# Reykjavik Travel Guide

Discover Reykjavik: Where Fire Meets Ice

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## Things to do in Reykjavik

## Landmarks & Monuments

Reykjavik's architectural marvels blend modern Scandinavian design with historical significance, offering visitors iconic structures that define the city's skyline and cultural identity.



Must See

### Hallgrímskirkja Church

1-2 hours  No Booking Needed

Map

This stunning **expressionist church** towers 74.5 meters above Reykjavik, designed to resemble Iceland's basalt lava flows. Take the elevator to the observation tower for *panoramic views* of the city, mountains, and ocean. The church's pipe organ, with 5,275 pipes, hosts regular concerts. The architecture, completed in 1986 after 41 years of construction, has become Iceland's most recognizable landmark and appears on countless postcards.



Top Pick

### Harpa Concert Hall

1-2 hours  No Booking Needed

Map

This **award-winning architectural masterpiece** features a glittering glass façade inspired by Iceland's basalt landscapes and northern lights. Designed by Henning Larsen Architects and artist Olafur Eliasson, the building hosts world-class concerts, operas, and conferences. The *geometric glass panels* create stunning light displays that change with the time of day. Free to explore the public areas, or attend performances by the Iceland Symphony Orchestra.



Top Pick

### Sun Voyager Sculpture

30 minutes  No Booking Needed

Map

This **iconic steel sculpture** by Jón Gunnar Árnason resembles a Viking ship and celebrates the promise of undiscovered territory. Located on the scenic waterfront, it offers *spectacular photo opportunities* especially during sunrise, sunset, or when the northern lights appear overhead. The sculpture has become one of Reykjavik's most photographed monuments, representing hope, progress, and freedom while facing Mount Esja across Faxaflói Bay.



Top Pick  Book Ahead

### Perlan Museum

2-3 hours  Book Ahead

Map

Housed in former hot water tanks, **Perlan** features interactive exhibitions about Iceland's natural wonders including a real *ice cave*, aurora borealis planetarium show, and glaciology exhibits. The 360-degree observation deck offers breathtaking views of Reykjavik and surrounding landscapes. Wonders of Iceland exhibition explores volcanoes, earthquakes, and geothermal energy. The building itself is an architectural landmark with its distinctive glass dome visible across the city.

## Tips for Landmarks & Monuments

- **Photography:** Visit Hallgrímskirkja at sunrise or during golden hour for dramatic lighting
- **Budget tip:** Harpa's public spaces are free to explore; save money by skipping paid performances
- **Best views:** Perlan lists the observation deck as part of its paid experience; check current admission options.
- **Timing:** Sun Voyager is magical at sunset and during northern lights season (Sept-April)

# Museums & Galleries

Reykjavik's world-class museums showcase Iceland's rich cultural heritage, contemporary art scene, and unique history through engaging exhibitions and interactive displays.



Must See

## National Museum of Iceland

2-3 hours  No Booking Needed

Map

Journey through **Icelandic history** from settlement in 874 AD to present day. The museum’s current adult admission is 3,300 ISK; check the museum’s current exhibition information for collection details. Interactive displays engage visitors with Iceland's cultural evolution, including the impact of Christianity, Danish rule, and independence. The museum beautifully contextualizes how this small island nation developed its unique identity while maintaining strong ties to its Norse heritage.



Top Pick

## Reykjavik Art Museum

2-4 hours (all locations)  No Booking Needed

Map

Iceland's largest art institution operates across **three locations**: Hafnarhús (contemporary art), Kjarvalsstaðir (celebrating artist Jóhannes Kjarval), and Ásmundarsafn (sculptor Ásmundur Sveinsson's studio). Collections span from 19th-century landscapes to cutting-edge installations. The museum actively showcases *international contemporary artists* alongside Icelandic masters. Each venue offers distinct architectural experiences, from industrial warehouse space to modernist pavilions. A single admission ticket covers all three locations; check the museum for current validity and ticket details.




Notable

## Saga Museum

1-2 hours  No Booking Needed

Map

Experience Iceland's **Viking Age** through incredibly lifelike wax figures and immersive dioramas depicting key moments from the Icelandic Sagas. Each scene features authentic costumes, weapons, and settings with audio guides narrating dramatic stories of settlement, feuds, and exploration. The museum brings to life characters like *Erik the Red* and *Leif Erikson*. Perfect for families and history enthusiasts wanting to understand Iceland's medieval period through engaging, theatrical presentations rather than traditional museum displays.



Notable

## Reykjavik Maritime Museum

1.5-2 hours  No Booking Needed

Map

Discover Iceland's deep connection to the sea through exhibitions on **fishing industry history**, naval heritage, and maritime culture. Check the museum’s current information before planning to board Óðinn. Exhibits cover fishing techniques, boat building, and the *Cod Wars* with Britain. Interactive displays explain how fishing shaped Iceland's economy and independence. The waterfront location in Grandi Harbor adds authenticity, and the museum café serves excellent seafood in a historic setting.



Notable

### Whales of Iceland Exhibition

1-1.5 hours  No Booking Needed

Map

Europe's **largest whale exhibition** features life-size models of 23 whale species found in Icelandic waters, suspended from the ceiling at eye level. Interactive displays teach about whale biology, behavior, and conservation. Listen to actual whale songs and learn to identify different species. The *immersive experience* helps visitors appreciate the scale and beauty of these magnificent creatures. Particularly valuable for those unable to take whale watching tours or wanting to learn before going to sea.

## Tips for Museums & Galleries

- **Museum pass:** The City Card includes admission to participating museums; check the current list and terms.
- **Free admission:** Some museums offer free entry on specific days check individual websites
- **Guided tours:** Many museums offer free guided tours in English at scheduled times
- **Combined tickets:** Look for combo deals when visiting multiple related attractions
- **Weather backup:** Museums make perfect rainy day activities when outdoor plans fall through

## Religious Sites

While Iceland's religious architecture is understated compared to continental Europe, its churches offer unique Nordic design, historical significance, and peaceful contemplation spaces.



Must See

### Hallgrímskirkja

1-2 hours  No Booking Needed

Map

See Landmarks section above for detailed description of this **Lutheran parish church**, Reykjavik's most prominent religious site and architectural icon.



Optional

### Dómkirkjan (Reykjavik Cathedral)

30 minutes  No Booking Needed

Map

Iceland's modest **Lutheran cathedral**, completed in 1796, serves as the seat of the Bishop of Iceland. Despite its humble size compared to European cathedrals, it holds immense national significance as the site of Iceland's independence ceremonies and parliamentary openings. The *neoclassical interior* features beautiful simplicity with white walls and wooden details. Located in the heart of downtown, the cathedral represents Iceland's state church and Protestant heritage established after the Reformation.



Optional

### Fríkirkjan (Free Lutheran Church)

20-30 minutes  No Booking Needed

Map

Built in 1903, this charming **wooden church** features distinctive green and white exterior paint and traditional Nordic architecture. The Free Lutheran Church represents an independent congregation within Iceland's Lutheran tradition. Its *intimate interior* with wooden pews and simple decoration creates a peaceful atmosphere. Though less visited than Hallgrímskirkja, it offers insight into Iceland's religious diversity and early 20th-century ecclesiastical architecture. The church occasionally hosts concerts and cultural events.

## Tips for Religious Sites

- **Respect services:** Avoid visiting during religious services; check schedules online
- **Free concerts:** Many churches host classical music concerts check event calendars
- **Dress code:** Casual dress is acceptable, but be respectful and quiet inside
- **Photography:** Generally allowed but disable flash and remain discreet

# Ancient & Historical Sites

Reykjavik's historical sites tell the story of Iceland's settlement, independence struggles, and transformation from fishing village to modern capital city.



Top Pick

## Settlement Exhibition (Reykjavik 871±2)

1-1.5 hours  No Booking Needed

Map

This fascinating **underground museum** showcases the archaeological remains of a Viking Age longhouse from approximately 871 AD, discovered during downtown construction. Built around the *in situ excavation*, the exhibition uses cutting-edge technology including holograms and interactive displays to recreate daily life in early Reykjavik. See actual Viking artifacts, learn about Landnám (land-taking), and understand how volcanic eruptions help date settlements. The museum brilliantly combines archaeology, technology, and storytelling to bring Iceland's foundation to life.



Notable

## Árbær Open Air Museum

2-3 hours  No Booking Needed

Map

Experience Icelandic rural and urban life from past centuries at this **living history museum** featuring over 20 historic buildings relocated from around Reykjavik and Iceland. Costumed interpreters demonstrate traditional crafts like turf house construction, blacksmithing, and textile work during summer. Explore authentic 19th and early 20th-century *farmhouses, workshops, and churches*. The museum shows how ordinary Icelanders lived before modernization, with furnished interiors and period gardens. Particularly engaging for families and history enthusiasts seeking hands-on cultural experiences.



Optional

## Höfði House

15-30 minutes  No Booking Needed

Map

This elegant white **wooden house** hosted the historic 1986 Reagan-Gorbachev Summit that helped end the Cold War. Though *not open to the public*, the exterior is worth viewing for its architectural beauty and historical significance. The waterfront location offers scenic views and photo opportunities. Höfði represents Iceland's role in international diplomacy and Cold War history. Information plaques explain the summit's importance. The surrounding park provides pleasant walking paths along the coast.

## Tips for Ancient & Historical Sites

- **Seasonal hours:** Árbær Museum has limited winter hours verify before visiting
- **Photo opportunities:** Historic buildings and costumed interpreters make excellent photo subjects
- **Guided tours:** Free guided tours enhance understanding of historical context
- **Family friendly:** Children especially enjoy hands-on activities at open-air museums

# Squares & Streets

Reykjavik's compact downtown features colorful streets, vibrant public squares, and pedestrian-friendly areas perfect for exploring Nordic urban culture.



Must See

## Laugavegur Shopping Street

2-4 hours  No Booking Needed

Map

Reykjavik's **main shopping thoroughfare** stretches through downtown, lined with colorful buildings housing boutiques, restaurants, bars, and galleries. The street perfectly encapsulates Icelandic design aesthetic with its mix of traditional and contemporary architecture. Browse *Icelandic wool sweaters*, designer goods, and quirky souvenirs. Weekend evenings transform Laugavegur into party central during Reykjavik's famous nightlife. Street art, outdoor cafés, and independent shops create a vibrant atmosphere. The area remains lively year-round despite harsh weather.



Notable

## Austurvöllur Square

30 minutes - 1 hour  No Booking Needed

Map

This **central public square** serves as Reykjavik's political and social heart, facing the parliament building (Alþingi) and cathedral. During summer, locals relax on the grass while outdoor cafés buzz with activity. The square hosts protests, celebrations, and public gatherings. A statue of *Jón Sigurðsson*, leader of Iceland's independence movement, stands prominently. Surrounded by restaurants and bars, Austurvöllur embodies Reykjavik's compact, accessible democracy where citizens can literally stand on the parliament's doorstep.



Notable

## Skólavörðustígur Street

1-2 hours  No Booking Needed

Map

This **charming pedestrian street** climbs directly up to Hallgrímskirkja church, creating a picturesque pathway lined with galleries, design shops, and cafés. The rainbow crosswalk at the bottom celebrates Iceland's progressive LGBTQ+ rights. Boutiques sell *Icelandic design items*, handmade jewelry, and artisan goods. The street's colorful buildings and gradual incline offer excellent photo opportunities with the church as backdrop. Less crowded than Laugavegur, it provides a more intimate shopping and dining experience with local character.

## Tips for Squares & Streets

- **Walking city:** Downtown Reykjavik is compact most attractions are within 15-minute walks
- **Shopping hours:** Stores typically open 10am-6pm weekdays, shorter hours weekends
- **Street art:** Look up and around for murals and artistic details on buildings
- **Café culture:** High-quality coffee shops abundant perfect for warming up

# Neighborhoods & Districts

Each Reykjavik neighborhood offers distinct character, from the historic center to trendy harbourside districts and creative residential areas.



Must See

## Downtown 101

Full day  No Booking Needed

Map

The **city center** (postal code 101) contains Reykjavik's main attractions, shopping, dining, and nightlife within a highly walkable grid. Colorful corrugated iron houses mix with modern buildings. This is where to experience Iceland's legendary weekend nightlife, browse designer boutiques, and enjoy diverse restaurants. The area maintains *small-town atmosphere* despite being the capital's heart. Street art, independent bookshops, and cozy cafés line every street. Most hotels, hostels, and apartments for tourists are located here for easy access to everything.



Top Pick

## Old Harbour (Grandi)

2-4 hours  No Booking Needed

Map

Once purely industrial, this **waterfront district** has transformed into Reykjavik's trendiest neighborhood featuring restaurants, galleries, and museums. The authentic maritime atmosphere blends with modern development. *Whale watching tours* depart from here, and the area houses the Maritime Museum, Whales of Iceland, and Marshall House gallery. Converted warehouses now contain craft breweries, seafood restaurants, and artisan shops. Weekend flea markets attract locals and tourists. Grandi perfectly represents Reykjavik's ability to preserve industrial heritage while embracing contemporary culture.



Optional

## Vesturbær (West Side)

2-3 hours  No Booking Needed

Map

This **residential neighborhood** west of downtown offers local atmosphere with charming houses, quiet streets, and several hidden gems. Home to the National Museum and University of Iceland campus. The area features *excellent cafés* and restaurants frequented by locals rather than tourists. Beautiful wooden houses with corrugated iron siding showcase traditional Icelandic architecture. The neighborhood provides insight into how Reykjavik residents actually live, away from tourist crowds. Easy walking distance from downtown but noticeably quieter and more authentic.

## Tips for Neighborhoods & Districts

- **Local experience:** Visit residential neighborhoods to see authentic Icelandic life
- **Food scene:** Grandi offers excellent seafood restaurants with harbor views
- **Safety:** All Reykjavik neighborhoods are extremely safe for exploration day or night
- **Public transport:** Buses connect neighborhoods, but downtown is easily walkable

# Parks & Gardens

Despite harsh climate, Reykjavik maintains beautiful green spaces, geothermal beaches, and parks offering recreation and nature within the city.



Notable

## Öskjuhlíð Hill and Forest

1-3 hours  No Booking Needed

Map

This **wooded hill** topped by Perlan Museum offers extensive walking and jogging trails through one of Iceland's few forests. The area provides *panoramic city views* and serves as popular recreation space for locals. In winter, trails become cross-country ski routes. The geothermal beach Nauthólsvík sits at the hill's base, offering warm seawater swimming year-round. Dense tree coverage is rare in Iceland, making this planted forest particularly special. Birdwatching opportunities abound, and the trails connect to city paths.



Notable

## Laugardalur Park

2-4 hours  No Booking Needed

Map

Reykjavik's **largest park** features botanical gardens, sports facilities, geothermal pools, a zoo (rare in Iceland), and family amusement park. The park showcases native Icelandic plants plus species from similar climates worldwide. Walking paths, playgrounds, and open spaces make it popular with families. The *geothermal swimming complex* offers multiple pools, hot tubs, steam rooms, and water slides. In summer, outdoor concerts and events take place here. The park demonstrates how geothermal energy enables lush green spaces even in subarctic climate.



Notable

## Nauthólsvík Geothermal Beach

1-2 hours  No Booking Needed

Map

This unique **geothermal beach** offers warm seawater swimming year-round thanks to heated water mixed with ocean water. The sandy beach features changing facilities, hot tubs, steam bath, and café. Popular with locals who practice traditional Icelandic cold water bathing followed by hot tub warming. *Summer temperatures* reach comfortable swimming levels, while winter offers the extraordinary experience of bathing in warm water while snow falls. The beach demonstrates Iceland's innovative use of geothermal energy and locals' love of outdoor bathing regardless of weather.



Optional

## Elliðaárdalur Valley

1-3 hours  No Booking Needed

Map

This **nature reserve** within city limits features Iceland's best salmon river flowing through a pristine valley. Over 10km of trails wind through the valley for hiking, running, and cycling. The area offers *peaceful nature escape* just minutes from downtown, with waterfalls, forests, and diverse birdlife. Popular with locals for outdoor exercise and dog walking. In summer, witness salmon leaping upstream. The contrast between wild nature and nearby urban development exemplifies Iceland's commitment to preserving natural spaces. Free access year-round with well-maintained paths suitable for all fitness levels.

## Tips for Parks & Gardens

- **Free activities:** All parks and most trails are free to access

- **Weather appropriate:** Dress in layers even in summer; weather changes rapidly
- **Swimming culture:** Bring swimsuit and towel for geothermal pools and beaches
- **Wildlife:** Bring binoculars for excellent birdwatching opportunities
- **Year-round:** Parks and trails accessible in all seasons with proper gear

## Fountains & Public Art

Reykjavik's streets and public spaces showcase diverse sculptures and installations reflecting Iceland's thriving contemporary art scene and creative spirit.



Must See

### Sun Voyager (Sólfar)

30 minutes  No Booking Needed

Map

See Landmarks section for detailed description of this **iconic waterfront sculpture**, Reykjavik's most photographed artwork.



Notable

### Imagine Peace Tower (Viðey Island)

2-3 hours (including ferry)  No Booking Needed

Map

Yoko Ono's memorial to John Lennon, this **powerful light installation** projects a vertical beam of light from Viðey Island, visible from Reykjavik. It is lit October 9–December 8, and on some other special occasions, The tower’s light comes from geothermal electricity; its visible height varies with weather and atmospheric conditions. The wishing well base features '*IMAGINE PEACE*' in 24 languages. Accessing the island requires a short ferry ride, offering beautiful views and hiking opportunities.



Notable

### Street Art & Murals

1-2 hours  No Booking Needed

Map

Reykjavik's buildings serve as **canvases for vibrant street art** and large-scale murals by local and international artists. The city embraces urban art, with new pieces constantly appearing. Notable works include murals throughout downtown, Grandi harbor area, and residential neighborhoods. The *colorful aesthetic* complements Iceland's naturally dramatic landscapes. Self-guided street art walking tours are popular, and local artists often participate in festivals creating new works. The ever-changing art scene reflects Reykjavik's creative energy and progressive cultural attitudes.

### Tips for Fountains & Public Art

- **Photography:** Public art is freely photographable capture unique perspectives
- **Changing art:** Street art evolves constantly; each visit reveals new works
- **Ferry access:** Viðey Island requires ferry booking during limited seasonal hours
- **Walking tours:** Join free or paid street art tours for context and hidden gems

# Transportation

Reykjavik offers efficient public transportation, though the compact downtown makes walking the preferred option for most visitors.




Essential Book Ahead

### Keflavík Airport Transfers

45-60 minutes Book Ahead

Map

Iceland's main international airport is **45km from Reykjavik**, requiring transfers via bus, shuttle, or car rental. Flybus and Airport Express offer frequent, reliable shuttle services to downtown hotels and BSÍ bus terminal. *Advance booking* recommended for best prices. Shuttles coordinate with flight arrivals. Taxis are expensive but convenient for groups. Many visitors rent cars at the airport to explore Iceland independently. Consider booking transfers before arrival to avoid queues and ensure smooth journey start. Journey takes 45-60 minutes depending on traffic and weather.



Useful

### Strætó Public Buses

N/A No Booking Needed

Map

Reykjavik's **public bus system** (Strætó bs) Capital-area Strætó routes serve Reykjavík and nearby municipalities; airport Route 55 uses a separate rural-bus fare system. Buses are modern, reliable. Check the operator for onboard amenities; Wi-Fi is not listed as a standard Strætó feature. The *flat fare system* makes pricing simple, with transfers available within 75 minutes. Download the Strætó app for route planning and mobile tickets. Most tourists rarely need buses since downtown attractions are walkable, but buses are essential for reaching outlying areas like Perlan, Blue Lagoon, or residential neighborhoods. Cash is no longer accepted on capital-area Strætó buses; use contactless payment, Klappið or another accepted fare option.



Optional

### Bike Rentals & Paths

N/A No Booking Needed

Map

Reykjavik offers **growing cycling infrastructure** with dedicated bike lanes and rental services throughout downtown. WOW Bikes and other companies provide rentals by hour or day. The city's compact size and relatively flat downtown make cycling enjoyable, though *strong winds* can be challenging. Coastal paths offer scenic routes with minimal traffic. Some hotels and hostels provide free bike use. Electric bikes available for easier navigation of hilly areas. Note that winter cycling requires experience with icy conditions. Cycling combines exercise with efficient city exploration.

## Tips for Transportation

- **Walkable city:** Downtown Reykjavik requires no transportation walk everywhere
- **Reykjavik City Card:** Includes free bus travel plus museum entry
- **Airport timing:** Book airport transfers to match flight times; services run 24/7
- **Weather impact:** Strong winds and rain can make cycling challenging dress appropriately
- **Parking:** If renting a car, note that downtown parking is limited and expensive

# Tours & Activities

Reykjavik serves as the gateway to Iceland's natural wonders, offering diverse tours from whale watching to northern lights hunts and geothermal spa experiences.



Must See Book Ahead

## Northern Lights Tours

4-5 hours Book Ahead

**Aurora borealis hunting tours** operate from September through April when darkness permits viewing. Tours chase forecasts to locations with clearest skies, maximizing sighting chances. Expert guides explain the science behind northern lights and provide photography tips. Most tours include *hot chocolate and Icelandic treats*. Options range from bus tours to super jeep adventures and boat trips. Tours typically last 4-5 hours and offer free rebooking if aurora doesn't appear. The natural phenomenon is weather-dependent and never guaranteed, but experienced operators significantly improve odds of witnessing this magical display.



Must See Book Ahead

## Golden Circle Tour

6-8 hours Book Ahead

Iceland's most popular route visits three iconic sites: **Þingvellir National Park** (UNESCO World Heritage site where tectonic plates meet), **Geysir geothermal area** (with Strokkur geyser erupting every 5-10 minutes), and **Gullfoss waterfall** (powerful double cascade). Day tours from Reykjavik typically last 6-8 hours. The route showcases Iceland's geological wonders in one day. Many tours add stops like Kerið crater or Friðheimar tomato greenhouse. Available as bus tours, small group experiences, or private excursions. Essential for first-time visitors wanting maximum nature impact with minimum planning.



Must See Book Ahead

## Blue Lagoon

2-4 hours Book Ahead

Iceland's most famous geothermal spa features **milky blue mineral-rich waters** set in dramatic black lava fields. The man-made lagoon uses runoff from nearby power plant, maintaining perfect bathing temperature year-round. Silica mud masks, in-water bar, and steam rooms enhance the experience. *Advance booking essential* often sells out weeks ahead in summer. Various packages include meals, spa treatments, and premium lounge access. Located 45 minutes from Reykjavik with shuttle options. While touristy and expensive, the surreal beauty and luxurious facilities deliver memorable experience worth the premium price for many visitors.



Top Pick Book Ahead

## Whale Watching Tours

2-3 hours Book Ahead

Multiple operators offer **whale watching excursions** from Reykjavik's Old Harbour year-round. Summer months (April-October) provide best sighting chances with up to 95% success rates. Commonly spotted species include *minke whales, humpback whales, white-beaked dolphins, and harbour porpoises*. Tours last 2-3 hours with expert guides explaining marine biology and conservation. Boats range from small RIBs for adventurous riders to larger, stable vessels with indoor seating. Warm clothing essential even in summer. Tours include safety equipment and sometimes hot chocolate. Unforgettable wildlife encounters just minutes from downtown.



Notable

### Reykjavik Food Walk

3-4 hours  Book Ahead

Guided **culinary tours** explore Iceland's unique food scene through multiple tasting stops. Sample traditional dishes like fermented shark, dried fish, lamb soup, and modern Nordic cuisine. Tours visit local restaurants, markets, and food halls while guides explain *Icelandic culinary traditions and history*. Learn about preservation techniques developed during harsh winters. Most tours include 6-8 tastings sufficient for full meal. Excellent way to discover foods you might not try independently. Tours typically last 3-4 hours covering downtown area. Vegetarian options usually available with advance notice. Perfect introduction to Icelandic gastronomy.



Notable

### Puffin Watching Tours

1-1.5 hours  Book Ahead

From mid-May to mid-August, **Atlantic puffins** nest on islands near Reykjavik, accessible via boat tours. These charming seabirds with colorful beaks gather in large colonies. Tours from Old Harbour visit Lundey (Puffin Island) and Akurey islands for close encounters. Guides explain puffin behavior, biology, and conservation. *Bring cameras with zoom lenses* for best photos. Tours last 1-1.5 hours. Some operators combine puffin watching with whale watching. Iceland hosts 60% of world's Atlantic puffin population, making this quintessential Icelandic wildlife experience during breeding season.

## Tips for Tours & Activities

- **Book ahead:** Popular tours fill quickly, especially Blue Lagoon and northern lights in peak season
- **Weather dependent:** Iceland's weather is unpredictable tours may be cancelled or rescheduled
- **Dress warmly:** Even summer tours require layers, waterproof jackets, and sturdy shoes
- **Small groups:** Consider paying extra for small group tours for more personal experience
- **Combination tours:** Save time and money by booking tours combining multiple attractions
- **Free cancellation:** Choose tours with flexible cancellation for weather or plan changes

# Day Trips & Excursions

Reykjavik's strategic location enables easy day trips to Iceland's most spectacular natural wonders, from waterfalls and glaciers to geothermal areas and coastal villages.



Must See Book Ahead

## South Coast Tour

10-12 hours Book Ahead

Map

Explore Iceland's dramatic southern coastline visiting **Seljalandsfoss** (walkable behind waterfall), **Skógafoss** (massive 60m cascade), **Reynisfjara black sand beach** with basalt columns, and the village of Vík. Tours typically cover 300km showcasing diverse landscapes from waterfalls to glaciers, lava fields to ocean vistas. *Full day tours* last 10-12 hours. See Eyjafjallajökull volcano, walk on black sand beaches, and photograph dramatic rock formations. One of Iceland's most scenic day trips combining multiple iconic locations. Bring weatherproof clothing as coastal weather changes rapidly. Essential for nature photographers.



Top Pick Book Ahead

## Snæfellsnes Peninsula

11-14 hours Book Ahead

Map

Often called **'Iceland in Miniature'**, this peninsula features diverse landscapes including Snæfellsjökull glacier-capped volcano, dramatic coastal cliffs, lava fields, fishing villages, and black/golden beaches. Day tours visit Kirkjufell mountain (Iceland's most photographed peak), Arnarstapi coastal cliffs, Djúpalónssandur beach, and charming villages like Stykkishólmur. *Jules Verne* set Journey to the Center of the Earth here. Tours last 11-14 hours covering significant distance. The varied geology and coastal scenery provide excellent photography opportunities and comprehensive Iceland experience in one day.



Top Pick Book Ahead

## Jökulsárlón Glacier Lagoon

14-16 hours Book Ahead

Map

Iceland's stunning **glacial lagoon** where icebergs calved from Breiðamerkurjökull glacier float in ethereal blue waters. Located 380km from Reykjavik, requiring very long day tour (14-16 hours) or preferably overnight trip. Watch seals swim among icebergs and visit adjacent *Diamond Beach* where ice chunks wash ashore on black sand creating jewel-like scene. Boat tours navigate among icebergs for close encounters. Tours typically include south coast attractions en route. One of Iceland's most photogenic locations featured in numerous films. Unforgettable natural spectacle worth the journey.



Notable

## Landmannalaugar

12-14 hours Book Ahead

Map

Iceland's **rainbow mountains** showcase surreal geological formations with colorful rhyolite peaks, geothermal hot springs, and vast lava fields. This remote highland location requires special 4x4 vehicle access, making organized tours essential. *Natural hot spring* allows bathing in stunning wilderness setting. Hiking trails of varying difficulty explore otherworldly landscapes. Tours operate mid-June through September only when highland roads are accessible. Full day tours last 12-14 hours. Photographers and nature enthusiasts consider Landmannalaugar Iceland's most spectacular interior destination. Bring swimsuit for hot spring experience.



Notable

### Reykjanes Peninsula

4-8 hours  No Booking Needed

Map

This **volcanic peninsula** between Reykjavik and Keflavík Airport features dramatic geothermal areas, rugged coastline, and recent volcanic activity. Visit Bridge Between Continents (where North American and Eurasian tectonic plates separate), Gunnuhver geothermal area with powerful steam vents, Kleifarvatn lake, and dramatic coastal cliffs. *Recent volcanic eruptions* (2021-2023) created new lava fields accessible via guided hikes. Easy half-day trip or full-day exploration. Underrated by tourists despite being closest dramatic nature to Reykjavik. Excellent choice for short visits or as airport transfer activity.

## Tips for Day Trips & Excursions

- **Early starts:** Day trips often depart 7-8am book hotels near pickup points
- **Pack essentials:** Bring snacks, water, layers, and waterproofs for all-day excursions
- **Self-drive option:** Renting a car offers flexibility but requires confidence on remote roads
- **Seasonal access:** Highland roads closed winter (October-May); check road conditions
- **Tour length:** Long day tours can be exhausting consider overnight options for distant locations
- **Photography:** Bring camera, extra batteries, and lens cloth for mist/spray

## Food & Dining

Real, highly-rated Restaurants in Reykjavik, sourced from Google Places (rating above 4★).



### Reykjavík Kitchen★★★★★ 4.8 (2,268)

1-2 hours

Map

Reykjavík Kitchen is a highly-rated restaurant in Reykjavik, rated 4.8★ from 2268 reviews. Located at Rauðarárstígur 8, 105 Reykjavík, Iceland.

#### Opening Hours

- Monday: 11:30 AM – 3:00 PM, 5:00 – 10:00 PM
- Tuesday: 5:00 – 10:00 PM
- Wednesday: 11:30 AM – 3:00 PM, 5:00 – 10:00 PM
- Thursday: 11:30 AM – 3:00 PM, 5:00 – 10:00 PM
- Friday: 11:30 AM – 3:00 PM, 5:00 – 10:00 PM
- Saturday: 11:30 AM – 3:00 PM, 5:00 – 10:00 PM
- Sunday: 11:30 AM – 3:00 PM, 5:00 – 10:00 PM



### Old Iceland★★★★★ 4.8 (2,949)

1-2 hours

Map

Old Iceland is a highly-rated restaurant in Reykjavik, rated 4.8★ from 2949 reviews. Located at Laugavegur 72, 101 Reykjavík, Iceland.

#### Opening Hours

- Monday: 11:30 AM – 3:30 PM, 5:00 – 10:00 PM
- Tuesday: 11:30 AM – 3:30 PM, 5:00 – 10:00 PM
- Wednesday: 11:30 AM – 3:30 PM, 5:00 – 10:00 PM
- Thursday: 11:30 AM – 3:30 PM, 5:00 – 10:00 PM
- Friday: 11:30 AM – 3:30 PM, 5:00 – 10:00 PM
- Saturday: 11:30 AM – 3:30 PM, 5:00 – 10:00 PM
- Sunday: 11:30 AM – 3:30 PM, 5:00 – 10:00 PM



### Mama Reykjavik★★★★★ 4.8 (878)

1-2 hours

Map

Mama Reykjavik is a highly-rated restaurant in Reykjavik, rated 4.8★ from 878 reviews. Located at Bankastræti 2, 101 Reykjavík, Iceland.

**Opening Hours**

- Monday: 9:00 AM – 10:00 PM
- Tuesday: 9:00 AM – 10:00 PM
- Wednesday: 9:00 AM – 10:00 PM
- Thursday: 9:00 AM – 10:00 PM
- Friday: 9:00 AM – 10:00 PM
- Saturday: 9:00 AM – 10:00 PM
- Sunday: 9:00 AM – 10:00 PM



### Sjávargrillið★★★★★ 4.7 (2,118)

1-2 hours

Map

Sjávargrillið is a highly-rated restaurant in Reykjavik, rated 4.7★ from 2118 reviews. Located at Skólavörðustígur 14, 101 Reykjavík, Iceland.

**Opening Hours**

- Monday: 11:30 AM – 2:30 PM, 5:00 – 9:30 PM
- Tuesday: 11:30 AM – 2:30 PM, 5:00 – 9:30 PM
- Wednesday: 11:30 AM – 2:30 PM, 5:00 – 9:30 PM
- Thursday: 11:30 AM – 2:30 PM, 5:00 – 9:30 PM
- Friday: 11:30 AM – 2:30 PM, 5:00 – 10:00 PM
- Saturday: 5:00 – 10:00 PM
- Sunday: 5:00 – 9:30 PM



### Íslenski Barinn - The Icelandic Bar★★★★★ 4.7 (5,003)

1-2 hours

Map

Íslenski Barinn - The Icelandic Bar is a highly-rated restaurant in Reykjavik, rated 4.7★ from 5003 reviews. Located at 43W8+QP5, Ingólfsstræti 1a 101, 101 Reykjavík, Iceland.

**Opening Hours**

- Monday: 9:30 AM – 1:00 AM
- Tuesday: 9:30 AM – 1:00 AM
- Wednesday: 9:30 AM – 1:00 AM
- Thursday: 9:30 AM – 1:00 AM
- Friday: 9:30 AM – 3:00 AM
- Saturday: 9:30 AM – 3:00 AM
- Sunday: 9:30 AM – 1:00 AM



### Höfnin Restaurant★★★★★ 4.7 (1,407)

1-2 hours

Map

Höfnin Restaurant is a highly-rated restaurant in Reykjavik, rated 4.7★ from 1407 reviews. Located at Geirsgata 7, 101 Reykjavík, Iceland.

**Opening Hours**

- Monday: 11:30 AM – 2:00 PM, 5:30 – 9:00 PM
- Tuesday: 11:30 AM – 2:00 PM, 5:30 – 9:00 PM
- Wednesday: 11:30 AM – 2:00 PM, 5:30 – 9:00 PM
- Thursday: 11:30 AM – 2:00 PM, 5:30 – 10:00 PM
- Friday: 11:30 AM – 2:00 PM, 5:30 – 10:00 PM
- Saturday: 11:30 AM – 2:00 PM, 5:30 – 10:00 PM
- Sunday: 11:30 AM – 2:00 PM, 5:30 – 9:00 PM



### Skál!★★★★★ 4.7 (1,165)

1-2 hours

Map

Skál! is a highly-rated restaurant in Reykjavik, rated 4.7★ from 1165 reviews. Located at Njálsgata 1, 101 Reykjavík, Iceland.

**Opening Hours**

- Monday: 5:00 – 11:00 PM
- Tuesday: 5:00 – 11:00 PM
- Wednesday: 12:00 – 3:00 PM, 5:00 – 11:00 PM
- Thursday: 12:00 – 3:00 PM, 5:00 – 11:00 PM
- Friday: 12:00 – 3:00 PM, 5:00 PM – 12:00 AM
- Saturday: 12:00 – 3:00 PM, 5:00 PM – 12:00 AM
- Sunday: 12:00 – 3:00 PM, 5:00 – 11:00 PM



**Forréttabarinn**★★★★★ 4.7 (1,041)

1-2 hours

Map

Forréttabarinn is a highly-rated restaurant in Reykjavik, rated 4.7★ from 1041 reviews. Located at Nýlendugata 14, 101 Reykjavík, Iceland.

**Opening Hours**

- Monday: 4:00 – 11:00 PM
- Tuesday: 4:00 – 11:00 PM
- Wednesday: 4:00 – 11:00 PM
- Thursday: 4:00 – 11:00 PM
- Friday: 4:00 – 11:00 PM
- Saturday: 4:00 – 11:00 PM
- Sunday: 4:00 – 11:00 PM



**Matarkjallarinn**★★★★★ 4.7 (1,234)

1-2 hours

Map

Matarkjallarinn is a highly-rated restaurant in Reykjavik, rated 4.7★ from 1234 reviews. Located at Aðalstræti 2, 101 Reykjavík, Iceland.

**Opening Hours**

- Monday: 11:30 AM – 11:00 PM
- Tuesday: 11:30 AM – 11:00 PM
- Wednesday: 11:30 AM – 11:00 PM
- Thursday: 11:30 AM – 11:00 PM
- Friday: 11:30 AM – 11:00 PM
- Saturday: 4:00 – 11:00 PM
- Sunday: 4:00 – 11:00 PM



**Le KocK**★★★★★ 4.7 (1,352)

1-2 hours

Map

Le KocK is a highly-rated restaurant in Reykjavik, rated 4.7★ from 1352 reviews. Located at Tryggvagata 12, 101 Reykjavík, Iceland.

**Opening Hours**

- Monday: 11:30 AM – 11:00 PM
- Tuesday: 11:30 AM – 11:00 PM
- Wednesday: 11:30 AM – 11:00 PM
- Thursday: 11:30 AM – 11:00 PM
- Friday: 11:30 AM – 11:00 PM
- Saturday: 11:30 AM – 11:00 PM
- Sunday: 11:30 AM – 11:00 PM



**KRÖST**★★★★★ 4.7 (1,375)

1-2 hours

Map

KRÖST is a highly-rated restaurant in Reykjavik, rated 4.7★ from 1375 reviews. Located at Laugavegur 107, 105 Reykjavík, Iceland.

**Opening Hours**

- Monday: 11:30 AM – 9:30 PM
- Tuesday: 11:30 AM – 9:30 PM
- Wednesday: 11:30 AM – 9:30 PM
- Thursday: 11:30 AM – 10:00 PM
- Friday: 11:30 AM – 10:00 PM
- Saturday: 11:30 AM – 10:00 PM
- Sunday: 11:30 AM – 9:30 PM



**Lóa Matur & Vín**★★★★★ 4.7 (826)

1-2 hours

Map

Lóa Matur & Vín is a highly-rated restaurant in Reykjavik, rated 4.7★ from 826 reviews. Located at Laugavegur 95-99 Main entrance from Snorrabraut, Laugavegur, 101 Reykjavík, Iceland.

**Opening Hours**

- Monday: 4:00 PM – 12:00 AM
- Tuesday: 4:00 PM – 12:00 AM
- Wednesday: 4:00 PM – 12:00 AM
- Thursday: 4:00 PM – 12:00 AM
- Friday: 4:00 PM – 12:00 AM
- Saturday: 4:00 PM – 12:00 AM
- Sunday: 4:00 PM – 12:00 AM



**Grillmarkaðurinn**★★★★★ 4.6 (2,912)

1-2 hours

Map

Grillmarkaðurinn is a highly-rated restaurant in Reykjavik, rated 4.6★ from 2912 reviews. Located at Lækjargata 2a, 101 Reykjavík, Iceland.

**Opening Hours**

- Monday: 5:30 – 9:30 PM
- Tuesday: 5:30 – 9:30 PM
- Wednesday: 5:30 – 9:30 PM
- Thursday: 5:30 – 9:30 PM
- Friday: 5:30 – 10:00 PM
- Saturday: 5:30 – 10:00 PM
- Sunday: 5:30 – 9:30 PM



**Icelandic Street Food**★★★★★ 4.6 (6,811)

1-2 hours

Map

Icelandic Street Food is a highly-rated restaurant in Reykjavik, rated 4.6★ from 6811 reviews. Located at Lækjargata 8, 101 Reykjavík, Iceland.

**Opening Hours**

- Monday: 11:00 AM – 10:00 PM
- Tuesday: 11:00 AM – 10:00 PM
- Wednesday: 11:00 AM – 10:00 PM
- Thursday: 11:00 AM – 10:00 PM
- Friday: 11:00 AM – 10:00 PM
- Saturday: 11:00 AM – 10:00 PM
- Sunday: 11:00 AM – 10:00 PM



**Kopar**★★★★★ 4.6 (1,376)

1-2 hours

Map

Kopar is a highly-rated restaurant in Reykjavik, rated 4.6★ from 1376 reviews. Located at Geirsgata 3, 101 Reykjavík, Iceland.

**Opening Hours**

- Monday: 5:00 – 9:30 PM
- Tuesday: 12:00 – 3:00 PM, 5:00 – 9:30 PM
- Wednesday: 12:00 – 3:00 PM, 5:00 – 9:30 PM
- Thursday: 12:00 – 3:00 PM, 5:00 – 9:30 PM
- Friday: 12:00 – 3:00 PM, 5:00 – 9:30 PM
- Saturday: 12:00 – 3:00 PM, 5:00 – 9:30 PM
- Sunday: 5:00 – 9:30 PM

## Practical Information

### Seasonal Guide to Reykjavik

### □□ Summer (June-August)

**Best for:** Midnight sun, warmest weather, hiking, all tours operating

- **Pros:** 20-24 hours daylight, temperatures 10-15°C (50-59°F), festivals and events, all roads accessible, lupine flowers blooming, puffin season (June-mid August)
- **Cons:** Peak tourist season with highest prices, crowded attractions, accommodation books far ahead, no northern lights visible

### □□ Fall (September-October)

**Best for:** Northern lights, autumn colors, fewer crowds

- **Pros:** Northern lights return, pleasant temperatures (5-10°C), lower prices than summer, autumn foliage, good whale watching

- **Cons:** Increasing rain and wind, some highland roads close mid-September, shorter daylight hours

### ❄ Winter (November-March)

**Best for:** Northern lights, winter activities, ice caves, budget travel

- **Pros:** Best northern lights visibility, lowest prices, Christmas atmosphere, ice cave tours, winter sports, fewer tourists
- **Cons:** Very short days (4-5 hours December/January), cold and windy (0 to -5°C), many highland roads closed, weather disrupts tours

### □□ Spring (April-May)

**Best for:** Shoulder season value, extending daylight, spring awakening

- **Pros:** Rapidly increasing daylight, moderate prices, fewer crowds, northern lights still visible early season, nature awakening
- **Cons:** Unpredictable weather, highland roads still closed, some tours limited, occasional late snow

**Best Overall Time:** *September* offers excellent balance of decent weather, northern lights visibility, and moderate crowds/prices. *June* provides maximum daylight and activities but expect peak pricing.

## Getting Around Reykjavik & Iceland

### □□ Walking

**Best for downtown exploration**. Reykjavik's compact center makes walking the ideal transportation method. Most major attractions within 15-30 minute walks. Well-maintained sidewalks and pedestrian streets. Dress appropriately for wind and weather.

### □□ Public Buses (Strætó)

Comprehensive city and regional network. **Single fare:** check the Strætó site for the current price. Buy via app, onboard (exact change required), or at terminals. Free transfer within 75 minutes. **Day pass:** check Strætó for current options. Schedules vary by route and day; check the live timetable before travelling. Route maps available online and at terminals. *Minimal need for tourists staying downtown.*

- **Route 55:** Airport to Reykjavik (90 minutes)
- **Routes 1, 3, 6:** Main downtown routes
- **Route 57 is a regional service between Akureyri and Reykjavík; use the current city route planner for Perlan or Nauthólsvík.**

### □□ Taxis & Ride-Sharing

**Expensive but convenient.** Taxis available 24/7 via phone or app (Hreyfill). No Uber. Fares are high; use the meter or the Hreyfill app. Airport taxi to city center: a high fare (confirm it first) ($115). Meters run automatically. Tipping not expected. Best for late-night transport or groups splitting costs.

### □□ Car Rental

**Essential for exploring Iceland beyond Reykjavik.** International license required. Book ahead for better rates. Downtown parking limited and expensive (expensive). *Not recommended for city sightseeing* only rent when leaving Reykjavik.

- **2WD sufficient:** Ring Road and major attractions (summer)
- **4x4 required:** Highland F-roads, winter driving, remote areas
- **Insurance:** Comprehensive coverage recommended due to harsh conditions
- **Fuel:** Expensive (expensive). Use pump cards or attend service stations

### ✈ Airport Transfer

**The airport is roughly 50 km from Reykjavík.**

- **Flybus to BSÍ costs 3,999 ISK; hotel drop-off costs extra. Check the operator’s current schedule and journey time.**
- **Airport Express:** Similar service, a fixed fare
- **Shared shuttle:** Budget option, door-to-door service
- **Private transfer:** a price to confirm when booking, direct to accommodation
- **Rental car pickup:** Most agencies at airport

**Book transfers before arrival** to ensure smooth connection and save money versus buying at airport.

### □□ Bicycles

Growing cycling infrastructure with dedicated lanes. Rentals are available (check prices). Downtown relatively flat but beware of *strong winds*. Coastal paths scenic. Electric bikes available. Winter cycling not recommended for tourists. Several rental companies offer city bikes and guided cycling tours.

## Shopping in Reykjavik

### □□ What to Buy - Authentic Icelandic Products

- **Lopapeysa (Wool Sweaters):** Traditional Icelandic sweaters with distinctive yoke patterns, expensive. Buy from Handknitting Association for authentic handmade versions
- **Icelandic Design:** Contemporary Nordic design items, minimalist homeware, unique jewelry from local designers
- **Skin Care Products:** Blue Lagoon skincare, lava scrubs, geothermal mineral products using Iceland's natural resources
- **Food Products:** Dried fish snacks, Icelandic sea salt, lava salt, liquorice, Omnom chocolate, Brennivín (schnapps)
- **Music:** Vinyl records from Icelandic artists (Sigur Rós, Björk, Of Monsters and Men)
- **Books:** Icelandic sagas, contemporary literature, poetry, Nordic noir mysteries
- **Outdoor Gear:** 66°North and Cintamani brands, high-quality Icelandic-designed outdoor clothing

### □□ Best Shopping Areas

**Laugavegur:** Main shopping street with boutiques, souvenir shops, international brands. Mix of high-end and accessible retailers. Most tourist-focused shopping district.

**Skólavörðustígur:** Charming street leading to Hallgrímskirkja. Independent boutiques, galleries, design shops. More curated, artistic selection than Laugavegur.

**Kringlan:** Iceland's largest shopping mall. International chains, food court, cinema. Take bus 1, 3, or 6. More practical than atmospheric.

**Grandi (Old Harbour):** Flea markets on weekends (Kolaportið), artisan workshops, unique finds. Best for vintage and local crafts.

**Farmers Market & Flea Market (Kolaportið):** Saturday-Sunday 11am-5pm. Vintage clothing, Icelandic wool items, local foods, second-hand treasures. Bargaining acceptable here.

### □□ Shopping Tips

- **Tax Refund:** Non-EU visitors can claim 15% VAT refund on purchases over 6,000 ISK. Look for Tax-Free Shopping signs. Get forms stamped at airport customs before checking bags
- **Prices:** Iceland is expensive. Expect to pay premium for quality goods. Designer lopapeysa from Handknitting Association worth the investment
- **Bargaining:** Not customary except at flea markets. Prices are fixed in regular shops

- **Opening Hours:** Typically 10am-6pm weekdays, shorter hours Saturdays, many closed Sundays. Malls have longer hours
- **Avoid Tourist Traps:** Generic "Iceland" souvenirs often made in China. Verify authentic Icelandic products by checking labels and asking about origin
- **Best Value:** Bonus and Krónan supermarkets for Icelandic food products as souvenirs (much cheaper than specialty tourist shops)

### Festivals & Annual Events

**□□ The 2026 event was August 22; the city lists August 21, 2027 for next year.**
**What: City's biggest celebration with free museum entry, outdoor concerts, street performances, fireworks finale. Museums and galleries open late with special programming. Downtown transforms into massive street festival. Extremely popular with locals and tourists book accommodation far in advance.**

**□□ RIFF 2026 ran September 24–October 4.**
**What: Showcase of international and Icelandic cinema. Screenings at multiple venues including Bíó Paradís art house cinema. Industry events, parties, and film discussions. Celebrates independent and innovative filmmaking.**

**□□ The 2026 festival opened February 5.**
**What: Celebrates winter's end with light installations, cultural events, Museum Night, Pool Night (swimming pools open late), and special programming throughout city. Free and paid events combat winter darkness with creativity and community.**

#### □□ Iceland Airwaves

**When:** Early November
**What:** Premier music festival featuring emerging Icelandic and international artists. Intimate venues throughout downtown. Off-venue showcases in bars and cafés. Essential for music fans accommodation scarce during festival. Tickets sell out months ahead.

#### □□ New Year's Eve

**When:** December 31st
**What:** Iceland's biggest celebration. Reykjavik residents light massive bonfires throughout city and private fireworks create spectacular displays from 11pm-1am. Visit Perlan or Hallgrímskirkja for elevated viewing. *Most spectacular New Year's celebration anywhere* the entire city participates. Book accommodation year in advance.

#### □□□ Reykjavik Pride

**When:** Early August
**What:** One of largest pride events per capita worldwide. Parade, concerts, parties, and celebrations throughout week. Iceland's progressive LGBTQ+ rights make this welcoming, inclusive celebration. Draws international visitors; book accommodation early.

#### □□ Christmas & Holiday Season

**When:** December
**What:** Christmas markets downtown, Jólabókaflóð (Christmas Book Flood) tradition, Yule Lads (13 Icelandic Santa figures) visiting children. Holiday concerts in churches. Cozy atmosphere with early darkness and festive lights. New Year's Eve fireworks are highlight.

#### □□ National Holidays

- **June 17:** Independence Day (Þjóðhátíðardagurinn) - Major national celebration

- **First Thursday after April 18:** First Day of Summer
- **August 1st weekend:** Commerce Day (Verslunarmannahelgi) - Long weekend, many Icelanders camp
- **December 23:** Thorláksmessa - Traditional day to prepare fermented skate

**Note:** Many businesses close on national holidays. Plan accordingly for services and restaurant availability.

## Sample Itineraries for Reykjavik

### Day 1: Classic Reykjavik Introduction

**Morning (9am-12pm):**

- Start at **Hallgrímskirkja** - visit church and take elevator to observation deck (1 hour)
- Walk down **Skólavörðustígur** street, browse boutiques (30 min)
- Coffee break at Reykjavik Roasters or Sandholt Bakery
- Explore downtown walking Laugavegur shopping street

**Afternoon (12pm-5pm):**

- Lunch at one of Laugavegur's restaurants (fish & chips at Icelandic Fish & Chips, or lamb soup at Svarta Kaffid)
- Visit **Settlement Exhibition** Reykjavik 871±2 (1.5 hours)
- Walk to waterfront to see **Sun Voyager** sculpture
- Visit **Harpa Concert Hall**, explore interior (45 min)

**Evening (5pm+):**

- Dinner at harbor restaurant (seafood at Sægreifinn or Messinn)
- Evening walk through **Old Harbour** area
- Drinks at downtown bar or café

### Day 2: Culture & Museums

**Morning (9am-12pm):**

- Visit **National Museum of Iceland** (2-3 hours) - comprehensive history
- Coffee at museum café or nearby

**Afternoon (12pm-5pm):**

- Lunch in Vesturbær neighborhood
- Choose one: **Reykjavik Art Museum** (Hafnarhús for contemporary) OR **Saga Museum** (for family-friendly Vikings)
- Walk through downtown, visit **Austurvöllur Square** and see Parliament
- Browse **Kolaportið Flea Market** if weekend

**Evening (5pm+):**

- Relax at local **geothermal pool** (Sundhöllin or Laugardalslaug) - authentic Icelandic experience (2 hours)
- Dinner at downtown restaurant
- Join **Northern Lights tour** if visiting September-April (evening departure)

### Day 3: Golden Circle Day Trip

**Full Day Tour (8am-6pm):**

- Join organized **Golden Circle tour** or self-drive:
- **Þingvellir National Park** - UNESCO site, tectonic plates, historical significance (1.5 hours)
- **Geysir geothermal area** - watch Strokkur erupt every 5-10 minutes (45 min)
- Lunch stop (many tours include or stop at café)

- **Gullfoss waterfall** - powerful double cascade (45 min)
- Optional: Kerið volcanic crater (+30 min)
- Return to Reykjavik

**Evening (7pm+):**

- Late dinner at downtown restaurant
- Experience Reykjavik's nightlife if interested (bars open until 1am, clubs until 4-5am weekends)

### Day 4: South Coast Adventure

**Full Day Tour (7am-7pm):**

- Join **South Coast tour** or self-drive (long day, 300km+):
- **Seljalandsfoss** waterfall - walk behind the falls (30 min)
- **Skógafoss** waterfall - massive cascade, climb stairs for top view (45 min)
- **Reynisfjara Black Sand Beach** - basalt columns, sea stacks, powerful waves (45 min)
- Lunch in Vík village
- Dyrhólaey peninsula or glacier views (weather permitting)
- Return to Reykjavik

**Evening:**

- Casual dinner near accommodation
- Early night after long day

### Day 5: Relaxation & Blue Lagoon

**Morning (9am-11am):**

- Sleep in and leisurely breakfast
- Last-minute shopping on Laugavegur
- Visit any missed downtown attractions

**Afternoon (12pm-5pm):**

- Transfer to **Blue Lagoon** (book 2-4 hour slot)
- Relax in geothermal waters, enjoy silica mud masks
- In-water drink at swim-up bar
- Optional: spa treatments, Lava Restaurant

**Evening:**

- Return to Reykjavik or continue to airport if departing
- Farewell dinner at nice restaurant (Dill for fine dining, Grillmarkaðurinn for Icelandic flavors)

**Itinerary Tips:** These are flexible templates adjust based on weather, interests, and season. Book tours 1-2 weeks ahead in summer, earlier for specific dates. Allow flexibility for Iceland's unpredictable weather. Consider Reykjavik City Card if visiting multiple museums (24, 48, or 72-hour options).

## □□ Best Photography & Instagram Locations

### 1. Hallgrímskirkja Church

**Best time:** Sunrise, sunset, or blue hour for dramatic lighting
**Pro tip:** Shoot from base looking up for imposing perspective, or from Skólavörðustígur street for church framing the street. Observation tower offers 360° city views.
**Instagram appeal:** □□□□□ - Iconic, instantly recognizable

### 2. Sun Voyager Sculpture

**Best time:** Sunrise/sunset for golden light, or during northern lights (Sept-April)
**Pro tip:** Arrive early morning for fewer people. Use Mount Esja across the bay as backdrop. Try long exposure at night with city lights.
**Instagram appeal:** □□□□□ - #1 Reykjavik photo location

### 3. Harpa Concert Hall

**Best time:** Blue hour (dusk) when internal lights glow through glass façade
**Pro tip:** Shoot exterior reflections, or interior geometric patterns. Night photography spectacular with colored lighting. Try waterfront angle with harbor reflections.
**Instagram appeal:** □□□□□ - Architectural masterpiece

### 4. Colorful Laugavegur & Downtown Streets

**Best time:** Overcast days make colors pop, or winter with snow
**Pro tip:** Focus on colorful corrugated iron buildings, street art, and architectural details. Rainbow street at Skólavörðustígur base. Look for contrast between traditional and modern buildings.
**Instagram appeal:** □□□□ - Quintessentially Icelandic urban scenes

### 5. Old Harbour (Grandi)

**Best time:** Golden hour for warm light on boats and warehouses
**Pro tip:** Industrial maritime aesthetic with mountain backdrop. Fishing boats, colorful buildings, and authentic working harbor. Great for moody, atmospheric shots.
**Instagram appeal:** □□□□ - Authentic Icelandic character

### 6. Perlan Observation Deck

**Best time:** Clear days for maximum visibility, sunset for golden city views
**Pro tip:** 360° panoramic views of Reykjavik, mountains, and ocean. Shoot through clean glass or go outside to top deck. Perfect for establishing shots showing city layout.
**Instagram appeal:** □□□□ - Sweeping vistas

### 7. Reynisfjara Black Sand Beach

**Best time:** Stormy weather for dramatic waves (stay safe!), or golden hour
**Pro tip:** Day trip from Reykjavik (2-hour drive). Basalt columns, sea stacks, powerful waves create dramatic compositions. Never turn back on ocean dangerous sneaker waves.
**Instagram appeal:** □□□□□ - World-famous location

### 8. Geothermal Pools (Sundhöllin, Laugardalslaug)

**Best time:** Winter evening with steam rising, or early morning
**Pro tip:** Check pool rules about photography some don't allow cameras. Capture steam, local swimming culture, and unique Icelandic bathing tradition. Go Pro or waterproof phone useful.
**Instagram appeal:** □□□□ - Authentic cultural experience

### 9. Höfði House & Waterfront Path

**Best time:** Golden hour with mountains across bay
**Pro tip:** Historic white house with mountain backdrop. Walk coastal path for various angles. Northern lights visible here in winter with city lights minimal. Good for historical significance captions.
**Instagram appeal:** □□□ - Historical interest

### 10. Viðey Island

**Best time:** Clear days for island exploration, Oct-Dec evenings for Imagine Peace Tower light beam
**Pro tip:** Short ferry ride from harbor. Relatively empty island perfect for landscape photography. Imagine Peace Tower activated John Lennon's birthday (Oct 9) through death anniversary (Dec 8) beam visible from Reykjavik at night.
**Instagram appeal:** □□□ - Unique art installation

## □□ General Photography Tips for Reykjavik

- **Weather:** Bring lens cloth sea spray and rain constant. Protect gear with rain covers
- **Light:** Summer midnight sun allows 24-hour shooting. Winter limited daylight (4-5 hours) requires planning
- **Northern Lights:** Sept-April, need tripod for long exposure, manual settings, away from light pollution
- **Drone regulations:** Registration required, restricted areas include downtown, airport vicinity. Check Isavia website for no-fly zones
- **Respect:** Ask permission before photographing people. Some churches restrict photography during services
- **Best seasons:** Winter for dramatic clouds, northern lights, moody scenes. Summer for midnight sun, lupine flowers (July), endless golden hour

## ⚡ Electricity & Adapters

### Power Specifications

**Voltage:** 230V
**Frequency:** 50Hz
**Plug Types:** Type C (two round pins) and Type F (two round pins with grounding clips - "Schuko")

### Do You Need an Adapter?

**From USA/Canada:** YES - North America uses 120V with Type A/B plugs. You need both adapter AND voltage converter for non-dual-voltage devices.
**From UK/Ireland:** YES - UK uses Type G plugs. Need adapter only (voltage compatible at 230V).
**From EU:** Generally NO - Most of Europe uses compatible Type C/F plugs and 230V.
**From Australia/NZ:** YES - Use Type I plugs. Need adapter only (voltage compatible at 230V).

### Practical Tips

- **Where to buy:** Available at Keflavík Airport, downtown shops, supermarkets (Bónus, Krónan), and convenience stores. Prices: 1,000-2,500 ISK ($7-18)
- **Universal adapters:** Best investment for frequent travelers works in Iceland and worldwide
- **Dual voltage devices:** Most modern phone chargers, laptops, and camera batteries are dual voltage (100-240V) check device label. These only need plug adapter, not voltage converter
- **High-power devices:** Hair dryers, straighteners, curling irons from 110V countries need voltage converter or buy dual-voltage versions
- **USB charging:** Many hotels/hostels have USB ports. Bring USB cables for convenience
- **Power banks:** Useful for long day tours and northern lights viewing in cold (batteries drain faster)
- **Rental equipment:** Some accommodations lend adapters to guests ask reception

## □□ Icelandic Cuisine & Dining

### Must-Try Traditional Dishes

- **Kjötsúpa (Lamb Soup):** Hearty traditional soup with lamb, vegetables, and herbs. Perfect for cold days. Try at Svarta Kaffid served in bread bowl
- **Plokkfiskur:** Fish stew with mashed potatoes, onions, and béchamel sauce. Comfort food classic
- **Icelandic Lamb:** Free-range, grass-fed lamb considered world's best. Try at Grillmarkaðurinn or Dill
- **Fresh Fish:** Atlantic cod, haddock, arctic char. Incredibly fresh seafood is highlight of Icelandic cuisine

- **Lobster (Langoustine):** Small, sweet lobsters Icelandic delicacy. Try at Sægreifinn or Seabaron
- **Skyr:** Thick, protein-rich dairy product similar to Greek yogurt. Eat for breakfast with berries
- **Rúgbrauð (Rye Bread):** Dark, sweet rye bread traditionally baked in geothermal ground. Served with smoked trout or lamb
- **Hot Dogs (Pylsur):** Iconic Icelandic street food from Bæjarins Beztu. Made with lamb, pork, and beef. Order "eina með öllu" (one with everything)

### Adventurous Traditional Foods

- **Hákarl (Fermented Shark):** Acquired taste pungent fermented Greenland shark. Try small piece with Brennivín schnapps
- **Svið (Sheep's Head):** Singed and boiled sheep head, traditionally eaten at Þorrablót festivals
- **Harðfiskur (Dried Fish):** Wind-dried fish jerky, often served with butter. Actually quite tasty protein snack
- **Slátur (Blood Pudding):** Blood sausage similar to Scottish haggis

*Note: Most visitors try hákarl once for the experience it's infamously strong-smelling and challenging!*

### Dining Tips & Etiquette

- **Prices:** Dining expensive expect 2,500-5,000 ISK ($18-36) for main courses at mid-range restaurants. Fine dining 8,000-15,000 ISK per person
- **Reservations:** Essential for popular restaurants, especially weekends. Book days ahead for high-end establishments like Dill, Grillmarkaðurinn, Matur og Drykkur
- **Tipping:** Not expected or required service included. Leave small tip (5-10%) only for exceptional service
- **Lunch specials:** Many restaurants offer affordable lunch menus (ráðhúsdagskrá) 11am-2pm for 1,500-2,500 ISK best dining value
- **Happy hours:** Bars offer reduced prices 4-7pm typically. Alcohol very expensive otherwise
- **Grocery savings:** Cook some meals using supermarket ingredients. Bónus and Krónan are cheapest chains. Skyr, rye bread, and smoked fish make excellent picnic items
- **Tap water:** Free, pure, and delicious drink from tap, don't buy bottled

### Recommended Restaurants by Category

**Fine Dining:**

- **Dill:** Michelin-starred, New Nordic cuisine, expensive but worth it
- **Grillmarkaðurinn:** Icelandic ingredients with global techniques
- **Matur og Drykkur:** Modern takes on traditional recipes

**Mid-Range:**

- **Sægreifinn (Sea Baron):** Famous lobster soup, casual harbor spot
- **Messinn:** Pan-fried fish served in skillets
- **Apotek:** Central location, diverse menu, lovely space
- **Snaps Bistro:** French-inspired, cozy atmosphere

**Casual & Budget-Friendly:**

- **Bæjarins Beztu:** Iconic hot dog stand since 1937
- **Icelandic Fish & Chips:** Fresh fish with unique sauces
- **Noodle Station:** Asian noodle soups, popular with locals, cheap
- **Gló:** Healthy, vegetarian-friendly, organic options

**Bakeries & Cafés:**

- **Sandholt:** Best bakery, excellent breads and pastries
- **Brauð & Co:** Famous cinnamon buns
- **Reykjavik Roasters:** Top coffee, multiple locations
- **Kaffi Vinyl:** Café-bar with vinyl records, live music

### Dietary Accommodations

**Vegetarian/Vegan:** Increasingly easy. Gló, Kaffi Vinyl, and Veganæs specialize in plant-based. Most restaurants offer vegetarian options.

**Gluten-Free:** Widely available. Icelandic celiac awareness high. Ask staff they're knowledgeable and helpful.

**Halal:** Limited options. A few restaurants in downtown. Check HalalTrip app.

## Tourist Passes

### Reykjavik City Card

The **official tourist pass** for Reykjavik offering excellent value for museum lovers and bus users.

#### Includes:

- Unlimited public bus travel (Strætó) in capital region
- The card covers participating museums; the National Museum is not included in the current City Card benefits.
- Free entry to thermal pools (Laugardalslaug, Sundhöllin, Vesturbæjarlaug, Árbaejarlauug, Grafarvogslaug)
- Free ferry to Viðey Island
- Discounts at restaurants, shops, and tours (typically 10-20% off)

#### Duration & Pricing:

- **The current listed adult price is 5,500 ISK, 2,500 ISK children**
- **The current listed adult price is 7,700 ISK, 3,400 ISK children**
- **The current listed adult price is 9,500 ISK, 4,000 ISK children**

#### Best For:

Visitors planning to visit 3+ museums/pools or using buses frequently. Card pays for itself quickly given museum prices (typically 2,000-2,500 ISK each).

#### Where to Buy:

Buy through the City Card’s current sales channels; confirm pickup location before visiting, major hotels, or online at *citycard.is*. Activation begins upon first use.

**Pro Tip:** Maximize value by visiting expensive attractions (National Museum, Perlan, multiple pools) and using buses to outlying areas. Calculate if pass saves money based on your specific plans.

visitreykjavik.is

### Blue Lagoon Packages

Iceland's premier geothermal spa offers **various package levels** for different experiences and budgets.

### Package Options:

- **Comfort Package:** 8,990-12,990 ISK ($65-95) - Entry, silica mud mask, drink, towel
- **Premium Package:** 13,990-18,990 ISK ($100-137) - Everything in Comfort plus bathrobe, slippers, second mask, sparkling wine, table reservation at Lava Restaurant
- **Retreat Spa Package:** From 75,000 ISK (~$540) - Luxury experience with private changing facilities, Retreat Lagoon access, spa treatments

### Add-Ons:

- □□ Bus transfer from Reykjavik: ~3,000 ISK each way
- □□ Lava Restaurant dining: 8,000-15,000 ISK per person
- □□ Spa treatments: Various prices for massages, facials

### Important Tips:

- **Book weeks/months ahead:** Blue Lagoon operates on timed entry slots that sell out, especially summer
- **Prices vary by time:** Peak times (midday summer) cost more than off-peak (evening winter)
- **What's included:** All packages include locker, entry, one drink. Premium adds comfort items
- **Time limit:** No official limit but most spend 2-3 hours
- **Combination tickets:** Sometimes available with Reykjavik hotels or tours check packages

**Alternative:** Consider Sky Lagoon (closer to Reykjavik, less touristy, ocean views) or local pools (authentic Icelandic experience, fraction of cost) if Blue Lagoon sold out or too expensive.

www.bluelagoon.com

### Sky Lagoon Packages

Newer **oceanside geothermal spa** featuring infinity edge overlooking North Atlantic closer to Reykjavik than Blue Lagoon with more intimate atmosphere.

#### Package Options:

- **Sky Pass (Pure):** 9,990 ISK (~$72) - Admission, towel rental available
- **Sky Pass (Sér):** 12,990 ISK (~$94) - Private changing room, towel, robe, Skjól ritual (7-step spa ritual), amenities

#### What Makes Sky Lagoon Special:

- □□ **Infinity edge:** Dramatic ocean views from lagoon
- □□ **Skjól Ritual:** Traditional 7-step Icelandic bathing experience (cold plunge, sauna, steam, scrub)
- □□ **Location:** Only 15 minutes from downtown Reykjavik
- □□ **Swim-up bar:** Included in admission
- □ **Evening ambiance:** Particularly magical at sunset or during winter darkness

#### Best For:

Those wanting *authentic Icelandic spa experience without Blue Lagoon crowds* , ocean lovers, visitors with limited time in Reykjavik area.

**Pro Tip:** Book sunset time slot for most atmospheric experience. Less crowded than Blue Lagoon and easier to get last-minute reservations.

www.skylagoon.com

### Multi-Day Tour Passes

Various operators offer **bundled multi-day tour packages** combining popular Iceland attractions at discounted rates.

#### Common Bundle Options:

- **Golden Circle + Blue Lagoon:** ~18,000-25,000 ISK - Two essential experiences in one
- **South Coast + Glacier Hike:** ~25,000-35,000 ISK - Full day adventure package
- **Northern Lights + Golden Circle:** ~20,000-30,000 ISK - Day tour plus evening aurora hunt
- **3-Day South Coast Package:** ~60,000-90,000 ISK - Multi-day exploration with accommodation

#### Benefits of Bundle Passes:

- □□ **Cost savings:** 10-20% cheaper than booking tours separately
- □□ **Simplified planning:** Coordinated schedule, single booking
- □□ **Same operator:** Consistent quality and pickup arrangements
- □□ **Priority booking:** Guaranteed spots on popular tours

#### Popular Tour Operators:

- **Reykjavik Excursions:** Largest operator, reliable, wide variety
- **Gray Line Iceland:** Established company, good value
- **Arctic Adventures:** Adventure-focused, smaller groups
- **Tröll Expeditions:** Small groups, personalized service

**Booking Advice:** Compare individual tour prices versus packages. Read recent reviews. Book directly with operators or through *GuideToIceland.is* comparison site. Check cancellation policies Iceland's weather can disrupt plans.

guidetoiceland.is