

italian tours and

*Travel* by Diana

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f Italian Tours by Diana

## Custom Tour of Iceland

Iceland is a beautiful and unique country, where you can enjoy nature in its purest forms. By visiting the breathtaking island, you can reconnect with the elements and invigorate your mind, body and spirit. Please keep in mind that nature cannot be controlled or regulated - many experiences are seasonal and cannot be guaranteed.

Iceland was uninhabited until 871 AD, when the first settler, Ingolfur Arnason, arrived from Norway. Modern Icelandic language in fact is derived from Old Norse. As the country was formed, fishing became the most important economic activity. The Danish king gave money to Iceland in order to build up industry, which included wool producing and rope manufacturing. Until 1944, Iceland was under the rule of Denmark. All inhabitants of Iceland live around the coast- the interior roads are often closed 9 months of the year due to snow and ice. The population of Iceland is around 340,000 and the currency is the Icelandic Krona. According to the 2016 and 2017 Global Peace Index, Iceland has earned the title of the world's safest country!

### Day 1 Depart USA

International flights to Reykjavik, Iceland (independently booked).

### Day 2 Arrive Reykjavik

#### Reykjavik



Velkominn to beautiful Reykjavik, Iceland. Upon arrival at 8:20 am, retrieve your luggage and continue to the arrivals hall where you will meet your private driver who will be holding a sign with your name on it. Your driver will transfer you to your accommodations in the city center. Here you will check in and settle. This afternoon at 2:00 pm or so, meet your private bilingual certified guide today for a two hour tour of the highlights of Reykjavik. As Iceland's largest city, about two-thirds of the country's population live in Reykjavik, which means "Smokey Bay" in Old Norse. During your tour, you will visit some of the most famous landmarks, including the Harpa Concert Hall and Hallgrímskirkja Church. If you would like, you can take the elevator to the top of the bell tower for views over the city (price not included). For many years, fishing was the main economic activity of Iceland. You will stroll by the Old

Harbor on your way to the unique and modern Harpa concert hall. The main street, Laugavegur, (washing street) is so named because it was the path through which many of the citizens of Reykjavik made their way down to Laugadalur (washing valley) in order to use the hot water for their washing. Your tour will provide a clear overview of the unique city of Reykjavik. After the tour, you have the rest of the day to explore.



May we suggest a visit to the most popular Hot Dog Stand in Reykjavik, *Baejarins Beztu Pylsur*, translated as “The Best Hot Dog in Town”! In August 2006 the British newspaper selected the Baejarins Beztu as the best hot dog stand in Europe. The stand is located downtown near the harbor and has been open since 1937. Hot dog condiments include ketchup, sweet mustard, fried onion, raw onion and mayo with sweet relish. Hot dogs are often ordered with

“the works”. Overnight in Reykjavik. **PT/G/H**

### Day 3 Reykjavik, Vik & South Coast

Breakfast at hotel. Today, enjoy a full day trip (10-12 hrs) to the southern coast of Iceland! Meet your private driver in the hotel lobby for transfer to the Lava Iceland Volcano and Earthquake Centre at Hvolsvollur town. There you will have a glimpse of Iceland’s volcanic and seismic life. Your next stop will be at Seljalandsfoss waterfall, a natural wonder with incredible views. Next stop at Skogafoss waterfall, where you can see the former Icelandic coastline. From there, visit the famous Reynisfjara black pebble beach and basalt columns. You will enjoy lunch in the village of Vik. A glacier walk at Solheimajokull glacier can be arranged and is something that you will never forget, or opt for a snowmobile ride at Solheimajokull glacier instead. Return to Reykjavik in the late afternoon with your driver. Overnight in Reykjavik. **B/PD/ET/L/H**

### Day 4 Reykjavik, Thingvellir, Laugarvath Hotsprings, Nesjavellir

Breakfast at hotel and check out. Meet your private driver in the hotel lobby for a transfer to Thingvellir National Park where you will have a chance to learn about the tectonic plates of Iceland and experience views of the country side unparalleled to anything you have seen before. You will also have an opportunity to visit the museum which is a self-guided, interactive experience- not to be missed. Entrance Tickets will be supplied. View unique landscape around the Mid-Atlantic ridge, where the Eurasian and North American Tectonic plates meet in Thingvellir National Park. The rift valley was home to the Althing, the national parliament of Iceland, established here in 930 AD because of the acoustics of the area. As you are adventurous, a snorkel adventure between the tectonic plates will be arranged. Continue on to Laugarvath Hotsprings with your driver for the afternoon at leisure. This sleek lakefront spa features natural steam baths, outdoor mineral pools & a sauna. There is also a restaurant available on the premises. During your visit you may be able to participate in the making and/or unburying of Iceland’s famous lava bread. Taste it while it is still warm from the natural geothermal heat! Spending the afternoon at this spa is both relaxing and invigorating and a perfect way to ease into your time in Iceland. After relaxing, continue with your driver to the

town of Nesjavellir. You will check in and spend the rest of the evening relaxing and acclimating to your beautiful surroundings. Overnight in Nesjavellir. **B/PD/ET/snorkel/H**

## Northern Lights



During your stay in Nesjavellir, prepare to view the Northern Lights! From your countryside hotel, you will see the millions of stars and Aurora Borealis beam out of the North-Atlantic Ocean. The Aurora Borealis is a natural electrical phenomenon characterized by the appearance of streamers of reddish or greenish light in the sky. Auroras are produced when tiny electron particles stream out from the Sun's solar winds and hit Earth's atmosphere. The particles are attracted to the North and South poles by the magnetic fields found there. The electron particles interact with molecules of gases in the upper atmosphere, which quickly give off another kind of energy—the colors of light that we call the aurora. Oxygen molecules found in the Earth's atmosphere make green or brownish aurorae, whereas nitrogen molecules make blue or red aurorae. Provided the skies are clear and there is complete darkness, you should be able to enjoy beautiful views of the Northern Lights, late September through March. Though difficult to photograph, the images of the Aurora Borealis will be forever part of your memories. Kindly note this natural phenomenon is weather dependent and can be easily cancelled due to cloudy or unfavorable climate conditions.

Day 5 Nesjavellir, Gulfoss Falls, Friedheimar, Geysir

## The Geysers



Breakfast at hotel. This morning, meet your private driver in the hotel lobby for transfer to Continue on to the geothermal area in Haukadalur, where you will view the bubbling ponds and steam vents created by geothermal heat. Here you will find two geysers called Strokkur and Geysir, which gave us the word “geyser” itself. Though Geysir has been mostly dormant for many years, Strokkur continues to erupt every 5–10 minutes so you can view it blow! You then will visit the Gulfoss Waterfall, which translates to “Golden Falls” and lends its name to the Golden Circle. The two-tiered waterfall drops about 105 feet into the Hvita River at a rate of about 29,000 gallons per second. This stunning glacier-



fed falls plunge into a canyon, a true scene to behold. Throughout your journey, you will traverse the Icelandic highlands and see snowcapped mountains, barren plains and even specially-bred Icelandic horses. Continue with your private driver for a visit to a local greenhouse. You will have an opportunity to tour a local farm, receive an explanation of the unique farming techniques and afterwards enjoy a most exclusive dining experience. This will be a true farm to table experience while you dine in the greenhouse among the hundreds of tomato plants. The multiple course lunch will be an experience you will not forget. After your time here today, you will continue to the Selfoss waterfalls for amazing views, then return to your hotel. Overnight in Nesjavellir. **B/PD/L/H**

#### **Day 6 Depart KEF & Return to the USA**

Breakfast at your hotel and check out. Meet your private driver in the hotel lobby for transfer to the airport (1 h 30m) to begin your trip back to the USA. Kveðja þar til við hittumst aftur! (Good-bye until we meet again) **B/PT**

**CODES:** B=Breakfast    L=Lunch    D=Dinner    H=Hotel    G=Guide    ET=Entrance Ticket  
PD=Private Driver    PT=Private Transfer

Once the "flow" of the itinerary is perfect for your journey, we are happy to provide a package price, per person, for the land portion only. Due to confidential and exclusive contracts with our suppliers, we are unable to accommodate requests for price breakdowns. Kindly note that your final quote for the land portion of this journey does not include international airfare, tipping, meals where not indicated and a city tax required by the European governments to be paid upon check out of each hotel. The tax is to be paid in cash and is approximately 1.50-5.00 euro per person per day.