



Horses



North

Riding with the Elves

*Through two exquisite valleys in the north
Relaxed pace, dramatic scenery
8 days/5 riding
2010*

Your host's family has farmed at Grytubakki for many years, and Stefan knows every wrinkle in the land, which is 40 minutes north of Akureyri. Juliane's organizational skills and cooking come from her Swiss homeland, and both are nicely flavored with Icelandic ingredients! In addition to a lovely group of young Europeans to help with the horses, they're joined by their eight year old son, Simon, who, not surprisingly, can carry on great conversations in several languages!

Friday:

Travelers from North America leave for Iceland on an overnight flight with an early morning arrival at Keflavik Airport in Iceland.

Saturday:

After arriving at Keflavik International Airport the Flybus will take you right to the Reykjavik domestic airport, for a dramatic 45 minute flight to Akureyri, the "capital" of northern Iceland. Here Polar Hestar will pick you up for a short drive to their farmhouse Grytubakki for a hearty dinner and a good night's sleep.

Sunday:

After a copious breakfast you'll saddle the horses. A short instruction brings you into contact with your horse and off you go! Your first ride goes up to the mountains from where you'll have a wonderful view over one of the longest fjords of Iceland – Eyjafjörður. After lunch outside you'll ride around

mountain Höfði, enjoying the view out to the sea and the island of Hrísey, Iceland's second biggest island.

Ride close to the hill of the ravens, "Hrafnabjörg", and under you is the vally of the cows – they'll tell you more about it!

Coffee and cakes await you at Grýtubakki. You'll be about 6 hours in saddle
Dinner and overnight at Grýtubakki.

Monday:

After breakfast you'll saddle up for a day tour. You ride to Grenivik, the little fishing village, close to the farmhouse and from there along the coast Látrarströnd. The North Sea is greeting you! You'll ride above steep cliffs, through luxurious meadows, clear brooks and impressive valleys, then have lunch close to the ruins of the farmhouse of Svínarnes: witnesses of formal life.

In this area the young horses of the farmers are spending the summer and they

are very curious! They will probably have a look at your sandwiches!

You go the same way back to the farm. 5 hour-ride. Dinner and overnight at Grýtubakki

Tuesday:

Today you'll prepare for a two-day excursion.

The ride goes through the valley of Fnjóská. The river Fnjóská is the longest freshwater river in Iceland. Approximately 10,000 years ago there was a glacial lake in this valley. The shore of this lake is still visible in the slopes of the mountains.

As the ride continues you will cross the river and ride to Laufás, the famous turf houses. There you will have lunch and visit the museum to learn about how life was in Iceland in former days.

Next you'll ride along the river, through wooden slopes and in the afternoon arrive the farmhouse Hjarðarholt where you spend thenight. Close to this farmhouse is the church of Draflastaðir, a historical place. You are welcome to visit it.

About 5 hours in saddle.

Wednesday:

After breakfast you'll catch the horses and ride back home on a higher way along the slopes of Draflastadarfjall. There's a beautiful view over the fjord Eyjafjörður where the river Fnjóská flows into the sea. On the way home you'll ride to Helguholl, the holy hill. People in the



Riding with the Elves

Mountain huts and farm guesthouses
Relaxed pace good for families
8 days/5 riding days
2010

Through two exquisite valleys in the north of Iceland

area say that under the hill there is a ship full of gold from the old vikings. If somebody tries to get the gold, all churches which are visible from the hill will burn down.

Nobody has tried to dig, not yet!
Coffee and cakes will be ready for you at Grýtabakki.
Dinner and overnight at Grýtabakki.

Thursday:

Today's ride goes up to the mountains into the area of Fjörður.

Fjörður is a mysterious and deserted countryside. It has been closed off from the rest of the world for 40 years. Only about 4000 sheep spend the summer here every year, together with the trolls and elves. Names like Trölladalur, the valley of the trolls and Álfaborgir, the cities of the elves remind you of the existence of these invisible beings.

From the rise of Leirdalsheiði there's a wonderful view over to whole fjord of Eyjafjörður, the fishing village Grenivík and the surrounding farms. The ride continues through green valleys, along rushing rivers and over stony paths. Extinct volcanos, silent glaciers and hidden waterfalls accompany you. At the highest point a tremendous view out to the polar sea awaits. You will take your lunch break at the mountain hut of Gil, enjoying the silence of nature which is only interrupted by the roaring waters of river Vestur-Gilsá.

Late afternoon you will be back at Grýtabakki.

About 6 hours in saddle. Dinner and overnight. at Grýtabakki

Friday:

The horses enjoy their free day and you'll drive by bus to the famous pearls of the North in the Myvatn area.

On the way to the lake of the midges have a look at the historic waterfall of Goðafoss. You'll continue on and visit the bubbling mud pools of Námaskarð, the well-known pseudo craters of Skútustaðir and the bizarre lava formations of Dimmuborgir.

A day full of impressions!

Dinner and overnight at Grýtabakki.

Saturday:

After breakfast, it's time to bid goodbye the horses and your hosts, and head back to Akureyri, where you'll have a short flight back to Reykjavik, and then onto the international airport for flights home- (unless you're lucky enough to be spending more time in Iceland!

Accommodations on the Riding with the Elves tour are traditionally Icelandic.

You'll need to bring a sleeping bag, towels, soap and shampoo. A mattress will be provided. The farmhouses, mountain huts and cabins where you'll sleep are simple, warm and clean. Typically there are several beds per room, and in huts there may be one big room. Most will have shared bathroom facilities.

Meals will be family style with lots of typical Icelandic cuisine which features fish, dairy products, lamb, and potatoes.

Vegetarians can be accommodated with advance notice. We'll send you a gear list that provides tips for packing, as well as info on converting money and electricity, weather advice (no guarantees, though) and other useful stuff.

Travel Dates for Riding with Elves:

Following are the travel dates for Riding with the Elves, which runs 9 times in 2010. The tour runs from Saturday to Saturday in Iceland, with Sunday being your first riding day. You can return home on the last Saturday of the tour.

June 25 to July 3

July 2 to July 10

July 9 to July 17

July 16 to July 24

July 23 to July 31

July 30 to August 7

August 6 to August 14

August 13 to August 21

August 20 to August 28

Price

The price for this 8 day ride is **\$3262** per person. The price includes round trip airfare, with US departure tax and fuel surcharge, from NYC, Boston, Minneapolis (ask for prices from Toronto, Halifax, and Europe). Add \$110 per person from Seattle. Most airport transfers and the flights to and from northern Iceland are included as are accommodations in guest and farm houses with shared baths, all meals, as well as rain gear and safety helmets. You'll need to bring a sleeping bag. ***NOT** included are travel insurance, breakfast and lunch on arrival day, lunch on departure day, and any additional travel you choose while in Iceland.

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