



Iceland

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Best Places to Stay

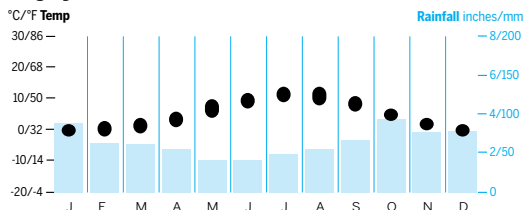
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Why Go?

The energy is palpable on this magical island, where astonishing natural phenomena inspire the welcoming, creative locals and draw an increasing number of visitors in search of its untrammelled splendour. A vast volcanic laboratory, here the earth itself is restless and alive. Admire thundering waterfalls, glittering glaciers carving their way to black-sand beaches, explosive geysers, rumbling volcanoes and contorted lava fields.

In summer, permanent daylight energises the already zippy inhabitants of Iceland's lively capital, Reykjavík, with its wonderful cafe and bar scene. Fashion, design and music are woven into the city's fabric, and the museums are tops. In winter, with luck, you may see the Northern Lights shimmering across the sky. Year-round, though, adventure tours abound, getting you up close and personal with sights and sounds that will stay with you for life.

When to Go Reykjavík



May–Jun Prime birdwatching season happily coincides with the two driest months and fewer crowds.

Aug It's full throttle in Reykjavík, the country teems with visitors and it's almost always light.

Nov–Apr The best months for Northern Lights and bare minimalism.



Iceland Highlights

- 1 Reykjavik (p595)**
Partying till dawn on the weekend pub crawl *djammið*, then hitting excellent museums, shops and cafes.
- 2 Snæfellsnes Peninsula (p609)**
Riding horses, climbing glaciers, trekking lava fields, or soaking in hot-pots.
- 3 Golden Circle (p604)**
Joining the droves exploring

the scintillating Gullfoss waterfall, exploding geysers, and the nation's birthplace, rift valley Þingvellir.

- 4 Vik (p607)**
Exploring black-sand beaches and off-shore rock formations.
- 5 Þórs mörk (p607)**
Taking a wilderness hike in this dramatic valley.
- 6 Húsavík (p610)**
Going

whale watching in Húsavík or Reykjavik.

- 7 Skaftafell (p608)**
Exhausting your camera's memory card at Skaftafell in Vatnajökull National Park and nearby Jökulsárlón glacial lagoon.
- 8 Blue Lagoon (p605)**
Swimming through steam clouds at this world-famous milky-blue geothermal pool.

REYKJAVÍK

POP 209,500

The world's most northerly capital combines colourful buildings, wild nightlife and a capricious soul to brilliant effect. You'll find Viking history, captivating museums, cool

music, and off-beat cafes and bars. And it's a superb base for touring Iceland's natural wonders.

Reykjavík's heart lies between Tjörnin (the Pond) and the harbour, and along Laugavegur, with nearly everything for visitors within walking distance.