

ICELAND

Capital: Reykjavik

Language: Icelandic

Population: 338,000

Time Zone: EST plus 4 hours

Currency: Icelandic Króna (ISK)

Electricity: 220V. 50Hz

Fun Facts



- Iceland is the most sparsely populated country in Europe
- Life expectancy is among the highest in the world averaging 81.3 years for women and 76.4 years for men
- Icelanders value literacy and hold the world record for number of books per capita
- The Icelandic language has been virtually unchanged for the past 1000 years

Glaciers, geysers, fjords, quaint towns, geothermal pools, active volcanoes, powerful waterfalls, and brilliant green and rocky landscapes make up the stunning terrain known as Iceland. With a sparse population, strange phenomenon like the Northern Lights and spewing natural mixes of ice cold ocean waters and the heat of the crusts below, and an abundance of volcanically formed land, some might call Iceland an accidental masterpiece. Nature presents itself to you as you explore unspoiled scenery, search for wildlife, and stroll under the midnight sun – a summer experience like no other, where the sun never fully sets and it casts that rejuvenating sunrise glow through the deepest part of night. The surprising array of colors, the dynamic people of the cities and towns, and the constant natural surprises, make Iceland a photographer's dream. It is an apex of earth's greatest joys, mysteries, and a magical spot that seems like it knows something the other ones don't.

It would take months to discover all of the natural oddities that occur on this northern island, but there are a few things you simply must experience. Perhaps the most famous place in Iceland and one of the 10 most magnificent natural hot springs in the World is the Blue Lagoon, just outside of Reykjavik. The moment you sink into the crystal blue, mineral white waters, relaxation will rush over you in the bath-like temperatures. Private cave areas, peaceful steam rising, and the surrounding landscape is a vision you will never forget. Just as impressive as the Blue Lagoon itself, but with an ecological flair, is the geothermal Power Station that produced the Lagoon. It is a tremendous source of pride for the country as it uses the natural elements of the sea and the molten heat of the earth below to produce steam that powers turbines to provide energy to Iceland. It is one of the most efficient ways of supplying energy with the smallest impact on the earth. Not only does the natural steam help generate energy, but the water that is purified in the process is used to supply households with fresh water. Even the "waste water" produced in this process that forms the Blue Lagoon is pure and peaceful, with soothing and healing powers – it's a fascinating and impressive stop on an Icelandic adventure.

Reykjavik is certainly the most fashionable and bustling city in Iceland. Its people are friendly, and it has a small-town feel to it with colorful little houses, and charming shops and restaurants, but it also has a notable urban atmosphere and is one of the most "hip" cities in the world with hundreds of attractions and an effervescent nightlife. Native Icelanders residing here take pride in having a diverse and unique city that is constantly at the forefront of architecture, technology, entertainment, culture, and fun.

As a land of water, Iceland provides many opportunities to see bubbling hot natural mud pools, jaw-dropping waterfalls, panoramic ocean views, and bursting geysers. There are picturesque lakes throughout Iceland as well as other natural encounters. As you work your way up to the northern half of Iceland and just into the Arctic Circle, your chances of seeing the Aurora Borealis (Northern Lights) are increased during the months of September and March. The ribbon of brightly colored dancing light hovering in the earth's atmosphere is one of the prettiest spectacles known to man and one of the most impressive natural phenomena in the world; Iceland provides a unique setting to potentially capture a glimpse of the luminous show. For animal and sea lovers, the northern shores of Iceland support some of the greatest wildlife found in Europe. On a cruise here, you can see various whale species, do some seal watching, or explore the landscape on horseback. One more compelling natural spot to explore when visiting Iceland (although there are hundreds) is the Eyjafjallajökull volcano on the southern coast. Few can forget the famous eruption and massive ash cloud that disrupted air traffic in Europe during 2010.

Iceland may not be one of the most thought-of places to travel, but it has something for everyone and some of the most stunning landscapes and natural phenomena on the planet. Just look at a few pictures of the country and you'll be hooked...then when you visit those places, you'll just be blown away. Friendly locals, high glacial treks, standing over plummeting falls with rising mists, and soaking in the most pristine natural spring in the world, Iceland might very well be one of the most extraordinary journeys of your life and a favorite among your travels.



VISAS, PASSPORTS, AND OTHER ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

Visas to Iceland are **not required** for US citizens. If you hold a passport from another country, please check with your local consulate about requirements for travel to Iceland. All passengers traveling internationally are required to have a passport. Please carry proper identification (your passport) on you and do not leave it in your suitcase or hotel room.

It is advisable to carry your passport with you at all times.



COUNTRY CODES

The country code for Iceland is 354. When calling to Iceland from overseas, dial your international access code (011 from the US/Canada), followed by the country code, area code, and phone number. Phone numbers in Iceland are seven digits in length. Dialing from the US/Canada: 011 354+#### ####.



CURRENCY

The official currency of Iceland is the Icelandic Króna; *plural Krónur* (ISK).

Bank hours: 9:15 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday through Friday.

ICELANDIC KRÓNA (ISK)

- Banknote denominations: 500, 1000, 2000, 5000, 10,000 Krónur
- Coin denominations: 1, 5, 10, 50, 100 Króna/Krónur

For the most current exchange rates, please go to our website at Globusjourneys.com/Currency.

Credit cards are widely accepted in Iceland (mostly Visa and MasterCard) and you should have no trouble using them. Smaller shops may ask you to pay in cash or have a minimum amount required to use a credit card.



BUDGETING AND SHOPPING

The following budget guidelines are just approximate values or starting values for meals and are per person. Actual prices will vary widely by restaurant and city within a country but below are some averages as provided by our experienced personnel.

- The approximate cost of a soft drink/mineral water/coffee is ISK 350-600.
- An average lunch consisting of a salad or sandwich and a soda or water starts at approximately ISK 1700-2200.
- Dinner at a mid-range restaurant with dessert and a non-alcoholic beverage starts at approximately ISK 6000-7000.

Shopping specialties: fine woolen products and knitwear with unique patterns (eg. Lopapeysa sweaters), handmade ceramics and glassware, silver jewelry, crafts made of lava stones or fish leather, saga storybooks, nature calendars/postcards, Icelandic designer clothing.

Counterfeit and pirated goods are widely available; be aware that under local law transactions involving such products may be illegal, and bringing them home may result in confiscation and fines.

Sales tax or VAT (value added tax) is included on price tags. To obtain VAT refunds (which may take up to three months to process) special forms usually have to be stamped by Customs; please ask for a tax-free shopping form with each purchase and follow the instructions for completion. Customs import charges on items shipped home are not included in purchase prices.



TIPPING

Tipping in Iceland is not customary. Service fees are always included on the bill; they apply to restaurants, taxis, cafes, room service and much more. Tipping is always appreciated in Iceland, but never expected.

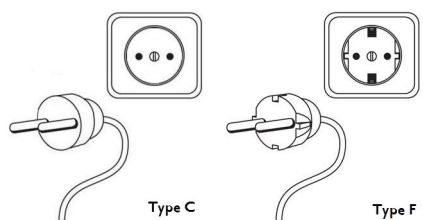


ELECTRICITY AND ELECTRICAL OUTLETS

Outlets

Voltage for outlets is 220V. North American voltage is generally 110V. Therefore, you will need a converter for your travels. Adapters will be necessary to adapt your plug into the outlet, but these may not convert the voltage, so both devices are necessary.

Icelandic-prong outlets with two round prongs in line which look like:



TEMPERATURES

Iceland has a cold oceanic climate near the southern coastal area, and tundra on the inland highlands. Since Iceland is on the North Atlantic Current, the island is more temperate than to be expected. Year-round weather is very changeable and windy, so pack for all eventualities. The Northern Lights (Aurora Borealis) are often seen at night during the winter. During the season of the Midnight Sun in June/July, nights are shorter or not dark, so if you have difficulty sleeping, eye shades (usually supplied on international flights) may help shut out the light.

To help you plan, below are average low and high temperatures for Iceland.

Reykjavik

January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
27/35°F	29/37°F	39/47°F	47/55°F	41/49°F	31/38°F	28/36°F	29/37°F	33/41°F	44/52°F	49/54°F	36/44°F

To convert to Celsius, subtract 30, then divide by 2. While not exact, this simple formula will give a close estimation.



FOOD SPECIALTIES

Traditional dishes based on lamb and fish (salmon, trout, herring), shrimp and lobster, hot spring-baked rye bread, *skyr* (yogurt), *plokkfiskur* (a fish dish). And for the culinary adventurer: *hakarl* (a fermented shark meat), and *brennivín* ("black death" schnapps).



A FEW WORDS OF THE LOCAL LANGUAGE

Icelandic:

Good Morning: Godan dag, **Goodbye:** Bless, **Thankyou:** Takk, **Yes:** Ja, **No:** Nei, **Do you speak English?:** Talar thu ensku?, **Where is...?:** Hvar er...?, **Smoking forbidden:** Reykingar bannadar, **Toilet:** Salerni/Snyrting-Karlar (**Gents.**), Konur (**Ladies**), **1:** Einn, **2:** Tveir, **3:** Thrir, **4:** Fjórir, **5:** Fimm, **6:** Sex, **7:** Sjö, **8:** Átta, **9:** Niu, **10:** Tíu, **Water:** Vatn, **Beer:** Björ, **Wine:** Vin, **Cheers:** Skál, **Chicken:** Kjúklingur, **Cheese:** Ostur, **Good Night:** Goda nött.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE COUNTRY INFORMATION

Additional country-specific information for US citizens can be found on the US Government's website www.travel.state.gov. Here, you can find the most up-to-date information about destination descriptions, passports/visas, safety and security, transportation, travel local laws, alerts/warnings, vaccinations, and more. For citizens of other nations, we recommend you consult your local consulate for travel information, regulations, and requirements.

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