

Itinerary - Iceland Ring Road Comfort - 10 Days

DAY 1: THE BLUE LAGOON, GEOTHERMAL AREA, AND ÞINGVELLIR NATIONAL PARK

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Get ready for a fantastic day full of top attractions! You start off by visiting the **Blue Lagoon**, one of Iceland's most famous attractions (make sure to book in advance). Enjoy relaxing in the pale blue water, so very warm and rich in minerals. What a great way to start your Iceland visit! Once you've had a proper soak, carry on your trip and drive through the small town of **Grindavík** by the sea on your way to **Krýsuvík** (Seltún), a fascinating hot spring area where you can walk around some interesting - and smelly - hot pots, steam rivers, and bubbling mud pots. Next up is **Strandarkirkja** church with its rich history, and then the lovely town of **Hveragerði**, home to many greenhouses and located in a very active geothermal area, with hot springs and steam all around town. From here, you drive to the phenomenal **Þingvellir National Park**. The park is not only home to the most important place in Icelandic history, where one of the world's oldest parliaments was founded in 930, but also Iceland's largest natural lake and a lava field, situated right on the Mid-Atlantic Ridge, where the Eurasian and North American tectonic plates are moving apart. At Þingvellir, you can walk through parts of the ridge.

DAY 2: WATERFALLS AND GEYSERS

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This is the day of great waterfalls! But, you start with a visit to the hot spring area of **Geysir**, including the very active geyser **Strokkur**, erupting every 5 to 10 minutes. Spend time walking along the paths and looking at the different geothermal phenomena. Carry on to the beautiful **Gullfoss** waterfall or the "Golden Waterfall", one of Iceland's most popular tourist attractions. 32 m high and 250 m wide, the water falls into a 70 m deep gorge, allowing for breathtaking views from different viewpoints. Carry on and visit **Skálholt** church and archaeological remains, one of Iceland's places of special historical interest. From here, you drive to one of the most famous waterfalls in Iceland, **Seljalandsfoss**, a narrow but high and powerful waterfall that you can walk behind (as long as it's not too icy). Breathe in the fresh air and forces of nature, all the while getting dewy from the waterfall. Next up: another beautiful waterfall! This one is called **Skógafoss**, probably the most photographed natural phenomena in Iceland. In addition to the magnificent waterfall, **Skógar** has a very interesting folk museum that comes highly recommended.

DAY 3: PUFFINS, BLACK SAND BEACHES, GLACIER LAGOON, AND LAVA FIELDS

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You begin your day in the **Vík** area, with spectacular black sand beaches and views of the impressive cliffs of **Reynisdrangar**. Watch out for the strong tide along the shore here! And see if you can spot the puffin colonies on the cliff faces of the small peninsula of **Dyrhólaey** (in the summertime). From Vík, you drive along a large black sand desert, formed by glacial rivers and glacial floods from one of the nearby glaciers. You also get an up close and personal chance to see **Eldhraun** ("fire lava"), a flow of lava from a row of craters called **Lakagígar**. This is the largest flow of lava in the world, covering 565 km², caused by eruptions in 1783-1784. Another geological phenomenon along the way is **Kirkjugólf**; a formation of basalt columns, thought to have been the floor of a medieval church. While driving along the south coast, you will have **Vatnajökull** glacier powering over you a large part of the way, by far Iceland's largest glacier (and the biggest in Europe), covering one of the most powerful geothermal areas in the world and many active volcanoes. You might even see the highest point in Iceland, **Hvannadalshnúkur** (2110 m). **Skaftafell National Park** awaits with its magnificent view over **Skeiðarársandur** sand desert. We recommend the 1.5-hour hike to **Svartifoss** (yes, another waterfall) in the park. Do you feel like you've already had enough of unbelievable natural phenomena today? Well, we're sorry, but there's another one waiting for you just down the road, the fascinating glacier lagoon, **Jökulsárlón**! The lagoon is filled with large chunks of ice like diamonds glistening in the sun. The area has several hiking trails and you can also book a boat tour around the lagoon.

DAY 4: THE EASTFJORDS

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Start your day by driving to the pretty fishing village of **Djúpivogur** and look at the Eggs of Merry Bay, one of the most unusual sculptures in Iceland. Next, you drive to **Stöðvarfjörður** fjord and village before reaching **Egilsstaðir** town, where you can enjoy views over the river **Lagarfljót** - see if you can spot the Lagarfljót monster believed to live in the river. You will find Iceland's largest forest, **Hallormsstaðaskógur**, on the eastern banks of **Lagarfljót** river with plenty of walking paths through the forest. If you're in the mood for a



longer and more difficult hike, why not hike the two hours it takes to get up to the beautiful **Hengifoss** waterfall? Today you can also visit **Skriðuklaustur**, home to a monastery during the middle ages but now a very interesting stone building. Return to Egilsstaðir to cross the highland moor of **Fjarðarheiði** and enjoy the views before ending your day in the picturesque town and fjord of **Seyðisfjörður**, or go all the way down to **Reyðarfjörður**, another beautiful town in a beautiful fjord with plenty of hiking opportunities close by.

DAY 5: A HUGE GLACIAL RIVER AND THE EASTERN TIP OF ICELAND

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Today, you start by driving to **Jökulsá á Dal** river, once one of the biggest glacial rivers in Iceland, but now very much changed because of the **Kárahnjúkar** hydroelectric power plant. There is a viewpoint at the eastern edge of the bridge with great views into the gorge, which is 70 m wide and 40 m deep. Next up is **Hellisheiði** mountain road, which is only open to traffic during the summer months. Stay safe and enjoy the astonishing views and breathtaking landscape. You might want a quick soak in the thermal pool close by in **Selárdalur** before carrying on to the remote fishing village of **Vopnafjörður**, where you can visit the local folk museum and enjoy beautiful views of the sea and the surrounding mountains from the village's natural harbour. End your day in some of the most remote parts of Iceland, including **Langanes** peninsula where you can enjoy a pleasant hike around its moors, lakes and marshes, and the small fishing village of **Þórshöfn**, named after the Norse god of thunder, Þór ("Thor"). Final point of the day is **Kópasker**, the right place if you are more inclined towards wildlife as bird-watching is particularly lively in the area, especially by **Melrakkaslétta** peninsula.

DAY 6: EUROPE'S MOST POWERFUL WATERFALL AND LAKE MÝVATN

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Are you ready to be blown away by some breathtaking nature? We hope so, because today you will start off by visiting the enormous horseshoe shaped valley of **Ásbyrgi**, surrounded by dark cliffs up to 100 m high, where legend has it that the valley was formed by the footprint of Sleipnir, the Norse god Odin's horse. From Ásbyrgi, there is a short drive to **Hljóðaklettur** (only in summer), a distinctive cluster of columnar rock formations. You then drive to the most powerful waterfall in Europe, **Dettifoss**, dispatching 500 m³ of dark glacial water per second! Next up is **Lake Mývatn**, where you will be spoiled for choice when it comes to beautiful nature and its various forces. Mývatn and the surrounding area offers interesting geological phenomena such as **Skútustaðagígur** pseudo craters, lava caves, hot mud pots, steam springs, volcanoes, canyons, and a hot spring area. It also offers fantastic bird and nature watching. Furthermore, you can go hunting for trolls turned to stone in the unique recreational area of **Dimmuborgir** with its bizarre lava formations and caves. And if you have time, why not end a long day by bathing in the outdoor lagoon at **Mývatn Nature Baths** before retiring to your accommodation?

DAY 7: WATERFALL OF THE GODS AND CAPITAL OF THE NORTH

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Prepare for an action-filled day! Leaving Mývatn, you drive to the magnificent "Waterfall of the Gods", **Goðafoss**, where you can spend some time walking to the different viewpoints and marvel at the waterfall's power. Carry on your drive through the countryside heading for **Eyjafjörður** fjord, one of the country's longest fjords and home to the "Capital of the North", **Akureyri**. Here you can spend time strolling around the shops, visit some of the museums, churches, and the botanical garden; check out some of the many restaurants and cafés on offer, and maybe even visit the fantastic local thermal pool with its many slides, and other activities. Further along the fjord you will find the pretty fishing village of **Dalvík**, where you could also go swimming and visit its pretty church and charming harbour, and the beautiful village of **Siglufjörður**, located in a fjord with the same name. Enjoy the mountain views and general atmosphere. Go down to the harbour and, if you have time, we recommend visiting the interesting Herring Era Museum.

DAY 8: NORTHWEST ICELAND, ROCK MONSTERS, SEA BIRDS, AND SEALS

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Once on the road, you head to the village of **Hofsós**, where the very interesting Icelandic Emigration Centre, with exhibitions on Icelandic emigration to Canada and the USA in the late 19th century, comes highly recommended. Hofsós also has one of Iceland's most beautifully located thermal pools. Next up: **Hólar**, a former bishopric, and the most important historical site in northern Iceland. Carry on your drive and you will get a chance to visit **Víðimýrarkirkja**, a traditional turf church from the 19th century, as well as the lovely folk museum of **Glaumbær**. You will also see **Kolugljúfur** gorge with many waterfalls and pass through a few

pretty towns and villages, some with interesting museums, such as the textile museum in **Blönduós**. As you drive further west, you will see **Hvítserkur** rock rising from the sea like a prehistoric monster. See if you can spot the colonies of sea birds and seal breeding grounds there.

DAY 9: SEAL SPOTTING, HOME OF ERIK THE RED, AND PRETTY VILLAGES

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You might have seen some seals yesterday, but today is still a great day to see if you can spot some more! Start the day by visiting **Illugastaðir** in Húnaflói bay, and see if you can spot any seals from there. The seals inhabit the skerries near Illugastaðir all year round, and curious seals swim quite near to the shore. Carry on your drive and visit **Hvammstangi** village, where you can visit the Icelandic Seal Center. Next, you drive through **Hrútafjörður** fjord and take the mountain road Laxárdalsheiði to **Laxárdalur** valley, the site of one of the most impressive Icelandic Sagas, Laxdæla Saga. We recommend a stop at **Eiríksstaðir** Viking longhouse on your way where you can step back in time and experience the lifestyle of a 1000 years ago. End your day in **Stykkishólmur**, a beautiful town by the sea, where you can visit some of the village's lovely old houses and interesting museums, or in the lovely small town of **Grundarfjörður** and its beautiful surroundings, dominated by the mountain **Kirkjufell**.

DAY 10: THE SNÆFELLSNES PENINSULA TO REYKJAVÍK

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Today, you explore the **Snæfellsnes** peninsula. Leave **Grundarfjörður** to the west to drive around the peninsula, through several small very pretty towns by the sea. You might want to visit the local waterfall in **Ólafsvík** before continuing to the national park. Brace yourselves, as you are about to enter a place of (supposed) supernatural powers - **Snæfellsjökull** glacier and volcano, where Jules Verne based his novel "Journey to the Centre of the Earth". A view to the glacier dominates the park but it is only visible on relatively bright days. Highlights in the park include walks on **Djúpalónssandur** beach, known for its lava formations, pebble stones, and trial stones for strength. **Arnarstapi** and walks by the picturesque cliffs is another highlight, especially in the summer when the birdlife can be enjoyed simultaneously. Don't miss a walk to the mysterious black church located close to the yellow sand beach at **Búðir**. Carry on your drive and reach the friendly town of **Borgarnes**. Situated in the beautiful **Borgarfjörður** fjord, Borgarnes is home to the fantastic Settlement Center and many Saga sites. You can end your tour here, or carry on your drive to **Akranes**, or go under the sea, through the Hvalfjarðargöng tunnel, to **Reykjavík**.