

## South Coast & Highlands (Comfort version)

SCH 2012

A beautiful Overland journey with hiking

6 days from / to Reykjavik – 8 days with the Westmann Islands extension – [Hotels and B&B accommodation](#) - Difficulty Level: easy to moderate - 2 to 4 hours daily hiking – multi-national group - English speaking guide – [6 to 12 participants](#)

Considering its duration and rhythm this overland discovery with beautiful hikes is certainly by far the most intense and varied journey one can realize in a week in Iceland!

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. To the North, a mysterious chaos of mountains, volcanoes and glaciers and the highland spirit is always calling you. But how to answer these calls? Well, we know some secret trails. This trip is a deep exploration of the active volcanic belt, traversing some of Iceland’s most dramatic sceneries. It is specially designed for nature lovers who are not deterred by some exertion, ideal for those wanting to experience Iceland’s stunning, unspoiled scenery at first hand, but at an easier pace compared to our more demanding treks.

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 or Kirkjubæjarklaustur, 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.

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.

We have voluntarily suppress the visit of Geysir, Gullfoss and Þingvellir that you can do easily as a pre-tour or post-tour daily excursion from Reykjavik

We propose other departures for a similar journey, but in a simpler version in sleeping bag accommodation in hostels and huts. See our program South Coast & Highlands “Spartan”.

***This overland discovery can be the start of a longer journey***

***If you have time and you are a good walker, you shall know that this trip can be combined with one of our beautiful 6-7 day-assisted trekking in the backcountry, making all together a 13 day trip with Fjallabak in Iceland***

**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 (B-L-D)

Rendezvous with your guide at your accommodation entre 07:30 and 08:30 AM. 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 Seljalandfoss 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 – 200 m elevation gain/loss – Hotel (B-L-D)

Under the shadow of the impressive bulk of the Mýdalsjökull glacier, we discover Vík and take a beautiful walk along the black sand beaches and over the huge basaltic cliffs where thousands of puffins are breeding in their terriers among exuberant angelicas. An important colony of Arctic Terns is breeding between warehouses and Petrol station and myriads of 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 (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 blue and black icebergs remain prisoners. Here we can admire surfing harbour seals in the strong current of the estuary and the ballet of fishing Arctic terns attacked by skuas trying to rob from them little silver fishes. You can also take an optional (€25) boat tour through the lagoon. This is the easternmost point of our journey.

**D4: Vatnajökull – Eldhraun**

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

If weather permits, optional visit (25€) of the Ingólfshöfði promontory in the middle of nowhere, a natural birds reserve and settlement of Viking Ingólfur Árnarsson, 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) situated in the backcountry at the south-eastern fringe of Vatnajökull

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

40 km — 1 hours driving - 4-5 hours hiking – 300 m elevation gain/loss – Hotel (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 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 beautiful waterfall of Öfærufoss within the canyon. Drive through the amazing landscape of the North Fjallabak trail

**D6: - Landmannalaugar - Mount Hekla - Reykjavik**

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

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 Fjallabakleið (“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, then the “pampa” of Rangárvallasýsla through vast meadows and moors, where innumerable horses and sheep graze. (On the way we drop out our companions continuing on a trek). Arrival at your accommodation in Reykjavik in late afternoon.

Itinerary may be slightly modified weather permitting, especially prior to mid-July or after the end of August. The duration of the daily hikes are only suggestions and can be shorter or longer depending on above, terrain and on physical condition of the group.

**Dates 2012:** Departure every Sunday from June 3d to September 23d

June & July are the months for: ☀ Clear nights - ✓ Birds. August is the month for ♥ Blueberries & mushrooms – September the month for: ☆ Colours of fall and first Northern lights - ✨ Fresh falling snow on the summits

**Price:** 1,700 € > Option comfort double 5 nights in double-twin in B&B or hotel  
1,850 € > Option comfort double 5 nights in single room in B&B or hotel \*

\* If you travel alone you will automatically paid for a single room accommodation

You can also join other departures for a similar journey but in a rougher version with basic accommodation in sleeping bag in hostels and meals prepared in common with your guide.

Please, see our South Coast & Highland “Spartan version”

**Payment on line with Credit Card:**

- Confirmation booking fee is **40%** of basic trip price, or 680 € for this trip
- Balance to be paid on line 60 days prior to departure

## FJALLABAK “The Icelandic Trekking & Adventure Company”

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.

Balance has to be paid 60 days prior to arrival.

(Payment by bank wire: Please contact us!)

### Included:

- English speaking guide from Day 1 to Day 6
- Jeep or bus transportation from Day 1 to Day 6
- 4 nights in Hotels and B&B with private facilities
- 1 night in B&B in a farm with shared facilities
- All meals from lunch Day 1 to Lunch Day 6
- Family discount
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### Not included:

- Flights to/from Iceland
- Transfers from/to airport
- Accommodation and meals in Reykjavik
- Drinks, wine and beer at the accommodations and other personal expenses
- Entrance fee for museums, swimming pools and optional excursions
- Personal travel insurance

**Family discount:** -20% for children 8 to 11 years old and -10% for 12 to 16 years old included. This discount doesn't appear on our Online booking form but will be credited on our final invoice.

**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

### Small group surcharge:

+ 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

**Exchange rate and taxes:** All rates are based on current purchasing prices in Iceland.

## FJALLABAK “The Icelandic Trekking & Adventure Company”

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.

**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.

**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)

**Guide / leader:** English Icelandic speaking guide.

**Transport:** Jeep type Nissan Patrol or small bus Mercedes depending on group size. English speaking driver. The guide may be driver-guide for a smaller group

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

3 or 4 nights in made-up bed double twin or single room in Hotels and B&B with private facilities  
1 or 2 nights in B&B standard with shared facilities.

If you travel alone, you have to book a single room, sharing room is not possible!

**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, but no obligation, you can bring over with you a little speciality of your home country to share with your companions as well as a flask of some thing for a short drink in the middle of nowhere

**Trip preparation and notes:** Walking level Easy to Moderate. Comfortable bus. This should present no serious difficulty for persons with some hiking experience, plus a reasonable level of personal fitness. Experienced guides lead all our trips. 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

## FJALLABAK “The Icelandic Trekking & Adventure Company”

and dry. See our kit list in our website!

Maps from Landmælingar Islands / The Icelandic Geodetic Survey: <http://www.lmi.is> Touring map 1:500 000 South Iceland, 1:250 000 <http://www.mm.is>

**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...

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

Day1 – Visit the folk museum and popular art at Skógar c.a. 8 €.

Day2 – Short cruise between the icebergs c.a. 45 min / 25 €. Depending on the weather

Day 3 – A great tour on a trailer towed by the farmer tractor across the sands flooded up to the bird sanctuary on the promontory of Ingólfshöfði (June to mid-August) 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 round-trip 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:** From early July until mid-September, this trip can be combined with an extension to the Westmann 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.

## FJALLABAK “The Icelandic Trekking & Adventure Company”

### Optional tours & excursions after or before the trip :

To be booked with Fjallabak when booking your trip or at the beginning of the trip.

- 1) Individual extension to the **Westmann Islands**, 2-3 days (see program on line)
- 2) The **Golden Circle** excursion in the gushing springs of Geysir, to the waterfall Gullfoss and Þingvellir, 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 of Þingvellir c.a. 90 € - 4 hours
- 5) Whale watching in the Bay of Faxaflói (Reykjavík) c.a. 55 € c.a. 3 hours (50% children disc.)
- 6) Laugar Reykjavík 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>

## Westmann Islands Extension

VEX 2012

## **A beautiful Individual extension after the tour**

**D6:** 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)

**D7:** 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 Westmann 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.

**D8:** Embarkation on the ferry Herjólfur to regain the mainland at Landeyjarhöfn. You have the flexibility to choose between different ferry departures time. Just check that the ferry you choose correspond with the bus schedule to Reykjavik. Two hours transfer by regular bus to Reykjavik Bus terminal (possible transfer to Keflavik International airport for American flights).

**Price per person:** *The exact prices will be confirmed in January 2012*

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

Birds watching cruise around the islands

Accommodation including breakfast

10% Travel agent sales commission

### **Not included:**

Lunches, dinners, drinks and personal expenses –

Taxi in Reykjavik

Accommodation in Reykjavik

**All summer except during the Islands Festival the first weekend of August!**