



Eldhraun (p36)



WELCOME TO ICELAND'S RING ROAD

Hitting headlines, topping bucket lists, wooing nature lovers and dazzling increasing numbers of visitors: Iceland, an underpopulated island marooned near the top of the globe, is literally a country in the making. It's a vast volcanic laboratory where mighty forces shape the earth: geysers gush, mudpots gloop, ice-covered volcanoes rumble and glaciers cut great pathways through the mountains. Its supercharged splendour seems designed to remind visitors of their utter insignificance in the greater scheme of things.

Bravely forging through the geological magnificence is the Ring Road, Iceland's Route 1, which joins nearly all the places you can get to without a serious 4WD in one long circumnavigation of the island. Epic doesn't even begin to describe this road trip, but it's not only about jaw-dropping vistas: the counterpoint to so much natural beauty is found in Iceland's vibrant cultural life, handicrafts, locavore cuisine and the warmth of its creative, no-nonsense, welcoming people. It's a drive like no other.

