



Iceland Discovery

Overview & Itinerary

Start	Reykjavik, Iceland
Finish	Reykjavik, Iceland
Destination	Iceland
Style	Original
Theme	Explorer
Code	BMSI
Trip rating	4.64
Validity	01 Jan 2019 to 31 Dec 2019

Is this trip right for you?

- Iceland can be an expensive destination in many ways, from museum entrance fees to outdoor activities, but especially in terms of eating out. Your leader will be able to advise on how to save money. In remote areas the only option for dinner will be at the guesthouse we are staying at. Please stock up on food at a supermarket prior to arrival if you would like to opt out eating at the guesthouse's restaurant.
- The destinations visited on this trip can be cold throughout the year, especially at the start and end of the season and at night. Please bring appropriate clothing for adverse weather conditions. There may be the rare occasion where your leader has to alter the itinerary and activities due to the weather. In this case an alternative will be offered.
- Due to the remote locations we visit, there are a few long drives on this trip. This is a great opportunity to enjoy the scenery and spend some time getting to know the other members of your group.
- As accommodation on this trip is either twin or multi share, single travellers will share a room with other travellers of the same sex. Hotels in Europe often don't have double beds, but rather two single beds that can be pushed together/apart. Please also be aware that most hotels and guesthouses in Iceland offer shared bathrooms rather than en-suite facilities. Rooms in Iceland can be small, and at times you may be accommodated a short walk away from the main building. Please note that a single supplement is not available on this trip.

Physical rating

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Joining point

Guesthouse Aurora
Freyjugata 24
Reykjavik
ICELAND
Phone: +354 8991773

Joining point description

Guesthouse Aurora is a family-owned property, located in a quiet street, yet right in the centre of Reykjavik. It's a 2-minute walk from the highest building in Iceland, the wonderful church Hallgrímskirkja, and a short walk from the main shopping strip Laugavegur Street. Please note that rooms are small, have shared bathroom facilities, and at times you may be accommodated in a neighbouring building that is also part of the guesthouse.

Joining point instructions

Keflavík International Airport (airport code KEF) is located about 50 kilometres southwest of the capital. Taxis are readily available outside the terminal. Gray Line and Flybus both offer regular coach transfers to the BSÍ Bus Terminal in Reykjavik, where you can change to a shuttle that will drop you at your hotel. You are able to purchase single or return tickets in the arrivals hall at the airport. From the BSÍ Bus Terminal it is a 10 minute walk to Aurora Guesthouse. Exit the bus terminal through the main door and turn left. At the roundabout turn right up Njardargata. After about 450m turn left into Freyugata. Aurora Guesthouse will be on your left.

Pre booked arrival transfer from Keflavik Airport (KEF): If you have pre booked an arrival transfer, your transfer driver will be waiting in the arrivals hall, holding a board with the Intrepid Logo or your name. In case of flight cancellations, changes, if you experience severe delays at immigration, baggage collection or customs, or if you are not able to find the driver, please contact the transfer operator directly on +354 497 8000 or go to the Airport Direct transfer counter where someone will assist you.

Problems and emergency contact information

While we always endeavour to provide the best possible holiday experience, due to the nature of travel and the areas we visit sometimes things can and do go wrong. Should any issue occur while you are on your trip, it is imperative that you discuss this with your group leader or our local representative straight away so that they can do their best to rectify the problem and save any potential negative impact on the rest of your trip.

We recognise that there may be times when your group leader/local partner may not be able to resolve a situation to your satisfaction - if this is the case, please ask the leader to speak to their direct manager.

You may also choose to provide details in your online feedback, which we ask you to complete within 30 days of the end of your trip. But we do ask you to be aware that it is very difficult for us to provide any practical help after the trip is complete.

For general contact details please use the following page: <http://www.intrepidtravel.com/ourtrips/contact/>

If you have booked an arrival transfer, and you experience severe delays at immigration, baggage collection or customs, or if you are not able to find the driver, please contact the transfer operator directly on the number listed in the joining point instructions in the section above.

In the case of a genuine crisis or emergency, Intrepid's Iceland Operations Team can be reached on the number listed below:

Intrepid's Local Operator: +49 8677 9186 657

Itinerary

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Day 1: Reykjavik

Hallo! Welcome to Iceland. The world's northernmost capital of Reykjavik lies just below the Arctic Circle. The city sees around four hours of sunlight a day in winter and 22 hours or more in summer. Surrounded by volcanic peaks and crystalline ocean, and boasting a vibrant arts and nightlife scene, Reykjavik's contrasts are utterly beguiling. Why not arrive early and head to the National Museum, which depicts the history of Iceland from the 9th century (when the first Vikings from mainland Scandinavia arrived and settled) to the present day, or join locals who gossip and chatter in the Laugardalslaug Geothermal Pool.

Accommodation

- Guesthouse (1 night)

Meals Included

There are no meals included on this day.

Special Information

Your adventure begins with a Welcome Meeting at 6pm today – see reception for more details. If you can't arrange a flight that will arrive in time, you may wish to arrive a day early. We'll be happy to book additional accommodation for you (subject to availability). If you're going to be late, please inform the hotel reception. We'll be collecting your insurance details and next of kin information at this meeting, so please have these on hand. You can check in at the joining point hotel anytime after 2pm. While early check-in is not guaranteed, feel free to store your luggage until needed. Please note that the guest rooms may be spread across a number of buildings all situated along a quiet street in central Reykjavik, a 5-minute walk from each other.

Day 2: Golden Circle / Hvolsvollur Valley

Make an early start to beat the crowds on the 'Golden Circle' route. Head first to Thingvellir National Park, home to the Parliament Plains and location of Iceland's first parliament. Thingvellir also contains the Silfra fissure, where the North American and Eurasian tectonic plates slowly pull apart. The resulting gap is partly filled with fresh water and is clearly visible. From here head to the Geysir geothermal area, checking out the Strokkur Geysir – get a thrill as the geyser swells with blue water before erupting and shooting a cloud of water some 20-30 metres in the air. Be spellbound by the immense beauty and sheer power of the Gullfoss (Golden) double waterfall on the Hvita River, before proceeding to a remote farm the Hvolsvollur region. Since the arrival of the first settlers to Iceland, deforestation has taken place in order to make space for pastures. Join the effort to counteract this and head out into the hills surrounding the property to plant trees. Later, pay a visit to the immense Seljandsfoss waterfall, where a you can trek behind the 65-metre high cascade showers moss covered rock. Continue to our guesthouse for our first night out in the countryside.

Accommodation

- Guesthouse (1 night)

Included Activities

- Golden Circle (Thingvellir National Park, Strokkur Geysir, Gullfoss Waterfall)
- Responsible Travel Tree Planting Activity

Meals Included

- Breakfast

Special Information

Total driving distance approximately 300 kilometres / 4-5 hours. Please note that the tree planting activity is only possible during the summer months from mid-May to mid-September, and depends on weather conditions. Today is a full day of activities, so our arrival at the guesthouse will be at around 8pm.

Day 3: South Coast / Skaftafell National Park / Jokulsarlon

Begin the day with a visit to the breathtaking Skogafoss waterfall. At 25-metres wide with a 60-metre drop, this waterfall roars. You can feel it's power up close with a strenuous walk up a windy set of stairs up to a stunning viewpoint. The black sands and bizarre, rectangular rock formations of Reynisfjara are up next. Then, travel to Skaftafell National Park, where you have the option to traverse the mottled blue, grey and black face of Svinafellsjokull, one of the tongues of Vatnajokull. If you would prefer, you can take a visit to the Skaftafell Visitor Centre and the Skaftafell Glacier Lagoon, where icebergs jut from the still water. Cap off a busy day by cruising between jagged icebergs in an included boat tour of Jokulsarlon Glacier Lagoon. From here it is not far to our overnight stay, picturesquely located on another lagoon sheltered by a black sandbar.

Accommodation

- Guesthouse (1 night)

Included Activities

- Jokulsarlon Glacier Lagoon Boat Tour
- Skaftafell National Park
- Skogafoss Waterfall
- Rocks of Reynisfjara

Optional Activities

- Vatnajokull Glacier Walk - ISK9500

Meals Included

- Breakfast

Special Information

Total driving distance approximately 300 kilometres / 4 hours

Day 4: East Fjords / Egilsstaðir

Take a scenic drive along the rugged coast of the East Fjord's, making stops along the way. Enjoy spectacular views of high mountains, deep fjords, spectacular waterfalls, glaciers, and quaint fishing villages. Make stops along the way at small but notable towns like Faskrudsfjörður, where historical ties have resulted in street signs written in French. Stop at the wooded village of Egilsstaðir, home to the mythic Lagarfljót Wyrm – a serpentine monster that allegedly lives in the lake the town sits beside. You'll have a free evening to do as you please in this charming little spot, perhaps head out for dinner in town – local specialties include reindeer and mushrooms.

Accommodation

- Hostel (1 night)

Meals Included

- Breakfast

Special Information

Total driving distance approximately 400 kilometres / 5-6 hours. Today's drive is all about the stunning scenery, with plenty of scenic stops for photos.

Day 5: Seydisfjörður / Modrudalur Valley

Journey further through this black and green wonderland, making a stop in Seydisfjörður, a bohemian and quirky town filled with multi-coloured houses that sit beneath steep, towering mountains. Continue along mountain roads into the Icelandic interior and the highland village of Modrudalur. At 469 metres (1,539 feet) above sea level, Modrudalur Valley is the highest inhabited place in Iceland, and snow can be seen almost year round. You'll arrive around lunchtime, and the rest of the day is free for you to explore the surrounding countryside. Make sure you visit the farm's church, built in 1949 by farmer Jon Adalsteinn Stefansson in memory of his wife. Its inner decorations and altarpiece were made by him as well. As a relatively flat valley, it's the perfect place to break out your hiking shoes. Various nature walks are marked throughout the area, with wide panoramas, deafening silence and majestic Mount Herdubreid looming in the distance.

Accommodation

- Guesthouse (1 night)

Meals Included

- Breakfast

Special Information

Total driving distance approximately 200 kilometres / 3 hours.

Day 6: Lake Myvatn

From Modrudalur you will drive to the magnificent Dettifoss waterfall, Europe's mightiest waterfall. It's so powerful that the vibrations can be felt in the nearby rocks. The falls are 100-metres wide, with a 45-metre drop down into the craggy shores of Jokulsargljufur canyon below. Then, continue to Lake Myvatn, where recent and old volcanic activity has shaped the landscapes of the area, making it one of the most interesting geological regions in the northern hemisphere. Watch steam rise from the red, sulphuric terrain of Namaskard and it's hard to believe you're on Earth and not Mars. Take a walk around the lava stacks and caves of Dimmuborgir and then observe the massive pseudo craters of Skutustadir. If you like, you can even take a soak in the hot blue waters of the Myvatn Nature Baths. Later, enjoy an included dinner at your guesthouse for the evening, nearby Narfastadir.

Accommodation

- Guesthouse (1 night)

Included Activities

- Lake Myvatn
- Dettifoss Waterfall
- Namaskard Boiling Mud Pools, Dimmuborgir & Skutustadir Crater Group

Optional Activities

- Myvatn Nature Baths - ISK4300

Meals Included

- Breakfast
- Dinner

Special Information

Total driving distance approximately 200 kilometres / 4 hours.

Day 7: Akureyri / Gauksmyri

This morning, drive to the impressive Godafoss waterfall (the Waterfall of the Gods). It's said that into this 30-metre-wide, gently curving waterfall, a pagan priest symbolically threw the idols of the Norse gods in the year 1,000, signifying Christianity becoming Iceland's official religion. From Godafoss continue on to Akureyri. Situated at the head of Iceland's longest fjord, Akureyri is the nation's second largest city. Embark on a short guided tour of the town, taking in the striking church and other local sights. If you're travelling between May and December, you might have the option to partake in a whale watching excursion. Otherwise, there is plenty more to see, including museums and botanical gardens. In the afternoon, journey on to Gauksmyri, where you'll spend the night.

Accommodation

- Guesthouse (1 night)

Included Activities

- Godafoss Waterfall
- Akureyri Walking Tour

Optional Activities

- Akureyri Whale Watching Excursion (seasonal) - ISK19990

Meals Included

- Breakfast
- Dinner

Special Information

Total driving distance approximately 300 kilometres / 4 hours

Day 8: Snaefellsnes Peninsula

Continue your journey into Snaefellsnes National Park, home to the magnificent Snaefellsjokull Glacier, which played a starring role in Jules Verne's 1864 novel 'Journey to the Centre of the Earth'. Ditch your luggage at your family-run guesthouse and then head to the basaltic pebble beach Djupalonssandur. Visit a rural church and the white beach at Budir, and Arnarstapi, where a short stroll along the coastal cliffs exposes you to rich bird life and other wonders of nature. If you'd like, you could bath in the natural pools of Lysuholslaug (open seasonally only), or perhaps explore the land on horseback with a short ride around Lysuholl. In the evening, you may wish to partake in an optional cooking class, learning the art of Icelandic fare. A homecooked dinner tonight is included.

Accommodation

- Guesthouse (1 night)

Included Activities

- Snaefellsnes National Park

Optional Activities

- Lysuholslaug Thermal Pool (seasonal) - ISK1000
- Lysuholl Riding Centre - Free

Meals Included

- Breakfast
- Dinner

Special Information

Total driving distance approximately 400 kilometres / 5 hours. Please note that much of today's drive is on an unpaved road which may be rough in places.

Day 9: Reykjavik

Today head back towards Reykjavik to complete your circuit of Iceland, passing beautiful Hvalfjordur (Whale Fjord) along the way. Upon arrival at midday, enjoy a one-hour guided walking tour of the city, through the pedestrian zone and the Hallgrímskirkja church – intended to resemble glaciers and mountains. The rest of the evening and afternoon are yours for the taking with plenty of sights to choose from. Later in the evening you may wish to have a final dinner with your fellow travellers.

Accommodation

- Guesthouse (1 night)

Included Activities

- Reykjavik Walking Tour

Meals Included

- Breakfast

Special Information

Total driving distance approximately 200 kilometres / 3 hours

Day 10: Reykjavik

Today is departure day and time to say 'sjaumst'. As there are no activities planned, you are able to depart the hotel at any time. Check out time is at midday. If you are departing later, you can arrange to store your luggage at the hotel. As limited time is spent in Reykjavik on this trip, it's recommended to stay a few extra days. We are happy to book additional accommodation for you (subject to availability). Please ask your booking agent for details.

Optional Activities

- Blue Lagoon - ISK11000
- Whale Watching (Seasonal) - ISK9000
- Volcano House - ISK1790
- Whales of Iceland Museum - ISK2900
- Saga Museum - ISK2200
- Settlement Exhibition - ISK1700
- Perlan Museum - ISK3900
- Harpa Concert Hall - Free
- Maritime Museum - ISK1700
- Laugarvatn Fontana Geothermal Baths - ISK3800
- Nauthólsvík Thermal Beach - Free
- Fludir Secret Lagoon - ISK3000

Meals Included

- Breakfast

Special Information

The Blue Lagoon has limited availability, and during peak times tickets sell out far in advance. We recommend you book your time slot online in advance if you would like to be sure of a certain time/date for your visit: bluelagoon.com.

Finishing point

Guesthouse Aurora
Freyjugata 24
Reykjavik
ICELAND
Phone: +354 8991773

Finishing point instructions

If you are making your own way to Keflavik Airport the guesthouse will be able to help you book an airport shuttle or taxi. Please ask at reception. Alternatively you can use the airport coach transfer buses operated by Flybus and Gray Line. They have frequent departures from the BSÍ Bus Terminal in Reykjavik and also offer hotel pick-ups. Tickets are available online or at the bus terminal.

Pre-booked departure transfer to Keflavik Airport (KEF): If you have pre booked a departure transfer, you will be collected from your hotel 3 hours prior to your flight departure time. Please reconfirm your departure transfer with your tour leader. In case of flight cancellations, changes or if you are not to able to find the driver, please contact the transfer operator directly: +354 497 8000.

Itinerary disclaimer

ITINERARY CHANGES:

Our itineraries are updated regularly throughout the year based on customer feedback and to reflect the current situation in each destination. The information included in this Essential Trip Information may therefore differ from when you first booked your trip. It is important that you print and review a final copy prior to travel so that you have the latest updates. Due to weather, local conditions, transport schedules, public holidays or other factors, further changes may be necessary to your itinerary once in country. The order and timing of included activities in each location may also vary seasonally to ensure our travellers have the best experience. Your tour leader will keep you up to date with any changes once on tour.

OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES:

A selection of optional activities that have been popular with past travellers are listed in the day-to-day itinerary. This isn't an exhaustive list and should be used as a guide only for some of what might be available. Prices are approximate, are for entrance only, and don't include transport to and from the sites or local guides unless indicated. All activities are subject to availability. It may not be possible to do all the activities listed in the time available at each destination, so some pre-planning for what you are most interested in is advised. When it's recommended that travellers pre-book these activities, look for a note in the Special Information section of the day-to-day itinerary. For most, they can either be organised independently on the day, or let your leader know you are interested and they can assist.

Where activities are considered medium or high risk, we work with operators whose safety and credentials we have sighted and assessed. Although it is possible that you may find the same activity cheaper with another operator on the ground, we cannot vouch for the safety or quality of that operator. Medium and high risk activities not listed above have not been assessed by us and as such our staff and leaders are unable to assist you with organising these activities. Activities that contravene our Responsible Travel policies are also not listed. Please remember that the decision to partake in any activity not listed is at your own discretion and risk.

Feedback

After your travels, we want to hear from you! We rely on your feedback. We read it carefully. Feedback helps us understand what we are doing well and what we could be doing better. It allows us to make improvements for future travellers.

<http://www.intrepidtravel.com/feedback/>

Essential Trip Information

Important notes

SINGLE SUPPLEMENT

A single supplement is not available on this trip.

COSTS & PRICES

Iceland can be an expensive destination in many ways, from museum entrance fees to outdoor activities, but especially in terms of eating out. Your leader will be able to advise on how to save money. In remote areas the only option for dinner will be at the guesthouse we are staying at. Stock up on food at a supermarket prior to arrival if you would like to opt out eating at the guesthouse's restaurant. Please make sure you read the trip notes carefully in order to know what is and what isn't included in the trip price.

Passport and visas

Visas are the responsibility of the individual traveller. Entry requirements can change at any time, so it's important that you check for the latest information. Please visit the relevant consular website of the country or countries you're visiting for detailed and up-to-date visa information specific to your nationality. Your consultant will also be happy to point you in the right direction with acquiring visas. Visas can take several weeks to process, so familiarise yourself with any requirements as soon as you have booked your trip to allow for processing time.

Visas for Iceland are not required for passport holders of the European Union, Australia, New Zealand, USA and Canada. All other nationalities should check with the relevant authorities.

Medical and health information

All travellers need to be in good physical health in order to participate fully on this trip. When selecting your trip please make sure you have read through the itinerary carefully and assess your ability to cope with our style of travel. Please note that if, in the opinion of our group leader or local guide, any traveller is unable to complete the itinerary without undue risk to themselves and/or the rest of the group, Intrepid Travel reserves the right to exclude them from all or part of a trip without refund.

You should consult your doctor for up-to-date medical travel information or for any necessary vaccinations before departure. We recommend that you carry a first aid kit as well as any personal medical requirements as they may not easily be obtained at the locations on this trip. Please ensure that you are adequately prepared.

Food and dietary requirements

While travelling with us you'll experience the vast array of wonderful food available in Iceland. Your group leader will be able to suggest restaurants to try in Reykjavik. To give you maximum flexibility in deciding where, what and with whom to eat, generally meals aren't included in the trip price. This also gives you more budgeting flexibility. As a rule our groups tend to eat together to enable you to taste a larger variety of dishes and enjoy each other's company. There's no obligation to do this though. In remote areas outside of Reykjavik the only option for dinner will be at the guesthouse we are staying at. Some guesthouses have kitchen facilities that are free to use if you wish. Stock up on food at a supermarket prior to arrival if you would like to opt out eating at the guesthouse's restaurant. Your leader will be able to advise on the facilities available at the guesthouses used on your trip departure.

Vegetarians might find the menu selection less varied than they would see at home. Vegetarianism is not as common in this region and generally the choices are basic, involving vegetables, soups, salads, bread, cheese, fruit, yoghurt, eggs etc. Vegans and those on gluten-free diets may find this region very challenging and may need to supplement meals with their own supplies from supermarkets and markets. Wherever possible we will cater for dietary needs for any included meals, but there may be times when those with special requirements may need to provide their own.

There are some basic breakfasts included on this trip which may simply include bread/toast or pastries, butter, jam, coffee/tea/juice (or similar).

Accommodation

Guesthouse & Farm Stay (8 nights), Hostel (1 night)

OCCASIONAL ALTERNATIVE ACCOMMODATION

The style of accommodation indicated in the day-to-day itinerary is a guideline. On rare occasions, alternative arrangements may need to be made due to the lack of availability of rooms in our usual accommodation. A similar standard of accommodation will be used in these instances.

TWIN SHARE / MULTI SHARE BASIS

Accommodation on this trip is on a twin/multishare basis. Please note there may be times where facilities will be shared rather than ensuite and rare occasions when you share a room with passengers travelling on different Intrepid trips than your own.

CHECK-IN TIME

Throughout the trip we request that our hotels prepare rooms in time for our arrival, especially if we're arriving prior to normal check-in time. However this isn't always possible which means we won't be able to check-in immediately on arrival at some hotels. Instead, we can store our luggage and explore our new destination.

PRE/POST TRIP ACCOMMODATION

If you've purchased pre-trip or post-trip accommodation (if available), you may be required to change rooms from your trip accommodation for these extra nights.

FACILITIES

Your accommodation may not always have private en suite facilities or air-conditioning. European hotels generally don't provide kettles or fridges.

Transport

Private minibus

On this trip we are travelling in our own private minibus as this allows us to reach some more off the beaten path destinations and gives us flexibility which would not be possible by public transport. Please note that there are some long travel days and some rough stretches on gravelly and windy roads. On some days we depart early in the morning to ensure we optimise our time. All our vehicles in Iceland have complimentary Wi-Fi.

Money matters

CURRENCY

The official currency in Iceland is the Icelandic Krona (ISK).

CASH

Please note that credit cards are virtually accepted everywhere throughout Iceland, and you can get by without withdrawing any cash. However if you do need an ATM, they are available in most towns. Please check with your bank about overseas withdrawal fees before you depart. Some banks will allow a cash advance against a major credit card which will incur a service charge of 5% or more. Currency exchange is available at major banks and some hotels. The easiest foreign currencies to exchange are USD and EUR, however please be aware of the security risk of carrying large amounts of cash.

SPENDING MONEY:

When it comes to spending money on the trip, every traveller is a little different. You know your spending habits better than we do, so please budget a sensible amount for things like meals not included, drinks, shopping, optional activities and laundry. It's always better to bring a little more than you think you'll need. Also make sure you've read your trip details thoroughly so you know what's included in the trip price and what isn't. This should make budgeting a little easier. You'll find this info in the Inclusions section of your Essential Trip Information (that's this document).

BUDGET

Please budget for additional meals and expenses while on your trip. We suggest ISK 60,000 for meals not included on this trip. Our suggestion is based on past traveller feedback but you may choose to spend more or less. Please remember that Iceland can be an expensive destination in many ways, from museum entrance fees to visiting a cafe, but especially in terms of eating out. Your leader will be able to advise on how to save money. In remote areas the only option for dinner will be at the guesthouse we are staying at. Please stock up on food at a supermarket prior to arrival if you would like to opt out eating at the guesthouse's restaurant.

TIPPING

If you're happy with the services provided a tip - though not compulsory - is appropriate. While it may not be customary to you, it's of great significance to the people who will take care of you during your travels, inspires excellent service, and is an entrenched feature of the tourism industry across many Intrepid destinations. You may consider tipping your tour leader/driver for outstanding service throughout your trip. The amount is entirely a personal preference, however as a guideline 300ISK-600ISK per person, per day can be used. Of course you are free to tip more or less as you see fit, depending on your perception of service quality and the length of your trip. Remember, a tip is not compulsory and should only be given when you receive excellent service. Tipping is not a way of life in Iceland for meals, hotels or taxi drivers though.

CONTINGENCY FUNDS:

We try to plan for every eventuality, but there are still some things beyond our control. Please make sure you have access to an extra US\$500 for emergencies (e.g. severe weather, natural disasters, civil unrest) or other events that result in unavoidable changes to the itinerary (e.g. transport strikes or cancellations, airport closures). Sometimes these things necessitate last minute changes to enable our trips to continue to run, and as a result there may be some extra costs involved.

Packing

PACKING

On this trip you must pack as lightly as possible because you will be expected to carry your own bag and although you won't be required to walk long distances with your luggage (max 30 minutes), we strongly recommend keeping the weight under 10kg / 22lb. Most travellers carry their luggage in a backpack, although an overnight bag with a shoulder strap would suffice if you travel lightly. Smaller bags or backpacks with wheels are convenient although we recommend your bag has carry straps to accommodate the cobbled streets, uneven surfaces, stairs and steps you are likely to encounter while carrying your luggage. You'll also need a day pack/bag to carry water and a camera etc for day trips. You can find Intrepid's Ultimate Packing List on our website. It should be used as a guide only and isn't intended to be a complete packing list.

<https://www.intrepidtravel.com/packing-list>

CLIMATE

The Icelandic climate is very unpredictable the whole year round thus we recommend to all our guests to bring good sturdy shoes with a good grip for trekking, a warm wind and rainproof jacket and trousers, gloves or mittens, good head wear and sunglasses.

WHITE NIGHTS

The closer you travel to the second half of June, the shorter the nights are in this part of the world. As many of our accommodations may not have suitable curtains to block out light you may want to consider bringing an eye-mask, especially if you are a light sleeper.

THERMAL BATHS

In order for you to be able to experience Iceland's famous thermal baths please don't forget to bring your swimsuit and a spare towel.

WATER BOTTLE

Consider bringing your own water bottle to refill along the way. The sale of bottled water contributes to an enormous environmental problem around the world. In addition to the water in bottles, the production of a 1 litre plastic bottle takes 2 litres of water and 200ml of oil. A large proportion end up in limited landfill or discarded in waterways and natural environments. Cold tap water is safe and good to drink so you can avoid the purchase of bottled water by refilling from the tap.

Climate and seasonal information

Iceland can be cold throughout the year, especially at the start and end of the summer season, and at night. Rain is possible at any time of year. Please familiarize yourself with what climate to expect and bring appropriate clothing for adverse weather conditions, including base layers, hat, rain coat and anything else that you think may be applicable.

Group Leader

All Intrepid group trips in Iceland are accompanied by one of our group leaders, who will also be the driver. The aim of the group leader is to take the hassle out of your travels and to help you have the best trip possible. Intrepid endeavours to provide the services of an experienced leader however, due to the seasonality of travel, rare situations may arise where your leader is new to a particular region or training other group leaders.

Your leader will provide information on the places you are travelling through, offer suggestions for things to do and see and introduce you to our local friends. While not being guides in the traditional sense you can expect them to have a broad general knowledge of the places visited on the trip, including historical, cultural, religious and social aspects.

Safety

Many national governments provide a regularly updated advice service on safety issues involved with international travel. We recommend that you check your government's advice for their latest travel information before departure and ensure that your travel insurance covers you for all areas your itinerary covers. Please refer to our website's safety page for links to major travel advisories and updates on safety issues affecting our trip.

We strongly recommend the use of a neck wallet or money belt while travelling, for the safe-keeping of your passport, air tickets, cash and other valuable items. Leave your valuable jewellery at home - you won't need it while travelling. Many of our hotels have safety deposit boxes, which is the most secure way of storing your valuables. A lock is recommended for securing your luggage.

Your leader will accompany you on all included activities, however during your trip you'll have some free time to pursue your own interests, relax and take it easy or explore at your leisure. While your leader will assist you with the available options in a given location, please note that any optional activities you undertake are not part of your Intrepid itinerary, and Intrepid makes no representations about the safety of the activity or the standard of the operators running them. Please use your own good judgement when selecting an activity in your free time. Please also note that your Leader has the authority to amend or cancel any part of the trip itinerary if it's deemed necessary due to safety concerns.

For more details on the type of conditions and safety standards you can expect on your trip, please refer to Intrepid's operational safety policy on our website. We recommend that you take a moment to read through this information before travelling, and would appreciate any feedback on how well it's being implemented in the field:

<http://www.intrepidtravel.com/contact-us/safety>

VOLCANOES

Katla Volcano has been showing growing activity in recent months. An eruption would most likely be accompanied by a flash flood which would affect the floodplains to the west or east of the Mýrdalsjökull glacier. Authorities warn that travellers could have as little as 15 minutes to get to safety (higher ground) in the case of an eruption. Text messages will be sent to all mobile devices in the affected area, advising residents and travellers to evacuate or move to safety. Therefore please make sure that your mobile phone is turned on and international roaming is enabled while in the area.

FIRE PRECAUTIONS:

Please be aware that local laws governing tourism facilities in this region differ from those in your home country and not all the accommodation which we use has a fire exit, fire extinguishers or smoke alarms.

TRAFFIC AND DRIVING ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE ROAD:

Depending on where you come from please note that drivers in this part of the world may drive on the opposite side of the road from what you are used to. Look both ways before crossing any road. Traffic can be a little more chaotic than you might be used to at home. Be aware!

SEAT BELTS:

Please be aware that local laws governing transportation safety may differ from those in your home country and not all the transport which we use is able to provide seat belts.

A couple of rules

Everyone has the right to feel safe when they travel. We don't tolerate any form of violence (verbal or physical) or sexual harassment, either between customers or involving our leaders, partners or local people. Sexual relationships between a tour leader and a customer are strictly forbidden.

Use or possession of illegal drugs will not be tolerated on our trips. If you choose to consume alcohol while travelling, we encourage responsible drinking, and expect that you'll abide by the local laws regarding alcohol consumption.

The sex tourism industry is known to exploit vulnerable people and have negative consequences on communities, including undermining the development of sustainable tourism. For this reason, patronising sex workers will not be tolerated on our trips.

By travelling with us you are agreeing to adhere to these rules. Your group leader has the right to remove any member of the group for breaking any of these rules, with no right of refund.

If you feel that someone is behaving inappropriately while travelling with us, please inform your tour leader or local guide immediately. Alternatively, contact us on the emergency contact number detailed in the Problems and Emergency Contact section of this Essential Trip Information.

Travelling on a group trip

As you travel on a group trip you will be exposed to all the pleasures and maybe some of the frustrations of travelling in a group. Your fellow travellers will probably come from all corners of the world and likely a range of age groups too. We ask you to be understanding of the various needs and preferences of your group - patience with your fellow travellers is sometimes required for the benefit of everyone's travel experience. Remember too that you have responsibilities to the group. If you are requested to be at a place at a certain time, ensure that you don't keep the rest of the group waiting. We have found time and time again that the very best trips we operate are those where the dynamics within the group work well - this takes just a little effort on your part. Due to privacy reasons we are unable to provide you with contact details and any personal information about your fellow travellers booked on your trip prior to departure.

SINGLE TRAVELLERS:

Our group trips are designed for shared accommodation and don't involve a compulsory single supplement. Single travellers share with people of the same gender in accommodation ranging from twin to multishare. Some of our itineraries have accommodation booked on a mixed gender share basis and where applicable this will be specified in our Trip Notes. On a selection of our trips, you have the option to pay a single supplement to ensure that you have your own accommodation (where available). Please note that this only applies to accommodation during the tour - pre-trip and post-trip accommodation will be booked on a single room basis.

SINGLE SUPPLEMENT

Please note that a single supplement is not available on this trip, as many of the properties we use on this trip have only a limited number of rooms. If a single room becomes available at check-in for any of the nights, there may be the option to upgrade to a single room and pay the surcharge locally for that night.

Travel Insurance

Travel insurance is compulsory for all our trips. We require that, at a minimum, you are covered for medical expenses including emergency repatriation. We strongly recommend that the policy also covers personal liability, cancellation, curtailment and loss of luggage and personal effects.

When travelling on a trip, you won't be permitted to join the group until evidence of travel insurance and the insurance company's 24 hour emergency contact number has been seen by your leader.

If you have credit card insurance your group leader will require details of the participating insurer/underwriter, the level of coverage, policy number and emergency contact number rather than the bank's name and credit card details. Please contact your bank for these details prior to arriving in-country.

<http://www.intrepidtravel.com/insurance.php>

Responsible Travel

We believe strongly in low impact or rather positive impact tourism. Broadly speaking this means that we try to minimise the negative aspects of tourism on the local cultures and environments that we visit and highlight the positive aspects. Please visit our website for further details and suggestions on how you can be a responsible traveller.

<http://www.intrepidtravel.com/ourtrips/rt/responsibletraveller>

WHALING

Intrepid Travel is a big supporter of the protection of endangered species around the world. Although a global ban on commercial whaling came into effect in 1986, approximately 1,000 whales are still being killed every year, as Iceland, Norway and Japan ignore the ban. We strive not to visit places that serve whale on any of our trips, however often this is unavoidable and there is a likelihood that you will come across whale meat on a menu or at a market stand.

TREE PLANTING

Smaratun Hotel Fljotshlid, a beautiful family run operation connected to a farm, are the leaders in responsible tourism and sustainability in Iceland. They produce almost all food locally, practice recycling, and hold seminars to teach other farmers and guesthouses on how to be more environmentally friendly. Since the arrival of the first settlers to Iceland, deforestation has taken place in order to make space for pastures. Overgrazing over the centuries has then led to soil erosion. With this in mind, the owners of Smaratun Hotel Fljotshlid had the idea to start a tree planting project on their land to contribute to lowering their carbon footprint and counteract soil erosion. Our groups have the opportunity to join the effort and head out into the hills surrounding the property to plant trees themselves.

The Intrepid Foundation

Help us change thousands of lives by creating meaningful work and supporting skills training in communities around the world.

The Intrepid Foundation is the not-for-profit for Intrepid Group. We work with local organisations around the world to improve the livelihoods of vulnerable individuals and communities through sustainable travel experiences. With our travellers' help, we've contributed more than AU \$6 million to over 100 community organisations since 2002.

Did you know that tourism is one of the biggest contributors to the global economy, making up 1 out of every 10 jobs? That's why we support local projects that create meaningful jobs and give people the skills they need to work in the destinations we take you to. And it's why we exist - to make it easy for travellers to give back to the communities and places they've been in an effective and meaningful way.

All donations to The Intrepid Foundation are matched by Intrepid Group dollar for dollar (up to AU\$10,000 per donor and AU\$500,000 in total each financial year, excluding emergency appeals). And because Intrepid Group covers all administration costs, every cent goes directly to the projects. Donating is simple and secure. Please ask your leader for information about the projects we support through The Intrepid Foundation or visit our website:

<http://www.theintrepidfoundation.org/>

