Another Iceland - the West Fjords North to South

A 10 day unique tour remote wonders, hidden gems Vikings, beaches, coastal wilderness Boat trip Vigur Islands Walking/Easy hiking each day small group tour

Our Prices include flights, taxes, fuel charges and a number of “extras”.

This unique escorted tour is truly unique because it is dedicated to the exploration of Iceland’s western most boundaries. In this western wilderness you can see Iceland at its most mysterious and remote – the real Iceland. Many Icelanders haven’t been there, and most members of the traveling public don’t get there either. This tour is ideal for visitors that have travelled Iceland’s ring road before and yearn to get off the beaten path.

Iceland’s Westford’s region has been dubbed “the most famous unknown place in Iceland.” When you throw in the prestigious “European Destination of Excellence” awards and Lonely Planet listing it as one of the 10 regions in the world to visit in 2011, you will see why the Westfords are becoming increasingly famous – or perhaps less unknown. Lonely Planet says that the “oddly shaped” peninsula is “as isolated as it is spectacular”. Luckily, “isolated” does not mean inaccessible. With only 7400 inhabitants in the region, each person has nearly a square mile of personal space, so there is ample room for any visitors as well. While local culture is interesting, it is, by and large, nature in the West Fjords that attracts visitors. It is untouched and almost uninhabited, and painted by the midnight sun during the summer. The cliffs and valleys are packed with birds, the uninhabited fjords offer silence and tranquility, and the Arctic fox proudly roams the mountains and inlets. The waterfalls are high and the streams pure. The midnight sun reigns where the distances are long and the fjords are deep. And then there are places where there are no roads at all. Visiting the Westfords is truly a different experience. It is a different Iceland altogether.

Here’s a daily itinerary.

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

Monday: Welcome to Iceland!
Early arrival at Keflavik International Airport and you’ll have a voucher for the Flybus Shuttle to get you to your hotel in the capital. Overnight at Guesthouse Borgartun or Hotel Cabin. We’ll provide ideas to explore Reykjavik on your own. Lots of good choices for meals, and they are on your own.

Tuesday: In the footsteps of the Vikings
You’ll leave Reykjavik for Thingvellir National Park, a UNESCO world heritage site that was home to the world’s first parliament during the in the 9th century Viking age. Then you’ll take the interior mountain track “Kaldidalur” north along the shield volcano “Skjaldbreidur” and past the long glacier “Langjökull”. There will be a stop at the lava waterfall Hraunfossar and Europe’s largest hot spring Deildartunguhver. Nearby is Reykholt, the historical home of Snore Sturluson, a poet historian and writer who recorded Iceland’s sagas in the 13th century. Continue on to West Iceland — “Dalir” the stepping-stone to the New World. Here you’ll visit the reconstructed turf longhouse o
Wednesday:
Wild coastal wilderness
Today you’ll discover the coastal wilderness of “Strandir”, the wildest and remotest coast of Western Europe. The road ends in the middle of nowhere, on the shore at the natural geothermal hot pool in Krossanes. You can soak in its hot water with amazing views towards the sea – it’s a uniquely lovely experience. Again, you’ll have dinner at Hotel Malarhorn in Drangsnes. Optional trip to Grímsey Puffin Island for bird watching.

Thursday:
Northern shores, west fjords glacier and peaceful valley
Crossing the wilderness of the Steingrímsfjarðarheiði moorland will take you to the long deep fjord Ísafjarðardjúp. Driving along Kaldalón gives you a unique view as you approach Drangajökull, the only glacier in the West Fjords. All the farms along the entire length of the northern shoreline of the Ísafjarðardjúp bay have been abandoned, so the land here is deserted. One of Iceland’s most beloved composers Sigvaldi Kaldalóns lived in Kaldalón for a time. He was also a doctor, but took the name Kaldalón, because the natural beauty of the place left him spellbound.

You’ll have dinner and overnight at the Farm-guesthouse Heydalur, in the middle of a spectacular countryside setting with a river, waterfall, shrub covered hillsides, mountains, fjords and a shore full of wildlife and flora. You’ll find yourself far from the rest of the world, in enchanted nature and with a natural hot pool. Heydalur also offers kayak and horse tours.

Friday:
The capital of the West Fjords, and the bird island
The scenic shoreline wanders past countless fjords to Ísafjarður, the “capital” of the West Fjords. You’ll head on a bit further to the picturesque village of Bolungarvík with its well known maritime museum. In the afternoon you’ll see the West Fjords from the sea as you take a boat trip to Vigur Island which has the smallest post office in Iceland, some beautifully renovated old homes and the only windmill in Iceland. Vigur is known for its bird life, too, with abundant puffins, guillemots and arctic terns as well as eider duck farm. Once back on dry land you’ll travel further south for dinner and overnight at Hotel Sandafell in Thingeyri. Options: Fishing on the fjord and/or horse back riding.

Saturday:
Truck expedition from Thingeyri
Thingeyri is the oldest trading post of the Westfjords with a warehouse dating back to the 18th century. Fishing and fish processing are still the main livelihoods here. The town is in a spectacular setting with Kaldbakur, the West Fjord’s highest peak, and many beautiful mountains surrounding it. Today you’ll enjoy an UNIQUE Adventure expedition by truck, along a rugged track around the peninsula between Arnarfjörður and Dýrafjörður fjord. You’ll stop at Kaldidalur valley to visit the old church part of the historical house collection of Iceland’s National Museum. The mountains are among the most magnificent s in Iceland, the beaches are breathtaking and there are numerous cliffs with dramatic lava intrusions. This exceptional adventure will show you sights that are impressive even in a land full of impressive sights. Dinner and overnight at Hotel Sandafell in Thingeyri. Options: Fishing on the fjord and/or horse back riding.

Sunday:
Dynjandi Waterfall
You’ll cross the highest mountains of the West to reach the majestic fjord “Arnarfjörður”. There will be a stop at Hrafneseyri, birthplace of Jon Sigurðsson, leader of the 19th century independence movement. Today’s highlight is Dynjandi, with its seven levels of plunging water, declared the country’s most beautiful waterfall by the people of Iceland. You’ll travel the shore of many scenic fjords with their beautiful beaches, and pass through small fishing villages. The day ends in Breidavik, an...
endless bay of golden sand, often aglow with an explosion of colorful sunsets.
Dinner and overnight at Hotel Látrabjarg or Hotel Breiðavík for the next 2 nights.

Monday:

**Bird cliffs and red beaches**
Today is a highlight! It will be a memorable walk in the wilderness to the top of the highest bird cliffs in Iceland, known the world over for its density of northern birds - puffins, razorbills, guillemots, fulmars, cormorants, and kittiwakes and other cliff birds in tens of thousands, hundreds of thousands, or in the millions. Látrabjarg is known as the place where you can get very close to the seabirds and even if you’re a bird watcher, the comic antics of the puffins and the sheer scale of the mob are mesmerizing. “Látrabjarg” is the remotest bird cliff in Western Europe and the ultimate fortress against the high waves of the North Atlantic. Greenland is 300 km further west and even further is Canada, areas that are important in the sagas with Eric the Red and the discovery of America. You’ll visit “Raudisandur”, endless beaches of red and orange sands - simply awesome!

Tuesday:

**Flight to Reykjavík**
You’ll travel from Látrabjarg to Bíldudalur airport and board a flight on Eagle Air, which will take you back to Reykjavík where you’ll have the rest of the day to explore Iceland’s capital or for an optional whale watching tour. Overnight at Guesthouse Borgartún or Hotel Cabin.

Wednesday:

**Farewell beautiful Iceland**
Travelers on early flights will make an early departure via Flybus to the airport, while those leaving late afternoon will have time to explore a bit of Reykjavík, do some shopping, or soak in a warm swimming pool. If you’re taking an afternoon flight, you’ll need to leave for Keflavik Airport between 1 and 2 PM.

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**Prices and Dates and other useful details**

In 2014 there are 4 departures for the West Fjords 10 day tour. The tour described here is version A - drive north and fly south and there’s the reversed version B where you fly north and drive south. Tour date below includes travel dates. It’s also easy to add a day or two before or after your tour - just ask! The hotels used on tours are often guesthouses, hotels, farms, or “summer hotels” and are simple and clean. They all include private bathrooms but may not offer other hotel amenities, such as in room telephones or internet connections. These are usually found in a central sitting area. We’ll provide a gear list for packing advice.

Please note that there are a very limited number of single rooms available on this tour.

**Travel Dates**

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*Price includes round trip airfare, including fuel surcharge, and US departure taxes from Boston, New York, and Washington Dulles (ask about Seattle, Anchorage, Minneapolis, Denver, and Toronto), and all airport transfers. **Note:** Not all gateways have daily departures or availability. Also included are a pre and post night at Guesthouse Borgatan or Hotel Cabin, with breakfast the following morning. During the tour, you’ll stay in double rooms in hotels, farms, and country guesthouses, all with private bath, breakfast and dinner included. Stops will be made for lunch (not included). Also included are entrance to Leifur Eiriksson Museum & Viking House, boat trip to Vigur Islands, Truck Tour around Skjótsnes peninsula, domestic flight Bíldudalur-Reykjavík and transfer Reykjavík domestic airport. **Not** included in the price are Travel Insurance, meals on arrival day, meals except breakfast on departure day, lunch while on the tour, (there will be a stop to purchase this), and any optional excursions in Reykjavik. PLEASE NOTE that no price is final until you book with a deposit. Later bookings may require an air surcharge - so book early!!