



The Highlands

Includes ➔

Kjölur Route (Kjalvegur).....	310
Sprengisandur Route	312
Öskjuleið (Askja Route)	314
Kverkfjöll Route	318

Best Natural Wonders

- ➔ Askja (p316)
- ➔ Herðubreið (p316)
- ➔ Hveravellir (p311)
- ➔ Kverkfjöll (p318)
- ➔ Drekgil (p316)
- ➔ Kerlingarfjöll (p311)

Best Places to Take a Dip

- ➔ Víti (p316)
- ➔ Hveravellir (p311)
- ➔ Laugafell (p313)
- ➔ Kerlingarfjöll (p311)

Why Go?

You may have travelled the Ring Road thinking that Iceland is light on towns; that sheep seem to outnumber people; that you haven't encountered an N1 service station for many a kilometre. Well, you ain't seen nothing yet. In the interior highlands, there are practically no services, accommodation, bridges – or guarantees if something goes wrong.

Gazing across the desolate expanses, you could imagine yourself in the Australian outback, or, as many have noted, on the moon. And those aren't overactive imaginations at work – *Apollo* astronauts trained here before their lunar landing.

This isolation, in essence, is the reason that people visit. Although some travellers are disappointed by the interior's ultra-bleakness, others are humbled by the sight of nature in its rawest form. The solitude is exhilarating, the views are vast, the access is limited (these 4WD-only roads are generally only open in summer's peak, but are served by all-terrain buses), and it's immensely tough but equally rewarding to hike or bike these cross-country routes.

Good to Know

Kjölur route (Rte 35) North-south route across the country. Served by summer buses. No rivers to ford.

Sprengisandur route (Rte F26) North-south route across the country. Served by summer buses.

Öskjuleið (Askja route; Rte F88 or F905/910) Access from Iceland's north to Askja caldera and Herðubreið mountain. Served by numerous tour operators – especially from Mývatn.

Kverkfjöll route (Rte F905, F910, then F902) Access from Iceland's north (or east, via Rte 910) to Kverkfjöll ice caves. Served by a few tour operators.



The Highlands Highlights

① Hike across the lava field at blustery **Askja** (p316), then soak in the tepid waters of Víti crater

② Marvel at icy sculptures hidden in the geothermal caves at **Kverkfjöll** (p318)

③ Pay homage to the Queen of the Mountains, **Herðubreið** (p316)