

Itinerary - Iceland Ring Road Essentials - 7 Days

DAY 1: REYKJAVÍK TO THE NORTHWEST

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The first day of the tour takes you from Reykjavík to the northwest of Iceland. You pass through **Hvalfjörður** fjord, one of Iceland's largest and most picturesque fjords, where you could add a couple of hours to your trip and hike up to Iceland's highest waterfall, **Glymur**, at 198 m. You will spend most of your day enjoying the wonders of the **Borgarfjörður** area, such as **Deildartunguhver**, the most powerful natural hot spring in the world; **Grábrók** crater, which offers an easy and accessible hiking opportunity; and two beautiful waterfalls, **Hraunfossar** and **Barnafoss**, close to the road. Furthermore, you visit one of Iceland's most important historical sites, **Reykholt**, where the famous writer and political leader Snorri Sturluson (1179-1261), author of the Snorra-Edda, lived and was subsequently killed. You could then go swimming in the recreational area of **Húsafell** before carrying on your journey over the Holtavörðuhéið highland route where, on a clear day, there are good views towards several mountains and glaciers. Once in the northwest, there is a great chance of spotting seals and several species of birds.

DAY 2: FROM THE NORTHWEST TO THE CAPITAL OF THE NORTH, AKUREYRI

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Wake up in the peace and quiet of your accommodation in Northwest Iceland. If you didn't get a chance the day before, why not see if you can spot any seals by the coast? Once on the road, you will visit **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**. There is also a great thermal pool there. You also 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 have some beautiful views of the sea and coastline, and then drive through spectacular valleys before reaching **Eyjafjörður** fjord, one of the country's longest fjords and home to the "Capital of the North", **Akureyri**, with its many restaurants and cafés, and a fantastic thermal pool with many slides, and other activities.

DAY 3: THE NORTHEAST, INCLUDING WATERFALL OF THE GODS, AND LAKE MÝVATN

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Today is all about the forces of nature in Iceland. Leaving **Akureyri**, 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. Then continue your drive to **Lake Mývatn**, where you will be spoilt for choice when it comes to beautiful nature and its various forces. Mývatn and the surrounding area offers interesting geological phenomena such as **Skútustaðagígar** pseudo craters, **Steinagjá** lava caves, **Námaskarð** hot mud pots and steam springs, volcanoes, canyons, and much more. 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 why not end a long day by bathing in the outdoor lagoon at **Mývatn Nature Baths** before retiring to your accommodation?

DAY 4: FROM LAKE MÝVATN TO THE EASTFJORDS

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Are you ready for some whales, valleys, waterfalls, and fjords? Today, you drive to the town of **Húsavík**, where you can visit a whale museum and even go out to sea to (hopefully) spot the real thing! Remember to allow for at least three extra hours for the sail. From Húsavík, you drive to 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. Next, you drive to the most powerful waterfall in Europe, **Dettifoss**, dispatching 500 m³ of dark glacial water per second! Carry on your drive over the very impressive **Möðrudalsöræfi** passage, where you'll see a whole lot of "nothing" for a good while (trust us on this one - just go and see for yourself!). From here, you go down to **Egilsstaðir** town and enjoy views over the river **Lagarfljót** - see if you can spot the Lagarfljót monster. And don't forget **Hallormsstaður** forest. Yes, you read correctly. Forest in Iceland! End your day in the picturesque town and fjord of **Seyðisfjörður** or **Reyðarfjörður**. Remember to bring your own food and have a full tank as there is not much on the way down to the Eastfjords.

DAY 5: THE EASTFJORDS AND VATNAJÖKULL GLACIER

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East Iceland has an amazing number of fjords, large and small. Today takes you through several fjords and fishing villages along the coast, such as **Fáskrúðsfjörður**, **Stöðvarfjörður** and **Berufjörður** fjords. There are numerous nice hikes and bird-watching opportunities along the way, and from **Djúpivogur** village go see the Eggs of Merry Bay, one of the most unusual sculptures in Iceland. Before ending the day in the southeast of the country, there is a chance of experiencing astonishing views of the icy vastness of **Vatnajökull** glacier, 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), in the southern part of Vatnajökull. A quick visit to **Stokksnes** for a fantastic photo opportunity is worth the short drive.

DAY 6: GLACIER LAGOON AND THE SOUTH COAST

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Today, you drive along the south coast, with **Vatnajökull** glacier powering over you a large part of the way. You visit the fascinating glacier lagoon, **Jökulsárlón**, 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. From here, you drive to **Skaftafell National Park**, which is an excellent area for hiking, such as the 1.5-hour hike to the beautiful waterfall of **Svartifoss**, surrounded by basalt columns. From Skaftafell, you drive along a large black sand desert, formed by glacial rivers and glacial floods from one of the nearby glaciers. There are several more interesting geological phenomena along the way, such as the spectacular **Eldhraun** lava field, and by **Kirkjubæjarklaustur** is **Kirkjugólf**, a formation of basalt columns, thought to have been the floor of a medieval church. Kirkjubæjarklaustur also offers attractive and easy hiking opportunities. You end the day in the **Vík** area, with spectacular black sand beaches and views of the impressive cliffs of **Reynisdrangar**.

DAY 7: TOP ATTRACTIONS FROM VÍK TO REYKJAVÍK

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Today, you return to **Reykjavík**, but not before you've seen some of Iceland's most popular attractions. You start off by visiting one of the most beautiful waterfalls in Iceland, **Skógafoss**, with plenty of walking paths and nice views. The area also has a very interesting folk museum. Next up: another beautiful waterfall! This one is called **Seljalandsfoss** and you can walk behind it (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. From here, you drive through the geothermal village of **Flúðir** - where you can make a stop at the Secret Lagoon - on the way to the next beautiful waterfall, **Gullfoss** 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. Next up, it's 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 through the town of **Laugarvatn**, with a pretty lake bearing the same name, before reaching **Pingvellir 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 Pingvellir you can walk through parts of the ridge. Return to Reykjavík, where this tour ends.