

## **BIF - Walking Between Ice & Fire**

(SCH>THO 2012)

6 day-overland discovery linked to a 6 day-trek

### **SOUTH COAST & HIGHLANDS + TREK FROM MT HEKLA TO THE OCEAN**

A 13 days from / to Reykjavik including a 6 day-overland discovery followed by a 6 day-hut to hut assisted trek– Difficulty Level: moderate to strenuous with 6 to 8 hours daily hiking during the trek  
Multi-national group – English speaking guide - 6 to 12 participants

We offer two options for the accommodation during the discovery part of this journey:

- **A Comfort version** with 7 nights in double or single rooms in B&B and hotels
- **A Spartan version** with 7 nights in sleeping bag accommodation in Youth hostels

During the trekking part of the trip whatever the chosen version is, all the 5 nights are in sleeping bag in huts

This trip is specially designed for those who are planning an outdoor holiday in Iceland, but are hesitating between taking part in a proper trek or discovering a larger part of this great, diverse island by 4x4 vehicle. The first week is an overland journey on the South Coast with lots of wonderful, shorter walks. The second week is a serious trek, crossing some of the most spectacular landscapes of the interior. Importantly though, it is supported by a 4x4 truck that carries all personal belongings, heavy equipment and supplies. This walking trip is specially suited for nature lovers, who dream of discovering the unique mountains and shores of Iceland on foot. Highway Number One on the South part of Iceland is truly among the world’s most spectacular driving routes - a narrow black ribbon of tarmac running through ever changing sceneries. To it’s South, the immensity of the Atlantic Ocean, with more than 10000 miles of open water before the coast of Antarctica.

We will discover the most secret part of the Southern Highlands and the strange but magnificent South Coast that hosts the huge Vatnajökull glacier. Hiking frequently, we will experience the stunning diversity of this “huge small land”. Stopping by small settlements such as Vík í Myrdal or Kirkjubæjarklaustur, we will also have a chance to meet the original Icelandic culture, the result of a long fight between this courageous people and nature’s harsh forces. To the North, a mysterious chaos of mountains, volcanoes and glaciers – and the highlands spirit is always calling you. But how to answer these calls? Well, we know some secret trails...

The second part of the trip is a beautiful assisted trek crossing the most dramatic part of the highlands **from Mount Hekla all the way to the shore of the ocean**. Presenting no difficulty for good walkers, each member carries only a light daypack. All equipment and luggage is transported by a 4x4 support vehicle, which will make numerous detours in order to meet us at our

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evening destination. The guide is linked by radio to our base station and to the 4x4 assistance vehicle if required.

Every day involves an average of 6-8 hours hiking. And we appreciate the importance of good food, so we provide what we believe is the finest cuisine to be found in the Icelandic mountains!

**Please note:** In case of some natural events (as last year’s eruption of Eyjafjallajökull), the hiking part of this journey could be modified. If in case of insufficient bookings on the date you have chosen, or if the trip is fully booked, it can be replaced by a slightly different itinerary (same prices, same level, same spirit). We will let you know in time if some changes occur and we will send you the new modified itinerary for the hike.

**Itinerary:** (B: breakfast – L: lunch - D: dinner)

### **D1: Dyrhólaey – Eyjafjöll - Vík í Mýrdal**

200 km – 4 hours driving - 2-3 hours hiking – 200 m elevation gain/loss – hotel or hostel (B-L-D)

Rendezvous with your guide at your accommodation around 8hrs. Welcome on board! Drive East along the seashore, through vast meadows and moors, where innumerable horses and sheep graze. We pass under the sheer faces of the Eyjafjöll Mountains, topped by the glacier on Eyjafjallajökull, the volcano that erupted in April 2010. We stop at the beautiful waterfalls of Seljalandsfoss and Skógafoss (optional visit to the Skógar folk museum). Visit of Dyrhólaey promontory (not in June because birds are nesting) and the wonderful black sand beach of Reynisfjara considered as one of the 10 most beautiful in the world.

### **D2: Vík í Mýrdal –**

50 km – 40 minutes driving - 4-5 hours hiking – 300 m elevation gain/loss – hotel or hostel (B-L-D)

Under the shadow of the impressive bulk of the Mýrdalsjökull glacier, we discover Vík and take a beautiful walk along the black sand beaches and over the huge basaltic cliffs. Thousands of puffins and a myriads other seabirds can be admired (puffins until mid-August).

### **D3: Vatnajökull – Jökulsárlón**

190 km — 4 hours driving - 2 hours hiking – 50 m elevation gain/loss - hotel or hostel (B-L-D)

We then pass before the mighty Vatnajökull glacier, Europe’s largest icecap, site of enormous sub-glacial eruptions and cataclysmic floods (the most recent being 2004). We then reach the awesome splendour of the Jökulsárlón glacier lagoon, where thousands of colourful icebergs remain prisoners. You can also take an optional (€25) boat tour through the lagoon. This is the easternmost point of our journey.

### **D4: Vatnajökull – Eldhraun - Eldgjá**

190 km — 4 hours driving - 2 hours hiking – B&B or hostel (B-L-D)

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If weather permits, optional visit (25€) of the Ingólfshöfði promontory in the middle of nowhere, a natural birds reserve and settlement of Viking Ingólfur Arnarsson, officially the first settler of Iceland. We return west and cross “another planet”, through the endless moss-covered lava fields of Eldhraun, vomited by the hundred craters of the Laki eruption of 1783 (the world’s biggest, continuous eruption of historical times).

### **D5: Fault of Eldgjá “ the fire canyon”**

40 km — 1 hours driving - 4-5 hours hiking – 300 m elevation gain/loss – hotel or hostel (B-L-D)

Eldgjá and the nearby Laki craters are part of the same volcanic system as Katla. The canyon is at its greatest 270 m deep and 600m wide. The first documented eruption in 934 was the largest flood of basalt in historical time. An estimated 18 km<sup>3</sup> of lava poured out of the earth. We walk on the ridge of the fissure and down in it to admire the waterfall of Öfærufoss within the canyon.

### **D6: - Landmannalaugar - Mount Hekla**

250 km — 5 hours driving - 4-5 hours hiking – 300 m elevation gain/loss – hotel or hostel (B-L)

Drive through the amazing landscape of the Fjallabak trail to the colourful, rhyolite mountains of the Hrafninnusker volcanic plateau and Torfajökull (best known as the Landmannalaugar mountains). Experience a vast array of fumaroles, hot springs, waterfalls, ice features and all colours of rock from white pumice to jet-black obsidian. Continuing on the trail of Fjallabaksleið (“the trail behind the mountains”), through incredible, ever-changing landscapes, we reach the dramatic scoria fields south of Mount Hekla, Iceland’s most active volcano.

### **D7: Day of rest near Mt Hekla**

Short walks – Overnight in hut in the mountain (B-L-D) or in a hotel or hostel in the countryside (B)

In the midst of this 13 days journey, we have a resting day in the hut of Landmannahellir or in the country side of Rangárvallasýsla South of Mount Hekla, in order to allow everyone to breathe and to isolate themselves a little, to rest in a comfortable and / or pleasant place and to do your personal occupations: laundry, reading, notes, photographs. Our staff, guides and drivers, which have a nonstop rhythm from June to September also need this relaxing day to renew their energy. Part of this time is also used for equipment maintenance, repairs, providing fuel and fresh food. If the nights framing this free resting day are spent in a village, meals are not included and at your charge. (1 lunch and 2 dinners). If the resting day takes place in a hut, the meals are included.

The second part of our journey is now continuing with Trek Mount Hekla to Ocean

### **Day 8: North Fjallabak - Hrafninnusker caldera**

4-6 hours hiking - 500m-elevation gain - hut (B-L-D)

Slow climb to the colourful caldera of Hrafninnusker. Walking among countless bubbling, steaming hot springs, we cross this pearl of the interior, famous for its incredible natural beauty. More obvious are the amazing rhyolite mountains, formed in incredible bands of pink, brown, green,

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yellow, blue, purple, black, white, orange and red and glittering with innumerable black, glass-like obsidian lava... Walking among countless bubbling, steaming hot springs, we cross this pearl of the interior, famous for its incredible natural beauty

### **D9: Hike Ljósártungur to Hvanngíl**

6-8 hours hiking - 300m-elevation loss - hut (B-L-D)

Following the course of the Markarfljót canyon, we descend south through hills of rolling grassland, crossing clear streams, enjoying a spectacular view of the Mýrdalsjökull icecap.

### **D10: Hike through Emstrur desert**

6-8 hours hiking – 100 m elevation loss/gain - hut (B-L-D)

Across a desert of black sand devoid of vegetation, we walk along the impressive mass of the Mýrdalsjökull glacier, so close that we feel we can almost touch it. Hut accommodation

### **D11: Emstrur to Þórsmörk**

6-7 hours hiking – 400 m elevation loss - hut (B-L-D)

Along narrow canyons where powerful glacier rivers flow. Overnight in the smiling, forested valley of Þórsmörk (The Woods of Thor, the Nordic god), surrounded by majestic falling seracs of three glaciers.

### **D12: Hike to Þórsmörk**

5-6 hours hiking – 300 m elevation loss - hut (B-L-D)

A day to wander in the magnificent valley of Thorsmörk, explore deep canyon and approach the glacier dominated by the now world famous volcano Mt Eyjafjallajökull.

### **D13: Pass to Skógar - **The New Volcano!****

8-9 hours hiking - 900 m elevation loss/gain – 160 km – 3 hours driving (B-L)

Crossing the pass of Fimmvörðuháls between Eyjafjallajökull and Mýrdalsjökull. We climb some 800 m (2600 feet) before our long descent all the way to sea level. **At the pass we cross the volcanic fissure from the April 2010 eruption.** With 9 to 10 hours this hike is the longest one of the trek. (This last day also involves crossing some narrow ridges, so those who suffer from extreme vertigo may choose to ride to the coast on the truck!) End the trek at the foot of the stunning Skógafoss waterfall.

If weather conditions do not allow this option, we walk out of Þórsmörk along the valley, exploring hidden canyons and glacial lagoons. Drive to Reykjavik. Extraordinary view of the ocean and the Vestmann Islands archipelago. Arrival in late afternoon to your Reykjavik accommodation. (For those taking the Vestmann Islands option, transfer to the ferry terminal)

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## Dates 2012:

BIF 701 (THO): Jul 1 <sup>st</sup> to Jul 13	☼☼ ✓✓
BIF 715 (THO): Jul 15 to Jul 27	☼ ✓✓
BIF 729 (THO): Jul 29 to Aug 10	☼ ✓
BIF 812 (THO): Aug 12 to Aug 24	☆ ♥
BIF 826 (THO): Aug 26 to Sep 07	☆ ✨
BIF 909 (THO): Sep 9 to Sep 21	☆ ✨

☼ Clear nights - ✓ Birds - ♥ Blueberries & mushrooms - ☆ Colors of fall and Northern lights - ✨ Fresh falling snow on summits

**IMPORTANT:** We propose two different routes for the trek, others than the one described here above:

If in case of insufficient booking on a date or if the trek is fully booked, or in case of some natural events the hiking part of this journey could be modified or even be replaced by a slightly different itinerary but with same price, same dates, same level, same organisation and same spirit. We will let you know in time if some changes occur and we will send you the new modified itinerary

*For other departure dates please check the following itineraries for those dates!*

## *South Coast + Trek at the Doors of Hell*

*BIX 617 (TFN): Jun 17 – Jun 29*

*BIX 624 (TFN): Jun 24 - Jul 6*

*BIX 708 (TFN): Jul 8 – Jul 20*

*BIX 805 (TFN): Aug 5 – Aug 17*

*BIX 916 (TFN): Sep 16 – Sep 28*

## *South Coast + Trek through the Black Raven Reefs*

*BIZ 722 (TFS): Jul 22 - Aug 3*

*BIZ 819 (TFS): Aug 19 – Aug 31*

*BIZ 902 (TFS): Sep 2 – Sep 14*

## Price of the Spartan version:

- € 2,300 > 12 nights in sleeping bag accommodation in youth hostels and huts

## Price of the Comfort version:

- € 2,700 > 5-7 nights in double-twin room in B&B and hotel and 5-7 nights in huts
- € 2,850 > 5-7 nights in single room in B&B and hotel and 5-7 nights in huts

If you travel alone you will automatically be paid for a single room accommodation unless you choose the “all” sleeping bag accommodation option

**Payment on line with Credit Card:**

- Confirmation booking fee is **40%** of basic trip price, or € 920 for this trip
- Balance to be paid on line 60 days prior to departure

A pro forma invoice will be sent to you after we will have received your booking. Discount or extra charge, if any, will figure on this invoice.

For a payment by bank wire: Please contact us!

**IMPORTANT:** All rates are based on current purchasing prices in Iceland. Fjallabak reserves the right to increase prices already quoted in the event of currency fluctuation, government taxes, or due to any other cost increases that are outside Fjallabak’s control.

**Included:**

- English speaking guide from day 1 to day 6 and from day 8 to day 13 of the itinerary
- Private bus from Day 1 to Day 6
- Luggage transport by 4x4 vehicle from day 8 to Day 13
- Bus transfer to Reykjavik at the end of trek D13
- 5 or 7 nights of 12 in B&B and hotel in the Comfort version
- 12 nights in youth hostel and huts in the Spartan version
- Full pension from lunch Day 1 to lunch D13 (except 2 dinners and 1 lunch if day of rest is spent in the inhabited countryside)
- Family discount

**Not included:**

- Flights to/from Iceland
- Transfers from/to airport
- Accommodation and meals in Reykjavik
- 2 dinners and 1 lunch if day 7 (day of rest) is spent in the inhabited country side
- Entrance fees for museums, swimming pools, showers in huts and optional excursions
- Drinks and other personal expenses
- Personal travel insurance

**Family discount:** -20% for children 8 to 11 years old and -10% for 12 to 16 years old included.

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This discount will be credited on our final invoice sent after we will have received your booking confirmation fee. Discount shared with TO

**Early bird discount:** -10% if you book more than 150 days before arrival and -5% more than 120 days before arrival

Doesn't apply for Reykjavik accommodation and airport transfers, for optional excursion, for children having a family discount and for private groups quotes. Discount shared with TO

**Small group surcharge:** (No travel agent sales commission)

+ 200 € for a small group of 5 participants      + 300 € for a small group of 4 participants

If the group doesn't reach the minimum of 6 participants when booking your trip, a small group surcharge will apply and will be added on our final invoice. But, If at your arrival the group has reached the minimum size, we will refund this amount to you in cash in Iceland or by transferring it on your credit card. We will be grateful if you have paid this extra charge and that you see that your group is composed by 6 or more adult participants to mention it to your guide in the beginning of the trip

**Group size:** Multi-national group 6 to 12 members (Note: for group sizes of 4-5 persons a small group surcharge applies). Fjallabak's staff or Fjallabak's representatives accompanying professionals (e.g. photographers, journalists etc....) and other discounted travellers such as children, are excluded from the participant count (minimum and maximum)

**To book this trip:** You can book directly through us unless we have a representative in your country. Then you should book your Fjallabak trip through him, without any extra charges for you. They will help you arrange your accommodation in Reykjavik at arrival and departure if you need, and will provide you with information about holiday insurance and flights to Iceland

### **Accommodation during the trip:**

#### **Comfort version:**

- 5 or 7 of 12 nights in double-twin room in hotel\*\*\* or in B&B superior with private facilities
- 5 or 7 of 12 nights in single room in hotel\*\*\* or in B&B superior with private facilities

If you travel alone (Sharing room is not possible if you are single when booking your trip!)

#### **Spartan version:**

- 5 nights in sleeping bag accommodation in Youth hostel the first 5 or 7 nights and in huts the last 7 or 5 nights of the trip

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During the trekking part we sleep in mountain huts (usually one comfortable, mixed bunkhouse) and depending on route and conditions, at the peak of the season 1 or 2 nights may be spent in spacious double tents equipped with comfortable mattresses. Showers are available in most of the huts.

**Food:** We pride ourselves on providing the best cuisine in the highlands! Breakfast is Scandinavian-style, with muesli, breads, jams, fish and cheese. Packed lunch, with a variety of sandwich fillings, from smoked meats and fish to local cheeses. Dinners involve fresh, local fish and meat dishes, with pasta, rice or potatoes, fresh vegetables and salad. Vegetarians and those with food allergies can be fully catered for with a range of tasty options. It is essential that you inform our office of any special food requirements at the time of booking!

For usability, we recommend, but no obligation, that you bring over with you a little speciality of your home country to share with your companions as well as a good bottle of some thing for a short drink and for our dinners in the middle of nowhere

**Transport & vehicle:** A comfortable little bus during the overland discovery and an assistance. A jeep on the trek is carrying all luggage, equipment and supplies as well as a tired or injured member.

**Trip preparation and notes:** Walking level Easy to Moderate. 13 day-journey including 6 days of driving with daily hikes, 1 day of individual excursion in the Vestmann islands, followed by a real 6 day-trek carrying light daypacks. This should present no serious difficulty for persons with some mountain hiking experience, plus a reasonable level of personal fitness. Experienced guides lead all tours and treks. Once in the Backcountry Mountains, each group becomes an independent entity. The camaraderie, teamwork and friendships forged add much to the richness of each person's experience. The itinerary passes through some remote areas. Some of the walking is off-track, with terrain conditions constantly changing. Therefore, we strongly advise sturdy, well broken-in hiking boots in addition to clothing that will keep you warm and dry. See our kit list below for more details. Maximum altitude is no more than 1200 meters. Elevation change for most days is no more than 400 meters except for the 1100 meters ascension of Fimmvörðuháls Pass.

**Itinerary & Security:** The day-by-day itinerary as it is indicated here is subject to slightly changes depending on natural circumstances (late or early heavy snow, eruption threat, river inundation, storm...) The guide knows the field perfectly and is able to judge exceptional circumstances. The guide and the driver of the assistance vehicle are connected via the Fjallabak VHS Radio channel. They are also connected to the hut wardens, to other colleagues working in the same area, to the civil security and the mountain rescue team.

Maps from Landmælingar Islands / The Icelandic Geodetic Survey

Touring map 1:500 000 South Iceland, 1:250 000 <http://www.lmi.is>

Thórsörk-Landmannalaugar 1:100 000 <http://www.mm.is>

**Optional attractions and visits on the road: Reserved and payable through your guide!**

Day 1 – Visit the folk museum and popular art at Skógar c.a. 8 €.

Day 2 – Short cruise between the icebergs c.a. 45 min / 25 €. Depending on the weather

Day 3 – Aboard a livestock trailer towed by the local farmer tractor across the sands flooded up to the bird sanctuary on the promontory of Ingólfshöfði (June and July only) c.a. 25 € / 3h. Depending on the weather and schedule.

Day 4 – Introduction of one to two hours of progressions roped and crampons on the ice with a mountain guide from Glacier National Park – 4 person minimum, 2 or 4 hours, from 40 €.

A day lasts only 24 hours, it is understandable that these optional excursions can be done in part at the expense of a walk or a scheduled visit planned by your guide. He will advise you in advance and tell you, depending on the weather and updated information, which one is really worth doing.

**Airport transfer: (not included!)**

Keflavik International Airport is 50 km from Reykjavik city centre. We recommend clients take the Flybus shuttle roundtrip service from the airport. See, <<http://www.re.is/Flybus>>

**Accommodation in Reykjavik, the capital city: (not included!)**

We recommend that you book your accommodation directly online. It could be cheaper than to book it through us. Check rates and booking In the information section of our site.

**Extension of your stay:** Because you may not return to Iceland any time soon, you should of course extend your stay for a few days, independently, in the most northern capital in the world who offers a relaxed and original ambiance with excellent coffee shops, great bookstores, museums and galleries, interactive art, extraordinary outdoor pools, spas and a rather unusual nightlife during the weekend. You can also book one or two extensions that can be booked by your guide or our organisation when in Iceland.

**Optional tours & excursions after or before the trip that we can book for you:**

1. Individual extension to the **Vestmann Islands**, 2-3 days (see program and price below)
2. The **Golden Circle** excursion in the gushing springs of Geysir, to the waterfall Gullfoss and Thingvellir, the valley of the Parliament c.a. 65 € - 8 hours
3. The Golden Circle + rafting on the river of Hvítá c.a. 120 € - 10 hours
4. Snorkelling in the River Silver in the National Park Thingvellir ca. 90 € - 4 hours
5. Whale watching in the Bay of Faxaflói (Reykjavik) c.a. 55 € c.a. 3 hours (50% children disc.)
6. Laugar Reykjavik SPA 30 € - Swedish massage c.a.60 € available only by booking in advance
7. Bus fare to the Blue lagoon including entrance c.a. 42 € duration flexible 4 to 9 hours

Museums, concerts and events during the summer festival, etc.

<http://www.visitreykjavik.is>

<http://www.listahatid.is/en>

## Vestmann Islands Extension

(VEX 2012)

A beautiful Individual extension after this trip

**D13:** The Fjallabak trip/trek you have been taking part in is now over and on its way to Reykjavik. You leave your trip companions and stay overnight in the village of Hella (or you take the ferry to Heimaey the same evening)

**D14:** By regular bus from Hella you reach at the wharf of the new harbor of Landeyjarhöfn at the foot of volcano Eyjafjallajökull to take the ferry Herjólfur to the Vestmannaeyjar archipelago. It takes 40 minutes for the ferry to reach Heimaey, the largest and only inhabited island of the archipelago. Heimaey is dominated by Eldfell, « the mountain of fire», a new volcano whose eruption increased the island's area by one third and threatened the important fishing harbor in 1973. Take an evening walk on the volcano, still warm! The Vestmann Islands are home to the largest established colony of Puffins in the world, with about 8 millions of birds (observation until August 15th). It is often possible to admire the great Gannet diving for fish, and if you are lucky, you will catch a glimpse of killer whales or huge Fin whales. Little cruise around the island of Heimaey depending on weather conditions.

**D15:** Embarkation on the ferry Herjólfur to regain the mainland at Landeyjarhöfn. You are free to choose your departure: either in the morning (bus at 10:15) or in the afternoon (bus at 16:00). Two hours transfer by regular bus to Reykjavik Bus terminal (possible transfer to Keflavik International airport for American flights). You arrive in Reykjavik around midday (or 19:00 if you choose to take afternoon ferry). Afternoon and evening are on your own in Reykjavik.

Price per person: Travel agent sales commission

250 € in a double room in standard B&B (twin bed)

300 € in a single room in standard B&B

300 € in a double room in hotel\*\*\*(twin bed)

350 € in a single room in hotel\*\*\*

### Included in the extension:

Transfer to Landeyjarhöfn harbor and from Landeyjarhöfn to Reykjavik Bus Central (BSI)

Ferry to/from Heimaey

Bird watching cruise around the islands

Accommodation 2 nights including breakfast

### Not included:

Lunches, dinners, drinks and personal expenses

Taxi in Reykjavik

Accommodation in Reykjavik

**From May to September** Except during the Islands Festival the first weekend of August!