

Self-Guided Icelandic Adventure

Trip Code: SGIR

Version: SGIR Self-Guided Icelandic Adventure



WALK & TREK



SELF-GUIDED



LEISURELY



HIGHLIGHTS

- Discover the Snaefellsnes Peninsula, the epitome of Icelandic landscape
- Relax in the warm waters of the Sky Lagoon
- Awaken your senses as you experience the Hengill Volcano area
- Hike to Glymur Waterfall and Kirkjufjell, the famous mountain in Iceland

AT A GLANCE

- Self-Guided
- 6 days walking and sightseeing
- Hire Car Included
- Daily departures available
- Join at Keflavik Airport

ACCOMMODATIONS & MEALS

- 6 Breakfasts
- 7 nights Hotel

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

Introduction

Experience Iceland in all its glory, away from the crowds and at your own pace, on this fantastic Self-Guided Walk and Drive trip. Arriving in the land of fire and ice your first stop will be the Sky Lagoon where an authentic Icelandic bathing experience will set the tone for the rest of your week. Spend time exploring the vibrant capital of Reykjavik with its photogenic architecture and many enticing restaurants before heading for the Snaefellsnes Peninsula- a mini Iceland within Iceland! Experiencing its diverse landscape of glaciers, mountains, lava fields and black volcanic beaches you will soon be captivated by this wild peninsula. You will have opportunity to hike to the mysterious Djupalonssandur beach where the power of volcanic lava meets the force of the Atlantic, to the breath taking Kirkjufjell and its cascades, and to the thundering Glymur Waterfall.

Of course no trip to Iceland is complete without a visit to the Golden Circle, though in true KE style your walks will veer away from the crowds to experience this fantastic region like a local. Bringing geology to life and awakening your senses you will walk through the geothermal region of Hengill Volcano and stand in awe on the Reykjanes Peninsula as nature's masterpiece is created before you in the form of fresh lava fields and incredible patterns of rope lava form. Ending your trip on a high you return to Reykjavik for your final evening of your Icelandic adventure. Well, that is, unless you choose to stay a little longer in the city and take advantage of the endless list of day trips in the region whether you fancy whale watching or visiting the famed Blue Lagoon.

Is this holiday for you?

If you love to have time in the city, seeing the sights and then retreating away from the crowds into wild landscapes, then this is the trip for you. If you are fascinated by the power of nature and geology, then this is also the trip for you. With time unwinding with an authentic Icelandic bathing experience, and time in the hustle and bustle of Reykjavik before leaving the crowds to hike on the Snaefellsnes Peninsula you will have the perfect balance of culture and wild escape. Plus with your own car and a selection of walks between 3 to 6 hours each day you can enjoy this fantastic region at your own pace.

Itinerary

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DAY 1

Welcome to Iceland, the land of Ice and Fire!

Arrive in Keflavik and collect your hire car for the week. To help you relax into the holiday mood we have included a visit to the Sky Lagoon so you can stop off on your way to Reykjavik, after all, you can't visit Iceland without experiencing an authentic Icelandic bathing experience in one of the famed geothermal lagoons. You can look forward to taking part in the seven-step Sky Ritual designed to follow traditional bathing culture and leave you refreshed and invigorated as you make your way from hot and cold bathing pools against a spectacular Atlantic backdrop.

Once you have soaked away the stresses of travelling you can check into your hotel in Reykjavik and explore the fantastic city. Be sure to take a stroll to the Hallgrímskirkja, a star of a thousand postcards and an impressive landmark that dominates the skyline. The impressive church also provides a panoramic view from its 75m tower. We also recommend visiting the Harpa Concert Hall and Old Harbour, one of the most iconic buildings in the city where, if you are lucky, you may be able to enjoy a concert too. End your day dining in one of Reykjavik's many fantastic restaurants and enjoy your first taste of the delicious, hearty cuisine.



Accommodation
Hotel

DAY 2

Discover the Snaefellsnes Peninsula, the epitome of Icelandic landscape.

Today you say farewell to the city and head north to the spectacular Snaefellsnes Peninsula, which translates to snow mountain peninsula. Along your way you may wish to break up your journey with a walk to the perfectly formed crater of Eldborg, which rises 60m above the surrounding lava. Arriving on the Snaefellsnes Peninsula you will soon see it lives up to its name. It is the personification of Icelandic landscape with its diverse landscape of glaciers, mountains and lava fields leading you down to its beautiful coast and beaches. Discover Borgarnes, one of the first places Vikings settled on the island, admire the seals frolicking at Ytri Tunga Beach and perhaps visit the beautiful little wooden Black Church of Budir.

Arriving in the charming port of Arnarstapi, nestled at the base of the iconic Snaefellsnesjökull your walk will take you to explore these contrasting landscapes along the south coast. When you have finished exploring you can settle in to your hotel for the evening with its envious location on the coast.

Meals: **B**



Accommodation
Hotel

DAY 3

Experience the mysterious beach of Djupalonssandur and hike to Kirkjufjell, the most famous mountain in Iceland.

Waking up in this wild paradise, today you will further explore the southern coast of Snaefellsnes before heading to the north of the peninsula where you will spend the night. Be captivated by the geological wonders of the ancient lava flows and the ocean reef formed as they hit the cold Atlantic at the beach of Djupalonssandur. Walk along its striking black sand and lava pebble beach and experience the mysterious atmosphere created by the remnants of a shipwreck and the four ancient lifting stones, once used to test aspiring fisherman's strength. You will discover the commanding yellow lighthouse of Svortuloft, a warning to fisherman below of the perils of the sea before heading to the northern peninsula where the landscape changes and fjords appear, adorned with waterfalls. As you approach the imposing Kirkjufjell you can't help but grab for your camera to capture its picture perfect Kirkjufellsfoss cascades. It will be no surprise that it is said to be the most famous mountain in Iceland!

Arriving in Stykkisholmur, with its typically colourful wooden buildings, you can settle into your hotel before venturing out to sample one of the local restaurants.

Meals: **B**



Accommodation
Hotel

DAY 4

Take a scenic drive through the Hvalfjorour Fjord and hike to the thundering cascades of Glymur Waterfall.

Feeling refreshed today will take you on a scenic drive through the picturesque Hvalfjorour Fjord which, ironically, is home to many species but is not somewhere you will spot whales despite its name meaning whale fjord. Arriving at the starting point of your walk you will discover the spectacular Glymur Waterfall with its 196m of cascades, a worthy reward for your efforts. You may also wish to take a detour for an exciting twist, to the delightful Reykholt Valley which showcases the Deildartunguhver hot springs, known as the fastest flowing in the world and the waterfalls of Hraunfossar and Barnafalls too. Your journey will take you to the realm of the Golden Circle where you will spend the evening in preparation for your exploration tomorrow.

Meals: **B**



Accommodation
Hotel

DAY 5

Enjoy the full Golden Circle experience and leave the crowds behind as you hike through the geological area of Thingvellir.

Famed as a 'must see' in Iceland, the Golden Circle comprises of three of the country's most popular attractions: Thingvellir National Park, the Geysir geothermal area and the waterfall of Gullfoss. Today you will get to experience the three parks and enjoy leaving the crowds behind as you venture on a walk off the beaten track. Your first stop will be at the Thingvellir National Park where you will be greeted with the majestic landscapes sculpted by the forces of continental drift and past volcanic activity: tectonic faults, lava fields, the lava dome of Skaldbreidur, and the shimmering waters of Thingvallavatn, the largest body of fresh water in Iceland. There is a reason these national parks are classified as a 'must see' and you will no doubt have your camera's memory bursting with snaps of nature's artistry.

When you have finished taking in the beauty you can look forward to taking a step away from the crowds for a few hours as you take a walk through the unique historical and geological area. Returning to your car your next stop is Geysir where you can observe the geyser Strokkur in action as it spouts its boiling water up to 20 m in the air every 5 to 8 minutes! Your final treat of the day is a walk to the stunning Gullfloss Waterfall where you will be mesmerised by its thundering beauty as the Hvita River falls into the impressive canyon. With all that excitement you end your day with another night staying in the famous Golden Circle.

Meals: **B**



Accommodation
Hotel

DAY 6

Explore Hengill Volcano area for a sensory filled hike, visit the geothermal fields and stay in Hveragerdi - the hot spring town.

Enjoy a relaxed breakfast before embarking on today's adventure, an exploration of Hengill Volcano. This is an area to get hot under the collar as the largest geothermal area in Iceland performs its constant display of power. While the volcano itself hasn't erupted for some 2000 years, the lava still runs close to the surface providing an ultimate sensory experience as you walk through the area. You can expect to encounter vibrant colours, hear the hissing sounds of the hot springs and steam vents and see the mud pools bubbling away like a witch's cauldron. There is so much power here that it is one of the renewable sources used to harvest Iceland's electricity and heated water. Who knows your shower this evening may be heated from the landscape you have been walking through today.

When you have finished exploring this fascinating area you make your way to the nearby town of Hveragerði for the night. The town, often known as the hot spring town, is home to the Hveragerði Earthquake Exhibition where you can experience an earthquake simulator and learn of the quake that hit the south of Iceland in 2008. You will have time to visit the museum and the other local attractions before enjoying dinner and settling into your hotel for the evening.

PLEASE NOTE: the geothermal areas are closely monitored by authorities and can be closed during periods of increased activity as was the case in summer 2023. There has been no lava flowing since 05 August 2023.

Meals: **B**



Accommodation
Hotel

DAY 7

Brace yourself for a hike through the Fagradalsfjall area and watch the lava flow before you. End your trip with a night in Reykjavik to raise a toast to a fantastic Icelandic adventure.

Today brings a highlight of the week as you venture along the southern coast of Reykjanes Peninsula. This untamed coastline is best known for its volcanic action and its otherworldly landscapes this creates, a landscape changing before you. Witness the bubbling cauldrons of mud at Krysuvík and marvel at the geological formations at Kleifarvatn Lake.

Your hike today will take you through the eruptive Fagradalsfjall area, the most active area in Iceland having witnesses to the last three eruptions in Iceland; Geldingadalir in 2021, Meradalir in 2022, and Litla-Hrú in 2023. The region is closely monitored and hosts a network of pathways for you to explore this area and really bring geology to life before your eyes. Brace yourself for a spectacle of smoking craters, freshly formed lava fields, fragmented lava blankets and incredible patterns of rope lava!

When you have finished exploring this fascinating area you return to Reykjavik to spend your final night in the city and enjoy another opportunity to soak up the city atmosphere, visit the attractions and raise a glass over dinner to a great week in the Land of Fire and Ice.

Meals: **B**



Accommodation
Hotel

DAY 8

Departure Day.

Your Icelandic adventure has come to an end and today you make your onward journey. Depending on your travel plans you may wish to enjoy a final stroll through the city and immerse yourself in the unique culture. You may even wish to end your trip in the same way as it started, with a visit to one of the thermal pools.

If you aren't quite ready for your trip to end then why not book some additional nights in Reykjavik so you can delight in some of the many day trips from the city such as whale watching tours or visit the famous Blue Lagoon. Our sales team will be happy to arrange additional night's accommodation for you, please ask for a quote.

Holiday Information

What's Included

- All accommodation as described
- Meals as described in the Meal Plan
- Self-guided information pack containing your map and route notes
- Pure Pass entrance to Sky Lagoon (min age: 12)
- Car Hire

What's not Included

- Travel insurance
- Travel to / from Keflavik Airport
- City taxes (approx. 2-5 Icelandic Krona per night)
- Visas (if applicable)
- Some meals as described in the Meal Plan
- Personal equipment
- Fuel for the hire car
- Any additional activities/excursions indicated as optional

Your Self-Guided Pack & Route Notes

Each self-guided holiday comes with comprehensive route notes and a map or pocket guidebook of the area you are exploring. The route notes contain information about the places you will visit, about the local transport you might need, along with the detailed route notes for your daily walks or cycle rides. We even include some tips for the best places to stop for lunch.

You can expect to receive your Self-Guided Pack containing your route notes, a map or guidebook and all your relevant documents no later than 3 weeks before your holiday start date. We will send your documents using signed for courier so that you can track your package and know that they are safely on their way to you. For bookings of more than 4 people we will send an additional Self-Guided Pack. If you do not need this additional pack please inform our sales team. Your pack will be sent to the lead booker so please remind them to pack it before you set off.

Should your self-guided trip be part of a longer adventure requiring you to leave home more than three weeks before your holiday start date, please do inform our sales team so that we can make alternative delivery arrangements.

Car Hire

Car hire is included in the cost of this trip and is supplied by our partner Avis.

The car type included on this trip is based on the number of passengers in your group. We include the following car types:

Category A hire for solo travellers and bookings of 2 passengers

Category N hire for bookings of 3 to 4 passengers

Please note that the car hire office is open 06.00 - 01.00 daily and cars must be collected/ returned within these times. We ask that you take this into consideration when choosing your flights.

Upon booking with us you will be asked to provide the name and driving license details of the person within your party who will be the designated driver for your group. It is important to note that the driver must be over the age of 25 years old and have held a clean licence EU driving license for a minimum of 3 years. It is possible to add an additional driver to the booking in resort for an additional fee.

Please ensure you read the terms and conditions of the car hire www.avis.co.uk/TermsAndCondition

You can also find answers to frequently asked questions and further information regarding our self-guided holidays with car hire [here](#).

Self-Guided Families

Our Self-Guided Holidays are perfect for your next family holiday and are suitable for children of all ages.

Our partner hotels and accommodations are able to provide cots for young children, and some offer family rooms. We can also arrange hire of children's bikes and tag along bikes for our self-guided cycling trips and with trips such as Lake Constance and the Danube offering routes on designated cycle paths you can rest assured in keeping your family safe.

As a parent we trust that you know your own child's capabilities, please read the itinerary details to ensure the distances covered each day are suitable for your family. If this is a first time walking holiday for your family, a centre based trip is a fantastic option as it allows you to easily opt out of a days walking if a day of building sand castles, swimming in the pool or visiting museums is calling.

Please discuss this further with our sales team who will be happy to assist in picking the best trip for your family.

Joining Arrangements & Transfers

The trip starts and ends at Keflavik Airport. All of our self-guided holidays are sold on a Land Only basis allowing you the flexibility to choose the travel method which best suits you. The nearest airport for this trip is Keflavik Airport with many departures from regional UK airports; it is also here where you will collect your hire car for the week.

Meal Plan

This trip is on a bed and breakfast basis to allow you the most flexibility during your holiday.

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.

Icelandic food is heavily influenced by its Scandinavian neighbours and won't disappoint even the more avid foodies. As a nation who historically struggled to grow fresh produce it will come as no surprise that the staples of the nation's cuisine are meat, fish and dairy, though the days of having to preserve fresh produce are a thing of the past.

You can look forward to simple, hearty, delicious delicacies such as flatkaka med hangikjoti (flatbread with smoked lamb), the perfect dish for fuelling a day adventuring; and freshly caught langoustine, cod and haddock - Icelandic fish and chips will even give the British a run for their money! Or perhaps sample kjotsupa, a traditional hot lamb soup, perfect for warming on those cooler days.

For brave foodies the Icelanders have some unique dishes for you to sample such as hakarl (fermented shark) and svid (sheep's head). These dishes aren't for everyone but are traditional none the less.

Of course, we cannot forget to mention skyr, perhaps Iceland's most famed dairy product, often classified as a cheese it is in fact a deliciously thick yoghurt and will be often seen at your breakfast selection in a range of flavours.

For those with a sweet tooth, be sure to sample the popular kleinur, a yummy twisted doughnut, or bragdarefur, a popular ice cream treat which requires you to choose 3 additional ingredients from a selection of sweets and fruit which are then mixed into the ice cream. We recommend you to order a small, these tasty ice cream treats can often be ginormous!

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

On this trip you will stay in a fantastic selection of 3* hotels and guesthouses, all chosen for their great locations and connection to the local area. In Reykjavik you will stay in the city centre, enabling you to enjoy all it has to offer before hitting the road to the wild coast where you can enjoy watching wildlife from your hotel. Then, you will head towards the national parks to enjoy the remote locations of Pingvellir and Hverageroi, all the while staying in comfortable hotels with trendy Scandi styling and warm hospitality, along with car parking. Each hotel and guesthouse offers a great breakfast buffet and most have on site restaurants available too.

It is possible to arrange additional nights accommodation in before or after your trip in Reykjavik if you wish for a little more time exploring the city. Please refer to the dates and prices tab for further details or speak to one of our sales team.

Baggage Allowance

For this holiday you should take one piece of luggage and a daypack. Luggage with wheels is useful for this holiday. For international flights please check your baggage allowance with your airline.

General Information

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

VACCINATIONS

You should contact your doctor or travel clinic to check whether you require any specific vaccinations or other preventive measures. You should be up to date with routine courses and boosters as recommended in the UK e.g. diphtheria-tetanus-polio and measles-mumps-rubella, along with hepatitis A and typhoid. A good online resource is [Travel Health Pro](#).

Severe Allergies

Please inform our KE Sales and support team of any severe allergies you may have before travel. We will always do our best to help but we are unable to guarantee an allergy free environment on our KE trips. We advise that you always carry your own treatment for the allergy with you such as 'adrenaline auto-injectors' if required. We also recommend that you discuss this with your accommodation on arrival so that they can better assist you.

Currency

The unit of currency in Iceland is the Icelandic Krona.

Preparing for your Holiday

The advantage of a self-guided walking holiday is that you decide the pace. However, getting some additional exercise before coming on an active holiday makes a lot of sense and the fitter you are the more enjoyable your walks will be. 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 Reykjavik, average temperatures are between 0 ° C in January and 12 ° C in July. 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.

From May to mid-August it barely gets dark at night allowing you to make the most of your trip, though if you are a light sleeper it may be worth packing an eye mask just in case.

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 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 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.

Books

Iceland - Lonely Planet

Iceland - Rough Guide

How Iceland Changed the World - Egill Bjarnason

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

Self Guided Equipment List

- Hiking boots with good grip soles
- Functional base layer
- T-shirts
- Hat
- Windproof jacket
- Fleece / extra layer
- Long/short hiking trousers
- Hiking socks
- Waterproof Jacket
- Waterproof Trousers
- Rucksack (approx. 20 l)
- Small first aid kit for your rucksack

- Sunscreen
- Water bottle or hydration pack
- Camera (batteries/memory card)
- Mobile Phone (ensure your data package covers your destination)
- Power bank
- Waterproof phone cover
- Sun glasses
- Personal wash kit
- Reusable cloth bag for shopping to avoid the use of plastic bags
- Tupperware for picnics
- Walking poles
- Headtorch & spare batteries
- Your self-guided route notes

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

Please note our 'from price' listed is based on 4 persons, however we can quote for any number of travellers, including solo travellers, contact our sales team for a quote.

All of our self-guided holidays are sold on a Land Only basis allowing you the flexibility to choose the travel method which best suits you. You may even wish to make this holiday part of a bigger adventure or pair it with one of our other holidays. We can arrange additional nights accommodation before or after your self-guided trip, ask our sales team to find out more about this.

Our sales team will be happy to provide you a quote for scheduled flights or alternatively you may wish to book your own flights with a low cost carrier from your nearest regional airport.

Please DO NOT book your flights before you have received your booking confirmation and your deposit has been taken.

Why Choose KE

why ke?

We are the only UK tour operator offering this fantastic exploration of West Iceland and Reykjavik and the Golden Circle Region. Plus with car hire included you will have the ultimate freedom.

Please Note This document was downloaded on 13/05/2024 and the trip is subject to change