

# Iceland Northern Lights

February 19 – 24, 2024 • 6 Days • \$3190

## Optional Snæfellsnes Peninsula

February 24 – 26, 2024 • Days • \$1175

Unlike our summer Icelandic adventures, in which the color *green* figures prominently, this February adventure features wintry white and hopefully splashes of night-time color under the Aurora Borealis.

Much of this ice-rich island sits atop smoking volcanoes lined up over the fractious junction of the Eurasian and North American tectonic plates. Norwegian Vikings were the first to settle here in the 9th century. Iceland, therefore, offers the rare opportunity to witness the intriguing development of a human culture in a land devoid of an indigenous race. We use this winter walking program to connect Iceland's fascinating history, present-day culture, and some of the most eye-popping natural wonders on the planet.

[Book Now Contact Us](#)

[Tour Type: Classic Curated, High Adventure](#)

## Iceland Northern Lights

### Including:

- Airport to hotel group transfers on first and last day
- All land travel as outlined
- Tourist-class or better hotel accommodations
- 9 meals: All breakfasts and 4 dinners as denoted (BD)
- 4 walks as listed (4 IVV walk stamps)
- Fees for IVV walking credit (sanctioning applied for)
- All tipping for local guides and coach drivers
- Cultural and historical expertise of our national guide throughout
- WAI guide service throughout (2 guides)
- Northern Lights lectures and viewing (when possible) with guide
- Pricing is based on double occupancy. A limited number of single rooms are available for a supplement of \$615

### Activities/Visits to:

- Reykjavík
- Skógafoss waterfall
- Skógar Folk Museum
- Jökulsárlón Lagoon
- Skaftafell National Park
- Geysir geothermal area

- Friðheimar geothermal greenhouse and horse stables
- Gullfoss waterfall
- Þingvellir National Park
- Plus more fun stops and amazing sights than we can list!

#### **Optional Excursion:**

- Skaftafell Glacier Walk (Day 4)

## **SNÆFELLSNES PENINSULA EXTENSION**

#### **Included:**

- Hotel to airport group transfer on last day
- All land travel as outlined
- Tourist-class or better hotel accommodations
- 5 meals: All breakfasts, 1 lunch, and 2 dinners as denoted (BLD)
- 2 walks as listed (2 IVV walk stamps)
- Fees for IVV walking credit (sanctioning applied for)
- All tipping for local guides and coach drivers
- Cultural and historical expertise of our national guide throughout
- WAI guide service throughout (2 guides)
- Northern Lights lectures and viewing (when possible) with guide
- Pricing is based on double occupancy. A limited number of single rooms are available for a supplement of \$195

#### **Activities/Visits to:**

- Grábrók volcanic crater
- Hraunfossar lava falls
- Borgarnes Settlement Center
- Bjarnarhöfn Shark Museum
- Reykjanes Peninsula tour
- Kirkjufell waterfall and mountain
- Viking Sushi Cruise from Stykkishólmur

#### **Optional Excursion:**

- Langjökull Into the Glacier Experience (Day 1)

- [Book Now](#)
- [360.260.9393](#)
- [Email Us](#)



## Adventure Pace

**Tour Pace:** 1 2 3 4 5

**Walk Challenge:** 1 2 3 4 5

[About Adventure Pace](#)

## Adventure Pace

How much Adventure do you want? Here are a few features to help gauge the following factors on each tour.

**Tour Pace:** On a scale of 1 (slowest pace) to 5 (fastest pace), we've rated the following factors: number of 1-night hotels; driving miles per day; fullness of schedule; mid-tour airline flights; high elevation setting; and average amount of walking per day.

**Walk Challenge:** This number represents an average walk difficulty rating for the tour using a scale of 1 (easiest) to 5 (hardest).

[Book Now Contact Us](#)

## Important Info



### Group Size

24 traveler maximum



### **Accommodations**

Strategically located Tourist Class hotels or better



### **Meals**

Breakfasts included with a selection of lunches and dinners. Letters BLD indicate which meals are included.



### **Airfare**

Not included. Travelers will be met at the official start/finish point, Iceland's Keflavík International Airport.



### **Transportation**

Included. A full-size bus is used for our Iceland tour.



### **Traveler Age**

Our travelers usually range from 50-75 years of age. All ages welcome!

## **Your Guides**



**Scott Isom** (left) has had a passion for the outdoors ever since his childhood days spent exploring the waterfalls and outstanding hiking trails of the Columbia River Gorge with his family.

Scott has led tours on all 7 continents and is one of WAI's busiest guides and on-site Adventure planners.

**Tim Friesen** has been guiding for Walking Adventures since 2003, most often leading summertime adventures in Europe due to his long career as a high school music teacher in Molalla, Oregon.

Tim recently retired from teaching music but is still occasionally known to burst into song on the trail!

## Itinerary

*Click on each day to reveal more details. (BLD) refers to meals included - Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner.*

## ICELAND NORTHERN LIGHTS

### [DAY 1~February 19: Arrive Reykjavík, Iceland \(D\)](#)

*Walk #1: Reykjavík Nordic Capital ~ 8 km, rated 1B*

Upon arrival into Keflavík International Airport (KEF), your transfer to our downtown Reykjavík hotel will be provided. Because flights arrive in Iceland in the early morning, our first group activity is a Welcome Orientation at the hotel at 11 am.

Following a break for lunch, we meet our local guide for this Adventure and enjoy a walking tour through old Reykjavík, the planet's northernmost capital. After a thought-provoking look at a culture that has endured a multitude of challenges in its 1200-year history, we'll enjoy this evening's welcome dinner together, anticipating our upcoming winter adventure that will hopefully be filled with the ethereal hues of the Northern Lights!

### [DAY 2~February 20: Reykjavík — Skaftafell \(BD\)](#)

*Walk #2: Skógafoss Waterfall ~ 3 km, rated 2D*

Today we leave the capital city of Reykjavík and travel along the gorgeous south coast of Iceland. In a land full of waterfalls, glaciers, and active volcanoes, we get our first taste of adventure on a brief visit to the iconic cascade of Seljalandsfoss ("foss" means "waterfall" in Icelandic).

Further east we pass by the occasionally rumbling volcano of Eyjafjallajökull on our way to one of Iceland's finest folk museums. The Skógar Museum contains an outstanding collection of farm and domestic artifacts from Iceland's past and several turf-built houses.

Nearby, our first wintry walk takes place at Skógafoss waterfall, at 62 meters high one of the most impressive waterfalls in the country. In the afternoon we depart for our hotel in the remote darkness bordering Vatnajökull National Park, ideal for glimpsing the Northern Lights.

### [DAY 3~February 21: Activities from Skaftafell \(BD\)](#)

*Walk #3: Svartifoss Waterfall ~ 5 km, rated 3C*

*Walk #4: Skaftafell ~ 4 km, rated 1C*

First stop today is at Jökulsárlón, a 600-foot deep river lagoon crowded with icebergs calved from the glacier Breiðamerkurjökull. Nearby these floating crystal pyramids, where we might see seals swimming, is a black sand beach often littered with glistening chunks of glacial ice.

In the afternoon at Skaftafell National Park, today's first featured trail explores a forested hillside resisting the force of two gargantuan glaciers flowing down from the massive Vatnajökull ice field. The trail passes lovely Svartifoss (black waterfall) and a lonely group of



deserted 19th century farm buildings.

Our second stroll of the day takes us on an easy trail to the glacial snout and lagoon fronting Skaftafellsjökull ("jökull" means "glacier" in Icelandic). Following a short coach ride, we return to our hotel near Vatnajökull National Park for a group dinner and another evening attempt at viewing the Aurora Borealis!

#### [DAY 4~February 22: Skaftafell — Dyrhólaey \(BD\)](#)

This morning offers a one-of-a-kind optional experience of walking on the surreal surface of a glacier in Vatnajökull National Park. This Blue Ice guided adventure on a crystalline glacier surface involves the use of crampons and ice axe but is very safe and relatively easy. Strolling through a natural Eden of periwinkle blue ice ridges, deep crevasses and intricately formed ice sculptures, is a breathtaking experience. Estimated price: \$145

Those not participating in the Skaftafell Glacier Optional Experience can enjoy a slower start to the morning and the possibility of a short bonus walk in Skaftafell before lunch.

In the afternoon we depart Skaftafell by bus and stroll on a black lava beach along bird cliffs at Reynisfjara in South Iceland. We also witness the rocky elevated vantage point of the Dyrhólaey Lighthouse, complete with views of a lovely sea arch, before retiring to our nearby hotel for dinner and another watch for the brilliant Northern Lights.

#### [DAY 5~February 23: Dyrhólaey — Reykjavík \(B\)](#)

*Walk #5: Þingvellir Viking Parliament ~ 4 km, rated 1C*

We venture toward the renowned Golden Circle of Iceland this morning, stopping first at the Friðheimar geothermal greenhouse and stables for a sampling of tomato soup and a look at the country's famous Icelandic horses.

Continuing our circuit, we gaze in wonder at Geysir, the cluster of geysers that gave their name to this geological phenomenon. Following lunch, the fun continues with a visit to sparkling Gullfoss, arguably the most spectacular waterfall in the country!

Our last stop along the Golden Circle comes at Þingvellir, Iceland's oldest national park and site of our featured walk for the day. Our route takes us from North America towards Europe as we cross the easily identifiable rift zone marking the tumultuous meeting of these two tectonic plates. Our destination is the Lögberg, medieval meeting point of the Alþing, the Icelandic Viking parliament established in A.D. 930.

Our winter wonderland day concludes in Reykjavík, where you are free to enjoy dinner on your own, or with new walking pals, near our downtown hotel.

#### [DAY 6~February 24: Reykjavík — Home \(B\)](#)

Our Icelandic Northern Lights Adventure comes to an end this morning. Travelers not

continuing on the Snaefellsnes Peninsula Extension say a reluctant farewell to walking friends made over the past few days amidst the wintry world of Iceland.

Enjoy additional time exploring Reykjavík before your flight home. Included transfer vouchers will be provided for you to arrange your transportation to the airport at a time that is convenient.

## **SNÆFELLSNES PENINSULA OPTIONAL EXTENSION**

### [DAY 1~February 24: Reykjavík — Borgarnes \(D\)](#)

*Walk #1: Grábrók & Hraunfossar Stroll ~ 3 km, rated 2C*

Journeying north from Reykjavík, we dive into the history of Borgarfjörður, known as the Saga Valley because of its many important historical events. The first part of today's walk explores the distinctive Grábrók volcanic crater. A short drive up the valley takes us to Hraunfossar to marvel at a series of waterfalls that pour from beneath a wide lava field.

This afternoon, consider joining us on an optional "Into the Glacier" adventure at Langjökull, Iceland's second largest glacier. Riding modified glacier vehicles from Húsafell, this well-reviewed 3-4 hour tour traverses glistening white slopes, taking you deep inside man-made ice tunnels leading to the blue heart of a glacier. ~Estimated price: \$250

We spend the first of two nights near Borgarnes in West Iceland, where entrance to the fascinating and educational Borgarnes Settlement Center is included. Following dinner at our hotel, prepare for more potential sightings of the Aurora Borealis in the night sky.

### [DAY 2~February 25: Activities from Borgarnes \(BLD\)](#)

*Walk #2: Kirkjufell ~ 4 km, rated 2C*

The Snæfellsnes Peninsula, "the peninsula of the snowy mountain," juts out from Iceland's west coast like a long arm with a clenched fist at its tip; in many ways it is a microcosm of the whole island. A rugged mountain chain runs its length and a uniquely Icelandic "treat" awaits us at Bjarnarhöfn, where the specialty is Hákarl—fermented shark.

Next, we travel to the charming fishing town of Stykkishólmur for a Viking sushi cruise in the Breiðafjörður fjord.

After sampling a few of the fresh fruits of the sea (i.e. raw) on board our ship, we visit the fishing village of Grundarfjörður, a place with an impressive coastline and mountains, lakes and waterfalls behind the village.

Jutting out into the bay rises one of the most photographed mountains in Iceland, Kirkjufell, our featured walk of the day.



Back in Borgarnes, we savor a final dinner together and hope the mesmerizing hues of the Northern Lights grace us with their presence one last time!

### [DAY 3~February 26: Borgarnes — Home \(B\)](#)

Our final morning in Iceland takes us across the Reykjanes (smoky) Peninsula. Viking settlers used this name to describe venting geothermal steam they mistook for smoke. Amidst the rugged moonscape, we stop to admire geothermal wonders along with dramatic seaside vistas at Reykjanestá, the most southwestern tip of Iceland.

The aptly-named Bridge Between the Continents, a simple footbridge, gives us one more chance to straddle the tectonic plates of Eurasia and North America. Following lunch, a short drive brings us to the airport, and flights back to North America. We leave enriched by the history, culture, and scenery of unforgettable Iceland!

## Before You Book

*Click on each heading for more details.*

### [How Do I Lock in My Place on This Adventure?](#)

To register, a **non-refundable** \$300 deposit is required to hold your spot. A final payment is due 90 days before departure and is **non-refundable** after the due date. You will receive a prompt email from us 2 to 3 weeks in advance.

Once this tour has a viable number of participants, an “Adventure Advice” email will be sent with critical information on flight arrangements as well as important steps to take in the months before your trip. Please do not buy your airline tickets until you review this Adventure Advice email.

Please follow this link to read our full [General Tour Conditions](#).

### [What is a Classic Curated Tour?](#)

With help from local experts and walking guides, these itineraries are hand-crafted with the help of trusted in-country partners to tailor itineraries to WAI specifications.

When planning Classic Curated Tours, our objective is to capture the essence of a destination—the history, culture, and natural wonders unique to that part of the world. We then build activities and walks that take us inside these characteristics.

Yes, these tours are educational, but they are also interactive and immersive; walking gets us off the bus and penetrates local cultures to not only see but touch, smell, and feel these special spaces.

Along the way, local walking guides amplify the experience by sharing insights into the

magic of that particular location.

### What is a High Adventure Tour?

“High Adventure” is a tag we add to tours to warn travelers of possible additional challenges. These challenges could stem from a variety of sources including:

- A high percentage of 1-night hotels
- More time driving than usual or challenging traffic settings (e.g. India)
- Walks routes that are more challenging on average (e.g. Appalachian Trail, Swiss & French Alps)
- More walking per day than usual (e.g. Hiking the Camino de Santiago)
- Walks and/or travel at high altitude (e.g. Peru; Colorado)
- A greater number of mid-tour flights (e.g. Chile)
- Cultural factors that can be stressors (lack of public toilets; extra caution required regarding food and gastro-intestinal challenges – e.g. India, Hiking the Camino de Santiago)

### Why is Iceland considered “high adventure”?

Though 11% of Iceland is covered in ice, its nickname “Island of Fire & Ice” refers to epic volcanic activity. Volcanic eruptions have characterized life in Iceland for all human history, and often devastated hardy Viking settlements. The result is a landscape that is mesmerizing for its blend of moonscape lava flows, often covered by layers of moss that range from green to gray depending on the season. Our trails sometimes pass through lava, creating uneven and unyielding terrain. For this reason, though hills and elevation gain are, on average, not significant, many of our walks could more accurately be described as “hikes”!

This is especially the case during the winter conditions which we experience on our Northern Lights Adventure, where snow and ice may be added to the uneven volcanic footing. For this reason, we recommend warm hiking boots, walking sticks, and the use of portable crampons (traction devices that can be strapped to your hiking boots) to help you safely enjoy the gorgeous Icelandic landscape during our winter escapades. Previous groups have found that portable crampons combined with walking sticks provide a good deal of stability and support in navigating the amazing winter Icelandic landscape. More advice on specific gear to bring and how to prepare for this unique adventure will come later in our Travel Tips memo.

Be aware that participation in the Icelandic Northern Lights Adventure requires a higher level of “adventure readiness” than most of our tours due to sometimes challenging and icy terrain and due to Iceland’s occasionally moody winter weather.

The rewards of experiencing Iceland’s magical winter landscape and of seeing the Northern Lights are worth the preparation and effort, but travelers should read the itinerary and **Before You Book** sections carefully before committing to a this high adventure tour.

### Walk Ratings

We generally walk at a pace of 2 to 3 miles per hour. Walks that are oriented more towards education may take longer due to stops for guide commentary. Nature walks, on the other hand, generally continue at a steadier pace because we're stopping less to talk. In most cases, we are not "strolling." We are walking at a relaxed but steady pace. Your experience will be significantly affected by your level of physical fitness. If not walking regularly at home, we strongly recommend that you make a priority of "training" beforehand to both enjoy the trip and avoid medical issues due to overexertion.

If you have questions about your ability to participate, please contact our office at [fun@walkingadventures.com](mailto:fun@walkingadventures.com).

We have adopted a walk difficulty rating system which contains a numeric indicator for trail incline and an alpha indicator for trail terrain. The explanation for this system is presented on the table below:

### **INCLINE**

1. Minimal hills or stair climbing. Cumulative elevation gain: <200 feet.
2. Some moderate hills and stair climbing. Cumulative elevation gain: 200-1000 feet.
3. Some significant hill or stair climbing. Cumulative elevation gain: 1000-2000 feet.

### **TERRAIN**

- A. Almost entirely on pavement.
- B. A significant part of the route is on well-groomed trails with very few obstacles.
- C. A significant part of the route is on somewhat difficult terrain (rocky / rooted paths or soft sand).

### [How Likely am I to See the Northern Lights?](#)

Our Icelandic Northern Lights Adventure is designed to maximize your chances of seeing the elusive Aurora Borealis, with three evenings in the countryside (away from Reykjavík) on the main tour and two additional days in the countryside on the Snæfellsnes Peninsula Extension. If participating in both the main tour and the extension, the average success rate of seeing the Northern Lights is about 85% - 95%. WAI planners saw them on three nights of their December 2017 planning trip. Still, the Northern Lights are an unpredictable natural phenomenon and thus sightings can't be guaranteed.

The Northern Lights are typically seen in the northern hemisphere from September through April but are only visible when the sky is clear and free of clouds. Like many natural wonders, the Northern Lights are ephemeral—they may be visible, they may appear for a bit and then be gone (it's not a TV show that you can just turn on and off). But it is worth the patience to search for them. As a bonus, our countryside hotels offer a Northern Lights wake up call for guests that register for that service.

Because the Northern Lights are a winter event, you need to be prepared to wait outside

while looking for them. It is best to dress very warmly, in layers, with good footwear, gloves, hat and whatever else will make you comfortable while you wait patiently for this truly outstanding light show. We also recommend using a flashlight for your night excursions and to aid operating your camera in the darkness, as well as the use of a tripod if you plan on taking pictures of the Aurora Borealis.

### [How Is Airfare Arranged?](#)

The official start and finish point for this Adventure is Iceland's Keflavík International Airport (airport code KEF). Travelers will be met upon arrival and transferred to our hotel in Reykjavik.

We recommend that you contact Laura Pfahler, the travel agent we work with, to help book your flight arrangements.

Details about flight arrangements and recommended travel agent contact information will be provided by email after you register for the Adventure. Please do not book your airfare prior to receiving these flight details from us!

- Laura Pfahler: 503.434.6401 or [llp@wtpdx.com](mailto:llp@wtpdx.com)

### [Travel Insurance](#)

WAI believes strongly in the importance of travel insurance for financial and medical protection from any number of unforeseen circumstances that can arise before departure or during your Adventure. Many travel insurance providers are available for you to consider. Laura Pfahler and Sharon Mitchell of World Travel Inc. are travel agents who provides air travel and insurance services to many WAI travelers.

Laura Pfahler: 503-434-6401 or [llp@wtpdx.com](mailto:llp@wtpdx.com)

Sharon Mitchell: 971-261-2091 or [smitchell@wtpdx.com](mailto:smitchell@wtpdx.com)

Check out [Insurance Tips](#) from World Travel for a short introduction to travel insurance. (NOTE: WAI receives no commission or financial remuneration from World Travel Inc.).

Be aware that some travel insurance policies contain time-sensitive provisions (i.e. some benefits, such as coverage of pre-existing conditions, are available only if the policy is purchased within a certain number of days of the purchase of the travel package). In addition, remember that airfare is not covered by any travel insurance policy you may have purchased for the tour.

As always, do some shopping to ensure you are getting the best value. Using the [SquareMouth.com](#) website can be a good way to compare pricing.

Other options include:

- Allianz

- Betins
- Travel Guard
- Travel Insured International

WAI bears no responsibility for travel insurance benefits advertised by various credit card companies. If you are relying on this type of benefit for insurance, we advise you to verify coverage types and limits and that your purchase does in fact qualify you for this insurance.

*NOTE: We suggest purchasing from a reputable, well-established insurance company (avoid buying insurance from an unknown company found only online). Travelers interested in purchasing “cancel for any reason” insurance coverage should be careful to check pricing and terms BEFORE they register for a tour. Recent changes in the international travel landscape has caused changes in the policies of some insurance companies, and made the purchase of this particular type of policy even more time-sensitive.*

### [What if WAI Cancels the Tour](#)

Walking Adventures International reserves the right to cancel this tour departure with fewer than 12 participants, in which case registered participants will receive a 100% refund of payments received.

This refund policy contains one exclusion. Many suppliers require non-refundable deposits as a condition of booking services. Though it is rare, unforeseen circumstances can force us to cancel a tour. In cases where supplier’s non-refundable policies are imposed, WAI attempts to retrieve as much of these deposits as possible but cannot guarantee a 100% refund. In cases where full refunds cannot be obtained for a cancelled tour, we will do our best to transfer unrefunded money as traveler credits to be applied to a future tour to that destination.

### [Wellness Policies for This Tour](#)

As of the date of this writing (June 14, 2023) Iceland has dropped all COVID-19-related restrictions.

WAI has also relaxed our policies and currently requires no mitigation procedures ([WAI Wellness on Tour Policy](#)).

Our approach to wellness on tour has traditionally been to encourage travelers to:

- Focus on health before the tour so you start healthy.
- Pace yourself while on tour; travel is inherently stimulating and can produce adrenalin boosts that mask energy drain. Guard your energy reserves and consider the length of the trip and whether to opt out of some activities and/or walks.
- Be self-aware. If you feel yourself tiring or feel a bug coming on, take precautions to block it (e.g. extra rest, extra doses of vitamin C, etc).
- If you feel a bug coming on or if you take ill, distance yourself from others when possible.

- If you feel ill, isolate yourself towards the back of the bus and away from others

### What Happens Next?

Soon after registration, an “Adventure Advice” email will be sent with critical information on flight arrangements as well as important steps to take in the months before your trip. Please do not buy your airline tickets until you review this Adventure Advice email.

A final payment is due 90 days before departure (November 21, 2023) and is non-refundable after the due date. You will receive a prompt email from us a week or two in advance. Please see our [General Tour Conditions](#) for the full terms and conditions for participation in this Adventure.

Around 2-3 weeks before departure, you will receive a final email packet with details of the program, including hotel names and contact information, a list of fellow travelers, and a more detailed daily schedule.

We look forward to exploring this exotic top-of-the-world wintertime destination with you !