



## **NCE Iceland Tour August 2017**

*August 4-10, 2017*

### **Contact:**

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### **Trip Itinerary:**

*Note that this itinerary is a general outline of what we will do. Once we have our group nailed down we can make modifications based on the group's desire.*

### **August 4 (Day 1): Reykjavik!**

*Explore the city – museums, restaurants, galleries, bars, and nightlife!*



Arrive on your own according to your schedule, and check into your hotel in Reykjavik! Reykjavik is the capital city of Iceland and it is chock-full of museums,

restaurants, galleries, bars, culture, and nightlife. You can choose to explore the city on your own, or with Samantha as a guide. Samantha will be taking those who are interested on optional excursions such as:

- Visit the Perlan – great 360 degree views of the city!
- Guided walking tour
- Lighthouse
- Museums
- Sculpture garden
- Arbaer Open Air Living History museum

For those who are interested in music or a show, we will work with you to make those bookings, or you can enjoy the Friday night nightlife! We will also reserve one night to get dinner with locals, which may happen in Reykjavik or in Egilsstaðir.

### **August 5 (Day 2): Golden Circle & South Coast**

*History, Geology, Waterfalls, Geysers, Rift Valley, Volcanoes, Black Sand Beaches, and Rock Formations!*



For our first day outside of Reykjavik, we will travel with our dedicated bus and guide to see some of the best-known natural phenomena in Iceland.

- The first stop will be Þingvellir National Park, where you can walk between the rift valley of the Mid-Atlantic Ridge (where two continental tectonic plates meet), and explore an area which plays a huge role in Iceland's heritage.

- Then, our knowledgeable guide will take us to the Althing, the world's oldest Parliament which was founded in 930 AD. This is also the site where Iceland converted to Christianity and declared its independence from Denmark.
- Our next stop will be the geothermal valley of Haukadalur, where we will see powerful geysers among many bubbling hot springs. Strokkur Geysir erupts every 10 minutes or so, to heights that exceed 20 m (66 ft).
- Then we will visit Iceland's most popular attraction, the mighty waterfall of Gullfoss. A pathway will take us to the water's edge, so we can observe the incredible power of the falling water!
- We will continue to the volcanic crater of Kerið, which is well worth the visit. The crater rocks are incredible shades of red and orange, in sharp contrast to the water in the bowl which is a vivid blue! It's a sight that you won't soon forget.
- We will see Seljalandsfoss waterfall, which you can walk all the way around for some great photos. We will also see the powerful Skógafoss waterfall, well worth a quick stop.
- Along the coast of Vik, we will admire the black volcanic beach and the dramatic Dyrhólaey and Reynisdrangar rock formations. We will spend the night in Vík.

If this sounds like a lot of driving, don't worry! Iceland is a small country and we will be spending more time off the bus than on.

### **August 6 (Day 3): Glaciers!**

*Glaciers, Diamond Beach, and the Glacier Lagoon!*



- Drive along the South coast, passing stunning volcanic deserts and an incredible view of the S Vatnajökull glacier.

- Stop at the charming, historic village of Kirkjubæjarklaustur for a bite to eat, with options for short hikes.
- Visit the beautiful Skaftafell Reserve, within Vatnajökull National Park. Here, we will have time to wander and enjoy the natural beauty of the park -there are many trails and tracks here suitable for all levels of mobility and experience, including one that leads to the beautiful Svartifoss waterfall. In Skaftafell we'll also be able to see incredible hexagonal basalt columns!
- Next, we will participate in an easy but beautiful glacier hike! Perfect for all fitness levels, this was one of my favorite activities last time I was in Iceland.
- We will see one of Iceland's most famous and beautiful attractions, the Jökulsárlón glacier lagoon. Here, we will enjoy an amphibian boat cruise on the water, meandering amongst serene icebergs. We may well see seals playing on the ice!
- We will walk along Diamond Beach, where small ice-floes wash up on the shore and sparkle like gems.
- We will spend the night in a countryside hotel near the lagoon.

#### **August 7 (Day 4): Eastern Fjords**



- Today, we will have some of the most spectacular views of the trip. We will go on a rollercoaster ride around the rolling hills and seemingly countless fjords of the eastern coastline. These fjords are breathtaking! The great Vatnajökull glacier lies to the west, visible as we cross the high mountain ridges to make our way north.

- The many idyllic fishing villages en route make for perfect rest stops, and will grant us many opportunities to learn more about Icelandic history and culture with our knowledgeable guide. We may also plan extra historical/cultural visits on this day.
- The East Fjords are also home to some of the greatest diversity of wildlife in the country. They have many incredible bird-watching sites and seal colonies, and the east is the only place in the country where you can spot herds of wild reindeer.

We will stay overnight in the “eastern capital”, Egilsstaðir, or one of the nearby villages.

### **August 8 (Day 5): Dip in the Thermal Baths, Canyons, Waterfalls, and Volcanoes!**



- Today, we will head to the Lake Myvatn area, an area known for its unique and stunning geothermal landscapes.
- First, we will visit the Asbyrgi canyon and Dettifoss, the most powerful waterfall in Europe.
- Then, we will continue on to the Námaskarð Pass and the Skútustaðagígar pseudo-craters.
- We'll wrap up our geological sightseeing with the Dimmuborgir lava formations and Mt. Krafla, one of Iceland's most visited volcanoes.

- Tonight, we will enjoy one of the highlights of the trip - a dip in the Myvatn Nature baths, a perfect way to relax after a full day of sightseeing! The Myvatn Baths are open until midnight and have gorgeous views – think Blue Lagoon without the crowds.
- We will spend the night in the “capital of the North”, Akureyri.

### **August 9 (Day 6): Horseback Riding, History, and Hot Springs!**



- We'll start with a scenic tour from horseback! Enjoy the Eldhestar, Iceland's special sturdy breed of horse.
- Then, we'll get our history fix at the Icelandic Settlement Centre in Bogarnes, which showcases the history of Iceland.
- Visit Deildartunguhver, the largest hot spring in Europe.
- We'll see two more captivating waterfalls, Hraunfossar and Barnafoss waterfalls.
- We'll also visit Snorrastofa, a medieval research institute where Iceland's most famous poet, politician, and historian, Snorri Sturlson, wrote the saga *Heimskringla* and the bible of old Norse mythology *Edda* in the 13<sup>th</sup> century.
- This afternoon we'll see one of the coolest geological sites of the trip via a caving tour in the Vithgelmir lava tubes!
- Spend the night in Reykjavik and enjoy the city cultural offerings once more. If you haven't tried to see the Northern lights, you can take a boat cruise from the capital to try to catch them before you leave.

## August 10 (Day 7): Farewell to Iceland and Departure, with Option for Blue Lagoon



- This is departure day, but depending on the time of your flight you can choose to see more of the sites in Reykjavik or get in some last-minute souvenir shopping.
- For those who are interested, we can also book a Blue Lagoon visit on this last day since it is on the way to the airport. If you choose this option, make sure you book an evening departure flight!

### Pricing

\$2,999/person for double-occupancy room

\$450 additional cost for single room

*You will have the option to pay in multiple installments.*

*Note that these are very good prices given how popular Iceland has become, and we negotiated hard to keep them down! The prices are dependent on a minimum of 20 passengers, so please bring your friends along!*

The following is included in the price:

- Hotels
- Bus
- Daily breakfast
- Expert tour guide
- Special tours for glacier hiking, lava caving, and horseback riding
- Entrance to the Myvatn Nature Baths
- All logistics handled
- Saga class & basic Icelandic lessons pre-trip
- Good company
- Cheery Newton Global Education Manager and cheery NCE chair!

*Note:* For your convenience, we will not be booking flights as a group. This way, you may easily extend your trip if desired and book your travel around your own schedule. Flights to Iceland are inexpensive, and Samantha would be happy to advise you if you have questions! Samantha will also send out plenty of detailed travel information in advance, e.g. packing lists, and will hold a pre-trip travel logistics meeting over the summer.

### **Registration Schedule**

To register for the trip, please email [Samantha\\_mandel@newton.k12.ma.us](mailto:Samantha_mandel@newton.k12.ma.us) immediately with a headcount for you and anyone you might be bringing along. Please also let her know how you plan to pay.

Here are the two options for registering:

- 1) **Pay in installments via check.** Checks can be made out to Newton Community Education with "Iceland" in the memo line, and mailed to "Newton Community Education, 457 Walnut Street, Newton MA 02460."

The installment payment schedule is as follows:

*May 1<sup>st</sup> - \$1,200 due (\$1,400 if purchasing a single room)*

*June 1<sup>st</sup> - \$900 due (\$1,150 if purchasing a single room)*

*July 1<sup>st</sup> - \$899 due*

- 2) **Pay all at once via credit card.** A link will be set up soon on the NCE website to register for the trip (Samantha will email the link out to the group once it is ready). If you wish to pay with your credit card, you can pay \$2,999 (or \$3,449 if you are purchasing a single room) via this link by May 1<sup>st</sup>.

*Please note:* In the unlikely event that we have more registrants for the trip than we can accommodate, we will fill spots on a first-come first-serve basis. Spots will be considered to be filled once the first payment has been rendered.

### **Refund policy**

If you withdraw before July 15<sup>th</sup>, there will be a \$250 cancellation fee, and then we will refund you everything else that we are able to get back from the vendor. Most vendors will refund 85% of monies paid. No refunds will be possible after July 15<sup>th</sup>.

If you are concerned that your plans may change, we highly recommend purchasing trip insurance. Samantha can advise of insurance plans upon request.

## FAQs

### ***How much are flights to Iceland?***

Not much. When last I looked you could get flights for \$350-\$450 roundtrip.

### ***Since we're all arriving at different times, how will we get to our hotel?***

There is a flybus that goes straight from the airport to your hotel. Very easy!

### ***Will we see the Northern Lights?***

We might! You will just have to stay up late. The only thing that is required for there to be a possible Northern Lights appearance is total darkness, and we will have that in August.

### ***Since this is an NCE program, will there be an educational component?***

Yes, travel is highly educational in and of its own right, and we are offering an optional pre-class of Icelandic history, sagas, and basic Icelandic language for those who are interested.

### ***How about the food?***

Icelandic food is delicious. They have amazing seafood but also lots of other options, and you can try delicacies like puffin, whale, and shark!

### ***I have friends/family who also want to come. Do they have to live in Newton?***

No! Our only requirement for travelers is that they be 18+ with a valid passport.

### ***What is the minimum number of travelers you need to run the trip?***

Our prices are negotiated based on a minimum of 20 passengers. We can run the trip with fewer people but might need to make some price adjustments. So bring friends!

### ***What happens if more people sign up than you can take?***

That seems unlikely, but if it happens we will take people on first-come, first-served basis.

### ***When will the pre-class on Icelandic sagas and language take place?***

Once we have a final group registered for the trip, we will poll those who are interested and try to find a mutually convenient time.

### ***I definitely think I'm coming on this trip. What should I get started on now besides registering?***

Make sure you have a valid passport that is good through the end of November 2017.

***Once the group is set, will there be another informational meeting to go over logistics?***

Of course! We will schedule something once we know who's on board.

***Will you give us information about what to pack and how to prepare?***

Of course, not to worry! Samantha has taken many groups of students and adults abroad, and will tell you everything you need to know - packing lists, using money in Iceland, health and safety, insurance plans, phone plans, etc. etc.

***How many people will there be per hotel room?***

The flat price assumes double rooms, and we can pair you up with a buddy if you don't know anyone else on the trip. Single rooms are also available for an extra cost of \$450.

***Is the trip geared towards a particular age range/fitness level?***

Not at all. We have no intention of making this a physically demanding trip. Walks/hikes will be accessible to people of all ages & levels of physical fitness.

***Is the trip geared towards couples & families or single travelers?***

So far it seems like we will have an even mix of both.

***Other questions?***

Contact Samantha Mandel at [samantha\\_mandel@newton.k12.ma.us](mailto:samantha_mandel@newton.k12.ma.us).