

CHRISTMAS & NEW YEAR'S IN ICELAND

ITINERARY

DAY
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DAY 1: ARRIVAL & EXPLORING REYKJAVÍK

Welcome to Iceland! From the arrivals hall in Keflavik International Airport, a driver will meet you and take you to your accommodation in Reykjavík. After settling in, the rest of the day is free for you to explore Reykjavik. You can stroll the charming capital city, visit museums, and explore landmarks. Downtown Reykjavík offers numerous excellent restaurants, cafés, coffeehouses, and bars, for those who want to experience the renowned Reykjavík nightlife. If you are arriving early, you could choose to add an optional activity to your day, such as a Reykjavík city walk, a food walk, or winter whale watching.

In the evening, you could add a tour to search for the otherworldly northern lights. You could join a guided small group bus tour with a knowledgeable driver that will find a great spot to view the white, green and sometimes red lights dancing and flickering in the sky, or even a northern lights boat tour.

Spend the night in Reykjavik.

Attractions: Reykjavík

DAY
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DAY 2: MOUNTAINS, WATERFALLS & CHRISTMAS DINNER CELEBRATION

Start the day by picking up your rental car before taking in some of the best attractions in south Iceland. The first leg of your journey is along the south coast, with a stop at the fairy tale-like Seljalandsfoss waterfall—the only one of its kind in Iceland where you can walk behind the cascade on a footpath! For those who are a bit more adventurous, we recommend visiting a hidden waterfall in the canyon, known as Gljúfrabúi, located near Seljalandsfoss, depending on weather and conditions. Further along you can visit the magnificent 60-metre tall free-falling Skógafoss waterfall in Skógar.

On the *24th of December* you will celebrate Christmas Eve with fellow travellers in a cosy gathering at Hotel Klaustur. At 18:00, there will be a complimentary aperitif followed by a delicious buffet, featuring an array of Icelandic delicacies, including lamb and fish. Close to midnight you can choose to visit the local church for a midnight mass with the locals (the mass is held in Icelandic).

Spend the next two nights in the Kirkjubæjarklaustur area.

Driving distance approx. 250 km/155 miles

Attractions: Kirkjubæjarklaustur, Seljalandsfoss, Skógafoss

DAY

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DAY 3: CHRISTMAS AMONG CLIFFS, ICEBERGS & NATIONAL PARKS

Enjoy the day in the countryside where you can visit sites such as the Kirkjugolf basalt stones and the Dverghamrar cliffs. If the weather and road conditions are favourable, we recommend driving to Jölulsárlón, to see the floating icebergs in the glacier lagoon. Nearby, you could explore the Diamond Beach, with chunks of glistening ice dotting the black sands, as well as the smaller glacier lagoon, Fjallsárlón. Please be aware that there are limited opening hours in the countryside for markets and cafes due to the holiday, so it is strongly recommended to pack a lunch and snacks for the day.

Spend the night in the Kirkjubæjarklaustur area

Driving distance: 250 km/155 miles

Attractions: Dverghamrar, Fjallsárlón, Jökulsárlón Glacier Lagoon, Kirkjugólf

DAY

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DAY 4: THE DRAMATIC SOUTH COAST & HOT SPRINGS

After a few days of taking in the frozen landscapes and glaciers of the south coast, you will head back west. Worthwhile stops along the way include the hauntingly beautiful volcanic black sand beach south of Vík and Dyrhólaey. It is ideal today to join some of the optional activities available in the area such as horse riding, glacier walking, snowmobiling or an ATV tour on the beach.

Spend the next two nights in the Golden Circle area

Driving distance: 200 km/124 mi

Attractions: Dyrhólaey, Reynisfjara & Reynisdrangar

DAY

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DAY 5: THE CLASSIC GOLDEN CIRCLE

You have a full day to visit the Golden Circle region, a popular route for viewing some of the best-known natural sites in south Iceland. Visit the great Geysir region and explore the bubbling mud pots and spouting Strokkur geyser before arriving at the picture perfect two-tiered Gullfoss waterfall. After, you could choose to visit the old bishopry at Skálholt and the explosion crater Kerið, now partially filled with bright blue water. Complete the circle at Þingvellir National Park, which appears on UNESCO's World Heritage Site list for being historically significant to the founding of Icelandic democracy and a place of immense natural beauty.

Spend the night in the Golden Circle region.

Driving distance: 190 km / 118 miles

Attractions: Geysir, Gullfoss, Kerið, Þingvellir

DAY 6: HOT SPRINGS, LAVA WATERFALLS & GLACIER ADVENTURES

Explore west Iceland today with a diverse array of activities. For a close up look at the island's geothermal power, check out the largest hot spring in Europe, Deildartunguhver as it bubbles and emits steam. Nearby, you can pay a visit to the beautiful Barnafoss and Hraunfossar waterfalls, where water thrashes, churns and spills from the vast lava field. Or for a truly unique experience, go inside a glacier! You can take an optional guided tour to Langjökull glacier, where a manmade ice cave is open to travellers (tour not included). Another highlight is the newly opened Krauma, which are geothermal baths located right next to Deildartunguhver, the most powerful hot spring in Europe.

Spend the next two nights in the Borgarfjörður area

Driving distance: 210 km / 130 miles

Attractions: Deildartunguhver, Hraunfossar & Barnafoss, Reykholt

DAY 7: SNÆFELLSJÖKULL NATIONAL PARK

Start the day early as you have a full day ahead of you to experience spectacular views of the ocean, lava fields and snowy peaks as you visit the Snæfellsnes peninsula. The main attraction here is undoubtedly the 1,446 m Snæfellsjökull glacier-topped volcano, believed by some to hold mysterious spiritual powers. So large that it's visible from Reykjavik on clear days. It was also the setting for Jules Verne's famous novel "Journey to the Centre of the Earth". Your drive along the coast also offers such picture-perfect sights as the Dritvík Cove, the Lóndrangar cliffs, the Arnarstapi cliffs, the hamlet of Hellnar and various other small fishing villages, including charming Stykkishólmur. For a fun photo opportunity, visit Djúpalónssandur, a pebble-filled beach with the four "lifting stones" that were used in old days to test men's strength for jobs on fishing boats.

Spend the night in Borgarfjörður area.

Driving distance: 330 km / 205 mi

Attractions: Arnarstapi, Búðir, Djúpalónssandur, Hellnar, Snæfellsjökull National Park, Stykkishólmur

DAY
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DAY 8: WEST COAST & REYKJAVIK

From beautiful Borgarfjörður, you will continue through Borgarnes to Reykjavik. If you're interested in Iceland's early history, visit the Icelandic Settlement Centre exhibition in Borgarnes to get a sense of Iceland's rich literary history of the sagas as well as what life was like during the days of settlement. After leaving Borgarnes you will drive through Hvalfjörður and onto to Reykjavik, where you will drop off the rental car in the afternoon. The rest of the day in Reykjavik is up to you, either to be spent at leisure or adding optional activities.

Spend the next three nights in Reykjavik.

Attractions: Borgarnes, Reykjavík

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DAY 9: ICELANDIC TRADITIONS & NEW YEARS EVE CELEBRATIONS

Enjoy an easy morning after yesterday's adventure. If you decide to venture out, please note that most businesses are generally open until 13:00 today. After lunch, your Icelandic New Year's Eve experience begins with a local guide showing you some of the main highlights of downtown Reykjavik, allowing you to take part in local traditions. You will have a chance to taste some local food, admire the city's Christmas decorations and have a chance to enjoy fireworks that the guide will set off.

Tonight at 19:30, you will attend a festive New Year's Eve party at the sophisticated Grand Hotel in Reykjavik. Mix and mingle with other guests over an apéritif and then enjoy a gourmet 5-course dinner, paired with selected wines, and live entertainment during your meal. Afterwards, you and fellow dinner guests will be taken to a large neighbourhood bonfire to celebrate with Icelanders. You will then return to Grand Hotel for dessert, sparkling wine and the exciting countdown to the New Year. Once the event finishes, you can head to the city centre and continue the party, like the locals, with music and dancing late into the night.

Attractions: Exclusive New Years Eve Party, Reykjavík

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DAY 10: BLUE LAGOON RELAXATION

Today, you will be picked for a visit to the famous Blue Lagoon. You have time to bathe in the heated geothermal pool, which is rich with silica and soothing for your skin. You can also enjoy a sauna or steambath and an array of spa services (which must be booked in advance). After your time at the Blue Lagoon, you return to Reykjavík, where you can spend the late afternoon, and evening, at your leisure.

Spend the night in Reykjavik.

Attractions: Blue Lagoon

DAY 11: DEPARTURE FROM ICELAND

Your winter holiday to Iceland has come to an end, and you will have a shuttle bus transfer from your accommodation to Keflavik International Airport. If you are departing in the afternoon and are interested in adding an optional activity, please arrange with your travel consultant in advance, as there are a limited number of activities available due to the holiday.

Please note: The standard itinerary is based on arrivals on the 23rd of December. For arrivals on the 22nd of December, the itinerary will be adjusted to travellers spending the nights of the 23rd and 24th in the Kirkjubæjarklaustur area, and the day at the Blue Lagoon will be moved to the 30th of December. Christmas day will be spent travelling the south coast toward the Golden Circle area. Please contact your travel consultant if you have any questions or concerns about the changes to the itinerary.

Whatever your needs, we are here to help. If you have any questions about our packages or services, please do not hesitate to contact us.

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