

Directory

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ACCOMMODATION

There's no shortage of accommodation in Iceland; there's a huge range, from luxury hotels to mountain huts, campsites, hostels, homely farmhouses, guest houses and summer hotels set in rural schools. It must be said, however, that accommodation is often of a lower standard than you might expect from a developed European destination. Although rooms are generally spotless, they are usually small, with thin walls and limited facilities – this can come as a shock to those who are accustomed to a certain amount of space and comfort on their travels.

Iceland's best-kept secret is the sleeping-bag option (designated 'sb' in this guide) offered by numerous guest houses and some

WARNING: POSTCRASH PRICES

Iceland's horrific economic problems (see p34) mean that the króna is extremely vulnerable and prices are unstable. Many Icelandic companies have begun listing prices in euros only, as it's a more stable currency. Where this is the case, we have followed suit rather than attempting to convert using ever-fluctuating exchange rates.

Throughout this book, we have given prices being used in summer 2009, but the tremendous financial uncertainty means that nothing is set in stone. Prices may look very different by the time you get here.

hotels. For a fraction of the normal cost you'll get a bed without a duvet or blanket; just bring your own sleeping bag and you can keep costs down substantially.

In this guide accommodation reviews are listed according to price: for a double room with linen and bathroom, budget accommodation costs up to Ikr12,000, mid-range Ikr12,000 to Ikr22,000 and top-end more than Ikr22,000. Many hotels and guest houses close during the winter; where this is the case, opening times are shown in the review. If no opening times are shown, accommodation is open all year. We've given summer prices throughout; in winter most guest houses and hotels offer discounts of between 20% and 45%. Between June and mid-August it's a good idea to book all accommodation in advance.

Camping

Tjaldsvæði (organised campsites) are found in almost every town, at farmhouses in rural areas and along major hiking trails. The best sites have washing machines, cooking facilities and hot showers, but others just have a cold-water tap and a toilet block.

Wild camping is possible in some areas but in practice it is often discouraged. In national parks and nature reserves you must camp in marked campsites, and you need to get permission before camping on fenced land in all other places. Icelandic weather is notoriously

fickle, though, and if you intend to camp it's wise to invest in a good-quality tent.

When camping the usual rules apply: leave sites as you find them, use biodegradable soaps, carry out your rubbish and bury your toilet waste away from water sources. Campfires are not allowed, so bring a stove. Butane cartridges and petroleum fuels are available in petrol stations and hardware shops. Blue Campingaz cartridges are not readily found in Iceland; the grey Coleman cartridges are more common. You can often pick up partly used canisters left behind by departing campers at the campsites in Reykjavík and Keflavík.

Camping with a tent or campervan/caravan usually costs between Ikr800 and Ikr1000 per person, with most campsites open from June to August or early September only. The free directory *Tjaldsvæði Íslands* (available from tourist offices) lists many of Iceland's campsites.

Emergency Huts

ICE-SAR (Icelandic Association for Search & Rescue; ☎ 570 5900; www.icesar.is) and **Félag Íslenskra Bifreiðaeigenda** (Icelandic Automobile Association; ☎ 562 9999; www.fib.is) maintain bright-orange survival huts on high mountain passes and along remote coastlines. The huts are stocked with food, fuel and blankets and should only be used in an emergency. Users should sign the hut guest book and state which items they have used, so they may be replaced for future users.

BOOK YOUR STAY ONLINE

For more accommodation reviews and recommendations by Lonely Planet authors, check out the online booking service at www.lonelyplanet.com/hotels. You'll find the true, insider low-down on the best places to stay. Reviews are thorough and independent. Best of all, you can book online.

Farmhouses

Throughout Iceland accommodation is available in rural farmhouses, many of which offer camping and sleeping-bag spaces as well as made-up beds and summer cabins. Most either provide meals or have a guest kitchen, some have outdoor hot pots (hot tubs) or a geothermal swimming pool, and many provide horse riding. Roadside signs signal which farmhouses provide accommodation and what facilities they offer. Rates are similar to guest houses in towns, with sleeping-bag accommodation costing Ikr2500 to Ikr3500 and made-up beds from Ikr4000 to Ikr7000 per person. Breakfast costs about Ikr1000, while an evening meal (usually served at a set time) costs Ikr2200 to Ikr3500.

Approximately 140 farmhouses are members of **Ferðapjónusta Bænda** (Icelandic Farm Holidays; Map pp72-3; ☎ 570 2700; www.farmholidays.is; Síðumúli 2, IS-108 Reykjavík), which publishes an annual members' guide. Twenty-five are wheelchair accessible – see the website for details.

PRACTICALITIES

- Iceland uses the metric system – distances are in kilometres and weights are in kilograms.
- The electrical current is 220V AC 50Hz (cycles); North American electrical devices will require voltage converters.
- Most electrical plugs are of the European two-pin type.
- Iceland uses the PAL video system, like Britain and Germany, and falls within DVD zone 2.
- The daily paper *Morgunblaðið* is in Icelandic but features cinema listings in English.
- For tourist-oriented articles about Iceland in English, check out the glossy quarterly magazine **Iceland Review** (www.icelandreview.is).
- Iceland's two TV stations show Icelandic programs during the day and American imports in the evening.
- Radio station RUV (Icelandic National Broadcasting Service; FM 92.4/93.5) has news in English at 7.30am Monday to Friday from June to August.
- Most hostels and hotels have satellite TV featuring other European channels.