Iceland: Reykjavík, Borgarfjord & Lake Mývatn

Air Package Itinerary

Step into a landscape unlike any other on a walking tour of Iceland showcasing the country's remote corners and hidden gems. Explore the volcanic Krafla region, where steam rises from the ground and ancient lava pillars twist towards the sky. Admire the deep blue of Lake Mývatn and indulge in a healing soak in the country's thermal waters. A secluded wilderness lodge and boutique accommodations provide everything you need, including trails that lead right from the front door and restaurants that boast meals of fresh, local fare. Trek past enchanting waterfalls and into lava caves as you travel from the capital of Reykjavík to scenic Akureyri, the "Capital of the North." This unforgettable hiking tour of Iceland takes you deep into the wild, untamed heart of this Nordic nation.

Highlights

Marvel at the otherworldly lava formations of Dimmuborgir, a vast landscape of dramatic, twisted pillars and arches located within walking distance of your hotel

Visit a family-run stable where you'll meet the distinctive Icelandic horse, a delightful, pony-sized animal with a unique gait and a friendly disposition

Savor the local, farm-to-table cuisine before retiring to your remote retreat – one of National Geographic's Unique Lodges of the World

Discover Iceland's fascinating history as told through a series of beautiful woodcuts, while visiting a warehouse-turned-museum in Borgarnes

Enjoy the quintessential experience of a soak in geothermal nature pools in a dramatic canyon setting

On all Guided Adventures you can count on ...

- Expert local guides to introduce you to the best of your destination.
- Gracious accommodations that are a clean, comfortable home away from home.
- Off-the-beaten-path places you'd never find on your own.
- Experts to handle all the details.
- A maximum of 18 fun-loving fellow travelers to share the journey.
- Flight + Tour Combos include plane tickets, airport car service, and pre- and post-tour accommodations.
- Delicious, authentic multi-course meals—virtually all are included.

Activity Level

This tour is one of our Guided - Full Walking Adventures, rated easy to moderate with challenging sections. Walks average 4 to 7 miles per day, with shorter and longer options on some days. The walking terrain is widely varied on well-worn heathland paths, grassy mountain trails, exposed trails with lava, rocks, and roots. Occasionally, there may be shallow river crossings. While this is not a mountain climbing tour, there are daily ascents and descents. The hills are short (usually 20-minute, gradual climbs), but the terrain may be rocky, with roots and/or loose gravel, and may be slippery when wet. Country Walkers provides walking poles because of the tricky footing on many of the trails.

DAY 1

Overnight Flight from USA to Reykjavík, Iceland

Begin your adventure by departing from a convenient gateway city in the United States or Canada. Spend the first night aloft.

DAY 2

Arrive in Reykjavík, Iceland

Upon arrival at Keflavík International Airport, after retrieving luggage and passing through customs, a Country Walkers representative holding a sign meets you as you exit the baggage-claim area. A small-group transfer is provided to your hotel in Reykjavík. The journey takes approximately 45 minutes. Upon arrival, you may store luggage in the event that your room is not ready. The remainder of the day is at leisure (no meals or activities included).

If you are going to be delayed meeting our transfer representative for more than 15 minutes due to delayed or lost luggage, please contact Allianz Global Assistance to advise of your delay, and they will contact our transfer service on your behalf. Our drivers are generally able to wait for up to 45 minutes from the time your flight lands, after which you would be responsible for your own transfer.

Please note: If you arrive early, and your hotel room is not available prior to the designated check-in time, you may store your luggage with the reception desk.

Accommodation: Canopy by Hilton, Reykjavík

DAY 3

Join your *Iceland: Reykjavík, Borgarfjord & Lake Mývatn* tour

Mt. Esja; 2-3 miles, easy to moderate. Afternoon: Hraunfossar and Barnafoss waterfalls and canyon baths; 1-2 miles, easy to moderate

Breakfast is included at your hotel. Your guide(s) will meet you at the Canopy by Hilton Hotel (Reykjavík Konsulat Hotel for September 3 tour only), Reykjavík at 8:30 a.m. in the lobby. Your guide(s) will be wearing a Country Walkers shirt. Please be dressed for walking.

After breakfast, join your guide and transfer approximately 30 minutes north of Reykjavík to begin your first hike, a trail on Mt. Esja. This easy forest path slopes upward through fields of colorful wildflowers and shrubs, offering expansive views of lush valleys and soaring mountain peaks in the distance. Continue on to the Settlement Center in Borgarnes, where a buffet lunch of freshly made soups, salads, pasta, and homemade bread awaits. After your meal, visit the Settlement Center's exhibits, learning about of one of Iceland's most famous settlers, poet-warrior Egill Skallagrimsson.

Depart the Settlement Center, and make your way (via a 1-hour transfer) to picturesque Hraunfossar (Lava Falls), where you admire the idyllic beauty of its many watery streams cascading over a towering shelf of hardened lava. Walk to the nearby Barnafoss, (Children's Waterfall), a more dramatic series of twisting rapids.

Continue on to your final destination of the day, and the magical landscape that is Húsafell—a tiny village surrounded by glaciers, lava caves, and of course, geothermal pools. After checking in to your hotel, depart for a walk to the nearby environmentally sustainable nature baths, located in a secluded private canyon about an hour walk from the hotel. Enjoy the quintessential Icelandic experience of soaking and relaxing, while nestled in a scenic spot with stunning views of the surrounding waterfalls within the canyon.
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Returning to your accommodation, you'll enjoy a welcome cocktail before dinner in your hotel's acclaimed restaurant. On the menu of high-quality, seasonal offerings may be a shellfish soup of langoustine, scallop and blue mussel, fresh fish, or perhaps leg of lamb with seasonal veggies. End your meal with a sugary concoction such as warm chocolate cake with caramel, raspberries and raspberry ice cream, or skyr with white chocolate ganache, licorice ice cream, and roasted chocolate and rhubarb.

After dinner, with daylight lingering well into the night (during the summer months), you may choose to go for a peaceful evening stroll along a path that takes you past some of Húsafells' historic sites and to scenic Bæjargil Ravine.

Accommodation: Hotel Húsafell

DAY 4

Borgarfjord

4 miles, easy to moderate, 550-ft. elevation gain and loss. Afternoon options: Víðgelmir lava cave tour or riverside walk; 3 miles, easy

Linger over coffee and breakfast this morning as you admire the views through floor-to-ceiling windows, then depart for a nearby waterfall walk. Ascend a grassy, four-mile hiking trail along a dramatic canyon to arrive at Tröllafoss (Troll waterfall) where locals say that you can see a troll's face in the rushing water. Even if you don't see the troll, the waterfalls and canyon make for an impressive sight—one that you're likely to have all to yourself on this secluded trail.

Arriving at the small hamlet of Hvanneyri, you'll visit a special wool center for a short, guided tour introducing you to the knitting tradition of the area. You'll learn about how the wool is dyed using local plants and lichen and afterwards there will be time to peruse the crafts shop. Here, you'll find a wide selection of high-quality handmade scarves, hats, blankets, and Borgarfjörður sweaters with traditional designs. Enjoy lunch at a nearby café before making your way back to Húsafell.

This afternoon you have a choice of several activities. An easy afternoon walk with your guides takes you from the front door of your hotel through pristine woodland, along the Oddalindir and the river Hvítá. For the adventurous, join a tour of impressive Cave Víðgelmir, Iceland's largest lava cave. With its fantastic lava formations and brilliant colors, colossal Víðgelmir truly deserves its crown as the country's mightiest cave. If you're eager to relax, look no further than your accommodation's four thermal pools, where you can unwind before another memorable dinner in the hotel's dining room.

Accommodation: Hotel Husafell

DAY 5

Glanni Waterfall and Hólar. Transfer to Akureyri

3 miles, easy and 1 mile, easy

After a satisfying breakfast, a 45-minute transfer brings you to the trailhead for Glanni Waterfall. Trek the easy, three-mile riverside walk to a viewing deck overlooking the spectacular, multi-tiered falls. Glanni means “light” or “shining,” and you’ll see why it has that name as you gaze below to the bright, splashing water hitting the rocks at the bottom of the falls.

Next, head to Gauksmýri pond for a boardwalk hike across a recovered wetland. Keep an eye out for birdlife, as more than 45 species call this area home. After your short hike, make your way to Gauksmýri Lodge, a ranch where Icelandic horses are bred and raised, for a private horseshow. Learn the history and admire the talents of these pony-sized animals with a demonstration of their unique gait followed by a visit to the stables, where you can truly get to know these friendly animals.

After a delicious buffet lunch, continue on to historic Hólar, where an expert guide introduces you to important local sights. Visit the Hólakirkja church (one of the oldest in the country) and walk a wooded trail culminating at the Nýibær (new farm) turf house. This rustic abode was inhabited until 1945! Enjoy an afternoon break with coffee and snacks, before departing for Akureyri.

Arriving at tonight’s accommodation, a renovated schoolhouse, you’ll step out for dinner on your own. Known as the “Capital of the North,” Akureyri is a hip, cultural center and has wonderful restaurants to choose from. Or, if you prefer, you can dine at your hotel’s restaurant.

Accommodation: Icelandair Hotel Akureyri

DAY 6

Transfer to Lake Mývatn

Skútustaðagígar; 2 miles, easy. Dettifoss and Selfoss; 2.5 miles, easy and Leirhnjúkur; 2-3 miles, easy

Enjoy a scrumptious buffet breakfast in the hotel restaurant before bidding Akureyri farewell.

Today’s travels take you east with a final destination of serene Lake Mývatn, in the midst of the geologically active My´vatn/Krafla region, home to volcanic craters, lava fields, and bubbling mud flats. It’s

also where you'll find Europe's largest migratory-bird sanctuary, with many species of waterfowl feeding on the insects and algae of the lake's warm, shallow waters.

En route to today's trailhead, you'll stop at Goðafoss, which means "waterfall of the Gods," named for the lawspeaker Þorgeir Ljósvetningagoði who made Christianity the official religion of Iceland. So devoted was Þorgeir, that after his conversion he threw his statues of the Norse gods into the waterfall. After a quick view of (and short walk around) the falls, you'll continue to your next walk. Trace an easy (two-mile) dirt trail adjacent to Lake Mývatn, with views of the impressive Skútustaðagígar pseudo craters. True craters are formed when lava from the earth's core pushes through the earth's surface. Skútustaðagígar was formed when hot lava crossed a cool body of water, and steam from below pushed debris into a crater-like shape. Also called "rootless cones," pseudo craters are found only in Iceland and on the planet Mars! Along the trail, viewpoints over Lake Mývatn may offer sightings of Barrow´s goldeneye, wigeon, Slavonian grebe, scaup, and many other water birds.

Continue to a nearby farm resort for a (literal) farm-to-table lunch. Afterward, transfer to a duo of waterfalls — Dettifoss and Selfoss. An easy, one-mile loop leads to Dettifoss, Europe's most powerful waterfall (often compared to Niagara Falls). Marvel at the volume of water flowing across the mighty Dettifoss then follow the cliff upstream to Selfoss, a stunning curtain of water stretching off along a rocky shelf.

Your last stop of the day in the active Krafla volcanic zone is at Leirhnjúkur, an eerie expanse of still-smoldering lava resulting from the Krafla fires of 1974-1984. Translated as "mud hill," your trail (fortunately) is along a boardwalk the whole way. Be careful in wet weather, as the boardwalk can get slippery. Geologically active, Krafla's landscape is teeming with volcanic craters, recent lava fields, and bubbling mud flats. Part of the greater Krafla volcanic system, a three-mile-wide and 50-mile-long strip of faults and fissures, the region is also the center of the country's geothermal energy industry.

Continue to your hotel to refresh and relax, drink in hand, in front of the cozy fire pit outside (or fireplace in) before savoring another meal that typifies the bounty of the region.

Accommodation: Icelandair Hotel Mývatn, Mývatn

DAY 7

Lake Mývatn

Grjótagjá, Hverfjall Crater, Dimmuborgir; 2.5-8 miles easy to moderate. Höfði and Kálfaströnd; 1 mile, easy, and 2 miles, easy

After a delicious breakfast buffet, you set off for a full day's exploration of the Lake Mývatn region. The morning's trail transitions from richly vegetated lava fields to an area blighted by wind erosion. En route you pass by the Stóragjá and Grjótagiá fault fissures, both used for bathing in earlier times. From Grjótagjá, you proceed through sandy plains and lava formations up the northern side of Hverfjall, a classic tephra cone. This near symmetrical crater appeared 2,500 years ago in a cataclysmic eruption. Rising 1,520 feet from the ground and stretching 3,400 feet across, it is a massive and awe-inspiring landmark in Mývatn. The trail circles along the western edge of the crater, where you enjoy stunning views of the crater itself and the surrounding landscape, before continuing down the southern side of the crater into Dimmuborgir. The giant, jagged lava field at Dimmuborgir (literally the "Dark Castles") is one of the most interesting lava flows in Iceland. The strange lava pillars were created about 2,000 years ago when newly-erupted lava flowed across older lava fields and was dammed into a fiery lake. The surface of the lake cooled and when the dam broke the remaining lava flowed onward and left behind the cooled, oddly shaped pillars.

Following a lunch of soup or curry in Dimmuborgir, you continue your exploration of the natural wonders of the Lake Mývatn area. A short transfer brings you to Höfði and Kálfaströnd for a final hike through an area where you'll see unique (and bizarre) lava formations – craggy pillars and twisted arches surrounded by water. Keep an eye out for the area's birdlife, including common redpolls, redwings, and Winter wrens.

Midafternoon finds you with a few options: you can return to your hotel in Mývatn with time to relax and pack before a celebratory farewell dinner in the hotel's dining room. Or, make a visit to the Northern version of Reykjavík's Blue Lagoon, the Mývatn Nature Baths. Your guides can arrange a visit at your own expense. Lastly, a neighboring farm provides Icelandic horse rides, also at your expense, but with the guide's assistance.

Dinner may begin with the Mývatn specialty of hot spring bread, baked in the local underground bakery using geothermal heat and traditional methods, topped with butter and smoked arctic char, the main course may be wild thyme-crusted roasted leg of lamb or pan-fried Lake Mývatn trout accompanied by craft beer, wine, or local aquavit!

Accommodation: Icelandair Hotel Mývatn, Mývatn

DAY 8

Your *Iceland: Reykjavík, Borgarfjord & Lake Mývatn* tour concludes

Öskjuhlíð park; 2 miles, easy

The final day of your tour begins with a 40-minute drive to the town of Húsavík for the flight back to Reykjavík. After your 55-minute flight, you arrive into Reykjavík's domestic airport with time to enjoy a (one-hour) walk in Öskjuhlíð park. Conveniently located in the heart of the city, this tranquil area offers paths that weave through a dense forest of pine and birch trees, leading to the scenic shores of Nauthólsvík Bay and around the coastline towards Seltjarnarnes. Following lunch, you're provided a small-group transfer to the Canopy by Hilton Hotel, Reykjavik or equivalent hotel in Reykjavík for your post-tour night. (Dinner is on your own.)

Accommodation: Canopy by Hilton Hotel, Reykjavik or equivalent

DAY 9

Departure

You will be transferred to the Keflavík International Airport in time for your departure flight via a small-group transfer. Please note that your guide(s) will advise you of the time of your transfer while on tour.

What's Included	Air Package	Tour Only
Exceptional boutique accommodations	✓	✓
All on-tour meals except 1 dinner	✓	✓
Local guides with you throughout tour	✓	✓
Local wine and/or beer with dinner	✓	✓
Entrance fees and special events as noted in the itinerary	✓	✓
Emergency travel assistance hotline available 24/7	✓	✓
Roundtrip airfare	✓	
Two extra nights in Reykjavik, Iceland	✓	
Airport car service for arrival & departure	✓	
Pre- and post-tour breakfasts	✓	
Business-class upgrades available	✓	