

Iceland

North Iceland Aurora Challenge



Hotel stays with great Escorted Day Tours included.

Winter Adventure Close to the Arctic Circle

Northern Lights

2015 - 16

8 days

Adventure.com

Experience the Arctic North! This tour takes you on an exploration of West and North Iceland, known for its winter adventures in a veritable nature paradise. Enjoy a relaxing visit to the Mývatn Nature Baths, join a snowshoe walk in a lava labyrinth, climb a volcano crater, travel along scenic fjord routes where you can almost touch the Arctic Circle. Do you want to go to places where people get to see in the winter time? Are you looking for some very unique but not arduous outdoor activities and a chance to search for the Northern Lights that appear in high latitudes when the skies are clear? Well, perhaps you are ready to take the North Iceland Aurora Challenge

Visit places where most other tour groups do not go in the winter time

A lot of museums, special visits and culinary experiences included

Snow shoe hike (or hike if no snow) in a lava labyrinth

Soak in the mineral rich waters of the Mývatn Nature Baths

Spend two nights in Reykjavik and 5 nights in North Iceland

Stay at Iceland's northernmost town, almost at the Arctic Circle

5 evenings of lectures, presentations, film and guided searches for Northern Lights

NEW for winter 2015/2016: stay one night in the brand new Hotel Siglufjörður, almost at the Arctic Circle

ITINERARY:

Day Zero THUR.:

Leave the US

Day 1, FRI: WELCOME TO ICELAND (50 km/31 mls)

The Flybus shuttle brings travelers from Keflavik International Airport to the accommodation in Reykjavik where you spend the night. We provide you with ideas how to explore Iceland's capital on your own, dinner suggestions too! Food lovers will be pleased and perhaps even impressed by the number of diverse restaurants in Reykjavik. Many award winning chefs create delicious Icelandic cuisine that is characterized by an imaginative use of

local ingredients such as fresh seafood, organic lamb and wild game; but be sure to try the fabulous Icelandic hotdog and pizza too!

Day 2, SAT: VOLCANO CRATER, SEALS, FJORDS & MOUNTAINS (248 mls)

Meet your tour guide and travel west, passing the town of Borgarnes and climb the Grábrók volcano crater. You visit a natural history & seal museum and further north you'll stop at the turf church of Víðimýri. Travel along scenic fjords and over several challenging mountain passes until the road ends in Siglufjörður,

Iceland's northernmost town.

Overnight at the new and beautifully located Hotel Siglo which offers spectacular geothermal hot tubs built into the local fjord. In the evening, if weather permits, we take a little walk or drive to search for the Northern Lights.

Day 3, SUN: ICELAND'S NORTHERNMOST TOWN (170 km/106 mls)

In the morning you'll explore Siglufjörður, Iceland's northernmost town, known as the herring capital of the North Atlantic. In Siglufjörður you visit the

Iceland Adventure, LLC Toll free 888 686-6784 Email: hn@icelandadventure.com



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herring museum, the largest seafaring and industrial museum in the country. In the afternoon it's a drive along Eyjafjörður, Iceland's longest fjord, offering an amazing mountain panorama and some exploring of Tröllaskagi Peninsula. Along the way, there's a stop at a deserted fjord valley that even most Icelanders have never seen. A short stop at a local brewery and a taste one of Iceland's micro-beers on the trip. Continuing on to Lake Mývatn, a winter wonderland, for 3 nights. Join an evening lecture about Northern Lights and don't miss the chance to search for the magical auroras after dinner.

Day 4, MON: SEARCH FOR THE TROLLS & SNOW ADVENTURES (19 mls)

This morning it's a snowshoe trip (or a normal hike if there is no snow) through the lava formations of Dimmuborgir "the dark castles", hoping to get a glimpse of the trolls who are said to live there. The afternoon is free at leisure to explore the many pseudo craters or walk along the lake shores. Also available is an optional tour on cross-country skis or snow-mobles. In the evening there's a relaxing soak at Lake Mývatn Nature Baths and get ready to chase the elusive Northern Lights.

Day 5, TUE: EXPLORE LAKE MÝVATN (31 mls)

Lake Mývatn is known for its geological wonders and active

bird life, but also for having Iceland's coldest temperatures. You'll take an easy walk through the bizarre lava formations and landscape with great views to the lake, bird life and trees. Later we explore the hot spring area of Námaskarð with its bubbling mud pools and steaming solfataras. You'll sample traditional dark bread baked underground in the geothermal heat. In the evening enjoy a video presentation about Northern Lights as a part of the Northern Lights educational program. After a delicious dinner, peel your eyes for the Northern Lights.

Day 6, WED: BIRDS, CHRISTMAS GARDEN & THE CAPITAL OF NORTH ICELAND (120 km/75 mls)

Today you'll visit the Lake Mývatn bird museum and then travel to Goðafoss, the waterfalls of the Gods. Next stop is the Christmas Garden, a small museum and shop where you find countless items connected to Icelandic Christmas traditions. The afternoon is free at leisure to explore Akureyri, the capital of North Iceland on your own. There are some excellent local museums and a great geothermal swimming pool. Depending on weather there is a short excursion into the darkness to hunt the Aurora Borealis.

Prices 2015-16

Double \$2,049

Single \$2,414

Day 7, THU: HISTORY, DESIGN & HORSES IN SKAGAFJÖRÐUR (261 mls)

You'll next travel back west over the mountains to Skagafjörður, the valley of horses and home of many ancient farms. A visit to the folk museum and turf farm at Glaumbær. Enjoy a guided tour through the only tannery in Europe which makes fish leather. Later at a stop for coffee & cake and a visit at a horse farm, to learn about the history and the special gaits of Icelandic horses. You will reach Reykjavík (depending on weather and road conditions) between 6 and 8 pm where you stay this last night in Iceland's capital.

Day 8, FRI: DEPARTURE HOME (50 km/31 mls)

Individual transfer by Flybus airport shuttle from your accommodation in Reykjavík to Keflavik Airport.

MON Departures from US

Tour #	Lv US	Return US	30 max
2015	THUR	FRI	
22/C2	Oct 8	Oct 16	15
22/E2	Oct 22	Oct 30	15
22/G2	Nov 5	Nov 13	15
22/I2	Nov 19	Nov 27	15
2016			
22/O2	Feb 4	Feb 12	16
22/P2	Feb 11	Feb 19	16
22/Q2	Feb 19	Feb 26	16
22/R2	Feb 25	Mar 4	16
22/S2	Mar 3	Mar 11	16
22/U2	Mar 17	Mar 25	16



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DAILY DRIVING: Total mileage without airport transfer is 1.190 km (738 miles) which is an average of 200 km (124 miles) per day. You spend about 3 hours per day on the bus, depending on road conditions, traffic and daily distances. On some days the driving might be longer than on some other days, such as day 2 and day 7.

NOTE: In rare cases, a change of itinerary might be necessary during winter programs in Iceland, should snow, road and weather conditions not allow to follow the scheduled itinerary, and certain outdoor activities might be cancelled. In this case no refund will be given, but GJ-Travel will try to find reasonable alternatives where and whenever possible.

New for winter 2015/2016:

Main changes are marked in red in the tour description and itinerary

For most nights different and improved hotel standard compared to past seasons

Day 2 overnight in Siglufjörður instead of Akureyri, therefore slight changes in itinerary for day 2 & 3

ACCOMMODATION: Comfort tourist-class hotels, in rooms with shower/wc

Reykjavík: New Keahotel Skuggi for first and last night / Siglufjörður: New Hotel Siglo (1 night) / Mývatn: Hotel Sel-Mývatn (3 nights) / Akureyri: Hotel Kea (1 night) / Note that the hotel list is subject to change.

INCLUDED: • Arrival & departure airport transfer by FLYBUS (no guide) • Fully escorted 6-day bus tour with an English speaking guide • Entrance fee to natural history & seal museum • Horse show, coffee & cake at local horse farm • Visit to herring museum and local micro beer brewery • Hot steam baked bread tasting • Entrance with towel at Mývatn Nature Baths • Snow shoe hike (or hike if no snow) in lava labyrinth • Admission to Lake Mývatn bird museum • Visit to Christmas house & garden outside Akureyri • Admission to Víðimýri turf church, Glaumbær folk museum & turf farm and tannery in Skagafjörður • Northern Lights program during 5 evenings with a combination of lectures, presentations, film and guided searches for the Northern Lights • Use of winter & Northern Lights explorer equipment: simple non-slip snow & ice grippers spikes for shoes and a flash light that is helpful when walking in the dark and operating the photo camera at night.

INFORMATION REGARDING DINNERS & LUNCHESES: In Reykjavík, Siglufjörður and Akureyri, the dinner is on your own. The stay at Lake Mývatn includes 3x 3-course dinner and 2x 2-course lunch. If you have any special diet requests or allergies, please let us know at the moment of your booking. Lunch stops are made at small country restaurants or petrol station diners.

NATURE FEES: There is a possibility that some of the nature attractions around Iceland might charge an entrance fee during the trip. These entrance fees are not included in the tour price and need to be paid by all tour members additionally on the spot, when entering any of these nature sites. Locations, amount of entrance fee, form of payment and other details are not known at the present time and are subject to change.

NORTHERN LIGHTS: On 5 evenings this program offers a combination of presentations, lectures, film and guided evening walks or excursions at spots that are likely to offer a glimpse of the Aurora Borealis – the Northern Lights. All hotels outside Reykjavík and Akureyri offer a Northern Lights wake up call for guests that register for that special service at the hotel reception. This tour series is designed to maximize the chances of seeing the elusive Northern Lights, still the tour is dependent on weather and therefore sightings are not guaranteed. The Northern Lights are visible in the northern sky from September through April when the sky is clear and free of clouds. Like many natural wonders, it is an ephemeral spectacle – the Northern Lights may be visible, they may appear for a bit and then be gone (it is not a TV show that you can just turn on and off). But it is worth the patience which is much required. Because they are a winter event, you need to be prepared to wait outside while looking for them. It is best to dress very warmly, in layers, with good footwear, gloves, hats and whatever else makes you comfortable while you await this truly outstanding event.

