Welcome to Iceland ..........  2
Map ....................................  4
14 Top Experiences ..............  6
Need to Know .....................  16
If You Like .........................  18
Month by Month ..................  21
Itineraries ..........................  26
Ring Road Planner ...............  30
Outdoor Adventures ............  32
Regions at a Glance .............  39

Iceland Today ...................  298
History ..............................  300
Natural Wonders ...............  309
Icelandic Culture:  
Sagas to Sigur Rós ..........  315
Icelandic Attitudes ..........  321
Icelandic Cuisine ..........  326

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“All you’ve got to do is decide to go and the hardest part is over. So go!”
TONY WHEELER, COFOUNDER – LONELY PLANET

PAGE 2 PLAIN YOUR TRIP
YOUR PLANNING TOOL KIT
Photos, Itineraries, lists and suggestions
to help you put together your perfect trip

PAGE 297 UNDERSTAND ICELAND
GET MORE FROM YOUR TRIP
Learn about the big picture, so you
can make sense of what you see

Your trip to Iceland unfolds just
between continents. Urban
as the perfect layover be-
tween...
Icelandic belongs to the Germanic language family, which includes German, English, Dutch and all the Scandinavian languages except Finnish. It’s related to Old Norse, and retains the letters ‘eth’ (ð) and ‘thorn’ (þ), which also existed in Old English. Be aware, especially when you’re trying to read bus timetables or road signs, that place names can be spelled in several different ways due to Icelandic grammar rules.

Most Icelanders speak English, so you’ll have no problems if you don’t know any Icelandic. However, any attempts to speak the local language will be much appreciated.

If you read our coloured pronunciation guides as if they were English, you’ll be understood. Keep in mind that double consonants are given a long pronunciation. Note also that öy in our pronunciation guides is like the ‘-er y-’ in ‘her year’ (without the ‘r’) and kh is like the ‘ch’ in Scottish loch.

BASICS

Hello. Halló. ha·loh


Excuse me. Afsakið. af·sa·kidh

Sorry. Fyrirgefðu. fi·rir·gev·dhu

Yes. Já. yow

No. Nei. nay

How are you? Hvað segir þú gott? kvadh·yir thoo got

Fine. And you? Allt fínt. En þú? alt feent en thoo

What’s your name? Hvað heitir þú? kvadh·hay·tir thoo

My name is … Ëg heiti … yekh·hay·ti …

Do you speak English? Talar þú ensku? ta·lar thoo·ens·ku

I don’t understand. Ég skil ekki. yekh skil·ekki

DIRECTIONS

Where’s the (hotel)? Hvar er (hótelið)? kvar er (hoh·te·lidh)

READING ICELANDIC

Letter Pronunciation

Á á ow (as in ‘how’)

Đ ð dh (as the ‘th’ in ‘that’)

É é ye (as in ‘yet’)

Í í ee (as in ‘see’)

Ó ó oh (as the ‘o’ in ‘note’)

Ú ú oo (as in ‘too’)

Ý ý ee (as in ‘see’)

Þ þ th (as in ‘think’)

Æ æ ai (as in ‘aisle’)

Ö ö eu (as the ‘u’ in ‘nurse’)

WANT MORE?

For in-depth language information and handy phrases, check out Lonely Planet’s Scandinavian Phrasebook. You’ll find it at shop.lonelyplanet.com, or you can buy Lonely Planet’s iPhone phrasebooks at the Apple App Store.
**Top Experiences**

- **Borgarfjörður Eystri**
  Hidden haven for puffins and elves (p247)

- **Seyðisfjörður**
  Cascades ring the fjord basin of this arty township (p251)

- **Vatnajökull National Park**
  Europe's largest ice cap is a haven for snowy sports (p272)

- **Jökulsárlón**
  Ghost-blue icebergs set adrift in an ethereal lagoon (p277)

**ELEVATION**

- 0m - 50m
- 50m - 100m
- 100m - 200m
- 200m - 500m
- 500m - 1000m
- 1000m - 2000m

- Glacier

**Arctic Circle**

**VATNAJÖKULL NATIONAL PARK – NORTH**

- Kirkjubæjarklaustur
- Kirkjufellsfoss
- Ölafsfjörður
- Dalvík
- Akureyri
- Ólafsfjörður
- Dalvík
- Kirkjubæjarklaustur

**VATNAJÖKULL NATIONAL PARK – SOUTH**

- Kirkjubæjarklaustur
- Kirkjufellsfoss
- Ólafsfjörður
- Dalvík
- Akureyri
- Ólafsfjörður
- Dalvík
- Kirkjubæjarklaustur

**Vatnajökull**

- Grímseym
- Flatey
- Mývatn
- Vatnajökull
- Grimsvotn (1719m)
- Kverkfjoll (1860m)
- Hvannadalshnukur (2119m)

**Jökulsárlón**

- Ghost-blue icebergs set adrift in an ethereal lagoon (p277)

**Seyðisfjörður**

- Cascades ring the fjord basin of thisarty township (p251)

**Borgarfjörður Eystri**

- Hidden haven for puffins and elves (p247)
Brandon Presser
Coordinating Author: Reykjavík, Southwest Iceland & the Golden Circle, West Iceland, The Westfjords, Iceland: Nature’s Wonderland, Iceland Today Growing up in northern Canada, Brandon was all too familiar with sweeping, desolate terrain and shiver-worthy landscapes. But no snowdrift was big enough to prepare him for the sheer awesomeness of the remote Icelandic countryside. It was a simple transcontinental layover that turned harmless curiosity into full-blown infatuation and now, a decade later, he’s checked off almost every fjordhead and mountain pass from his to-do list. He’s even received compliments on his Icelandic pronunciation! (His grammar, however, is improving at glacial speeds.) Brandon spends most of the year writing his way across the globe – he’s authored around 40 Lonely Planet guidebooks and explored over 75 countries. For more about Brandon, check out www.brandonpresser.com.

Carolyn Bain
Month by Month, North Iceland, East Iceland, Southeast Iceland, The Highlands, Directory A–Z, Transport Melbourne-born Carolyn has had an ongoing love affair with the Nordic region, a love that began when she was a teenager living in Denmark and that has been regularly rekindled over 12 years of writing guidebooks to destinations such as Denmark, Sweden and Nordic-wannabe Estonia. Researching this book fulfilled a long-held ambition and has taken her Nordic adulation to dizzying new heights. New and/or rekindled obsessions include skyr, snowmobiles, fjords, hot-pots, Northern Lights, puffins, lopapeysur and Of Monsters and Men.

Fran Parnell
History, Natural Wonders, Icelandic Culture, Icelandic Attitudes, Icelandic Cuisine Fran’s passion for Scandinavia began while studying for a masters degree in Anglo-Saxon, Norse and Celtic. A strange university slide show featuring sublime Icelandic mountains and a matter-of-fact man who’d literally dug his own grave awakened a fascination that has kept on growing. Deserted valleys and blasted mountain tops are her chosen lurking places, and Hekla is her favourite volcano. Fran has also worked on Lonely Planet’s guides to Scandinavian Europe, Sweden, Finland, Denmark and Reykjavík.
Whether you’ve got three days or 30, these itineraries provide a starting point for the trip of a lifetime. Want more inspiration? Head online to lonelyplanet.com/thorntree to chat with other travellers.

10 Days
Intro to Iceland: Classic Ring Road

Depart Reykjavik in a clockwise fashion, stopping in Borgarnes on the way to Stykkishólmur, an adorable village overlooking an isle-ridden bay. Rejoin the Ring Road, breaking away once more to uncover the quaint townships and coastal vistas of the Tröllaskagi Peninsula before gliding through Akureyri, Iceland’s unofficial northern capital. Onto mysterious Mývatn next, with a stop at Dettifoss to experience the awesome power of nature. Push eastward to Borgarfjörður Eystrí for summer puffins galore. Slow down in Seyðisfjörður, then tackle the long journey through the rest of the east as the road curls along dozens of magical fjords. Pause in Höfn for langoustine, jump on a snowmobile to discover Vatnajökull, then putter along the glacial lagoon at Jökulsárlón. Warm up your hiking legs in Skaftafell, then tackle the awesome trek from Skógar to Þórsmörk, a verdant interior valley. Find your way back to the Ring Road and as you continue west, veer away one last time to check out the yawning continental divide and the island’s ancient government seat at Pingvellir National Park before rolling into Reykjavík to spend the remainder of your holiday enjoying the capital’s treasures.
Three to Four Weeks

The Grand Tour

Pick up your own wheels after arriving in Keflavík, and head to Blue Lagoon to slough off the hours of tiring travel. Follow the coastal road through maritime Stokkseyri, then it’s on to Landmannalaugar for the legendary multiday hike down into the secreted valley of Dórsormök. Back near the Ring Road – as the anticlockwise journey continues – you’ll find the boat out to Vestmannaeyjar, where puffins flit like buzzing bees above fresh lava flows. Hang out in verdant Vik, then push onward to Kirkjubæjarklaustur, where you can venture up to Lakagígar to learn about the devastating effects of the Laki eruptions. Further on, Skáftafell offers a slew of hiking and biking possibilities. Don’t miss a boat ride among oversized ice cubes at Jökulsárlón and a snowmobile safari on Vatnajökull, Europe’s biggest glacier. Pause in Höfn for some legendary langoustine, then relax in hushed Breiðdalsvík before negotiating the hairpin fjord roads leading up to peaceful Eskifjörður and inspiring Seyðisfjörður. Follow the rhyolite cliffs down to Borgarfjörður Eystri to snap photos of puffins and turf houses, then climb through Vopnafjörður to the grassy plains of Langanes, Iceland’s ‘tail’. The quiet northeastern circuit rolls through Ásbyrgi before dropping off in the charming town of Húsavík for some serious whale watching. Wander around scenic Mývatn, which makes a great base for exploring the pounding waterfall, Dettifoss, and Iceland’s inland treasures like the glittering caldera at Askja and silent ice caves at Kverkfjöll. Stop for a slice of civilisation in Akureyri before touching the Arctic Circle in Grímsey. Wander up through Dalvík, check out Siglufjörður, then treat yourself to a relaxing swim in Hofsós. Learn about ancient witchcraft in Hölmavík, sleep fjordside in Djúpavík and bathe in Norðurfjörður’s geothermal spring. Base yourself in the charming village of Stykkishólmur to explore the myriad treasures of the Snæfellsnes Peninsula, from golden beaches and craggy lava fields to glistening ice caps and hidden hot-pots. It’s on to Borgarnes next, followed by Upper Borgarfjörður’s blend of saga sites and hidden caves. Continue the history lesson at Pingvellir National Park, where you can also glimpse the shifting continental plates. Then end the epic journey in Reykjavík, Iceland’s charming cultural stronghold.
Plan your trip itineraries

» (above) Svartifoss waterfall (p272), Skaftafell
» (left) Town houses along Gretta, Reykjavík
If you’re on a lengthy layover or enjoying a long weekend away, try the following route, which takes in some of the top attractions located within a stone’s throw of the capital. After landing in Keflavík make a beeline for Blue Lagoon to soak away the jetlag. Wander through the steaming earths at Krýsuvík before barrelling down the coastal highway for fresh seafood in Eyrarbakki. Choose a base near Hella or Hvolsvöllur to enjoy a spot of horse riding and Northern Lights viewing (in the colder months). Active bodies will enjoy the stunning hike from Skógar up through the ridge between two brooding ice caps (and the site of the Eyjafjallajökull eruption in 2010) then down into Þórsmörk, a silent kingdom filled with wild Arctic flowers. Those who are tighter on time can trek along the glacial tongue of Sólheimajökull instead. Swing through gushing Gullfoss, spurting Geysir and the rift-ridden Pingvellir National Park on your way to Reykjavík, Iceland’s capital bustles with an all-star assortment of trendy boutiques, galleries and clubs. Don’t forget to stop in Hafnarfjörður to cavort with ‘hidden people’ before returning to the airport.