

# ICELAND

Iceland is a land of surprises. A land of experiences. A land of adventure. Located in the North Atlantic Ocean, just outside the Arctic Circle, it boasts a dramatic landscape capped by active volcanos and fringed with rugged coastlines. For those who love the outdoors, it's got everything from spectacular views to specialist sports. Best of all, with the daylight in the summer lasting nearly all the way round the clock, you can really pack your days with thrills!

## How to get here

Getting to Iceland could not be easier. There are frequent flights from major UK airports. You can even take a cruise ship, if you like to travel in style. To find out more about holidays in Iceland, visit your local travel agent or search for Icelandic tourist information online.

Commissioned by The PiXL Club  
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Example 2017

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WHY FOLLOW THE CROWD? VISIT A  
COUNTRY THAT'S AS INDIVIDUAL AS  
YOU ARE.

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## Lava Island

Iceland is a force of nature. Shaped by hundreds of volcanos, including around 30 that are still active, it has giant glaciers, wonderful waterfalls, bizarre beaches of black sand and eerie fields of living lava. No wonder it has been called the land of fire and ice! Despite being so close to the Arctic, it has a mild climate in summer, where the cold winds of the north are calmed by the warmer waters of the Gulf Stream, flowing straight from the West Indies.

With mid-summer temperatures at around 13 degrees, you won't be going to sunbathe or top-up your tan. Even so, feel free to wallow in the naturally-warmed waters of Iceland's many geothermal (lava-heated) spas. Perhaps the best known and most spectacular is the Blue Lagoon – regarded by some as one of the wonders of the world. Here, you can bathe in mineral-rich sea water, kept at a steamy 37-39 degrees by volcanic action far beneath the ground.

## Active Island

There is so much to do in Iceland. The lively tourist has many ways to enjoy the unique, thrilling and largely unspoilt scenery. Naturally, there is plenty to challenge the serious cyclist, hiker or even rock-climber. Fancy something a bit different? Then why not try exploring some of the island's many caves and marvel at the stunning rock structures. On the other hand, you could try ice-climbing on one of the huge glaciers (rivers of solid ice). Just make sure you take a guide with you who really knows the area.

But this amazing country is not just about craggy landscapes: the surrounding seas have a lot to offer too. In the past, Iceland relied on the life-rich waters to provide food for its people, but now tourists are discovering its other treasures. Not only is there a wild and raw coastline of fjords (steep-sided, ice-carved inlets) and volcanic beaches, but also there is plenty to see for lovers of wildlife. This is a bird-spotter's paradise with vast, sheer cliffs that provide nesting sites for millions of seabirds such as puffins and razorbills. During the summer months, you can also take a boat out to enjoy close

encounters with some of the greatest creatures under the waves such as humpback, minke and blue whales.

## Chilling Out

After a hard day's exercise and excitement, relax in the warm company of Iceland's famously friendly folk. You could enjoy a meal out in one of the fine restaurants and enjoy unique local dishes, especially if you like sea food and are happy to try something different – dried fish or cured shark anyone? Or why not gather round a cosy fire and recount your day's epic adventures? You'd be carrying-on the age-old tradition of saga-telling that was brought to this land by the Vikings. To cap a perfect day, you might even be lucky enough to glimpse the stunning northern lights (also known as the aurora borealis) and marvel at the ghostly colours dancing across the sky.