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ICELAND

Iceland, a Nordic island nation, is defined by its dramatic landscape with volcanoes, geysers, hot springs and lava fields. Massive glaciers are protected in Vatnajökull and Snæfellsjökull national parks. Most of the population lives in the capital, Reykjavík, which runs on geothermal power and is home to the National and Saga museums, tracing Iceland's Viking history, per Google.

DAY ONE

9 AM - Flight arrives in the morning, as most US flights do

- Pick up duty-free alcoholic drinks at the airport, its much cheaper than in town

Rent a Car, then explore the [Reykjanes Peninsula](#)

- Relax in the [Blue Lagoon](#); time spent 3-4 hours
 - o Different packages: Standard for \$62 USD or Comfort for \$82 USD - I'd go for comfort
- If you have time, stop and see [Reykjanesviti](#) - first Icelandic lighthouse
- or [Krýsuvík-Seltun](#) - geothermal activity with bubbling mud pits

Drive to Reykjavik

- Drive from Blue Lagoon is 39 minutes

2 PM Quick Lunch: [Lobster Hut](#), lobster roll is a must (\$, Seafood)

Check-in at the hotel then walk around and explore the town

- or join a [Walking Tour](#); time spent is 2 hours, free but donations appreciated
- Walk up to [Hallgrímskirkja Church](#) - go to the top for a view you won't forget
- Main street is Laugavegur, do some window shopping
- MUST buy an Icelandic sweater – Handknit sweaters will run you around \$200 or more, but are also sure to keep you warm with thick Icelandic wool!

Dinner: [Bæjarins Beztu Pylsur](#) (\$, American), hot dog from the stand at the harbor - get one of everything

- Or if you just want dinner, [Drunk Rabbit Pub](#) (\$\$, Irish Pub)
- **Brennivín** is a clear, unsweetened schnapps that is Iceland's signature distilled beverage. It is a popular Icelandic liquor and special-occasion alcohol shot, and the traditional drink for the mid-winter feast of Þorrablót. Try one!

8:30 PM - [Whale Watching tour](#); time spent is 3 hours, \$109 USD

DAY TWO

Pack-up & check-out, moving from Reykjavik to Hella

7 AM Breakfast: [Stofan Cafe](#) (\$\$\$, Coffee & Tea), [Bergusson Mathus](#) (\$\$\$, Cafe) or [Sandholt](#) (\$\$, Bakery)

Driving the **Golden Circle**

- [Þingvellir National Park](#) [45-minute drive]; time spent is 3-4 hours
 - o Also, known as Thingvellir
 - o Oldest parliament in the world, quaint Thingvellir church and summer houses
 - o Not interested, skip it - if you do pass, start your morning with a visit to Reykjadalur hiking trail just outside of Hveragerði Public Park. Reykjadalur directly translates to “steam valley” and it holds true to its name with steam floating in the air everywhere on this hike! (bring a bathing suit)

8:30 AM - [Kerið](#); time spent is 1-2 hours, \$3 USD

- Drive from Reykjavik takes 50 minutes
- Scenic lake that occupies a volcanic crater

10:30 AM - [Faxi Waterfall](#); time spent is less than an hour, free

- Drive from Kerið is 30 minutes

11:30 AM - [Strokkur Geysir](#) ("The Churn"); time spent is less than an hour, free

- Drive from Faxi is 10 minutes
- Geothermal geyser that erupts every 8-10 minutes
- Make sure to stand downwind or be water-proof

Noon - [Gullfoss Falls](#); time spent is 1 hour, free

- Drive from Strokkur Geysir is 12 minutes
- Named as 1 of the world's top 10 waterfalls

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- View from above by the gift shop and from the parking lot
 - 1 PM Lunch - [Gullfoss Kaffi](#) (\$\$, Cafe & Soups)
 - 3 PM - Soak at the [Secret Lagoon](#) in Flúðir; time spent is 1-2 hours, \$28 USD
 - Drive from Gullfoss Falls is 35 minutes
 - 5 PM - Check in [Hotel Ranga](#)
 - Watch the northern lights, as you enjoy the Jacuzzi and reindeer carpaccio
 - o Drive from Secret Lagoon is 40 minutes
- Dinner: [Restaurant Árhús](#) (\$\$, European and Vegetarian friendly)

DAY THREE

8 AM - Breakfast at the hotel, then pack up and check-out

Day trip to **Iceland's South Coast**

8:30 AM - [Seljalandsfoss Waterfall](#); time spent is 1 hour, free

- Drive from the hotel is 20 minutes
- You can walk behind the sought-after waterfall, if you're water-proof from head to toe
- If you have time, visit the Gljúfrabúi Waterfall just down the way
- You'll pass Eyjafjallajökull - the volcano eruption that put all flights on hold
 - o Drive from Seljalandsfoss Waterfall is 15 minutes

10:30 AM - Small hike to [Seljavallalaug Zwembad](#); time spent is 1.5 hours, free

- Drive from Eyjafjallajökull 5 minutes
- Walk to the pool is 15 minutes, unpaved path
- One of the oldest swimming pools

Noon Lunch - Sveitagrill Miu-Mia's Country Grill (\$\$, Fish & Chips)

1 PM - The famous, [Skógarfoss Waterfall](#); time spent 2 hours, free

- Drive from Seljavallalaug Zwembad is 5 minutes
- Option: 45 minute walk to [Sólheimasandur Plane Crash](#); time spent is less than an hour, free
 - o The Black Sand Nature Preserve - continue walking from the plane crash to Black Sand Nature Preserve
 - o Drive down the road to [Dyrhólaey Lighthouse](#); time spent is 30 minutes, free

3 PM - Famous [Black Sand Beach of Reynisfjara](#); time spent is 2 hours, free

- Drive from Skógarfoss Waterfall is 30 minutes
- As you drive to the hotel, look out over the [Eldhruan lava fields](#); drive from the black sand beach is 1 hour

If you're not super tired and it's not dark - see the [Fjaðr., rglj" fur](#) (Moss Canyon)

Check in at the Icelandair Hotel Klaustur

DAY FOUR

Pack up and check-out of the hotel

10 AM - **Glacier Tour Day** - [Into the Glacier-Winter Ice Caves on Vatnajökull](#); time spent is 4 hours, \$200 USD

- Bring lunch with you

2 PM - Drive to the town of Höfn; 2 hour drive

- Day Option: 4:30 PM - [Jökulsárlón](#)-Glacier Lagoon, Boat Tours & Cafe; time spent is 2 hours, \$200 USD

Stay: Guesthouse Hafnarnes

Dinner: [Pakkhús](#) (\$\$\$, Scandinavian Seafood)

- Get the three-course meal

DAY FIVE

8 AM - Breakfast at the hotel, then pack up and check-out

Scenic, long drive along **Iceland's East Coast** (East Fjords to North Iceland)

11 AM - Drive from the hotel to [Egilsstaðir](#)

- Drive to the store is 2.5 hours
- Stock up at the grocery store and get gas - this is the only stop
- Stop along the Eastern Fjords for photos

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- If you have time, take a drive to the town of [Seyðisfjörður](#)
 - o Required - mountain pass from Egilsstaðir to access this adorable harbor town
 - o Save time and skip this stop
 - 2 PM - From the gas station to [Dettifoss Waterfall](#) in Vatnajökull National Park; time spent is 1 hour, free
 - Drive from gas station is 2 hours
 - Stop at Dettifoss Parking East for amazing photos
 - Walk along the paved path for 20 minutes to [Selfoss Waterfall](#), a prettier waterfall
 - 4 PM - visit the [N., mafjall Hverir](#), geothermal area with bubbling pits
 - Drive from waterfalls is 1 hour
 - 5 PM - continue down the way to [Mývatn Nature Baths](#); time spent is 2 hours, \$38 USD
 - Drive from N., mafjall Hverir is 5 minutes
 - Traditional naked bathing in ultra-hot water
 - Have dinner here or at the hotel
 - 7 PM - check in to the hotel, Dimmuborgir Guesthouse
- Take an evening stroll around Lake [Mývatn](#) the volcanic lake

DAY SIX

- 8 AM - Breakfast at the hotel, then pack up and check-out
Explore **Mývatn (Lava Rock Town) and the Northeast**
- 9 AM - Make a loop around the lake to [Skútustaðagígar](#) (craters); time spent is 1 hour, free
 - Drive from hotel is 10 minutes
- 10:30 AM - [Goðafoss Waterfall](#), one of the most spectacular waterfalls; time spent is 1 hour, free
 - Drive from craters is 31 minutes
 - Access from Ring Road, don't miss the sign
 - Sad news, this is the last waterfall you'll see
- Noon - Stop in the town of [Akureyri](#) for some quick souvenirs before another long drive
 - Drive from waterfall is 43 minutes
 - Get lunch and snacks too
- 2:30 PM - Visit the [Byggðasafn Skagfirðinga](#) in Glaumbaer; time spent is less than an hour
 - Drive from town is 1 hour
 - Cute museum of irregular turf houses, you can take pictures from outside
- Explore **Snæfellsnes Peninsula** | Nicknamed "Iceland in Mini"
- 5 PM - [Hvitserkur](#); time spent is 1 hour, free
 - Drive from turf houses is 1.5 hours
 - Must see the rhino-shaped rock formation and get the best view of the West Fjords
- 7 PM - the colorful fishing town [Stykkishólmur](#)
 - Drive from Rhino Rock is 3 hours
- Check-in at Harbour Hostel and enjoy the evening discovering the town 'made of many islands'

DAY SEVEN

- 6 AM - early morning, pack up and check out
 - First stop is the famous [Kirkjufell Mountain](#); time spent is 2 hours, free
 - o Drive from the hotel is 35 minutes
 - o You'll pass a cute town, [Grundarfjörður](#) - if you need gas
- 10 AM - Next stop is [Bíðakirkja](#) - black church is right off the Ring Road; time spent is 1 hour, free
 - Drive from the mountain is 30 minutes
 - If you want more photo stops, visit the church in [Hellnar](#) and get some coffee
 - Before this is the beautiful spot [Lóndrangar](#) - lava field paired with rock formations
- 11:30 AM - Golden sand beaches at [Ytri Tunga Beach](#); time spent is 1 hour, free
 - Drive from the black church is 20 minutes
 - Seal time - best time to see them is June and July
- By 1 PM, start the journey back to [Reykjavik](#)
 - Stop in [Borgarnes](#) for gas and some shopping; drive to this town from the beach is 1 hour
- 2:30 PM - back in Reykjavik, drive back is 1 hour
- Check into the hotel and then explore the city more, and you can walk everywhere

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- Things to see: [Sun Voyager](#) sculpture; [Harpa Concert Hall & Conference Center](#); the Harbor
- If you didn't get to the Blue Lagoon, stop at a Local Pool - [Laugardalslaug](#) (\$10 USD); [Vesturbæjarlaug](#) (\$7 USD); [Sundhöll](#), oldest pool (\$9 USD)

Dinner: [Icelandic Fish & Chips](#) (\$\$\$, European)

If you're feeling adventurous and want to get out of town one last time, book a night at the [Buubble Hotel](#) and sleep under the stars, literally.

DAY EIGHT

Full breakfast: [Cafe Paris](#) (\$\$, American); [VOX Restaurant](#) for the breakfast buffet (\$\$\$\$, Scandinavian); [Snaps Bistro](#) (\$\$\$, French)

Drive to the airport and return the rental car

- Drive from town to the airport is 43 minutes

Goodbye Iceland. Head home.