
FUN ICELAND

Travel Guide



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Funiceland



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About Iceland

Location and Geography

Iceland is located closer than you might think, a direct flight from **New York** takes approximately five hours, and three hours from **London**. Iceland is an island in the **North Atlantic**, located part way between the United States and Europe, just south of the Arctic Circle. Iceland is part of **Europe** as it is closer to continental Europe than to mainland North America. Greenland is the nearest neighboring country, located about 290 km (180 miles) away. The closest countries in Europe are the Faroe Islands, about 420 km (260 miles) away and Norway about 970 km (600 miles) away.

Iceland is a rather young country, at least in geological context. Because of this the island is very active when it comes to volcanic and geothermal activity. Great example of this is in **Thingvellir**, in the southern part of Iceland, where the **North American and Eurasian tectonic plates** meet or rather move away from each other.

This can easily be seen on land in Thingvellir, which is a national park. The great forces of the tectonic plates can be seen in the unique surroundings in Thingvellir and were among the criteria that resulted in Thingvellir being listed on the United Nations World Heritage list.

More than 11% of the country is covered by glaciers, including Europe's largest glacier, **Vatnajökull**. Iceland is very remote and rugged country, with almost 80% of the country uninhabited. The main reason that most people visit Iceland is probably the spectacular natural scenery, with all kinds of waterfalls, deep fjords, glaciers, geysers, volcanoes, black sand beaches, lava fields, geothermal activity and much more.



History of Iceland

The first Viking settlers arrived in Iceland in the late 9th century when the Norsemen migrated around the North Atlantic and discovered Iceland by accident. **The settlement period** of Iceland is believed to have lasted for about 60 years from around 870 to 930.

Most of the first settlers came from Norway but also from Denmark, Sweden and from the Viking settlements around the British Isles. Prior to the arrival of the Vikings it is actually believed that Iceland was not uninhabited as some Irish monks were already living there but they left soon after the Nordic settlers arrived. **Ingólfur Arnarson** was the first permanent settler of Iceland, he was a rich and influential Norwegian chieftain who sailed to Iceland in 874 AD.

Records from the early history of Iceland can be found in old literary sources, **Íslendingabók** - The Book of Icelanders and **Landnámabók** - The Book of Settlement. Many of the events in the Icelandic sagas actually took place during the period 930-1030, and it's known as **The Saga Age**.

In the year 930 the Icelandic parliament was established at **Thingvellir (Þingvellir)** and it was held there until the year 1798. Many of Iceland was an independent free state until the year 1262/64 when Icelanders were persuaded to swear allegiance, called **Gamli Sáttmáli**, to King Haakon IV of Norway. Later, Iceland became under the dominant Danish crown in 1397, when the Kalmar Union was formed between Sweden, Norway and Denmark.

Along with the rise of nationalism around Europe in the 19th century the nationalization and independence movements began in Iceland. **Jón Sigurðsson** (born on 17 June) was a great leader of the Icelandic independence movement and a national hero. Iceland gained sovereignty on 1 December 1918, but Iceland still shared the Danish Monarchy until declared a fully independent nation on **17 June 1944**.





Environmental Protection

To help us protect the environment, please follow these simple guidelines when travelling in Iceland so that others can also enjoy the beauty of the unspoiled nature. For more information visit the **Environment Agency of Iceland (Umhverfisstofnun)**, whose main tasks include promoting environmental protection, the sustainable use of natural resources and offering public welfare by helping to ensure a healthy environment, and safe consumer goods.

Travelers Code

- Leave camping and picnic site's as you would wish to find them.
- Never bury litter or leave it lying around.
- Never light open fires on vegetated land.
- Never dislodge stones or build Cairns.
- Keep water clean and safeguard springs and pools.
- Keep vegetation undamaged.
- Keep wildlife undisturbed.
- Never damage geological formations.
- Respect the tranquillity of the countryside.
- Never drive off roads.
- Keep to marked footpaths when requested.
- Respect conservation rules and warden's instructions.

National Parks

In Iceland there are three National parks, **Pingvellir**, **Vatnajökull** and **Snæfellsjökull**. All three parks are managed and maintained by the **Environment Agency of Iceland**, National parks are areas considered outstanding in landscape, flora or fauna, or having special historic significance.



Wildlife of Iceland

The only land mammal living in Iceland before the viking settled here for more than 1000 years ago was the Arctic Fox. Other wild mammals living in Iceland include the mink, mice, rats, rabbits and reindeer. Occasionally Polar bears visit from Greenland.

Most animals you will see when travelling around Iceland are domestic animals, including the Icelandic horse, sheep, dog and cattle. The animals have remained unchanged in isolation since the settlers brought them with them. The sheep is a big part of Icelandic culture, there are more sheeps in Iceland than humans and they can be found grazing around the country from May to September.



Seals and Whales are common off the coast of Iceland and Iceland is a great place for whale watching, a place where people have the opportunity to get up close to these massive mammals in their natural habitat. Whale watching is something that everyone should try if they intend to visit Iceland. There are 23 species of whales off the coast of Iceland, some are there for a short time each year while others stay there longer. The best time for whale watching is late spring until August.



The Icelandic horse has also always played a big role in the Icelandic life and culture, today the Icelandic horse is one of the most popular and versatile riding horse in the world. The Icelandic horse was originally a mixed breed, but today it is one of the oldest and purebred horse in the world. It is the only horse breed in the country because horses have not been imported to Iceland since the 11th century. There are many horseback riding tours available all over Iceland.



Birds in Iceland

Iceland is also rich with birdlife and marine mammals. Around 70 to 80 bird species regularly nest in Iceland which is considered rather few compared with other European countries, but over 30 additional species breed in the country even though they choose not to permanently live in Iceland. Even though there are not many different types of birds in Iceland there is a vast numbers of individual birds of each specie and the country therefore ideal for bird-watching and bird-photography.

The most famous bird specie in Iceland is probably the Puffin. **The Atlantic Puffin** (*Fratercula arctica*), is a species of seabird in the auk family (Alcidae), he is one of the smaller auks, and also the most common. The puffin is most commonly found around the coast of Iceland, around sixty percent of the population breeds in Iceland.



Good places to see the puffin:

- Vestmannaeyjar (Westman islands)
- Látrabjarg
- Dyrhólaey
- From Reykjavik
- Tjörnes
- Grímsey

Best time to spot puffins is in end of April until early September. Best time of the day to spot them is in the morning (07:00-10:00) and in the evening (18:00-22:00).

Guidelines for Bird Watching in Iceland

- During bird watching, it is important to keep few things in mind to minimize interference with the nature and disruption of nature.
- Stay on marked paths and approach quietly and slowly in order to avoid disturbance to nesting birds and damage to sensitive vegetation.
- Avoid spending prolonged periods close to nesting birds or birds with young.
- Be careful around the cliffs and do not go near the edge. The gravel can be loose and break easily.
- Do not touch or feed the bird.

Facts about Iceland



Country Size: 103,000 sq.km



Population: About 344.000



Capital: Reykjavik



Currency: Icelandic Króna (ISK)

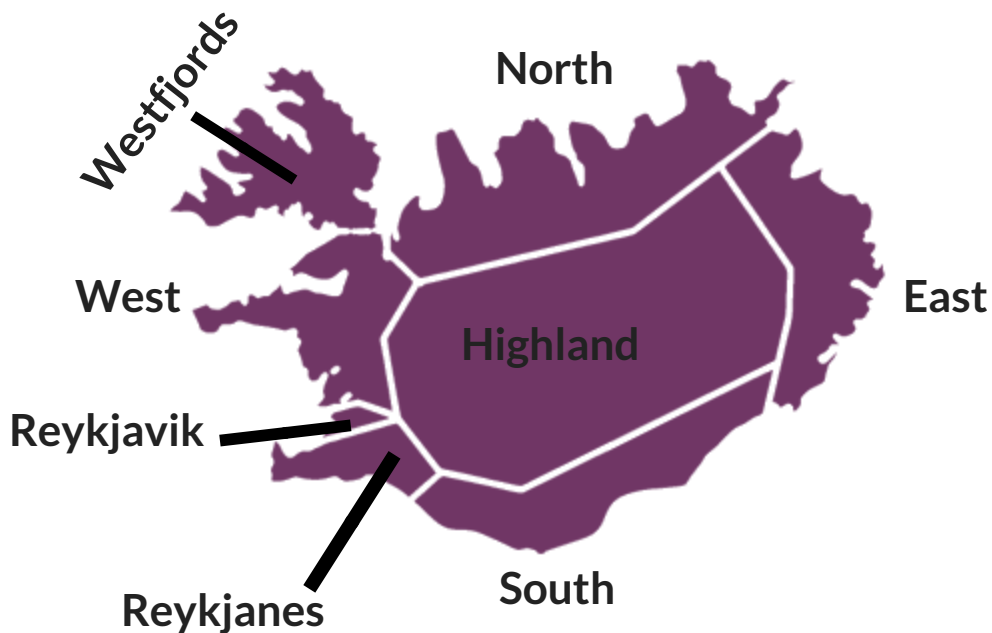


Language: Icelandic



President: Guðni Th. Jóhannesson

Regions of Iceland





Before you go

Currency & Cost

National currency is Icelandic króna, and it is normally abbreviated as "kr." or "ISK". Króna has 5 denominations of banknotes: 500 ISK, 1.000 ISK, 2.000 ISK (being removed from circulation), 5.000 ISK and 10.000 ISK. Coins also exist, and they are of the following types: 1 ISK, 5 ISK, 10 ISK, 50 ISK and 100 ISK.

It is possible to use credit and debit cards anywhere in Iceland when paying for goods and services. Visa, MasterCard, American Express, China Union Pay are widely accepted.

ATMs can be found in capital area and bigger towns across Iceland and are normally accessible 24 hours if located outside bank offices, or during office hours (9 AM - 16 PM) if located indoors. They are operated by banks Arion, Íslandsbanki, Landsbankinn and also by independent operator called Tomato.

If money remittance services are needed, Western Union and MoneyGram operate in Iceland. Western Union services are provided by staff of Landsbankinn bank. 10-11 supermarket chain has MoneyGram services at a few locations.

Costs

Although Iceland is a country with high living expenses, there are ways to decrease spendings and make a journey both enjoyable and affordable. Here are few examples of what one might expect to pay for various goods and services in Reykjavik as of July 2017:

- 1 menu/set with 2 pieces of chicken, a soft drink and french fries at KFC - 1.399 ISK
- 1 visit to a swimming pool - 950 ISK
- 1 beer or wine at a bar during happy hour - from 500 ISK
- 1 liter of fuel - from 170 ISK to 195 ISK

Visa & Customs

Visa

Since March 25, 2001, Iceland has been part of the Schengen agreement, an agreement of 26 countries to abolish border passport control between Schengen countries in Europe.

To visit Iceland all person, who do not hold a valid Schengen visa in their travel document, need to apply for a visa to enter Iceland.

No visa is required for a stay of up to 90 days for citizens of EU and Schengen countries also, citizens of Australia, Canada, Japan, New Zealand and USA. The total stay within the Schengen area must not exceed 90 days in any period of 180 days.

Note that you must have a valid passport for three months beyond the proposed departure date, except for citizens of EEA/EFTA.

For more information about Visa and how to apply visit the Icelandic Directorate of Immigration.

Duty-free concession limits for visitors

Alcoholic beverages for example:

1 liter spirits and 0.75 liter wine and 3 liters beer or
3 liters wine and 6 liters beer or
1 liter spirits and 6 liters beer or
1.5 liters wine and 12 liters beer or
18 liters beer

Tobacco:

200 cigarettes or 250 g of other tobacco products

The minimum age for bringing alcoholic beverages into Iceland is 20 years and 18 years for tobaccos.

Customs

What items are prohibited from bringing into Iceland

Iceland's customs laws prevent you from bringing certain items into the country in order to protect Iceland and its environment, including narcotics and dangerous drugs, uncooked meat and various meat productions, uncooked milk and eggs, various weapons, finely powdered snuff and moist snuff to be used orally. Some items have restrictions or need to be declared, these can include telephones and other communications equipments, angling gear and riding clothing, firearms and ammunition, live animals, medicines and flowers and other plants.

For more detailed information, please visit **directorate of customs**.



Useful Information

What is the language of Iceland?

Icelandic is the official language of Iceland. However most Icelanders also speak fluent English and some also speak other languages including the Nordic languages, Spanish, French, Italian and German.

What is the currency in Iceland?

National currency is Icelandic króna, and it is normally abbreviated as "kr." or "ISK". Króna has 5 denominations of banknotes: 500 ISK, 1.000 ISK, 2.000 ISK (being removed from circulation), 5.000 ISK and 10.000 ISK. Coins also exist, and they are of the following types: 1 ISK, 5 ISK, 10 ISK, 50 ISK and 100 ISK.

Tipping in Iceland

Tipping is not necessary in Iceland as the cost of service and VAT is included in all prices. However if you like the service you get, for example at a restaurant, hotel or from your tour guide there is nothing wrong with leaving a tip and most people will appreciate it. It is not rude or illegal to tip in Iceland but also not customary so totally up to you.

Banks of Iceland

There are three major banks in Iceland: Landsbankinn, Arion Banki and Íslandsbanki. The banks in Iceland are generally open from 09:00 to 17:00 on Weekdays and are closed on public holidays. Banks and ATMs can be found in Reykjavik and bigger towns across Iceland.

Liquor store and legal drinking age

Alcohol is not sold in grocery stores in Iceland, it is only sold at a state liquor store called Vínbúð (The wine store). You can find the Vínbúð in most towns around Iceland and they are usually open between 11:00 - 18:00 Monday to Saturday. In some towns the stores have shorter opening hours and there is no service on Sundays.

The legal drinking age in Iceland is 20 years old. To buy alcohol in the Vínbúð, in bars or restaurant you have to provide proof of age with photo ID for example, driver's license or passport.

Post office

Post offices can be found in most towns in Iceland and are usually open from 09:00 to 18:00 on weekdays but opening hours may vary in smaller towns. For more information visit the [post office website](#).

Water

You can drink the tap water in Iceland. Safe money and the environment and bring a bottle with you from home and refill it as you go.

Electricity

Iceland's electricity supply runs at 220V/50hz with two round pins. Northern European electrical standard.

Shopping in Iceland

The cosmopolitan atmosphere in Reykjavík might come as a surprise but Icelanders actually have a great sense of fashion and you can shop the most popular brands and the latest in world fashion there. Icelanders also love design and the best local design shops can be found on **Laugavegur** and **Skólavörðustígur** in Reykjavík, along with souvenir shops, the famous Icelandic outdoor clothing stores (66° North, Cintamani and Icewear) and other interesting stores, restaurants and cafés.

There are two big shopping malls in Reykjavík, **Kringlan** and **Smáralind**. The shopping hours in Iceland can vary, but most shops are open between 09:00 and 18:00 from Monday to Friday, the shopping hours are usually shorter during the weekends.

If you are looking for an Icelandic souvenir like the woolen knitwear (lopapeysa), jewellery, crafts, clothing or music then check out **Kolaportið** in Reykjavík. Also if you are travelling around the country don't be shy to check out the local stores and galleries, that's where you find the good stuff!



Grocery stores

If you want to save some money on food there are a lot of supermarkets around Iceland. There are several different chains around the country that vary in size, price and selection. In Reykjavík you can find many supermarkets in all price ranges but if you are traveling outside of Reykjavík there are more limited options.

Bónus - Budget Store. 32 stores around Iceland. Cheapest grocery store in Iceland.

Krónan - Budget Store. 17 stores around Iceland.

Nettó - Budget Store. 16 stores around Iceland. Some stores are open 24 hours.

Kjarval - Budget Store. 4 stores in South Iceland.

Hagkaup - Mid-range store. 11 stores around Iceland. Food, clothes, cosmetics and other items. Some stores are open 24 hours.

Iceland - Mid-range store. 7 stores around Iceland. All stores are open 24 hours.

Samkaup Úrval/Strax and Kjörbúðin - Mid-range store. About 20 stores around Iceland.

10-11 - Expensive - 35 stores around Iceland. Most stores are open 24 hours.

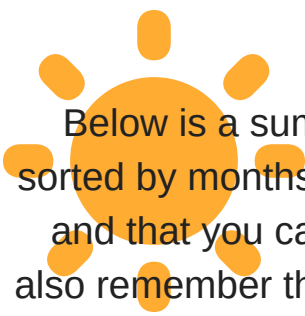


Weather in Iceland

Weather in Iceland varies a lot in the various parts of the island. In the southern part, there may be sunshine and relatively warm but at the same time it can be windy, cold and even snow in the northern and/or eastern parts. It is also important to realize and remember that weather in Iceland can change unexpectedly and very fast. It is therefore important to check the weather forecast and be prepared for all types of weather.

The Icelandic climate is more temperate than one should expect considering the latitude of the island but it is not so far away from the Arctic Circle. This relatively mild weather, considering the latitude, is due to the North Atlantic Current, which carries warm sea from the equator to the waters around Iceland. Most of the inhabitants live close to the ocean so the weather in the towns is warmer than inland where few people live. The highlands are uninhabited but are popular tourist destination during the summer months. The weather in the highlands can be very different from close to the coast and snowfall often occurs during the summer months. Fierce winds and heavy rain is also to be expected there during the summer.





Below is a summary about the average weather in Reykjavík, the capital. It is sorted by months. But remember that the weather may vary a lot from the average and that you can even experience snowfall in the summer months! You should also remember that this is the average for Reykjavík and that the weather can vary a lot from one location to another. It is usually a bit warmer in Reykjavík and other locations in the southern part than in other parts of the island.

Spring

In March, the average temperature is 0.5 degrees Celsius. The average sunshine is 111 hours and the average precipitation is 82 mm.

In April, the average temperature is 2.9 degrees Celsius. The average sunshine is 140 hours and the average precipitation is 58 mm.

In May, the average temperature is 6.3 degrees Celsius. The average sunshine is 192 hours and the average precipitation is 44 mm.

Summer

In June, the average temperature is 9 degrees Celsius. The average sunshine is 161 hours and the average precipitation is 50 mm.

In July, the average temperature is 10.6 degrees Celsius. The average sunshine is 171 hours and the average precipitation is 52 mm.

In August, the average temperature is 10.3 degrees Celsius. The average sunshine is 155 hours and the average precipitation is 62 mm.



Autumn/Fall

In September, the average temperature is 7.4 degrees Celsius. The average sunshine is 125 hours and the average precipitation is 67 mm.

In October, the average temperature is 4.4 degrees Celsius. The average sunshine is 83 hours and the average precipitation is 86 mm.

In November, the average temperature is 1.1 degrees Celsius. The average sunshine is 39 hours and the average precipitation is 73 mm.

Winter

In December, the average temperature is -0.2 degrees Celsius. The average sunshine is 12 hours and the average precipitation is 79 mm.

In January, the average temperature is -0.5 degrees Celsius. The average sunshine is 27 hours and the average precipitation is 76 mm.

In February, the average temperature is 0.4 degrees Celsius. The average sunshine is 52 hours and the average precipitation is 72 mm.



What to pack

Winter/Fall

Winter and fall in Iceland is usually cold but it is actually milder than many people imagine, but that does not mean you don't need warm clothes.

The average temperature in Iceland during the winter is around 1°C (33,8°F) and 3°C (37°F) during fall, but we often have strong winds so it feels much colder. The weather is also very unpredictable and changes very fast from being sunny to raining and even snow blizzards.

The first thing that we recommend for your winter/fall trip is layers and more layers, clothes for all kinds of weather and of course good shoes!



Summer/Spring

The summer months June - August are the warmest in Iceland, we have daylight 24/7 and the sun is shining. But those beautiful summer nights can be cold and it can rain a lot during the summer, so you still need to bring warm clothes and rain gear with you but also pack shorts and T-shirt.

The spring in Iceland is usually warmer than the winter but it is still cold, the average temperature during the spring is around 3°C (37°F), but with the wind it feels colder. The average temperature during the summer in Iceland is around 10°C (50°F) but it can go as high as 20-25°C (68-77°F) and as low as 6-9°C (43-48°F). The weather is still very unpredictable during the summer and we can have the sun shining one minute but raining the next minute.

So it's important to bring layers of clothes that you can strip of as you need it. Sweater, rain gear and hiking boots are essentials during the summer/spring in Iceland.

Packing List

Clothing

- ☐ Socks (thin and thick)
- ☐ Underwear
- ☐ Jeans
- ☐ Light-weight trousers
- ☐ Base layer (Long wool or thermal underwear)
- ☐ Shorts
- ☐ T-shirts
- ☐ Long sleeves (Layering for cold days, quick dry)
- ☐ Pajamas
- ☐ Smart casual clothing for a night out
- ☐ Swimsuit

Outdoor Clothing

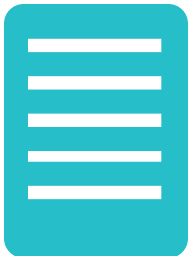
- ☐ Fleece or wool
- ☐ Water & windproof jacket
- ☐ Parka
- ☐ Water & windproof pants
- ☐ Hiking pants
- ☐ Hats & gloves
- ☐ Scarf
- ☐ Warm socks
- ☐ Casual shoes
- ☐ Hiking boots
- ☐ Flip flops

Documents

- ☐ Passport
- ☐ Travel documents (Hotel/flight/Vouchers info)
- ☐ Credit/debit cards
- ☐ Travel insurance
- ☐ Driver's license (International driver's license)
- ☐ Dive certification cards

Other items

- ☐ Earplugs
- ☐ Eye mask
- ☐ Phone charger
- ☐ Electronics
- ☐ Sunscreen
- ☐ Sun glasses
- ☐ Medications and prescriptions
- ☐ Adapter
- ☐ Daypack
- ☐ Toiletries
- ☐ Water bottle
- ☐ Camera gear
- ☐ Towel





Safety in Iceland

Iceland is one of the safest countries in the world where you can travel around and enjoy a safe trip all year round if basic safety precautions are followed while travelling. We recommend that visitors take the same care of personal safety and belongings as you would in any other country. Below are some tips on how to safely enjoy Iceland and Icelandic nature.

Download the **112 Icelandic emergency app**. You can call for help from the app and leave your location and travel plan with the Icelandic rescue team. If something happens on your travel they will have more information to work with.

Health care and hospitals

Iceland provides first-rate healthcare and emergency services. There are hospitals or healthcare in every major towns in Iceland as well as pharmacies, called Apótek in Icelandic. In case of an emergency do not hesitate to call 112, the emergency number in Iceland.

safetravel.is
The official source for safe adventure in Iceland

Vedur.is
Road.is

112

Good tips

- Always bring a phone with you and remember the **emergency number 112**.
- Do not travel by foot or bike on the main road after dark. It gets very dark in Iceland during the winter and it is not easy for drivers to see people walking or cycling on the side of the road.
- Weather in Iceland is unpredictable and can be variable between regions. Always check the weather forecast and road conditions before heading out in Iceland, especially during the winter.
- Always be prepared with enough clothes for all kinds of weather, appropriate equipment's, communication device, first-aid kit, water and snack.
- Leave a plan! It is very important, whether you are traveling by yourself or with others, that someone knows your travel plan. You can leave your travel plan at **www.safetravel.is** or by downloading the **112 Icelandic emergency app**.
- The roads in Iceland are probably different then in you home country so be careful and always check the road conditions.
- Make sure to be driving a vehicle in good conditions, for example a 4X4 or with winter tires during the winter.
- Even though the crime rate in Iceland is low we recommend that you always lock your accommodation or vehicles and keep your personal belongings in a safe place.
- Do not leave important documents in the car.



Travel insurance

We recommend you purchase a travel insurance before leaving your country of residence, that will cover you for any accidents, medical problems, theft, losses or anything else that might affect your trip. It is important to bring the insurance policy details with you to Iceland. If you are in need of medical emergency, you need to provide the insurance. Those who are citizens of EEA countries need to bring the European Health Insurance Card (EHIC Card) or else you will be fully charged for your medical attention. If you are interested in participating in any adventure activities like snowmobiling, scuba diving, hiking in the highlands or something else make sure that your insurance covers that as well. Take a copy of important documents, for example passport and credit cards and keep them in a different place than the original.



Stay safe in the highlands of Iceland

Most people visit Iceland to enjoy the unique and beautiful nature, but it is important to remember that Icelandic nature is very unpredictable and the weather can change very quickly. If the plan is to travel in the highlands of Iceland keep these things in mind:

It is important to be informed about the area for example, what hazards can be hidden there and what you need to bring with you.

The highland roads in Iceland are only open during the summer and it is not advisable to travel there during winter without a professional guide who knows the area.

Cell phone connection is not guaranteed in the highlands of Iceland. You can rent a Personal Location Beacon or Emergency Beacon from 4 different locations in Iceland. The cost is 1200 ISK per day. [Click here for more information.](#)

Weather in Iceland can change very quickly, always be prepared for all seasons by bringing clothes, equipment and enough food and water for emergency situations.

Let someone know about your travel plans or leave the plan with the Icelandic rescue team. If something happens they will have more information to work with.

Challenge yourself within your physical limits and experience.

Remember the most important thing is to use common sense, follow safety warnings, remember the emergency number 112 and enjoy your stay in Iceland!





Driving in Iceland

How to get around

Travelling by a car is a very convenient and popular way to explore Iceland. There are no trains in Iceland so the best way to get around is by a car. It is also possible to take a taxi or a bus but that can be expensive. In the summertime Bus Passports are available, they give the opportunity to hop on and off the bus at some of the most popular tourist attractions. For those who like a bit more adventure like to walk or cycle around the country but you need to be well prepared for that, it's not that

easy. Route 1 is the main road in Iceland, often called The Ring Road because it goes around the entire island except for the Westfjords. The Ring Road is close to the coastline and most of the popular tourist attractions in Iceland are near the road. The majority of the Ring Road is a one lane road with traffic coming from each directions. The road is about 1.332 km (828 miles) long, paved and accessible by any type of car. Even so the conditions in Iceland are unusual in many ways and it is very important to be informed on how to drive in Iceland before you begin your journey.



The Road Traffic Directorate of Iceland prepared this video on How to Drive in Iceland and we recommend to watch it, it is only 9 minutes.

Road conditions

Most of the roads in Iceland are paved but sometimes the roads suddenly changes to a gravel road, it is therefore important to follow the speed limitations and slow down when entering the gravel roads. Other things to be aware of while driving on Icelandic roads are single-lane bridges, blind hills and animals on the road. Special warning signs indicate danger ahead so be aware of them at all times. It is important to keep full attention to driving at all times and don't let the beautiful surroundings draw your attention away from the road.

For more information about road condition please visit www.road.is or call **1777** (if problems use +354 522 1100). For emergency call **112**. Always check the road conditions before heading out on a long drive especially in the winter time.



Driving Regulations

If rules and regulations are not followed when driving in Iceland it can be punishable with very high fine! Follow these rules to prevent accident and keep you safe on the road:

- The speed limit is 30-50km/hour in residential areas and 90km/hour on the paved main roads. If driving on a gravel road then the speed limit is 80km/hour. Speed cameras are all around the country and the fines for speeding are high so take your time and don't drive too fast.
- Everyone in the car is required by law to wear seatbelts.
- Children must be in a car safety seats or wear seat belts, depending on their age.
- It is forbidden under any circumstances to drive under the influence of alcohol. The punishment for doing so is very high fine and loss of driving license.
- The use of phones while driving in Iceland is not allowed unless using a hand-free equipment.
- Headlights should be turned on both day and night when driving.
- Driving off-road is strictly forbidden in Iceland

Practical information

In Iceland people drive on the right side of the road and most of the roads are single lane in each directions with no barriers in the middle.

Like in every other country it is very dangerous to drive when you are tired. In the summer time in Iceland it is bright outside for 24 hours so people sometimes forget the time. It is very important to stop the car and rest when feeling tired.

Even though it doesn't seem like there is much traffic on Icelandic roads it is very dangerous to stop the car in the middle of the road when you see something amazing on the way. If stopping for a photo try to find safe place to park the car and be careful when turning off the main road by slowing down in time and give indicators.

When travelling around Iceland remember to fill the gas tank when near to a gas station. There are gas stations in every town in Iceland and throughout the country. Most gas stations are open until 20:00-23:30 but that can vary from town to town. Usually they can still be operated after closing hours and accept credit card or cash.

Driving in the highland of Iceland

It is prohibited by law to drive off-road in Iceland and the punishment for doing so is very high fine. Driving off-road can result in serious damage to the vegetation as is extremely sensitive. F-roads are special mountain roads in the highlands that is allowed to drive on, but it is very important to stay on those roads at all time. Most mountain roads are closed during the winter and it is not recommended to drive those road except with a expert driver guide and an appropriate vehicle. In the summertime it is possible to drive on those roads with a 4X4 vehicles and it is recommended that two or more cars always travel together. Always be well prepared before a journey to the highland of Iceland.



Icelandic winter and driving

Driving in the winter is a lot different than in the summer time in Iceland. You have to be prepared for all kinds of weather; rain, sunshine, heavy wind or snowstorm. The weather can also vary in different region of Iceland. Make sure to pay attention to weather road signs. They will give you information about the weather and if the road is closed or if there is a storm. If the average wind goes over 20 m/s you should be very careful and even consider not driving, especially if driving larger vehicle. Keep in mind that the days are very short in Iceland during the winter and the route usually take longer than google maps indicates because of road conditions, 5 hour drive on Google Maps can become 8-10 hours.



Things you should bring with you when driving during the winter in Iceland:

GPS and a regular map

Phone

Clothes for all kinds of weather

Snacks and water

Make sure that the car you are driving is fitted with good winter tires.



Public Transportation

The most popular way to get around in Iceland is by car, there are no trains in Iceland so the other options are the buses, flights, taxi or private drivers. The main road in Iceland is called Hringvegurinn or the Ring Road and lies along the coast around the island, except for the Westfjords. It is usually no problem driving the Ring Road and other roads during the summer but the winter months can be more difficult because of the weather.

Public bus - Strætó

Apart from the car, buses are probably the second most popular way to get around in Iceland. The public buses in Iceland are called Strætó and you will recognize them by the yellow color. If you are staying in Reykjavík you can buy a 1-3 day city pass. Strætó also travels to the main places around the country and you can check out their schedule [HERE](#). The only downside to taking the bus in Iceland is that it's quite expensive.

During the summer months (June - mid September), Strætó runs to all major places in Iceland but the service may be limited in the winter due to weather.

Bus companies

There are several bus companies in Iceland that offer day tours to many popular tourist attractions both during the summer and winter.

During the summer (June - mid September) few bus companies run their own bus network around the country, including the highland. You can board the buses at any time on the route and buy the ticket online or when boarding the bus. Another way is to buy a bus passport, each passport offers different routes and different places to explore. The passports work as a single ticket for that particular route. Either way offers more flexibility and freedom to your stay in Iceland.

Ferries

Ferries are popular to travel between some of the islands around Iceland, including the Westman Islands (Vestmannaeyjar) in the south, Grímsey Island in the north and Flatey Island in the West. It is also possible to take a ferry from Stykkishólmur on the Snæfellsnes peninsula in the West to the Westfjords. The schedule for the ferries differ between winter and summer and there are usually more trips during the summer months (June-August).

Taxi

It is of course possible to take a taxi anywhere you want in Iceland but it is very expensive and we recommend using a rental car or buses instead. The taxis have a yellow taxi sign on the top and if you need one you have to call and order. But there are usually taxis in line at the airport, outside bus stations and downtown that you can take. The taxi runs by the meter and you can pay with cash or credit cards. There is no Uber or Lyft in Iceland.

Private drivers

Many companies offer private tours all over the country where you have your own driver and car. With a private driver you have more flexibility and you can adjust the trip according to your needs and wishes. We can help you find the perfect tour for you whether you're traveling on a budget or wish to travel with more luxury. For more information give us a call or send us an email.



Domestic flights

Flying is a great way to get around in Iceland especially during the winter when the roads are sometimes impassable due to weather. The Icelandic flight network is large but it is also quite expensive, so keep that in mind. The main airport for domestic flights in Iceland is Reykjavík Airport and from there you can catch a flight to numerous of destination in Iceland. The airlines that offer scheduled flights from Reykjavík Airport are Air Iceland Connect and Eagle Air.

Air Iceland Connect destinations: Reykjavík, Akureyri, Egilsstaðir, Ísafjörður, Keflavík, Grímsey, Vopnafjörður, Þorshöfn. They also fly to Greenland and Faroe Islands.

Eagle Air destinations: Vestmannaeyjar, Höfn, Husavík, Bíldudalur, Gjógur and Saudarkrokur.

Airport shuttles

The Flybus in Keflavík International Airport leaves every 35-40 minutes after arrival of each flight. You can either take the bus to the BSÍ bus terminal or to your hotel in Reykjavík. The trip to Reykjavík takes approximately 45 minutes.



Phone & Internet

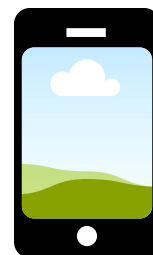
Mobile and internet service (3G/4G coverage) is usually very good in Iceland and mobile phones work in all major towns and popular routes around the country. The service can be limited in some rural and wilderness areas.

There are three main phone networks in Iceland: **Síminn, Vodafone and Nova**. All these companies offer prepaid SIM card and if you want to stay connected to the internet and phone services while traveling in Iceland we recommend that you purchase a plan from one of those companies. The SIM cards can be purchased at the company's stores around Iceland, Keflavik Airport, online and most gas station and convenience stores around Iceland. If you run out of data it is easy and simple to refill your prepaid service online.

The country code is 354 plus the seven digit number.

Free WiFi

Most cafés, restaurants, bars, hotels and guesthouses offer free Wifi around Iceland. If you don't have a prepaid SIM card it should not be a problem finding internet connection. We still recommend buying a SIM cards when traveling in Iceland for your own safety.





Book your adventure

Fun Iceland is a fully licensed **Travel Agency by the Icelandic Tourist Board**. We want to make your stay in Iceland enjoyable and fun! We provide a wide range of services and information about Iceland available all year round. We aim to provide expert and useful information to customers, personal service and high quality trips. Whether you are travelling solo, in a group, on a family vacation or with friends, Fun Iceland offers authentic and affordable service so you can make the most of your stay in Iceland.

Why choose us?

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