

Iceland – country of huge energy and golf

Iceland became an extraordinary popular tourism destination due to amazing and unique beauty, active volcanos, hot springs, lava fields, high mountains and total use of geothermal energy for electricity generation, heating of towns and municipalities as well as for heated swimming pools or glass houses.

What to visit

Bláa Lónio - cosmetics treatment directly in water. Probably the best known



swimming worldwide in geothermal water offers the Bláa Lónio (Blue Lagoon), close to the international airport in capital – Reykjavik. During our first visit to Iceland, the swimming pool was located directly in the power plant but during the second visit it was already

transferred into lava fields with the approach road well-hidden and reminding visitors of scenes from space movies. A combination of sea and geothermal



waters represents the basis for own very successful cosmetics products.

<http://www.bluelagoon.com/>.

In case you are planning to visit the Blue Lagoon individually, it is recommended to book your ticket well in advance.

Geysir, waterfall and the oldest parliament are the three mostly visited places included in the Golden Circle trip. Stórl Geysir (Large Geysir) located in the valley of hot spring Haudakulur named all geysirs worldwide. Waterfall **Gullfoss** is more than thirty meters high and because of frequent rainbow it is also called golden waterfall. In winter, ice can be more than one meter thick. In

Tingvellir, the seat of the oldest parliament, starting from 930 the highest



Viking period representation met including their families and settled all necessary issues during no longer than three weeks! It is also the place where two continental shelves are moving apart a few centimeters each year. Visit of these three most important points of interest can be managed by bus from the capital within a half day.



<https://www.extremeiceland.is/en/information/about-iceland/geysir-geothermal-field> <http://gullfoss.is/> <http://www.ancient-origins.net/ancient-places-europe/ancient-parliamentary-plains-iceland-001926>

The capital of Iceland, **Reykjavik**, according to a legend, was home to the first settlers arriving in 874 AD. Today, almost three out of four Icelanders, live in the capital. In case you like exact figures, a real time counter of population is presenting this number in a popular restaurant in downtown. A wonderful bird's eye view of the capital offers the tower of the Lutheran Hallgrímskirkja church. 73 metres high, it is the largest church in Iceland and among the tallest structures in Iceland. An introduction to your visit to Iceland offers the presentation in the new modern Harpa located close to the sea. It is exactly the place where probably half of local population as well as visitors celebrated the surprising result of football match during European championship. Really

everybody! In a small house called Hofdi, not far from Harpa, the Reykjavík Summit between President Ronald and General Secretary of the Communist Party of Soviet Union Mikhail Gorbachev, was held October 1986. Beautiful view of the offers also Perlan, geothermal hot water storage tanks, located on a small hill.



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We can only recommend another interesting **Reykjanes** tour. It includes visit of the bridge between continents crossing the continental divide between the North-American and Eurasian tectonic plates. Iceland is the only place in the world where the divide between the plates is so

visible. Later we have visited the boiling mud pools known as **Gunnhver** and Iceland's oldest lighthouse. We had a short walk among the magnificent cliffs and experienced first-hand the full power of the ocean. (Half-day bus visit).

What is the appropriate time to visit Iceland? The best time is for sure June - sunny weather during the entire day, the sunset is really very short one. During winter time, it is usually nearly all day dark. But people are used to these conditions and for instance ski resorts have all day lighting. Iceland is a quite large country. During my three visits I have always visited only the capital and important points of interest around the capital as described in this article. If you wish to visit more remote areas you have to plan a longer trip. Beautiful golf courses are located in the North, as for instance **Akureri**, the venue of the Arctic Open <http://www.gagolf.is/>.

Weather in Iceland can change very quickly. During one day you can have horizontal rain and your umbrella would be no longer useful, sun, clouds and all these conditions change abruptly. Rain apparel for golf is a must!

Having decided on your trip to Iceland, it can be recommended to book your flight and accommodation as soon as possible as Iceland is every year more and more popular and the number of visitors increasing. The navigation system is in English but using names in the local language. You have to be careful and write all names complete including all diacritics, otherwise the system will not find them.

Fishing

The main industry represents fishing. All restaurants offer a really broad selection of fish and fish specialties of high quality. Traditional local meals include also lamb steak or smoked lamb as well as sea birds.

Golf

There are 70 golf courses, 16 of them 18 hole golf courses and 54 - 9 hole golf courses. In greater Reykjavik area there are 11 courses, 6 of them 18 hole and 5 9 hole courses.

Besides tourists visiting important places also golfers like to play in this special environment. Golf became very fast a popular sport and so many golf courses were built for less than 340 000 inhabitants. We have decided to play on several golf courses, located mainly not very far from the capital.

The first one, top ranked **Keilir** Golf Course in Hafnarfjodur is located only 10 km south west of Reykjavik. First nine holes were built in 1967, extended to 12 in 1972 and to 18 holes in 1994 by local Hannes Þorsteinsson. Front nine holes over lava fields "Kapelluhran"



mean that a ball in lava fields will be very difficult to find and even more

difficult to return to fairway. Back nine holes on old farmland are close to the sea shores offering wonderful vistas. Clubhouse built in 1993 offers beautiful views over the Atlantic Ocean. Par 71, length 5.876 m, CR 71.6, Slope 123, green fee 64 €. <http://english.keilir.is/>

The second one, **Grafarholt** Golf Club, 10km east of Reykjavik, was established



in 1934 and opened for play in 1963, design by N. Skjold. It is the oldest golf club in Iceland. Par 71, length 6.057 m, CR 72,3 Slope 130, green fee 70 €. The front nine holes we enjoyed together with two ladies from the capital. They have informed us that generally people in Iceland

like to play golf on a golf course not further than plus minus 15 minutes from their house and prefer to play nine holes before they go to work or immediately after work. <http://www.grgolf.is/english/>



The third golf course **Brautarholt** lies in a breath taking nature by the sea with a view to Reykjavik city. After a short drive from the capital we arrived to this area with very rich bird life. It was raining and nobody there. After a short moment we were offered coffee and

trolleys and instructed to bring them after play near the clubhouse and were left completely alone. Already on the day one of our stay we were informed that some birds protect very aggressively their nests and the best way to protect against injury is just to keep your club in your hand, watch and protect mainly your face. On third hole, my drive landed in a nest on the edge of fairway exactly in the center among four eggs. The protective bird immediately

attempted to attack the intruder. In order to avoid any conflict, I left my ball in the nest - to take it out would mean to touch the eggs. We are looking forward to play this golf course again when completed to 18 holes in the near future. Par 35, length 2.647 m, (5.292 m, CR 68.8, Slope 127), green fee 42 €. <http://www.gbr.is/>

The fourth golf club **Sudurnesja**, located not far from the international airport



in Reykjavik, established in 1964, was extended to 18 holes in 1986, design N. Skjold. The club hosted Icelandic Golf Championship in 2005. Par 72, length 5.983 m, 5.983 m, CR 72,5 Slope 138, green fee 57 €. <http://gs.is/>

The fifth golf club **Porláksvöllur**, we have played instead of the Vestmannaeyja golf course due to the fact that it was not possible to book ferry boat or flight tickets to the island on such a short notice. It is highly recommended not to



forget to book these tickets well in advance! Porláksvöllur is about a 30 minute driving distance from the capital, out of the beaten track. It offers beautiful views of the always interesting mountains and you can hear the nearby sea behind the dunes. Par 71, length 5.854 m. Not far from

this golf course we can recommend to visit the restaurant directly on the sea shore with wonderful views. www.golfthor.is

The last golf club we have visited, **Urridavöllur** surrounded by lava fields opened in 1997 and is now considered one of the best golf courses in Iceland located within about 20 minutes driving distance from the centre of Reykjavik. Par 71, length 5.979 m, CR 71.7, Slope 134, green fee 78 €. <http://www.oddur.is/en/>



Icelanders are a nation which despite not very favourable nature conditions succeeded to build really excellent conditions for their existence and they are proud how they have managed. They are very friendly with tourists and ready to help. No problem to communicate in English. Very frequently instead of “How are you?” you will be asked “What is your handicap”?!

Iceland is a country like geology textbook. Because of the immense beauty you will immediately like this country. I have visited this country already three times and I am looking forward to my next visit.

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