

# Classic Laugavegur Trail Trek

Trip Code: ILT

Version: ILT Classic Laugavegur Trail Trek



WALK & TREK



GUIDED GROUP



MODERATE



## HIGHLIGHTS

- A trekking holiday through the volcanic landscape of Iceland's southern highlands
- Trek between vibrant yellow rhyolite mountains and over black sand deserts
- Sleep in cosy mountain huts and enjoy delicious Icelandic meals
- Walk past steam-vents, icecaps, and soak in rejuvenating natural hot springs

**AT A GLANCE**

- 5 days trekking
- Max altitude - 1060 metres
- Join at Reykjavik

**ACCOMMODATIONS & MEALS**

- All meals included
- 4 nights Mountain Hut / Refuge

[VIEW DATES, PRICES & BOOK YOUR HOLIDAY HERE](#)

## Introduction

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From the modern city of Reykjavik to the volcanoes, glaciers and tortured lava formations of the interior, Iceland is a country of great contrast. This wild and wonderful walking holiday takes us across the most outrageous of Iceland's volcanic landscapes, the southern highlands. The Laugavegar Trail weaves across the dramatic volcanic region of the Fjallabak, one of the most spectacular places for a walking holiday in the world. Driving close to Hekla, Iceland's famously active volcano, we reach the start of our trek at Landmannalaugar. From here, our first afternoon of walking takes us south into the mountains, through rocky gorges and by way of steaming hot springs to the ancient lava flows of Hrafninnusker and our first night in a cosy mountain hut. Our route continues via Lake Alftavatn (Swan Lake) and across the extraordinary black sands of Maelifellssandur, below the Myrdalsjokull Icecap. We traverse the former summer grazing area at Emstrur and visit the magnificent Markarfljot Canyon, en route to the picturesque glaciated valley and birch woodland of Thorsmork (Thor's Forest), where we spend our fourth and final night at a mountain hut where we will enjoy a celebratory BBQ. On our last morning at Thorsmork, we have the option to visit Songhellir Cave and to hike to the top of the small peak, Valahnukur, before catching the bus back to Reykjavik.

### Is this holiday for you?

This is real wilderness travel, with the Icelandic landscape changing dramatically each day. The trails will change from good paths to rocky scree and expanses of black volcanic sand, from green valley pastures to windswept ridges. Especially on the first departures of the season you are also likely to encounter snow patches, some of them quite extensive. There will also be river crossings on most days and the weather can be very unpredictable. We will walk for approximately 4 to 5 hours on Days 1 and 2 and 6 to 7 hours on Days 3 and 4, with the opportunity for further exploration on the morning of Day 5. The route is generally undulating, rather than hilly, with no more than 600 metres of ascent on any of the days. This trekking holiday is suitable for any regular hillwalker, but be prepared for a unique experience. The group's baggage is carried by the support vehicle and this means you can walk with just a light daysack.

# Itinerary

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## DAY 1

**The holiday starts and the BSI Bus Terminal in Reykjavik. Drive via Mount Hekla to Landmannalaugar. Afternoon walk via gorges and hot springs to Hrafninnusker.**

The holiday starts at 0630am at the BSI Bus Terminal, Vatnsmýrarvegur 10 on the morning of Day 1. The bus to Landmannalaugar will leave at 0700am sharp. It would be a good idea to ask your accommodation to prepare you an early breakfast that you can bring with you.

Your main luggage will go in the support vehicle, so please make sure that you have everything you need for the first day in your daypack. You will need to wear your sturdy waterproof hiking boots and bring your backpack on the bus. The daypack needs to contain your water bottle, rain clothes (trousers and jacket), sunglasses, sunscreen, gloves, warm hat, and a warm sweater/jacket. If you also want to dip into the warm river in Landmannalaugar you will also need to carry a swimsuit and towel.

The drive takes around 4 hours and is one of the most scenic routes in Iceland. We cross the high moorland of Hellisheidi and pass south of the steaming volcano, Hengill. We pass also the greenhouses of Hveragerði Village, where hot water is cheaper than cold water and keeping buildings cool is more of an issue than heating! East of the Thjorsa River, we head inland and cross to the north of Mount Hekla. We now enter the black Domadalur (Valley of Doom), which is gateway to the Fjallabak (Backcountry) Nature Reserve. The Fjallabak is a huge mountainous wilderness that is constantly built up by ongoing volcanic activity and eroded by glaciers, rivers and wind. Finally reaching Landmannalaugar, we have lunch, before setting off on the first stage of our walk to Hrafninnusker. Setting off southwards into the mountains, we cross the 500-year-old Laugahraun lava flow that is still giving heat to the Landmannalaugar hot springs. Climbing steadily past numerous sulphur vents, we top a succession of rolling rhyolite hills before descending to the steaming hot springs at Stórihver. As we get higher, the better we can understand the forces of nature. Whole mountains have been created and remoulded by thousands of years of boiling sulphuric vents and glacial erosion. Up on the plateau, steam rises in all directions from unseen vents. We reach our accommodation at the Hrafninnusker Mountain Hut in the late afternoon. Here, we meet the support vehicle for the first time since leaving Reykjavik and have access to our main baggage. Our guide will prepare the evening meal at the hut and will appreciate help with the food preparation, serving and washing up.

Meals: L D



**Accommodation**  
Mountain Hut / Refuge



**Ascent**  
500M



**Descent**  
50M



**Time**  
4 - 5 hrs walking



**Distance**  
11KM

**DAY 2****Trek via a chaotic canyon system to the beautiful lake of Alftavatn (Swan Lake).**

The idea that there is always some logic to landscape is proved to be false today, as we head south into the canyon complex to the south of Hrafninnusker. Descending into the gullies of Jokultungur, we come across hundreds of steaming hot springs and mud pools. The route meanders easily southwards, crossing old snow patches and climbing to ridges where we have views across dark volcanic plains towards Alftavatn and the Myrdalsjokull and Eyjafjallajokull glaciers. Crossing the southern edge of the Torfajokull Massif, we descend a long slope towards the black sands and palagonite ridges around Lake Alftavatn (Swan Lake). Arriving at the lake, one of the most beautiful locations on our route, we check in at the Alftavatn Mountain Hut.

Meals: **B L D**



**Accommodation**  
Mountain Hut / Refuge



**Ascent**  
80M



**Descent**  
600M



**Time**  
4 - 5 hrs walking



**Distance**  
12KM

**DAY 3****Cross rivers and trek via the black sand plain of Maelifelssandur to Emstrur.**

There are several rivers to cross today, as we head southwards and towards the white ice cliffs of the Myrdalsjokull Icecap. Some of these glacial streams and rivers are bridged, but others need to be forded - a chilly experience for the feet. After a long, but gentle climb, we descend to the green oasis of Hvanngil, where there is a mountain hut. We continue our walk, crossing another couple of rivers, to reach the surreal 5 kilometre wide, black sand plain of Maelifelssandur, beneath the conical peak of Storasula. Heading now towards Hattfell, another ancient volcano, we reach the Emstrur region where farmers used to graze their sheep in summer. Before arriving at the Botnar Mountain Hut (our accommodation for the night) we visit the magnificent Markarfljot canyon which is cut almost 200 metres down into the rocks south of Hattfell.

Meals: **B L D**



**Accommodation**  
Mountain Hut / Refuge



**Ascent**  
130M



**Descent**  
160M



**Time**  
6 - 7 hrs walking








**Distance**  
16KM

**DAY 4**

## Trek through the Markarfljot Canyons to the spectacular Thorsmork Valley.

The first challenge today is to cross the bridge across the Emstrur River. Having overcome this obstacle, we trek through the magnificent Markarfljot Canyon, which was carved out by thundering floods, caused by volcanic eruptions under the ice cap. The effects of erosional forces are visible at every step on this trip and nowhere more obvious than in the Thorsmork Valley. For the first time on our trek, we enter a green and well-vegetated valley, which becomes more luxuriant the closer we get to Thorsmork. The last part of the hike is through thick birch forest, where even the lava ridges are covered with scrubby trees and the lovely arctic flowers that bloom for a few weeks each summer. Thorsmork means Thor's forest and it is not hard to see why this lovely area should be considered to belong to a god. It is out of this world! The valley is guarded on all sides by tremendous, fast-flowing rivers and steep glacier-clad mountains. It is one of the most beautiful spots in Iceland and the favourite weekend retreat of many of Reykjavik's walkers. We overnight at one of the Thorsmork huts.

Meals: **B L D**

	<b>Accommodation</b> Mountain Hut / Refuge		<b>Ascent</b> 200M		<b>Descent</b> 450M		<b>Time</b> 6 - 7 hrs walking
	<b>Distance</b> 17KM						

### DAY 5

## Morning at Thorsmork, then return drive to Reykjavik via the south coast. The holiday ends on arrival at the BSI Bus Terminal.

We spend the morning in Thorsmork, with the option to take it easy or to walk one of the numerous trails. One option is to visit to Songhellir Cave (Song Cave) and there is also the opportunity to trek up to the viewpoint of Valahnukur, from where we can look across to the icecaps of Myrdalsjokull (1460m) and Eyjafjallajokull (1666m). After lunch, we catch the bus back to the Central Bus Station in Reykjavik where the holiday ends. We expect to arrive at approximately 1930. From here you can walk, or take a taxi back to your accommodation.

Meals: **B L**

	<b>Ascent</b> 100M		<b>Descent</b> 100M		<b>Time</b> 2 - 3 hrs walking		<b>Distance</b> 6KM
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## Holiday Information

## What's Included

- A professional and qualified tour leader
- Accommodation as described
- Meals as detailed in the Meal Plan
- All land transport required by the itinerary
- Vehicle support throughout the trip

## What's not Included

- Travel insurance
- Accommodation in Reykjavik
- Airport transfers between Keflavik Airport and Reykjavik are not included
- Some meals as detailed in the Meal Plan
- Miscellaneous expenses - drinks and souvenirs etc

## Joining Arrangements & Transfers

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### TRAVEL TO YOUR DESTINATION

If flying from the UK there are low cost airlines available to the start and from the end of your holiday.

To benefit from full financial protection, ease your holiday planning, and avoid dealing with airlines, we can book scheduled flights from the UK as part of a flight inclusive package. Scheduled flights are usually more expensive than low cost alternatives, however potentially less stressful if your flight is cancelled or delayed. If you book flights through KE Adventure Travel we will offset the carbon of your flight.

The holiday starts at the BSI Bus Terminal at 06:30 on the morning of Day 1. After a quick briefing from the Tour Leader, you will catch the 07:00 public bus to Landmannalaugar.

You will need to book your own accommodation in Reykjavik. Transfers between Keflavik Airport and Reykjavik are also not included.

Contact details and an emergency number will be provided with your booking confirmation.

## Meal Plan

4 breakfasts, 5 lunches and 4 dinners are included in the holiday price.



## Food & Water

Many places on this holiday have drinkable water from the tap to fill your personal water bottles. Please check with the leader at the various locations. Please take purification tablets or a filter bottle (such as a [Water-To-Go bottle](#)) for days when drinking water out of the tap is not available. We do not encourage the purchasing of single use plastic bottles.

All food is purchased in Reykjavik, with the emphasis on fresh produce and easily-prepared meals. The tour leader will prepare the group's evening meals and they will appreciate the help of group members in the kitchen - preparing vegetables, serving the food and washing up, for example. Local specialities predominate; including excellent sea-fish and Icelandic lamb, as well as the chance of fresh Arctic char. Breakfasts will consist of porridge, muesli, bread, jam, cheese, ham, plus tea and coffee. At breakfast, snack items and sandwich materials will be made available so that group members can make up their own packed lunches.

It is not possible to cater for vegetarian/vegan diets as standard on this tour. A special diet can be ordered for a supplementary cost (ISK7000/£50 (2023)). The supplement will ensure that you will be supplied with balanced meals that meet the requirements of your diet. If you require another specialised diet, for example gluten free/lactose intolerant please contact the office to discuss your requirements.

## Special Diets

Whilst we can cater for vegetarians, albeit sometimes with a more limited choice, we cannot always provide special diets. Due to the nature of some of the trips that we operate and the countries in which we operate them, it can be very hard (and sometimes impossible) to cater for a wide range of dietary choices and you may have to supplement your diet with food/snacks from home. If you have specific dietary requirements please do speak to our sales team and they will be able to advise you whether or not we will be able to offer your specific choice. Please note that we are unable to provide separate menus and cannot accept liability for any problems arising from special dietary requirements or intolerances.

## Accommodation

For our 4 nights on the Laugavegar Trail we will stay in cosy Icelandic mountain huts with dormitory-style accommodation and shared facilities. Sleeping bags are required in the huts. Showers are available at some of the huts, but there is a fee to use them. The huts generally do not have electricity and we recommend bringing a power bank to charge your electrical devices.

## Group Leader & Support Staff

The group will be led by a professional and qualified tour leader. There will also be a support vehicle and driver.

## Spending Money

Approximately £150 - £200 (in local currency) should be allowed for miscellaneous expenses, including meals in Reykjavik. You can withdraw cash from ATMs in most towns in Iceland using a credit or debit card. If you wish to bring your travel money in cash this can be changed into Icelandic Krona at the airport. Meals whilst on trek are included, so you will only need to pay directly for meals other than breakfast whilst staying in Reykjavik. In Reykjavik there is a wide range of dining options and you can expect to pay from around 2500ISK for lunch and 4000ISK for an evening meal in a restaurant in Reykjavik.

## Guidance on Tipping

Tipping is the accepted way of saying 'thank you' to your leader and local team. Tipping is entirely voluntary and should be dependent on good service. We recommend that you decide levels of tipping and give any tips as a group rather than from individual group members.

## Baggage Allowance

For this holiday you should take one piece of luggage, which should be a soft duffle bag, and a daypack. For international flights please check your baggage allowance with your airline.

## Group Size & Holiday Status

For each holiday there is a minimum number of participants required to enable it to go ahead. Once the minimum number is reached, the trip status will change from 'Available' to 'Guaranteed to run'. You can check the trip status for each departure in 'Dates and Prices' table. Other than in exceptional circumstances, we will not cancel a trip once it has achieved this guaranteed to run status and so you are free to proceed with your international flight booking and other travel arrangements.



# General Information

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## Passport & Visas

The information that we provide is for UK passport holders. A passport with 6 months remaining validity at the end of your stay is generally required, and you should have at least 2 blank pages for each country that you visit.

**It is your responsibility to ensure that you have the correct travel documents and visas for your holiday.** Please ensure that you check for the latest advice before travel. For the most up to date information on entry requirements, please visit the [UK Government website](#).

## Visa Iceland

UK and USA passport holders do not require a visa for short stays.

## Health & Vaccinations

If you have a severe allergy please inform the KE office before you travel. We will do all we can to help, but we cannot guarantee an allergy free environment on KE trips. You will need to carry your own treatment for the allergy with you, as 'adrenaline auto-injectors' are not carried as standard by KE leaders and staff. You should inform your leader on arrival of your allergy, and let them know where you keep your adrenaline pen.

## Vaccinations

You should contact your doctor or travel clinic to check whether you require any specific vaccinations.

## GHIC / Medical cover

UK residents should carry a free Global Health Insurance Card (GHIC). This entitles you to state provided medical treatment when you're visiting an EU country or Switzerland. This is not a substitute for medical travel insurance which is vital when travelling overseas.

## Currency

The unit of currency in Iceland is the Icelandic Krona.

## Preparing for your Holiday

Getting some additional exercise before coming on an active holiday makes a lot of sense. The fitter you are, after all, the more enjoyable you will find the experience.

You should be aerobically fit and comfortable with walking 3 to 6 hours for consecutive days. Hill walking, with a good amount of ascent and descent, is the best training. Running, cycling and swimming are also good for developing cardiovascular fitness and stamina.

## Climate

Despite its location on the edge of the Arctic Circle, Iceland is not the cold country we sometimes imagine. The island benefits from the influence of the Gulf Stream, which bathes its south, west and north-west coasts, giving the country a temperate oceanic climate (relatively mild winters and relatively cool summers). In Reykjavík, average temperatures are between 0 ° C in January and 12 ° C in July. In winter, they are slightly lower in the northeast and in the east, due to the Greenland polar current. In fact, only the interior of the land experiences really low temperatures, which can drop below -15 ° C. The rains are more abundant in the south than in the north. As for the winds, they are very frequent and sometimes strong. The only thing certain about Icelandic weather is that it is extremely changeable, so you should be prepared for four seasons in one day, though generally it is warm and sunny in summer.

December, January and the first half of February have little daylight (from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. approximately), but, on the other hand, from May to mid-August it is permanent. June has beautiful light and long days.

## Travel Aware

As a reputable tour operator, KE supports the British Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office's '[Travel Aware](#)' campaign to enable British citizens to prepare for their journeys overseas. The 'Travel Aware' website provides a single, authoritative source of advice for all kinds of travellers and we recommend that prior to travel, all KE clients visit the official UK Government website at [travelaware.campaign.gov.uk](http://travelaware.campaign.gov.uk) and read the FCDO Travel Advice for their chosen destination. North Americans can also check out the U.S. Department of State website: [www.travel.state.gov](http://www.travel.state.gov) for essential travel advice and tips.

KE treat the safety and security of all clients as the most important aspect of any trip we organise. We would not run any trip that we did not consider reasonably safe. Should the FCDO advise against travel for any reason, we will contact everyone booked to travel to discuss the situation. We receive regular updates direct from the FCDO and are in constant touch with our contacts on the ground. If you have any questions about government travel advice, please call our office.

## Single Use Plastic

KE do not encourage the use of single use plastic items. We are ensuring that our agents all over the world are working together to reduce the problem and educate those around them. We are leading by example in our KE office by reducing our plastic use.

## Maps

**Mal og Menning. Fjallabak. Hekla - Laki. 1:100,000 scale.**

The Icelandic maps published by Mal og Menning are good. The above map covers the area of the trek in detail. There are also general maps at a smaller scale, such as Island (covers the whole island) at a scale of 1:600,000.

## Travel Insurance

It is an essential condition of joining a holiday with KE Adventure Travel that you have a valid travel insurance policy to cover the cost of medical treatment and to protect the value of your holiday in the event of cancellation. When taking out insurance please ensure the policy you choose covers you for the activities and altitude included in your itinerary.

For appropriate insurance cover we recommend Campbell Irvine Direct. Please go to our [Travel Insurance](#) page for further information and to get a quote.

# Equipment Information

## Equipment List

Please try to keep the weight of your baggage to a minimum. See the 'baggage allowance' section for further details.

**You SHOULD bring the following items:**

- Sturdy and waterproof hiking boots
- Gaiters
- Sandals or similar (for river crossings)
- Socks and underwear
- Trekking trousers
- Waterproof overtrousers
- Baselayer shirts (1 short sleeve, 1 long sleeve)

- Midlayer fleece
- Fleece jacket or jumper
- Casual shirt or T-shirt (for Reykjavik evenings)
- Warm jacket (down or synthetic)
- Waterproof jacket
- Warm hat
- Light thermal gloves
- Waterproof overgloves or mittens
- Sunglasses
- Sleeping bag (comfort rated 0°C)\*
- Drybags (to keep items in your luggage dry)
- Daypack 30 litres
- Sun protection (including for lips)
- Water bottles x 2 (1 Litre) (we encourage re-filling water bottles rather than single use plastic)
- Water purification tablets
- Washbag and toiletries
- Swimwear (for hot springs)
- Small trek towel
- Antibacterial handwash

- Basic First Aid Kit. Including: antiseptic cream, throat lozenges, diarrhoea treatment (Imodium), painkillers, plasters and blister treatment, Insect repellent, and re-hydration salts (Dioralite).

**The following items are optional:**

- Sleeping bag liner
- Trainers
- Trekking poles\*
- Shorts
- Spare laces
- Headtorch
- Eye mask - to assist sleeping in the near 24-hour daylight
- Travel clothes
- Repair kit - (eg. needle, thread, duct tape)
- Camera
- Pen-knife (remember to put all sharp objects in hold baggage)
- Reusable cloth bag for shopping (to avoid plastic bags)

**Equipment hire:**

\*Available for hire/rental through KE Adventure Travel

**Cotswold Outdoor**



Many of the Equipment items listed above are available from [Cotswold Outdoor](#) - our '**Official Recommended Outdoor Retailer**'. When you book a holiday with KE you will receive 12.5% discount voucher from Cotswold Outdoor and other retailers.  
[>> Find out more](#)

## Land Only Information

We sell this holiday on a Land Only basis allowing you the flexibility to choose the travel method that best suits you. The holiday starts at the BSI Bus Stop in Reykjavik. Keflavik Airport is the most convenient airport. Transfers and accommodation in Reykjavik are not provided.

# Why Choose KE

## Why KE

Walk the full classic Laugavegur route (named as one of the 20 best treks in the world by National Geographic) across the Fjallabak, in 5 days, with an experienced guide, vehicle support and mountain hut accommodation.

**Please Note** This document was downloaded on 06/05/2024 and the trip is subject to change