



The High Peaks of Iceland

- **Iceland's highest peaks**
- **Spectacular Waterfalls**
- **Hot Springs, Geysers & Glacial lakes**
- **Volcanoes**



TREK OVERVIEW

You will have the opportunity to develop alpine skills, walk on Iceland's largest Icecap, climb an active volcano and ascend the highest peak Hvannadalashnjúkur (2119m), whilst being able to see and absorb the sights that make

Iceland so spectacular: volcanoes, fabulous waterfalls, lava fields, hot springs, geysers, icebergs. No previous experience is required except a good level of fitness.

Participation Statement

Adventure Walks recognises that climbing, hill walking and mountaineering are activities with a danger of personal injury or death. Participants in these activities should be aware of and accept these risks and be responsible for their own actions and involvement.

Adventure Travel – Accuracy of Itinerary

Although it is our intention to operate this itinerary as printed, it may be necessary to make some changes as a result of flight schedules, climatic conditions, limitations of infrastructure or other operational factors. As a consequence, the order or location of overnight stops and the duration of the day may vary from those outlined. You should be aware that some events are beyond our control and we would ask for your patience.

OUTLINE ITINERARY

KEY to inclusions (H-hotel, R-refuge/lodge, B-breakfast, L-lunch, D-dinner/evening meal)

Day 1: Fly to (or meet in) Reykjavik

We provide accommodation in a guesthouse/hotel close to the centre of Reykjavik, on arrival you will be given a briefing on the week's activities before we explore this great city. Reykjavik is not cheap ó a beer costs around £5-£6 and a meal £20-£25, but exciting and vibrant nevertheless. (H,B)

Day 2: Climb Mount Botnssulur, Gulfoss and Geysir

Today we loosen up with an ascent and traverse of Mount Botnssulur (1095m) followed by a visit to Gulfoss and Geysir for a glimpse of these renowned sights that Iceland is so famous for. Our ascent of Mount Botnssulur starts close to the deep canyon of Glymur, Iceland's highest waterfall, which drops 200m into the narrow gorge below. The climb is straightforward but ends with a lovely ridge to the summit that gives outstanding views stretching over Hvalfjörður, the steaming volcano Hengill, the Vestmann islands and Þingvallavatn, Iceland's largest lake just below us. 5 hrs walking.

The double waterfall of Gulfoss waterfall (ðGolden Fallsö) flows from the glacial river Hvita as it plummets down 32 metres, but it is the sheer volume of water that makes it so spectacular. The Geysir area is only ten minutes drive from Gulfoss where there is a variety of colourful hot springs, steaming vents and hot pools to be seen. (R,B,L,D). Please note if the walk takes us longer than expected we may need to cut these visits short.

Day 3: Climb Mount Hekla 1491m

Today we climb Mount Hekla, Iceland's best known and most active volcano that adopts the classic volcano shape. We start our climb from the North side of the mountain from the edge of the newest lava field formed in the year 2000, a great lunar landscape of black volcanic sand and rocks that leads upwards along the volcano's ridge to the summit. The variations in the lava and vegetation shaped by the forces of erosion create a colourful and spectacular scenery. The view from the top of Mt. Hekla is wide and beautiful; you can see all of the Fjallabak mountains, up to Vatnajökull glacier (Europe's biggest) and Mount Bardarbunga (Iceland's second highest peak). 6-7 hrs, 1040m of ascent (R,B,L,D)

Day 4: Glacier Day

Today we spend the day on the Skeiðarárjökull glacier practicing the skills we need for our forthcoming ascent of Mt Kristinartindar, surrounded by ice and high mountain ridges. This is a fun day on ice as we traverse across the glacier. (R,B,L,D)

Having completed our training we now have the flexibility to make our ascent of Mt Kristinartindar on any of the coming three days according to the weather forecast.

Day 5: Climb Volcano Laki

Today we head for the craters of Laki, where in 1783 a 25km long fissure opened and lava flew out of 130 craters, devastating huge areas of pasture killing over 50% of Iceland's livestock. This remains Iceland's greatest eruption, but today these craters are mostly covered with green moss which makes a huge contrast to the black and red of the underlying lava. Our ascent takes us to the highest of the Laki craters and offers splendid views over all the craters and the ice cap of Vatnajökull. 4-5 hrs walk (R,B,L,D)

Day 6: Climb Mt Kristinartindar 1126m

We set off from the campsite through the beautiful arctic birch forest on route to Svartifoss, famous for its black basalt columns that frame the waterfall. We continue crossing the open moorland of Skaftafell to gain the slopes of Kristinartindar. We stop briefly at the viewpoints Sjúnnipa and Gláma before gaining the col between the two summits of Kristinartindar. The true summit is reached by a rocky path, which finally gives way to magnificent views over the surrounding mountains including Mt. Hvannadalshnjúkur, the highest mountain in Iceland and the great expanse of glacial ice that surrounds them. We return by a circular route taking in two further waterfalls Hundafoss and Þjófafoss to complete a wonderful day. 7-8hrs (R,B,L,D)

Day 7: Mt. Hvannadalshnjúkur 2119m

Our aim today is to climb Iceland's highest peak, an unforgettable experience to look out across the frozen world beyond, the Vatnajökull icecap (Europe's biggest glacier) and the Arctic Ocean. We start very early as the days walk is likely to take around 12-14 hours, but with 24 hours of daylight we have plenty of time!! We walk up for about 1000metres to gain the Oraefajökull Glacier, here it's time to rope up and put our previous crampon training into action as we weave our way round the various crevasse and icefalls. Ultimately on reaching the summit we are rewarded with the most awesome views across Iceland in all directions, a hard day but extremely rewarding. 12-14hrs (R,B,L,D)



Day 8: Visit Jökulsárlón, Skogárfoss and Seljalandsfoss

Today we make a leisurely start to our journey back to Reykjavik, much appreciated after our arduous ascent yesterday. We head for the coast to visit Jökulsárlón, a pretty lagoon famous for its many icebergs that have been thrown into the water by the descend glacier. Seals can often be seen ducking and diving their way between them. You can take a walk along either shore., The icebergs will adopt a variety of colours from white to blue to blackí .all beautiful. This place has provided the backdrop for many Hollywood films, including the recent James Bond movie -Die Another Dayø Our next stops will be at the impressive Skogárfoss waterfall and Seljalandsfoss which you can walk behind. No trip to Iceland would also be complete without a stop for a dip in a geothermal pool somewhere on route. Overnight in Reykjavik (H,B,L)

Day 9: Return flights

The morning is free in Reykjavik before the airport transfer.

PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE/FITNESS

You do not need to be an experienced winter mountaineer, but a confident summer walker and have a good level of fitness e.g. you should be able to enjoy two good consecutive mountain days in the Lake District (7-8hrs) without being exhausted at the end. Time is given to teach you the crampon and glacial skills needed to make the ascent. If you would prefer to learn these skills in advance you are welcome to attend one of our winter skills courses.

A TYPICAL TREKKING DAY

Most days will involve 6-7 hours walking but the ascent of Mt. Hvannadalshnjúkur is a long day and will take around 12-14 hours.

ACCOMMODATION

The group will spend two nights in a basic hotel in Reykjavik on a twin room basis. Single upgrades are usually available at a cost of around £50 per night. The lodges/refuges used for the remaining nights are fairly basic which provide good food, accommodation with 2-4 beds and shared facilities. A sleeping bag is needed. Hotel upgrades are available at around an extra £60 per night, room only, please request.

FOOD

The majority of this will be purchased in Reykjavik using, where possible, fresh produce for the main meals (prepared by our leader, perhaps with a little assistance!). Breakfast; porridge/cereals, bread, jam, cheese, ham, tea and coffee. Packed lunch items will be available at breakfast time for you to make up your lunch for the day.

WHAT TO CARRY

You will only need to carry a light daypack at the very most. A 30-35L rucksack is a useful size to comfortably fit in essential items such as water bottle, camera, sun cream, wet-weather gear, extra layers and your technical gear on the approach to the glaciers etc.

BAGGAGE

For your own comfort, travel light. Normally airlines restrict baggage to 20kg, but you will be wearing boots and you could wear one set of trekking clothes. Some items can be left at the hotel for your return. A suitable kit bag is provided (sent out 6 weeks prior to departure) but important items should also be packed in plastic bags.

HEALTH

All our leaders hold first aid certificates and carry a fully equipped first aid kit for medical emergencies. However you should bring your own supplies of plasters, blister prevention pads (compeed), paracetamol, throat lozengers etc. and any medication you are taking. No special vaccinations are required.

ALTITUDE

The altitudes we reach on this trip should not cause any problems, you must however be careful to ensure you drink plenty of liquid to stay hydrated.

CLIMATE

The weather during June-August is generally fairly good with temperatures ranging from 10-20°C dropping to around freezing at night. On the mountains you should be prepared for cold temperatures similar to those encountered in the UK during the winter, likewise we can expect a fair divide between sunshine and rain. Please bring waterproofs.

USEFUL TIPS

Just in case your main luggage goes missing en route, it is a good idea to wear your boots on the plane. Most other things can be replaced but comfortable, well worn-in boots are more difficult to replace.

INSURANCE

Insurance which covers mountain rescue, helicopter evacuation and medical expenses is **essential**. We will require a copy of your insurance prior to departure.

VISAS AND PERMITS

UK citizens and most EU nationals do not require a visa. Other nationalities should check directly with their own embassy. Passports must be valid for at least six months after the end date of the trip.

LOCAL COSTS

Most meals are inclusive as set meals, please see the key above. Individuals are responsible for drinks throughout and hotel meals which gives the flexibility to choose where you eat. Reykjavik is not cheap ó a beer costs around £6-£7 and a meal £20-£25. Money should be carried in cash obtained prior to departure or on arrival in Reykjavik. Travellers cheques tend to be inconvenient, for larger purchases credit cards are generally accepted.

TIPPING

If you wish to tip the walks leader we would recommend in the region of £2 per day (total £18-£20) per person for this trip.

EXTENSIONS

There are a wide variety of excursions and sights to see so you are welcome to request an alternative return flight date. Please request at time of booking.

BOOKS & MAPS

Lonley Planet Iceland, Greenland & the Faroe Islands

The Insight Guide to Iceland

Iceland: Rother walking guide Gabriele & Christian Handl

Icelandic maps by Mal Menning

Whole island 1:600,000

Fjallabak Hekla ó Laki 1:000,000

FLIGHTS

We fly to Keflavik, on the outskirts of Reykjavik, using Icelandair, Icelandexpress or BA who make regular flights from Glasgow, Manchester and the London airports.

If booking your own flight the group's airport shuttle will be arranged to leave Keflavik at around 2pm, the return group shuttle will be booked to arrive at the airport for around midday. Alternatively we will provide the hotel details for you to meet up with the group.

