



Pre-Departure Information

WINTER ADVENTURES IN ICELAND



Table of Contents

TRAVEL INFORMATION

- Passport
- Visas
- Money
- Tipping
- Special Diets
- Communications
- Electricity

MEDICAL INFORMATION

- Inoculations
- Staying Healthy
- Getting In Shape

HELPFUL INFORMATION

- Photography
- Being a Considerate Traveler
- Explore on Your Own

PACKING LIST

- The Essentials
- WT Gear Store
- Luggage
- Notes on Clothing
- Layers
- Clothing
- Equipment
- Personal First Aid Supplies
- Optional Items

READING LIST

- Essential Reading
- Also Recommended

Reminders Before You Go

WELCOME!

We're delighted to welcome you on this adventure! This booklet is designed to guide you in the practical details for preparing for your trip. As you read, if any questions come to mind, feel free to give us a call or send us an email—we're here to help.

PLEASE SEND US

- Trip Application:** Complete, sign, and return your Trip Application form as soon as possible if you have not already done so.
- Medical Form:** Complete, sign, and return your Medical Form as soon as possible if you have not already done so.
- Air Schedule:** Please forward a copy of your email confirmation, which shows your exact flight arrival and departure times. Refer to the Arrival & Departure section of the Detailed Itinerary for instructions. Please feel free to review your proposed schedule with Wilderness Travel before purchasing your tickets if you have any questions about the timing of your arrival and departure flights or would like to confirm we have the required minimum number of participants to operate the trip.
- Vaccination Card:** Please send us a photo or scanned copy of your completed Covid-19 Vaccination Card if you have not already done so. Just the front side of the card is sufficient.

PLEASE CAREFULLY REVIEW

- Travel Documents & Medical Information:** Carefully review the Travel Documents and Medical Information sections of this booklet to familiarize yourself with Passport and Visa entry requirements for your destination, as well as any recommended inoculations.
- Optional Travel Insurance:** Review the Trip Cancellation & Transfer Fee Schedule included in the Detailed Itinerary. We recommend that all trip members purchase Travel Insurance.
- Final Documents:** Approximately three weeks before your trip, we will send you final departure documents, including hotel and local contact information and rendezvous instructions.

QUESTIONS?

Call: 1-800-368-2794, go to our **website** or e-mail us at: info@wildernesstravel.com.

Travel Information

PASSPORT

A valid passport is required for your trip. Be sure to check the expiration date. Your passport must be valid for three months after your date of exit from Iceland. In addition, we recommend your passport have at least two completely blank visa pages for every country you will be visiting. It is very important that the blank pages say “Visas” at the top. The last few pages of your passport, which say “Amendments and Endorsements,” and the final page of your passport, which may not have a page number, are not considered to be legitimate visa pages. The service of adding pages for visas was discontinued as of January 1, 2016. You can request a new passport through **US Passport Services Office** or use a visa service agency, which can take care of your passport renewal and expedite the process, if needed. We recommend **Passport Visas Express** . Be sure to allow sufficient time to acquire this before your trip.

It is a good idea to carry photocopies of your passport’s photo page and any acquired visa pages for your trip (if applicable) in case your passport is lost or as an additional piece of identification, as well as two extra passport photos.

VISAS

US citizens do not need a visa for countries visited on this trip. If you are a citizen of any country other than the US, check with a local consulate for entry requirements.

MONEY

The króna is the official currency of Iceland. The most convenient way to obtain krónur is to use your debit card at ATMs. To use an ATM internationally, you must have a four-digit PIN. Major credit cards are accepted in most shops in cities and larger towns. If you plan to use your credit cards, inform your credit card company before your departure that you will be using the card abroad.

TIPPING

Tipping is completely discretionary, but over the years, clients have asked us for tipping guidelines to reward guides for outstanding service. We suggest a tip of \$110 or more per trip member for each of the Trip Leaders, preferably in local currency. The Trip Leaders take care of gratuities for hotel and restaurant staff, and for local guides and drivers.

SPECIAL DIETS

Please reach out to us directly to discuss any dietary restrictions or concerns you may have. We can easily make arrangements for most diets, but please keep in mind that certain cultural differences or logistical limitations can make it difficult or at times impossible to accommodate all requests. With this in mind, please inform us at least eight weeks before your trip if you have a special diet, and any food allergies in particular, so we can do our best to meet your needs.

COMMUNICATIONS

Telephone

The international dialing code for Iceland is 354. Please contact your cell phone company for specific instructions for international use.

Email & Internet Access

Internet access is available at most of our lodges, but connections can be spotty.

ELECTRICITY

Iceland has 220-volt current. Plugs usually have two or three prongs.

Medical Information

The following recommendations should be used as a guideline only; consult your physician for medical advice. It is vital that you let Wilderness Travel know of any medical problems, allergies, or physical limitations you may have. Please fill out and return the personal medical questionnaire, and feel free to consult us if you have any questions about your ability to undertake this particular trip.

Wilderness Travel is not a medical facility and has no expertise or responsibility regarding what medications or inoculations you and your physician decide are necessary for your safe participation in the trip.

Traveler's health information is available from the **Centers for Disease Control**. Medical travel products are available from **Travel Health Medicine** and from **Magellan's Travel Supplies**.

INOCULATIONS

No inoculations are required. However, it is easy to get a small cut, so a tetanus booster is strongly recommended (good for 10 years). If you take prescription medicines, be sure to bring enough for the duration of your trip.

STAYING HEALTHY

You can reduce your risk of getting sick on the trip by washing your hands often and not touching your face with unwashed hands. If you arrive on the trip with a cold or feel the symptoms of a cold, avoid close contact with others and move away from people before coughing or sneezing. The CDC recommends coughing or sneezing into a tissue or into the crook of your elbow or upper sleeve, not your hands.

GETTING IN SHAPE

For your own enjoyment, we recommend you make a special effort to be in good physical condition. Daily brisk walking and/or regular hiking (or using a stair-climbing machine at your gym) are excellent preparatory exercises.

Helpful Information

PHOTOGRAPHY

Camera Recommendations

With the many advances in digital technology, a simple compact digital camera or even your smartphone is capable of taking pictures suitable for the needs of most people. For higher quality images and the ability to use long lenses for closer wildlife pictures, a DSLR camera is well worthwhile, though heavier. Most digital cameras and phones have good video options, but you may want to consider a GoPro for a lightweight, waterproof option. Always practice ahead of time with new equipment and bring your manual with you. Camera equipment is available for rent from **Borrow Lenses** , with a 10% discount offered to Wilderness Travel clients. This is an especially good idea for renting large zoom lenses that you may need for just one trip.

Camera Accessories

We recommend bringing at least two large capacity memory cards or a small digital storage unit (or tablet) to back up your photos, freeing space on your memory cards. Don't forget to bring a battery charger and a backup battery so one is always charged and ready to use. For trips where you may be away from power sources for multiple days, consider looking into a solar-powered battery charger or buying additional backup batteries, and check that you have the appropriate adapter for the electrical outlets in your destination.

Sharing Your Images

We would love for you to share photos from your trip, and with your permission, may even use your photos in our marketing materials or on our photo blog. We request that you send us a small sample of your best images. Please email your photos to wtphotoblog@gmail.com or tag us [@WildernessTravel](https://www.instagram.com/WildernessTravel) on social media.

Photography Etiquette

When taking pictures of local people, be aware of cultural considerations. Approaching people with a warm smile and using polite gestures or simple phrases to ask permission to photograph them usually works well. It is always recommended to engage people in conversation before asking to photograph them, but if people do not wish to have their photo taken, please honor their requests. We urge travelers to avoid giving money in exchange for photo opportunities, which makes it harder for future travelers to have a meaningful personal interaction with local people. Please always heed your Trip Leader's guidelines for what is appropriate.

BEING A CONSIDERATE TRAVELER

Please show respect for the cultures we are visiting by observing local customs concerning appropriate dress, particularly in sacred places. Your Trip Leader is always available to answer any questions that you may have regarding this. If it is necessary to use a cell phone during the trip, please do so privately. Smoking is rarely an issue these days, but if you do smoke, please do so only away from the group.

EXPLORE ON YOUR OWN

We have provided great lists of activities, restaurants, and histories of areas you may want to explore on our website.

Please use the following links:

Explore Reykjavik

Packing List

THE ESSENTIALS

- Air tickets (or E-tickets)
- Passport
- One other picture ID, such as a driver's license
- Expense money

WT GEAR STORE

To help you prepare for your next WT adventure, we've put together a great collection of top brands including Patagonia, Outdoor Research, Eagle Creek, and more at our **WT Gear Store** .

LUGGAGE

- Soft-sided suitcase, with small TSA-approved padlock
- Daypack, large enough for a jacket or rain gear, water bottle, camera, and other items you want on the trail. Note: Very few daypacks or fanny packs are waterproof and any items that you need to keep dry should be put in a waterproof stuff sack inside your pack.
- (Optional) Small roll-up bag to carry home purchases

Bring clothes you find most comfortable for walking. Quick-drying fabrics are the best for travel. Waterproof your hiking boots before your trip. You will want a change of clothes for evenings, but nothing dressy is necessary. Casual wear is fine, and coats and ties are not required.

Please pack everything in one piece of luggage, as this simplifies the transportation of luggage en route. Although airline service to Europe is generally reliable, it is best to wear or carry your hiking boots with you on your flights in the event that your luggage is lost or delayed. Likewise, don't pack valuables, such as travel documents, camera gear, or prescription medicines in your checked luggage.

NOTES ON CLOTHING

Warmth and comfort are the main priorities. Weather conditions could vary greatly and can be cold. Dressing in layers is the best way to stay comfortable. The single two most important and essential items for this trip are: waterproof, breathable, good quality RAIN JACKET with a hood, and good quality HIKING BOOTS to use for snowshoeing. It is a sensible precaution to wear or hand-carry your hiking boots on the plane. Nearly everything else can be replaced in case of baggage loss, but not a pair of well-fitted, fully broken-in hiking boots.

LAYERS

For your base layer, look for t-shirts and long underwear in synthetic fabrics. Synthetic fabrics (Polypropylene, Capilene, fleece) insulate and retain warmth even when they are wet, and they are far lighter than wool. They also have the added benefit of drying quickly. Avoid cotton because it is not a good insulator, especially as the first layer next to the skin. Once cotton gets wet from perspiration, it stays wet and keeps you cold. (Cotton is fine for city wear and touring.) As your insulating layer, we suggest a fleece jacket and pants, which are lightweight, warm, and breathable, or wool, which also keeps you warm even when wet. Finally, a good outer layer is necessary to block the wind and keep you dry in case of rain. Gore-Tex and equivalent fabrics are waterproof and breathable and are a practical choice. Your outer layer should be roomy enough to fit over other layers of clothing.

CLOTHING

The clothing list below is provided as a guideline only.

- Gore-Tex rain/wind shell jacket with hood, and Gore-Tex rain/wind pants (preferably with leg zippers so that they can be taken off without removing your boots). Important: Whether you choose Gore-Tex, Supplex, or a similar fabric, make sure your jacket has a hood and sealed seams to prevent leaking.
- Waterproof rain pants. Pants with leg zippers are practical because you can take them off without removing your boots.
- Warm jacket (down or heavyweight fleece)
- Light insulated jacket (down or Thinsulate) for our rest stops and picnics
- Fleece sweater or fleece vest for layering
- Polypropylene or Capilene long underwear, bottoms and tops
- Long-sleeved shirt. Wool, fleece, or quick-drying “travel” fabrics like nylon.
- T-shirts
- Hiking pants, one or two pairs. Fleece pants or synthetic hiking pants are a practical choice. Most of the time we will be snowshoe-hiking wearing these types of pants. They should be warm, have wind resistance, and dry quickly
- Fleece hat for warmth. Your hat should cover your ears. The hood of your waterproof jacket should be able to go over this hat completely and zip up around your face.
- Hand protection. Very important! Bring several pairs of gloves, at least one insulated waterproof pair, and a lighter wind-stopping pair. Insulated mittens are OK, too, for those with cold-sensitive hands.
- Medium to heavyweight hiking boots designed for on- and off-trail hiking. They must be waterproof and above the ankles, with good support.
- Comfortable shoes for hotels
- Hiking socks. Tall, thick pairs (Thorlo-type) are good as well as synthetic liner socks.
- Gaiters. Important and indispensable for keeping snow and moisture out of your boots.
- Sleepwear (long underwear can double)
- Bathing suit (for the Blue Lagoon, geothermal springs, and thermal pools during the trip)
- Casual city/hotel attire

EQUIPMENT

- Hiking Poles are provided.** Most of our hikes are on undefined, steep trails or through rough areas, and the terrain may be wet. Hiking with a collapsible hiking pole, such as those by Leki and REI, helps to distribute your body weight, takes pressure off your knees, and improves your balance. Some hikers like using one pole and others hike with two poles.
- Waterproof stuff sack to carry inside your daypack
- Waterproofing material for leather boots (Sno-seal or a silicon product)
- One or two reusable water bottles, 1 qt. capacity
- Small, quick-drying towel for the hike to the geothermal springs
- Good quality sunglasses with case. A spare pair of sunglasses is a good idea should your first pair be broken or lost.
- Plastic bags to compartmentalize items in duffel, Ziploc-style bags to carry small items during the day

PERSONAL FIRST AID SUPPLIES

Every trip member should bring a small kit for personal use. Your own experience will influence your choices.

- Sunscreen SPF 30 or higher and lip balm with sunscreen. We recommend mineral-based sunscreens with zinc oxide or titanium dioxide because they do not contain harsh chemicals that are harmful to the environment. Brands such as Honest Company, Badger, and Alba Botanica are found in most sporting goods stores and drugstores.
- Aspirin, ibuprofen, or Tylenol for muscle pain or headaches, Tylenol PM for sleep
- Blister kit. Look for long-lasting gel-type bandages that you can apply directly on blisters, such as Band-Aid Advanced Healing Bandages or Curad Gel Multi-Day Bandages. "Liquid band-aids," such as New-Skin, are useful because they dry rapidly to form a tough protective cover over a blister.
- Prescription medications properly labeled
- Spare contact lenses or spare prescription glasses

OPTIONAL ITEMS

- Plug adapter for appliance use. Most newer appliances don't need a voltage converter.
- Long underwear if you tend to get cold
- Laundry soap for hand-washing clothes
- Camera, spare batteries
- Reading/writing material
- Lightweight binoculars
- Tevas or other sturdy sandals
- Small umbrella
- Money belt or neck pouch. Always carry your passport, credit cards, and cash with you in a money belt or neck pouch tucked down inside your shirt or blouse.
- Washcloth, if you like to use one (most European hotels do not provide them)

Reading List

ESSENTIAL READING

Independent People, An Epic

Halldor Laxness

1997, 480 PAGES

Rich in local color, this great mock-epic by the Icelandic Nobel Prize-winner features the indelible Bjartur of Summerhouses, a hard-headed, independent-minded sheep farmer.

Insight Guide Iceland

Insight Guides

2014, 352 PAGES

This guide emphasizes culture and history, with wonderful photographs, maps and essays from experts.

Ring of Seasons, Iceland, Its Culture and History

Terry G. Lacy

1998, 332 PAGES

A longtime resident of Reykjavik, Lacy weaves tales of family life, anecdote, lore and history into this illuminating personal portrait of Iceland.

Iceland Adventure Map

National Geographic Maps

2011

A detailed map at a scale of 1:465,000, printed on handy tear- and water-resistant paper.

ALSO RECOMMENDED

Birds of Europe

Lars Svensson

2010, 416 PAGES

Featuring 3,500 glorious paintings by Killian Mullarney and Dan Zetterstrom, the second edition of this exquisite guide features updated text and maps.

Frommer's Easyguide Iceland

Nicholas Gill

2015, 288 PAGES

This lightweight guide to Iceland highlights important attractions with expert advice on accommodations and meals.

Lonely Planet Pocket Reykjavik

Lonely Planet

2015, 144 PAGES

With a section of not-to-be-missed highlights, pullout map, and a calendar of annual events.

Bradt Guide Iceland

Andrew Evans

2014, 464 PAGES

A detailed, personable guide in the venerable British series with a focus on natural treasures, including glaciers, lava flows and rugged coastlines.

Lonely Planet Iceland

Deanna Swaney

2015, 384 PAGES

This concise guide to Iceland includes short essays on history, culture and attractions and plenty of practical travel information.

Moon Iceland

Jenna Gottlieb

2016, 350 PAGES

A practical guide to Iceland, packed not only with travel necessities (hotels, restaurants, sights), but also with a good overview of history. With full-color maps and photos throughout.

North: The New Nordic Cuisine of Iceland

Gunnar Gislason

2014, 352 PAGES

Catering to a rising interest in Nordic cuisine, this cookbook celebrates Iceland's food alongside its haunting landscapes, portrayed in starkly beautiful, full-color photos.

Iceland Imagined

Karen Oslund

2013, 260 PAGES

This cultural and environmental history explores the geography, literature, language, culture, politics and symbolism of Iceland, Greenland, northern Norway and the Faroe Islands.

Song of the Vikings, Snorri and the Making of Norse Myths

Nancy Marie Brown

2014, 256 PAGES

Brown brings to life not just the great Norse tales of medieval Iceland but also the life and times of the worldly Icelandic chieftain, known as the "Homer of the North."

The Vikings, Lords of the Seas

Yves Cohat

2010, 175 PAGES

An indispensable reference that fits in your pocket, this slim volume is packed with maps, archival photographs and illustrations.

Last Places, A Journey in the North

Paul Theroux

2000, 242 PAGES

Millman explores the culture and history of the Faroes, Iceland and Greenland in this hilarious account of his travels in the wake of the ancient Vikings.

Epic, Strassen Islands, Roads of Iceland

Stefan Bogner

2014, 224 PAGES

This collection of photographs captures the sweeping roads of Iceland hewn in a landscape of extremes both volcanic and arctic.

Penguin Historical Atlas of the Vikings

John Haywood

1995, 144 PAGES

This history of the Vikings tells their story through a series of innovative maps and excellent photographs. It traces the routes of 9th-century Viking merchants and explorers throughout Europe and the New World.

The Almost Nearly Perfect People, Behind the Myth of the Scandinavian Utopia

Michael Booth

2016, 400 PAGES

Guardian journalist Booth writes with laugh-out-loud humor and brutal candor about the Scandinavians, mixing history and his own experiences in Nordic regions in this searing cultural portrait.

Iceland, Land of the Sagas

David Roberts

1998, 160 PAGES

Krakauer and colleague Roberts hike and climb around Iceland in this classic travel narrative, reissued as a paperback and featuring Krakauer's color photographs. The book interweaves the natural and cultural history of the island with the authors' own adventures.

Letters from Iceland

W.H. Auden

2002, 256 PAGES

Written with fellow poet Louis MacNiece, this quirky, under-appreciated masterpiece captures the spirit of Iceland, its people and landscapes.

Names for the Sea, Strangers in Iceland

Sarah Moss

2013, 358 PAGES

A stranger in a strange land, British novelist Sarah Moss captures the spirit of Iceland in this tale of a year in the Reykjavik with her husband and two children.

Butterflies in November

Auour Ava Olafsdottir

2014, 296 PAGES

Scorned by love, a quirky, unapologetically independent 33-year-old woman takes a spontaneous trip along Iceland's Ring Road, her best friend's 4-year-old deaf-mute son in tow. Evocative of the Icelandic spirit.

Jar City

Arnaldur Indridason

2006, 288 PAGES

Indridason's first moody police procedural finds Reykjavik detective Erlendur Sveinsson investigating the brutal murder of a lonely pensioner and the man's connection to the deaths of a number of young women. Made into a darkly superb film.

The Sagas of Icelanders

Robert Kellog

2001, 848 PAGES

Nine sagas and six tales composed between the years 1000 and 1500, including an account of Leif Eriksson's voyage to North America, all newly translated.

Auroras, Fire in the Sky

Yuichi Takasaka

2011, 144 PAGES

These 80 color photos by Yuichi Takasaka celebrate the beauty, history, folklore and science of the northern lights.

The Windows of Brimnes, An American in Iceland

Bill Holm

2008, 216 PAGES

In these provocative essays, Minnesotan Bill Holm writes about the fate of America from his fisherman's cottage on the shore of a creek in northern Iceland.

Hrafinkel's Saga and Other Icelandic Stories

Herman Palsson

1971, 137 PAGES

This collection of the most famous of Icelandic sagas includes stories with titles like Thorstein the Staff-Struck and Ale Hood. Dating from the 12th century, these tales vividly recreate the society of medieval Iceland.

The Great Weaver from Kashmir

Hallador Laxness

2008, 450 PAGES

First published in 1927, this first major book by the esteemed Icelandic writer Hallador Laxness (Independent People) propelled Iceland into the modern world. An experimental novel, it tells the story of a young poet who flees the confines of his island nation for the complexities of post-WWI Europe.

A Naturalist's Guide to the Arctic

E.C. Pielou

1994, 327 PAGES

A primer on Arctic climate, geography, plants, birds, mammals and insects in a single nicely written book. It's a highly recommended, enthusiastic guide to natural history throughout the Circumpolar North.

Island on Fire: The Extraordinary Story of a Forgotten Volcano That Changed the World

Alexandra Witze

2015, 224 PAGES

Two science writers discuss the political and natural ramifications of the 1783 eruption of Iceland's largest volcano, Laki, which led to global death, famine and even revolution. Great for the geologically minded but accessible to all with an interest in volcanoes.

Primordial Landscapes, Iceland Revealed*Feodor Pitcairn*

2015, 256 PAGES

Presented here in gorgeous, oversized photos is the extraordinary landscape of Iceland. Award-winning photographer Pitcairn captures volcanoes building textured landscapes, glaciers melting into thunderous waterfalls and many of Iceland's other unique geological forces.

The Northern Lights, The True Story of the Man Who Unlocked the Secrets of the Aurora Borealis*Lucy Jago*

2002, 320 PAGES

The compelling story of Kristian Birkeland, the turn-of-the-century Norwegian scientist who devoted his career to understanding the aurora borealis, this book also covers the science, history, myth and romance of the phenomenon.

The Arctic, A Guide to Coastal Wildlife*Tony Soper*

2012, 160 PAGES

An essential handbook for the ship-based traveler, this compact guide to the plants, marine mammals and birds of the Circumpolar North features handsome watercolor illustrations and lively text. This new edition includes a section on the Bering Sea.

Revised: April 11, 2022

The Control of Nature*John McPhee*

1989, 272 PAGES

In the classic McPhee tradition, these sparkling essays explore our generally feeble attempts to combat all-powerful nature, including valiant efforts by Icelanders to control the flow of a volcano across the harbor at Heimaey in the Westman Islands.

Familiar Animals & Plants of the Arctic & Subarctic Regions*James Kavanagh*

2014

Handy for a pocket or backpack, this durable, fold-out wildlife reference features species of flora and fauna familiar to the Arctic.