



A&K GUIDE

HOW TO SELL ICELAND

*A land of volcanoes, waterfalls, geysers
and black-sand beaches*



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The night sky offers the greatest show on Earth: the northern lights



THE NORTHERN LIGHTS DANCE IN THE SKY NEAR REYKJAVÍK

CULTURE

Reykjavík Icelandic adventure should begin in the world's most northerly capital. This compact city is easy to explore and is packed with cool cafés and galleries. Head to the Old Harbour for the Harpa concert hall. Learn about the country's history with a visit to the National Museum. Make a photographic pilgrimage to Hallgrímskirkja, the tallest and largest church in the city.

Stay: Hotel Borg is a landmark building in the heart of Reykjavík. The 99 rooms effortlessly combine Art Deco elegance with modern touches. The Borg restaurant serves delicious Nordic cuisine and is regarded as one of the best in the city.

Akureyri Located only 30km from the Arctic Circle, Iceland's second city is set in the stunning Eyjafjörður fjord. Just like the capital, the city's skyline is dominated by Akureyrarkirkja church, by Guðjón Samuélsson and the cityscape is full of cool cafés, bars, geothermal pools and museums.

NATURE

The Golden Circle This popular tourist trail takes in Thingvellir National Park, Geysir Geothermal Area and Gullfoss waterfall (all located within 100km of the capital). If travelled in a circuit, the drive is approximately 300km. Thingvellir is a UNESCO World Heritage Site and was home to the Althing – an open-air assembly representing the whole of Iceland. This parliament was established in 930 and continued to convene until 1798. The Geysir area is located within the Haukadalur Valley. Located here are Great Geysir, which only occasionally goes off, and Strokkur, which erupts every 10 minutes and shoots water 20-40m into the air. The water of Gullfoss falls into two drops from a height of 32m. The falls – and its famous rainbows – are world-renowned.

Lake Thingvallavatn Clients can grab their gear and head to Lake Thingvallavatn to dive or snorkel in between the North American and Eurasian tectonic plates. The lake is glacially fed, and visibility is far-reaching. Enthusiasts will need an Open Water qualification to dive but anyone can snorkel in these super-clear waters. The most beautiful ravine in the

lake is Silfra, which is regularly voted one of the top ten dive sites in the world.

Thorsmörk Clients will love the vistas as they hike this breathtaking mountain ridge. The dramatic scenery of gorges and icy rivers is situated between Tindfjallajökull and Eyjafjallajökull glaciers. They'll marvel at the rainbow over Skógafoss, one of the biggest waterfalls in the country.

The South Shore View the spectacular waterfall, Seljalandsfoss on the South Shore. Walk behind the waterfall for an out of this world experience. Visit Eyjafjallajökull, a world-famous volcano that sleeps beneath a glacier. Its 2010 eruption made world news.

Jökulsárlón This glacially fed lagoon is 25sqkm and 260m-deep. Floating on its rolling surface are brilliant blue, white and grey (from volcanic ash) icebergs that have calved from Breidamerkurjökull glacier. Located right beside the Ring Road, between Höfn and Skaftafell, visit Jökulsárlón for seal spotting and iceberg idolatry. On nearby Diamond beach, icebergs rest like gems on the black sands.

Stay: Rangá Lodge. There are not many places in the world you can sit in an outdoor hot tub searching the skies for the northern lights. Rangá Lodge offers this unique experience and more. Located close to the Golden Circle, Jökulsárlón Glacier Lagoon and the South Shore – it's the perfect base for exploration.

RELAX

The Blue Lagoon Visitors love taking the mineral-rich waters of the Blue Lagoon geothermal spa. They languish in the pools, even during a light snowfall, and feel rejuvenated upon emerging. Located in the UNESCO Global Geopark, this area is a spectacle of fire and ice with its volcanic craters, blistered lava fields and glaciers.

Recommended A&K experience: VIP Blue Lagoon Access at the Retreat Hotel.

Stay: The Retreat is a new luxury hotel catering Blue Lagoon visitors. The hotel offers 62 rooms, decorated in a Scandi-style, which allow the view from the floor-to-ceiling windows to be the star of the show.

Landmannalaugar The Blue Lagoon may be Iceland's best-known geothermal bath but others

are dotted all over the country – there are 17 public pools in Reykjavík alone. Those wanting to take a memorable dip though should visit Landmannalaugar in the southern Highlands. Known as 'the People's Pools', Landmannalaugar is awash with handsome hot pools surrounded by multicoloured magma-made mountains and black lava fields.



FORCE OF NATURE - GULLFOSS



IN THE DRIVING SEAT

Unmissable Icelandic experiences:

- 4x4 ice-drive adventure
- Whale watching in Húsavík
- Celebrate the summer solstice in the land of the midnight sun at the Secret Solstice music festival
- Descend into Thrihnukagigur volcano
- Visit Hellisheidarvirkjun geothermal power plant
- Ride an Icelandic horse
- Explore inside Langjökull glacier
- Snowmobile on Langjökull
- Take a zodiac iceberg cruise
- Visit a replica Viking village at Stokksnes
- Have a super jeep experience in the Reykjanes peninsula

BEST TIME TO VISIT

<i>When</i>	<i>Why</i>
January	With short days and long nights, cosy accommodation is an essential if you're drawn to the remote regions of Iceland. Even in winter you can get out an experience the natural beauty that makes Iceland such an attractive destination. Explore the country's natural ice caves, or perhaps take a helicopter tour.
February	On the night of the Winter Lights Festival, Reykjavik's museums and swimming pools stay open long into the night, while all manner of light installation can be seen. Also in this month is the Food & Fun festival and the Sónar Reykjavik, which features international and local music acts in the harbour area of the city.
March	March is a good time to enjoy the many winter activities available – skiing, snowmobiling, dog sledding and ice hiking. Beer was once illegal in Iceland, and in March Icelanders celebrate the end of prohibition with vehemence. See the whole country explode in merriment when the sun sets. Visitors are come this month to witness the Iceland Winter Games. Head north to Akureyri, the winter sports capital, to watch.
April	As the days lengthen and the snow begins to melt, stunning expanses of greenery lay claim to the landscape. Get out into these peaceful scenes to visit huge puffin colonies and witness the arrival of thousands of migrating birds. Icelanders celebrate the first day of Viking summer with the Sumardagurinn Fyrsti festival. Throughout the country, parties and colourful street parades can be seen bringing cheer..
May	The lengthening days and spectacular birding opportunities carry on as wildflowers bring a dash of colour to the scenery. This is a good month for nature lovers, and summer prices have yet to take effect. May is the month of the Reykjavik Arts Festival. Across two weeks, culture vultures can indulge in theatre and film as well as many other artistic performances and expositions.
June	June brings beautiful weather, long days and an incredible amount of choice when it comes to entertainment. Whale-watching excursions yield sightings of some 11 species of whale in summer months, making this a good time to visit Iceland's whale-watching hot spots. On summer solstice, you can experience a night where the sun doesn't set in the north of the country.
July	Icelandic summers are incredible for those who love the outdoors, offering enticing hiking trails and a range of intriguing natural features. Meanwhile, there are a range of worthwhile festivals going on. Landsmót Hestamanna is week-long horse competition held in even-numbered years. Skálholt Summer Concerts, holds around 40 concerts and lectures in Skálholt Cathedral from July into August.
August	August is your last chance to see the puffins before they migrate, and whale sightings will become fewer in the coming months. Visit the Westman Islands Camping Festival in Heimaey where locals commemorate the day in 1874 when, due to weather, the town couldn't celebrate Iceland's constitution being established. Now thousands come to enjoy fireworks, drinking and live music.
September	Although September brings some warm and sunny days, some hotels and attractions close for the winter. Many highland roads close too, making it a little more difficult to travel throughout the country. However, autumn has a number of fantastic festivals. Experience the rural side of life here at the Réttir, which honours the tradition of the Autumn round up of wild-grazing sheep.
October	Temperatures cool while the nights begin to lengthen again. As the country prepares for winter, hot chocolates and woolly hats are necessities as you explore the snowy plains and bustling cities. October is a great month to see the aurora borealis light up the night sky. To get the best views, head far from any light pollution where the natural beauty of the scenery makes the perfecting backdrop for the lightshow.
November	As the nights become noticeably long and snow settles on the landscape, November is a good time to visit the Blue Lagoon. This geothermal spring makes for one of the most serene experiences, particularly on days with a light snow.
December	December sees the lowest light levels of the year, though there are enough light hours in the day to enjoy all the winter markets and Christmas celebrations. New Year's Eve in Iceland is no small affair. You'll see huge bonfires, fireworks, fantastic feasts and incredible parties as Icelanders dance the long night away.

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