



HARVARD

Alumni Association

EXPLORING ICELAND

JUNE 21 – JULY 1, 2018

Witness the natural beauty of Iceland. Explore the country from the sophisticated urban center of Reykjavik to the thermal springs, highlands, dales, and fjords of the countryside. Arrive in Reykjavik and embark on excursions to Deildartunguhver, site of the country's largest thermal spring, and Hraunfossar Falls, cold springs that cascade into the Hvítá River. Travel towards the northeast countryside across highlands and fjords. Visit Lake Myvatn and its environs of bubbling mud flats, lava fields, and lunar-like volcanic craters. Stop at Gauksmyri Horse Farm to see Icelandic horses, a unique variety first brought here by the Vikings. In Reynisfjara, walk along the black-sand beach and visit Seljalandsfoss, Iceland's most photographed waterfall. Conclude by returning to Reykjavik and explore its museums and galleries, theater, boutiques, and restaurants.

GROUP SIZE: Up to 24 guests

PRICING:

- *\$6,942- Air inclusive from Boston, JFK, or Washington, DC (includes airline taxes and fees)
- *\$6,195- Land only
- *\$995- Single supplement

STUDY LEADER: To be announced

SCHEDULE BY DAY

B=Breakfast, L=Lunch, D=Dinner

THURSDAY, JUNE 21

DEPART U.S. FOR REYKJAVIK, ICELAND

FRIDAY, JUNE 22

ARRIVE REYKJAVIK / BORGARNES

Upon arrival in Iceland's capital, enjoy a scenic drive to your hotel in Borgarnes, a small town on the shores of Borgarfjordur. You have time for lunch on your own before you get your first real taste of Iceland's beauty as you embark on an excursion to Deildartunguhver, site of the country's largest thermal spring; and also to Hraunfossar Falls, cold springs that well up through the lava landscape and cascade into the Hvítá River. Continue to the Reykholt Cultural Center, a historic site based on the life of saga writer Snorri Sturluson. Return to the hotel and enjoy a welcome dinner there tonight.

Overnight: Icelandair Hotel Hamar (B, D)

SATURDAY, JUNE 23

BOGARNES / SNAEFELLSNES PENINSULA

Encounter the scenery of the Snaefellsnes Peninsula. Begin on the south shore with a walk along the shell sand beach at Budir. Explore the bizarre rock formations along the rugged shore at Arnarstapi, site of hundreds of nesting cliff birds. After stopping for lunch of traditional seafood soup at a rustic oceanfront restaurant, visit Djupalonssandur to see the haunting remains of boats that once took local fishermen to sea. Taste shark at the home of a local farmer who processes this former Viking delicacy himself. Return to Borgarnes and tonight dine together at the hotel.

Overnight: Icelandair Hotel Hamar (B, L, D)

SUNDAY, JUNE 24

BORGARNES / AKUREYRI

Depart Borgarnes this morning, traveling towards the northeast countryside across highlands, dales, and fjords to the volcanic region surrounding Lake Myvatn. Make two stops along the way: first to

Gauksmyri Horse Farm to see Icelandic horses, a unique variety first brought here by the Vikings in 800 CE; then to the still-operating 17th-century Vidimyri church constructed of sod. Mid-afternoon, reach Akureyri, capital of Iceland's north region. Eat lunch on your own before touring this urban gem by coach and on foot, visiting the botanical garden and Akureyrarkirkja church, with its unusual interior. The remainder of the afternoon is at leisure. This evening, return to the hotel for dinner.

Overnight: Hotel Kea (B, D)

MONDAY, JUNE 25

AKUREYRI / LAKE MYVATN

One of the world's natural wonders, Lake Myvatn and its environs of bubbling mud flats, lava fields, and lunar-like volcanic craters comprise a national nature reserve that ranks among the most spectacular sights in a country overflowing with natural beauty. Begin with a stop at Godafoss, the stunning "waterfalls of the gods." This afternoon, visit the active volcano areas of the lake, including the boiling mud pots at Namaskard, the bizarre lava formations at Dimmuborgir, the explosion crater at Viti, and the flat volcano system at Krafla. Birdwatchers will want to bring binoculars, as this area boasts a profusion of interesting avian life. From here drive across the rugged Myvatn Desert to witness jaw-dropping Dettifoss, Europe's most powerful waterfall with its thunderous falls cascading at a rate of 200 tons per second. Return to the hotel in time for dinner on your own tonight.

Overnight: Hotel Kea (B)

TUESDAY, JUNE 26

AKUREYRI / JÖKULSÁRGLJÚFUR NATIONAL PARK

Drive to the picturesque fishing and whale-watching village of Husavik for a boat cruise around Puffin Island, aptly named for the thousands of puffins who congregate here. Among the summer residents of Puffin Island, a thriving bird refuge: 200,000 puffins and Long-tailed duck, Eider duck, Purple sandpiper, and cormorants. (Please note: this boat trip is dependent on weather conditions and the annual puffin migration). Following this scenic cruise, have lunch together and return to Husavik.

This afternoon's excursion takes you to Jökulsárgljúfur National Park for a walk around Hljodaklettur, the labyrinth of "echoing rocks" created by the spiral basalt formations of arches and canyons here. (Please note: the visit to Hljodaklettur is dependent on road conditions). Then drive to incredible Asbyrgi, also in the National Park, a huge canyon enveloped by towering walls. After touring the park, return to the hotel in Akureyri for dinner.

Overnight: *Hotel Kea (B, I, D)*

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 27 AKUREYRI / REYKJAVIK / SELFOSS

Fly to Reykjavik, then drive to Thingvellir National Park. Revered for its historical importance – Iceland's Althing, or national assembly, met here from 930 CE to 1798 – Thingvellir also sits on an active volcanic site where the fissure between the geological plates of North America and Europe is most evident in Iceland. It's also a gem of nature, with canyons, caves, waterfalls, and ponds surrounded by snow-capped mountains. Learn about Iceland's historic parliament and walk along a gorge into the rift valley. After lunch at a local restaurant, depart for Great Geysir, the most famous of Iceland's geysers; then continue on to Gullfoss, Iceland's immensely popular "golden" waterfall. From Gullfoss drive down to the country's southern coast to the agricultural area of Selfoss. Dinner is on your own tonight.

Overnight: *Hotel Selfoss (B, L)*

THURSDAY, JUNE 28 SELFOSS / VIK

After a morning walk along the black-sand beach at Reynisfjara, lined with basalt-filled caves, visit picturesque Seljalandsfoss, Iceland's most photographed waterfall. Travel to Skogar to visit the country museum and learn about early life in Iceland. From here, walk to nearby Skogafoss waterfall, known for its rainbows on sunny days. After lunch on your own at the museum, continue on to the lovely town of Vik, Iceland's southernmost village surrounded by green hills, a massive icecap, the sea, and Katla, a notorious volcano. There's time here to shop for items made from locally produced wool before the tour resumes at stunning Solheimajokull glacier, often called the "sliding glacier" for its rapid advance in the 1990s. Return to the hotel late this afternoon and dine there tonight.

Overnight: *Hotel Selfoss (B, D)*

FRIDAY, JUNE 29 SELFOSS / REYKJAVIK

Traveling back to Reykjavik this morning, pass through "saga" country, the setting of one of the country's famous medieval stories – Njáls saga. Upon arrival in Iceland's capital, enjoy a lunch of traditional lobster soup at a local restaurant and then embark on a city tour. Sites include Hallgrimskirkja, the country's largest church, with a sculpture garden and excellent views of the city from its tower; Parliament house; and the harbor. The evening is at leisure; dinner tonight is on your own.

Overnight: *Hotel Reykjavik Centrum (B,L)*

SATURDAY, JUNE 30 REYKJAVIK

Today is at leisure to explore and enjoy Reykjavik as you wish. It's a sophisticated European urban center, with museums and galleries; theater, symphony, and dance; boutiques and restaurants. Interesting sites include Old Town; the Arni Magnusson Institute where Iceland's historic sagas are kept; Nordic House designed by renowned architect Alvar Aalto; and the National Museum, which celebrates Nordic culture and Iceland's history. You may wish to visit the soothing thermal baths of the Blue Lagoon (at additional cost). Reservations are strongly recommended prior to your departure from the U.S. and can be obtained online at www.blueagoon.com. Tonight celebrate your adventure over a farewell dinner.

Overnight: *Hotel Reykjavik Centrum (B, D)*

SUNDAY, JULY 1 DEPART FOR U.S.

Depart for the airport and your return flights to the U.S. (B)