

Iceland: Reykjavík, Borgarfjörð & Lake Mývatn

Air Package Itinerary

Talk about a total immersion experience. As you plunge into the steaming water at your hotel's private thermal baths, you can't help but be awed by your surroundings. An hour's hike has brought you to this secluded canyon, where a simple wooden boardwalk ends in two circular hot pools cradled between otherworldly volcanic ridges. Ahead of you are days of exploring Iceland's waterfalls, lava caves, and volcanic craters. You'll get to know our local friends, like the family that runs a stable of Icelandic horses. But leaving civilization behind doesn't have to be uncivilized on this Iceland hiking tour—your hotel is a modern Nordic beauty, waiting to welcome you back with fireside cocktails and a scrumptious dinner of local seafood or Icelandic lamb.



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.

Tour Iceland's largest and most spectacular lava cave, Viðgelmir, home to ice formations, stalagmites, stalactites, and fascinating archaeological remains.

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 local, farm-to-table cuisine before retiring to your fully self-sustained, luxurious 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 a quintessential Icelandic experience—soaking in a geothermal pool in the midst of 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 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

Fly to Reykjavík, Iceland

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

Country Walkers provides you with City Information including recommendations on what to see and do in Reykjavík during your stay.

Accommodation: Canopy by Hilton Hotel, Reykjavík

DAY 3

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

Mt. Esja; 2-3 miles, easy to moderate. Húsafell canyon baths; 1-2 miles, easy

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

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 to the Settlement Center in Borgarnes, where a lunch of freshly made soups, salads, pasta, and homemade bread awaits. After your meal, visit the Settlement Center's exhibits, learning about one of Iceland's most famous settlers, poet-warrior Egill Skallagrímsson.

Continue through a magical landscape to your final destination of the day—Húsafell, a tiny village surrounded by glaciers, lava caves, and of course, geothermal pools. After checking in to your award-winning 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.

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 local vegetables. End your meal with a touch of sweetness 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 Húsafell's historical sites and to scenic Bæjargil Ravine.

Accommodation: Hotel Húsafell, Húsafell

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 4

Borgarfjörður

Morning options: Viðgelmir lava cave tour or riverside walk; 3 miles, easy. Hraunfossar and Barnafoss

waterfalls; 1-2 miles, easy to moderate. Gufuá farm walk; 1 mile, easy

Linger over coffee and breakfast this morning as you admire the views through floor-to-ceiling windows, then depart on your choice of several activities. An easy 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 Víðgelmir Cave, 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.

After lunch at a local café, depart for picturesque Hraunfossar (Lava Falls), where you admire the idyllic beauty of its many watery streams cascading over a towering shelf of hardened lava. The nearby Barnafoss (Children's Falls), is a more dramatic series of twisting rapids, named for a local legend. Later, you make your way to the small hamlet of Hvanneyri, where you'll visit a special wool center for a brief, 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 afterward, 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.

Later, you make your way to a nearby historic farm to embark on a walk with a local farmer. As you stroll along the Gufuá River, you notice an abundance of rock cairns called *varða*. Historically, these cairns were used to help wayward travelers find their way. The cairns are also thought to be home to elves, trolls and "hidden people" or *huldufólk*. Your host happily regales you with stories about these beings and other Icelandic legends. At the end of the walk, you may have time to meet the resident horses, sheep, and goats who call this fairytale countryside home.

This evening, enjoy another memorable dinner in the hotel's dining room.

Accommodation: Hotel Húsafell, Húsafell

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 5

Glanni Waterfall and Skagafjörður. Transfer to Akureyri

3 miles, easy and 1 mile, easy

Indulge in a satisfying breakfast, then 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 Dæli Ranch (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 lunch, continue to historic Skagafjörður, where an expert guide introduces you to important local sights. Visit the Víðimýri Church and stroll along to the Glaumbær turf house and timber houses, all dating back to the 18th and 19th centuries. 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 stylish restaurant.

Accommodation: Icelandair Hotel Akureyri, Akureyri

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

DAY 6

Skútustaðagígar

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

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

Today’s travels take you east to serene Lake Mývatn, in the midst of the geologically active Mývatn/Krafla region, home to volcanic craters, lava fields, and bubbling mudflats. 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 religious 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 Skútustaðagígur pseudocraters. True craters are formed when lava from the earth's core pushes through the earth's surface; Skútustaðagígur 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," pseudocraters are found only in Iceland and on the planet Mars! Along the trail, viewpoints over Lake Mývatn may offer sightings of birds such as Barrow's goldeneye, wigeon, Slavonian grebe, scaup, and many other waterfowl.

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 mudflats. The region is part of the greater Krafla volcanic system, a three-mile-wide and 50-mile-long strip of faults and fissures, which is 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 firepit outside (or fireplace inside) before savoring another meal that typifies the bounty of the region.

Accommodation: Icelandair Hotel Mývatn, Reykjavík

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

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, 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 the Stóragjá and Grjótagjá 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 into Dimmuborgir. The giant, jagged lava field at Dimmuborgir (literally the "Dark Castles") is one of the most interesting lava flows in Iceland. These 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 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.

Mid-afternoon 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 tonight features local cuisine. Perhaps a Mývatn specialty—hot spring bread, which is baked in the local underground bakery using geothermal heat and traditional methods, and topped with butter and smoked arctic char. Your main course may be wild thyme-crust roasted leg of lamb or pan-fried Lake Mývatn trout accompanied by craft beer, wine, or local aquavit!

Accommodation: Icelandair Hotel Mývatn, Reykjahlíð

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

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 your 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 in Reykjavík for your post-tour night. (Dinner is on your own.)

Accommodation: Canopy by Hilton Hotel, Reykjavík

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

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.

Included Meals: Breakfast

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	✓	✓
Travel assistance available 24/7 provided by Allianz	✓	✓
Roundtrip airfare	✓	
Two extra nights in Reykjavík, Iceland	✓	
Small-group Airport car service for arrival & departure	✓	
Pre- and post-tour breakfasts	✓	
Business-class upgrades available	✓	