

Arctic Circle

The Arctic

# North Iceland

Energy - Magic - Tranquillity



#NorthIceland

# Winter Magic



## Northern Lights

Northern lights can be seen in North Iceland from end of August to April. Enjoy the clear skies by simply looking up into the sky for those dancing, flickering veils of light in green, white or red, or take a guided northern lights tour to excellent observation and photography locations. These tours can include a visit to geothermal bathing areas, evening boat tours or sightseeing in unique locations.

## Ski Iceland

In North Iceland there are seven well-equipped and flood-lit ski resorts open from November to May, offering ski rental and ski schools for everyone. Akureyri ski resort is Icelanders number one ski area, only 5 min away from the town centre. Whether you are a beginner or an extreme skier you have the opportunity to experience unique nature while skiing.

## Off Piste and Heli Skiing

Troll Peninsula is the centre of activity for off piste skiing, alpine ski touring, cat skiing and heli skiing. Skiing on virgin slopes all the way down to the Atlantic Ocean is what characterizes this skiers' paradise, and never having to worry about trees blocking the way.

## The Icelandic Horse

Riding tours for any ability, horse shows and exhibitions are widely available in North Iceland, including Skagafjörður, the centre of Icelandic horsemanship. Be sure not to miss the opportunity to experience Tölt, the unique gait of the Icelandic horse. Experiencing an autumn roundup by the owners of free-ranging horses is no less of an adventure. Sitting on the corral fence and watching the action, you will see excitement, hear singing, and find happiness in every face.

## Super Jeep and Snowmobile Tours

Super jeep adventure tours enable you to experience the unique highlands of North Iceland. Tours include guided tours through the rough terrain of the mountains of the North or tours to natural attractions such as Dettifoss waterfall. The breathtaking beauty of North Iceland's highland wilderness will remain in your memory forever. Snowmobile tours let you breathe in fresh air while travelling next to unspoilt nature and even get some adrenaline running if that is what you want.

# Breathtaking Nature



## Seal Watching

Seals can easily be observed throughout the year in their natural environment, either from land or by boat at Hvammstangi and the beautiful Vatnsnes peninsula where you also find the Hvítserkur cliff rising high from the sea.

## Bird Watching

Bird watching trails, guides, hides and exhibitions are available throughout North Iceland. Up to 80 species of birds can be observed on some trails depending on the season. Some of the birds that can be found all year round are the Barrow's Goldeneye, Harlequin Duck, Gyr Falcon and the Rock Ptarmigan. The best time of the year for bird watching is the last two weeks of May and first two weeks of June.

## Whale Watching

You can easily get up close with humpbacks, dolphins and minke or even blue whales in North Iceland. Whale watching options include oak-boats, rib safaris, schooners and various boats renovated perfectly for whale watching. A unique experience available both in Húsavík the whale watching capital, or in the calm sea of Eyjafjörður fjord, sheltered by mountains.

## Highland Excursions

Highland excursions to Herðubreið, known in Iceland as queen of the mountains, Kverkfjöll or Hveravellir are all extremely popular. Trout fishing in the wild highlands of Arnarvatnsheiði south of Húnaflói bay is equally unforgettable.

## River Rafting

Austari-Jökulsá (East Glacial River) has earned the reputation of being one of the most exciting rivers in Europe. Enjoy the excitement of white water river rafting or more relaxed family tours in Vestari-Jökulsá (West Glacial River).

## Lake Mývatn Geothermal Area

In the region of Lake Mývatn, located on the Mid-Atlantic Ridge, the most interesting sights are volcanic or geothermal features including the pseudocraters at Skútustaðir, Höfði peninsula, Dimmuborgir lava formations, Hverfell Crater, Hverir hot spring area, Krafla volcanic area and Mývatn Nature Baths. The area is considered one of the best bird watching places in Iceland as there are more species of duck gathered in and around its waters than anywhere else on the planet.

# Culture and Sagas



## Local Food

North Icelanders are known for being great gourmets, and their food customs and traditions have a long history. The north has a diverse range of restaurants where the main emphasis is on cooking varied dishes from fresh and local produce, including both local and international traditions.

## Geothermal Bathing

Visit North Iceland's favourite lagoon, the Mývatn Nature Baths, surrounded by the volcanic nature and lava fields of Mývatn area. The historic Grettislaug geothermal pool, named after Grettir the strong, gives you an opportunity to relax while surrounded by the ocean and black sand beach, while looking at Drangey Iceland known for its puffins and rich birdlife. Icelanders love visiting the 32 outdoor geothermal swimming pools found in every village, each one with its own unique aspects. Soaking in a hot outdoor pool after a day spent outdoors skiing or hiking is a magical experience.

## Yule Lads

Dimmuborgir lava field is the home to the 13 Icelandic Yule Lads. They are the cheeky sons of Grýla and Leppalúði trolls. 13 days before Christmas they come one by one during the night and give presents to children who behave well. In Mývatn they can be visited in November and December.

## Local Culture and Historic Sites

The culture and way of life from past centuries is commemorated in historical museums showing artefacts of olden days, mostly relating to the traditional occupations of agriculture and fishing. Natural science museums focus on representative samples and noteworthy characteristics of Iceland's geology, flora and fauna. The area has numerous sites of historic interest where visitors are introduced to the art of storytelling, poems and sagas stretching back to the Viking Age.

## Towns and Villages

Akureyri is the capital of North Iceland, easily accessed by a short connecting flight from Reykjavik to Akureyri International Airport. The town, often named the little big city, offers a most diverse range of accommodation and food. Each of the 25 villages and coastal towns in North Iceland has its own characteristics of recreation, entertainment and lively residents.

## Driving

Scheduled bus tours are available every day or you can take your own car. Road conditions are good but keep in mind that due to snow and ice, driving conditions during winter can be difficult at times. Always check on conditions with Safe Travel before you start your journey.

## Flying

Direct connecting flights are available to Akureyri from Europe and USA by Icelandair from June to September.

From Reykjavik two airlines offer scheduled 45 min flights to North Iceland, Air Iceland to Akureyri and Eagle Air to Húsavík. Scheduled and sightseeing flights are available to Grímsey island and Þórshöfn by Norlandair and Air Iceland.

## Ferries

Ferries are available several times pr day to Hrísey Island (15 min) and Grímsey Island (3,5 hours).

## Weather

North Iceland offers mild winter temperatures, the days being amazingly light due to the magical illumination of snow, moon and northern lights. May to August is mostly mild and often sunny days with bright arctic summer nights when the sun never sets.

## Clothing

Weather conditions can quickly change during the day so be prepared. Wear warm clothes with a wind and waterproof jacket. Layers are easy to adjust if the weather changes. In winter hats, gloves and good shoes are a must, preferably boots with good soles. Temperatures during summer can range from 5-25°C and from -15-10°C in winter.



# Unique North Iceland

Iceland's no 1 winter destination with snow, winter sports, northern lights and geothermal bathing in mild winter temperatures.

Akureyri the capital of the north with 18 thousand inhabitants, the biggest town outside Reykjavík.

Grímsey island where you can step over the Arctic Circle and Raufarhöfn, the Arctic Circle Village near Hraunhafnartangi, the northernmost point of the Icelandic mainland.

Dettifoss, Europe's most powerful waterfall, Vatnajökull national park including Askja crater close to Holuhraun, Iceland's freshest lava and Bárðarbunga volcano.

Hvitserkur sea cliff stands 15 m high just off shore on the eastern side of Vatnsnes peninsula.

An area of only 36 thousand people, with rich coastal culture, variety of activities and easy access to the vast Icelandic highlands.

North Iceland was voted as one of the Top Ten European Destinations in 2013 by Lonely Planet.

Photo: Holuhraun 2014  
By: Hörður Finnbogason

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