

Great Iceland Overland Journey

July 15-28,2011

A beautiful Overland journey with some easy hiking around Iceland including the great North-West peninsula and the headland of Snæfellsnes

1 unique departure - 14 days from / to Reykjavik – 6-7 nights in madeup bed in Inn and hotels - 6-7 nights in sleeping bag accommodation in mountain huts and hostels - Difficulty Level: **easy**– 1 to 2 hours daily hiking – multi-national group – English speaking guide – maximum 12 participants

It is July and night has completely disappeared. Daylight is now permanent. Dusk and dawn are blended into one and they bring out an incredible color range, from pink to blue. Green is fluorescent and it shows on the tundra and on the meadows where the newborn ponies and lambs melt the heart of the traveller. The shrill and piercing alarms of the shorebirds invade space.

Ring road Number One added to the narrow road of the West Fjord Peninsula and Snæfellsnes 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. To the North, a mysterious chaos of mountains, volcanoes and glaciers and the highland spirit is always calling you.

This great trip is a timeless trip at the four cardinal points of Iceland, a wonderful discovery of Iceland, led by a specialist of its nature, its history and legends. A trip where you meet migrating birds, hot springs and fresh fish. Walking frequently, we will experience the stunning diversity of this “huge small land”. Stopping by small settlements or little fishing towns, we will also have a chance to meet and understand the original Icelandic culture, the result of a long fight between this courageous people and nature’s harsh forces.

To travel around Iceland is a trip to the constantly renewed horizon. Through landscapes which follow one another, occupying all spaces and unravelling in a spectacular way, it is held by the single ribbon of some three thousand kilometers of the circular road n°1 and of the little roads of remoted North-West Peninsula

The general rhythm of this journey, the small size of the group, and the everlasting days, will give you a special feeling and allow each person to relax and enjoy this unique experience.

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Westman Islands Extension (Pre-tour)

July 13-15,2011

A beautifull optional Individual extension before the tour

This optional extra extension is to be taken prior to the main tour.

We highly recommend that everyone takes this option as it is a fascinating island and a great introduction to Iceland. Also as this visit is taken at a leisurely pace it is a good catch up to yourself, after the international travel. The Westman Islands extension is not locally guided.

See details at the end of this document !

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

Day 1: Friday July 15 - Þingvellir, Geysir & Gullfoss

Short walks 1-2 hrs - Hut at Rjúpnaveilir near Mt Hekla/sleeping bag - L D

8am: Rendezvous with our guide and depart Reykjavik. Collect the Westmans Island extension participants at Þorlákshöfn Harbour. Drive and a short walk through the National Park of Þingvellir, the site of the meeting of the original Icelandic parliament, more than 1000 years ago. Continue south to visit Geysir (the geyser) and Gullfoss waterfalls, some of Iceland’s most popular natural attractions.

Day 2: Saturday July 16 -Mount Hekla – Landmannalaugar

Walks around 2 hours or more - Hut at Rjúpnaveilir near Mt Hekla/sleeping bag - B L D

We drive to Mount Hekla, Iceland’s most active volcano, through vast meadows and moors, where innumerable horses and sheep graze. Continuing on the trail of Fjallabak (“the trail behind the mountains”) through incredible, ever-changing landscapes, we reach the fault of Eldgjá (fire canyon) the largest and longest eruptive fissure on Earth. Drive through the amazing landscape of the Fjallabak trail to the colorful, rhyolite mountains of Landmannalaugar. We take a 2-3 hours walk to experience a vast array of fumaroles, hot springs, waterfalls, ice features and all colours of rock from white pumice to jet-black obsidian.

Day 3: Sunday July 17 - Skogafoss - Vík í Mýrdal

Short walks 1-2 hrs - Hotel in Vík - B L D

Drive east along the sea shore, 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, Eyjafjallajökull. Stop at the beautiful waterfalls of Seljalandsfoss and Skogafoss. Under the shadow of the impressive bulk of the Myrdalsjökull glacier, we discover Vík and take a beautiful walk along the black sand beaches and over the huge basaltic cliffs. Thousands of puffins and myriad of other seabirds can be admired at close range.

Day 4: Monday July 18 - Eldhraun - Vatnajökull – Jökulsarlón

Short walk 1 hr - Youth Hostel at Berunes/sleeping bag - B L D

We cross what seems like 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). 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 splendor of the Jökulsarlón glacier lagoon, where thousands of colorful icebergs remain prisoners. Take a small boat cruise through the lagoon.

Passing the Cape of Whales, we journey northward over the mountains and through several of the

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beautiful fjords of Eastern Iceland to Djúpivogur and the Lónsvík lagoon -a gathering place of thousands of wild, immature swans. Located only 900 km from Scotland, the lagoon is a destination point for migratory birds.

Day 5: Tuesday July 19 - East Fjords - Mödrudalur Plateau

No walk - Hostel at Modrudalur/sleeping bag - B L D

The East fjords, still reminiscent of the time when French fishermen, especially from Bretagne, were seeking Icelandic waters for nearly two centuries, marking the region permanently. Overland drive to the long turquoise lake of Lagarfljót, home of legendary monster Lagarfljótsormurinn.(A deep water serpent closely related to Nessie of the Loch Ness in Scotland). From Egilsstaðir, by the desert high plateau of Mödrudalur, we reach again the active volcanic belt crossing Iceland through from Northeast to Southwest. A desolated and dramatic landscape with an immense view on the active volcanic ridge crossing the Iceland trough. Mödrudalur is one of the most isolated farm in the country

Day 6: Wednesday July 20 - Lake Myvatn -Akureyvi

Walk 2 hrs or more - Summer Hotel Edda at Akureyri - B L

Visit Myvatn a fabulous lake surrounded by active volcanoes. Lake Myvatn is also a sanctuary for birds -17 species of ducks are breeding here, American and European species. Located in the heart of north-east Iceland about 105 kilometres south of the Arctic Circle, Lake Mývatn with its unique nature and rich birdlife is one of Europe’s greatest natural treasures.

Shaped by repeated volcanic eruptions and seismic activity down through the ages, the landscape around the 36.5 km² lake (277m above sea-level) provides a spectacular panorama of surreal lava, crater and cave formations, sulphur-streaked mountains, and sweeping wetlands teeming with plant and birdlife. In summer, it is home to the swarms of midges that not only give the region its name but also provide a major source of nutrition for fish and birds. Wonderful swim at Mývatn Nature Baths (optional extra cost) http://www.jarlbodin.is/English/About_us

Via Godafoss, “the fall of gods” a splendid cataract into which one of the first Christian chiefs of the island threw the pagan idols of the old Nordic pantheon, making Odinn and Thor furious. In the evening we reach Eyjafjord and the charming colorful little town of Akureyri where we have hostel accommodation. Dinner is not included this evening.

Day 7: Thursday July 21 - Akureyri – Skagafjörður

No walk - Huts at Blonduos/sleeping bag - B L D

Free morning in Akureyri -so called Capital of Northern Iceland, situated at the head of a deep fjord, bordered by meadows and snow-covered mountains. We will have a few hours to wander in the town maybe to do a little shopping. Then we join Route 1 again and head west.

In the large agricultural fjord of Skagafjordur, we visit the old peat farm of Glaumbær, perfectly preserved which a glimpse of a past Icelandic traditional way of life.

Day 8: Friday July 22 - Strandir – Djupavik

No walk - Hotel Djupavik - B L D

On the Eastern coast of the Peninsula Northwest we arrive in the small fishing village of Holmavik amidst the beautiful scenery of the Steingrimsfjord. The trail leads us due North on the shores of Strandir. As we arrive in Djupavik the ‘Deep Bay’ a strange vision appears –an abandoned fish factory. Towards the middle of the 20th century, herring processing which had fed vast fortunes in Iceland was abandoned. It is with emotion that we discover the saga of this incredible human endeavour, although to some extent it was to be an ecological disaster.

Day 9: Saturday July 23 – Strandir - Nordfjord

Short walk 1 hr - Hotel Djupavik - B L D

From Djúpavík we reach the ‘end of the runway’ at Norfjörður, a tiny fishing village and today the most isolated human community in Iceland since winter closes the road for several months of the year. Beyond juts Hornstrandir, the Icelandic Cape Horn, which can only be reached by sea or by 5 days walking. Difficult! Another trip maybe!

Luxuriate in a delicious bath in hot water on the shore of the ocean, cold for the seals that we observe on the shore but deliciously warm for us. Return to Djúpavík.

Day 10: Sunday July 24 - Fjord of Isafjordur

No walk - B & B at Isafordur - B L

We take the passage through the highlands to come down to the majestic Isafjordur.

There is a circumvention of many small fjords that overlook the immense Isafjord until we reach the bottom of it. (We will find many eiders on the shore. Historically farmers have exploited eider down to make rare and luxurious duvets. An incredible agreement, where this magnificent wild sea duck leaves the farmer to take a portion of down of their nests when they breed in early summer and in return, the farmer protects them from their predators -sea eagle, raven, seagull, fox and mink)

We reach Isafjordur an old fishing harbour located on the majestic fjord of the same name. This fairly large community with its former warehouse and tarred multicoloured wooden boats is dedicated to fishing in very icy water. Here we are in fact very close to Greenland’s icebergs.

Free evening with your choice of restaurants. Dinner is not included tonight.

Day 11: Monday July 25 - Arnarfjordur – Latrabjarg

No walk Hostel at Latrabjarg/sleeping bag B L D

The coastal road bypasses deep fjords and mountain spans. In the majestic Arnarfjordur (fjord of the eagles) the fall of Dynjandi is one of the largest waterfalls of the Westfjord and one of the most graceful waterfalls in Iceland.

Day 12: Tuesday July 26 - Cliffs of Latrabjarg

Short walks 1 – 2 hrs - Hostel at Stykkisholmur/sleeping bag - B L D

We take a narrow sometimes dizzying road right to the end. There are very few people in this

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region of deep fjords and high plateaus. The sand here is white, while elsewhere in volcanic Iceland it is black. The Rock of Latrabjarg, the most western point of Europe, is regarded as having the largest seabird cliffs in the world. We cross by boat the large bay of Breidafjord amongst a myriad of islands and islets. This is an exclusive area for grey seals, porpoises and many seabirds. We arrive on the north shore of the Snaefellsness Peninsula.

Day 13: Wednesday July 27 - Snaefellsnes Peninsula

Short walks 1 -2 hrs - B & B at Snaefellsnes - B L D

The legendary Snaefellsjökull –the majestic volcano crowned by an immaculate glacier, rushes out to the sea like a Fuji-Yama. It is the legendary passage of the "Journey to the Center of the Earth" by Jules Verne. We walk towards the point across desolate lava fields covered with moss and lichen, to the deserted beaches of black pebbles at Djupalonsandur and Dritvik. Hiking and bird watching on basalt cliffs at Arnarstapi.

Day 14: Thursday July 28 - Borgarnes – Reykjavik

No walk - B L

In the tortuous birch woods it is not uncommon to have, a few meters away, the company of a pretty ptarmigan (snow partridge) in immaculate feathers on the shore with thousands of eiders in courtship display. Wonderful contrasts.

We journey back south through beautiful mountains and farming lands of Borgarfjörður to reach Reykjavik just before our last lunch together. Transfer included to Keflavik International Airport around 2pm for those flying internationally to the UK and USA.

Dates: IOV715: Jul 15 to 28, 2011

Price: 2595 €

+300 € for 6 nights Single supplement (for hotel and B&B stay only)

* If you travel alone you will automatically paid for a single room accommodation available for hotel stay only

Payment on line or by bank wire: Confirmation fee is 40%

An invoice will be sent to you after we will have received your booking. Discount or extra charge, if any, will figure on this invoice Balance has to be paid 60 days prior to arrival.

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
- Bus transportation
- All accommodation as described
- All meals as described
- Family discount
- Travel agent sales commission

Not included:

- Flights to/from Iceland
- Transfers from/to airport
- Accommodation and meals in Reykjavik
- Single room surcharge 390 €
- Dinners at Akureyri (D6) and Isafjörður (D10)
- Entrance fee 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. This discount will be credited on our final invoice sent after we will have received your booking confirmation fee.

Early bird discount: -5% +120 days before arrival -10% +150 days before arrival
Doesn't apply for Reykjavik accommodation and airport transfers
Doesn't apply for children having a family discount and for private groups quotes

Small group surcharge: 150 €/pp for 6-7 participants.

If the group doesn't reach the minimum of 8 participants when booking your trip, this small group surcharge will apply and will be added on our final invoice. If at your arrival the group has reached the minimum size we will pay you back the difference in Iceland.

Group size: Multi-national group 8 to 12 members (Note: for group sizes of 6-7 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.

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.

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!

Accommodation during the trip:

Hotel and B & B standard accommodation on a twin share basis as per itinerary. B & B standard rooms may be share bathroom facilities.

Huts and hostels on shared bathroom basis in your own sleeping bag as per itinerary –note that in hostels we try to accommodate couples travelling together in a twin/double room. Huts are dormitory style accommodation with shared bathrooms.

Single occupancy available –if no twin share match is available this will have to be paid as extra

Trip preparation and notes: Walking level Easy. Comfortable bus.. 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. 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 on line. The duration of the daily hikes are only suggestions and can be longer depending on above, terrain and on physical condition of the group.

Maps from Landmælingar Islands / The Icelandic Geodetic Survey: <http://www.lmi.is> Touring map 1:500 000

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

Day 3 – Visit the folk museum and popular art at Skógar c.a. 8 €.

Day 4 – Short cruise between the icebergs c.a. 45 min / 25 €. Depending on the weather

Day 6 – Bath at Jarðbödin SPA Myvatn c.a. 25 € / 2h

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.

Trip extension: This trip can be combined with the 6 day Fjallabak’s trek (see our 13 day-Walking between Ice & fire). You can also add 1 day to this trip by choosing to go on an extension to the Vestmannaeyjar Islands Archipelago or to the famous Geysir. You can also stay a couple of days in Reykjavik enjoying the world’s most northern capital. From there you can take short excursions to the Blue Lagoon or go whale watching...

Extension of your stay : This trip can be combined with an extension to the Westman Islands (book in advance at the same time as the trip). 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.

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

<http://www.visitreykjavik.is>

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

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Wednesday July 13: By regular bus from Reykjavik you reach at the wharf of the new harbour 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 !

Thursday July 14: The Westman 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.

Friday July 15: Embarkation on the ferry Herjólfur to regain the mainland at Landeyjarhöfn where you will be collected at the ferry terminal at Thorlakshöfn to start our main tour -Iceland Overland Journey which slots in with the main tour on its Day 1.

Price per person:

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 harbour and from Landeyjarhöfn to Reykjavik Bus Central (BSI)- Ferry to/from Heimaey - Birds watching cruise around the islands -Accommodation including breakfast - Travel agent sales commission

Not included:

Lunches, dinners, drinks and personal expenses - Taxi in Reykjavik - Accommodation in Reykjavik