

HIKING ICELAND—ISLAND OF FIRE & ICE**

June 22 – July 1 * 10 DAYS

DAY 1: ARRIVE REYKJAVÍK

Reykjavík Nordic Capital Walk 10 km, rated 2

After an early arrival at Keflavík Airport (flight not included), your Walking Adventure on the Island of Fire & Ice begins with breakfast in Reykjavík. A guided walk through the historic district of this northernmost capital on the planet provides a thought-provoking look at a culture that has endured a multitude of challenges in its 1200-year history.

DAY 2: ACTIVITIES FROM REYKJAVÍK

Pingvellir Parliaments and Plates Walk 10 km, rated 2+/3

Iceland's renowned Golden Circle Tour brings us to Pingvellir, the country's oldest national park. We'll walk from the Lögberg, traditional meeting point of the Alþing, the Icelandic Viking parliament established in A.D. 930, and continue from North America to Europe across the rift zone that marks the junction of these two tectonic plates. Next on our route are stops at Geysir, the cluster of geysers that gave their name to this geological phenomenon, and Gullfoss, arguably the most spectacular of Iceland's many beautiful waterfalls.

DAY 3: REYKJAVÍK—LAKE MÝVATN

After breakfast in Reykjavík, we'll depart by plane for the northern reaches of Iceland and the modern little town of Akureyri on the shores of the Eyja Fjord. From Akureyri, we continue north in search of whales. Though whale activity can never be predicted, the odds are good that we'll encounter humpbacks, minke whales and dolphins on our cruise from the port of Husavik. We'll leave Husavik for Lake Mývatn, stopping en route at pounding Goðafoss (Waterfall of the Gods), one of several impressive falls we'll experience together.

DAY 4: ACTIVITIES IN LAKE MÝVATN AREA

Dimmuborgir Black Lava Castles Walk 10 km, rated 3+

Lake Mývatn is a geological wonderland brimming with geothermal and volcanic delights. From our hotel amongst a forest of pseudo-craters, we'll depart by bus for our walk at nearby Dimmuborgir, a convoluted labyrinth of "black castles"—oddly shaped pillars and crags created 2000 years ago by trapped lava flows. After stopping at the hot mud pots of Námafjall, we'll return to the hotel.

DAY 5: LAKE MÝVATN – BREIÐDALSVÍK

We'll explore Josulsargljúfur National Park this morning, with a visit to Dettifoss, the largest waterfall in Europe. The afternoon drive takes us across the island's interior, a mesmerizing volcanic wasteland, and on to the rugged fjord country and dramatically isolated farmland of east Iceland.

DAY 6: BREIÐDALSVÍK—SMYRLABJORG

Djúpivogur Seascapes and Seabirds Walk 10 km, rated 3+

An hour south along the coast lies the quiet fishing village of Djúpivogur, an unlikely venue for one of the most intriguing days of our Adventure. A 45-minute cruise offshore in the North Atlantic, the now deserted island of Papey was once farmed by several generations of Norwegian Vikings and Icelanders. Today it is home to a lighthouse, the oldest and smallest wooden church in Iceland, and a thriving population of seabirds, including the comical little puffin. Due to the size of the boat, we'll alternate our visit between two groups. While one group explores the island, the other will participate in a stimulating hike along the rocky headlands and coves near Djúpivogur, with outstanding opportunities to enjoy dramatic seascapes and a diverse population of sea birds.

DAY 7: SMYRLABJORG—HÖFÐABREKKA

Skaptafell Rivers of Ice Walk 10 km, rated 2+/3

First stop today is at Jökulsárlón Lagoon, a 600 foot deep river lagoon cluttered with icebergs calved from the glacier Breiðamerkurjökull. A short cruise will take us even closer to these floating crystal pyramids. Our walk venue for today is a forested hillside resisting the force of two huge flanking glaciers flowing down from the massive Vatnajökull ice field. The route passes lovely Svartifoss (black waterfall), visits a lonely group of deserted 19th century farm buildings. Following a short coach ride, part two of the walk explores an Icelandic mosaic hiking above a beautiful gorge and into a remote lagoon feed by a glacial waterfall.

DAY 8: ACTIVITIES FROM HÖFÐABREKKA

Höfðabrekka Moonscapes and Meadows Walk 10 km, rated 2+/3

This morning's walk starts on a hillside overlooking an extinct volcano with a photogenic braided river extending over the plain far below. The trail takes us through a fascinating landscape of soft green hills, bizarre lava and sandstone shapes, and panoramic vistas out over the Atlantic. After a break for lunch in the tiny community of Vik, we'll explore a section of the Icelandic coast offering stunning rock formations, a lovely black sand beach, and a bevy of coastal bird life.

Day 9: HÖFÐABREKKA – HEKLA

From Höfðabrekka, we'll stop at the homey Skógar Folk Museum for a memorable visit with its elderly founder and curator, busily demonstrating and animating a wide collection of rural Icelandic memorabilia. Two more spectacular waterfall visits will conclude another day exploring the delightful coast of southeast Iceland. Later tonight, we'll enjoy a special Farewell Dinner as we reminisce about our adventures together

DAY 10: HEKLA—HOMETOWN, USA

Join us on an excursion to the Blue Lagoon this morning (admission not included). This turquoise-tinted thermal pool, set amongst the contrasting grays of the Reykjanes lava flows, is the perfect place to relax in preparation for a trans-Atlantic flight. Early this afternoon, we'll depart for the Keflavík Airport and our return to the USA, reluctant to leave, but enriched by the history, culture, and scenery of unforgettable Iceland!

*****This document is a draft. Changes may occur prior to publishing the final itinerary, which will include confirmed dates and pricing.***