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Northern Lights Trail

Weight limit: 95 kilos

Nearest airport: Reykjavik

4 days / 3 nights / 3 days riding



Visit a remote winter wonderland with a cosy hotel stay and the chance to witness the Northern Lights in the night sky. Spent three days riding the willing Icelandic horses on volcanic mountain slopes before relaxing in thermal swimming pools and watching the snow fall from the outdoor hot tub. The Icelandic winter is an incredibly special time to visit this region. This trail also includes a half day excursion by bus to take in the waterfalls, geysers and hot springs scattered across southern Iceland.

The Riding

Ride one of the friendly and willing Icelandic horses through snowy, mountain paths. Every rider gets the chance to try 2 or 3 different horses each day. This trail involves riding for around 4 hours per day. In Iceland you'll ride mostly in the tölt, a comfortable, smooth gait somewhere between trot and canter. Participants must be able to mount a (small) horse with little assistance and hard hats are mandatory.

Guides & Group sizes

You'll be accompanied by professional guides who will show you the ropes with the Icelandic horses and help you to get used to their special gait, tölt. There can be up to 20 riders in your group.



Horses and Tack

During this holiday you will be riding Icelandic horses. This native breed is known to be tough, robust and hardworking, ideal mounts for the challenging terrain and changing weather. The horses are home-bred and live in a large herd roaming vast expanses. All the horses are ridden in simple, Icelandic style tack. The saddles are built close to a dressage saddle, with a relatively flat seat. The riding style is very close to English riding, but stirrups are worn longer.

Accommodation & Dining

Accommodation during the trail is at a cosy countryside hotel in the south of Iceland, close to your host's farm. There are double, twin and family rooms available, all are spacious, warm and light-filled. There is an onsite restaurant and traditional hot tubs to relax in at the end of the day. The hotel was built in accordance with ecological guidelines and is the first lodging in Iceland to be awarded the Nordic Swan Ecolabel. All rooms are fitted with luxurious Hästens beds, offering unrivalled comfort and each room has a door to the garden, allowing you to step outside and observe the scenery and northern lights depending on the time of year.

Full board is included starting with dinner on arrival day and ending with lunch on the last riding day. Dinner is traditional Icelandic home cooking, stews and casseroles are common and ingredients are locally sourced with an emphasis on fresh produce. Lunch is either a picnic packed in your saddle bags or the cook meets the group. Allergies or special dietary requirements can be catered for with advance notice.



Itinerary

Day 1

You will be met by your hosts at the BSI bus station or at your hotel/ guesthouse in Reykjavik between 17:30- 18:00 and will transfer to the farm Vellir in Hveragerði. Get to know your fellow guests and hosts over dinner and finish the day with a briefing on the upcoming trail.

Day 2

After breakfast, head to the stables where you'll be met by your guide. Once everyone is happy riding in the paddock you'll head out for a four hour ride beside the meadows surrounding the farm, a good opportunity to get familiar with the special gait of the Icelandic horse, the tölt. Follow the river Gljúfurá, heading towards the volcanic mountains and enjoy spectacular views of the diverse landscape between the ocean and the volcano Hengill. Back at the farm, warm up with a light lunch before riding for another hour. After riding, head to the thermal swimming pool in Hveragerði where you can relax in the soothing, warm geothermal water, relax in the steam sauna or take a swim in the comfortably warm outdoor pool. Afterwards, coffee and home baked cake will be served at the hotel. If the forecast is favourable, and the sky is clear, look out for the lights at the farm or go on a hunt for the best viewing point for this natural phenomenon.

Day 3

Start the day riding on the trails along the slopes of Reykjafjall Mountain and along forested paths. You'll pass by many hot springs in the colourful geothermal area known as the Gufudalur valley. The route continues along the volcanic hills interspersed with wide plains. You'll stop close to the stables for some refreshments before riding back to the farm for lunch. After lunch we saddle our horses again for the afternoon ride; following the river Gljúfurá until you reach the mighty glacial river Ölfusá. From there, we have a view of the river and, if the weather allows, the famous Hekla and Eyjafjallajökull volcanoes. Upon your return to the farm, dinner will be served before more Northern Lights spotting.

Day 4

Today's ride takes you through meadows, lava fields and even across a small river. On the way, enjoy the scenery of volcanic mountains and farmland, passing several farms. After the ride, check out of your room and warm up with a light lunch and hot drink before being picked up to visit the three most impressive natural sights in South Iceland along the Golden Circle: the famous Geysir geothermal area, the golden waterfall of Gullfoss and Thingvellir National Park. The Geysir geothermal area boasts spouting springs, including Strokkur, the most active geyser in Iceland. At Gullfoss, stand next to the breathtaking waterfall, watching enormous quantities of water tumble violently into a deep canyon. You also spend time encountering a cross-section

of Iceland's natural wonders and geological phenomena at Thingvellir National Park, an area of historical and geological significance before returning to Reykjavík around 18:00.

This tour is dependent on weather and Northern Lights sightings are not guaranteed.



International flights & Airport transfers

Do not book flights until you have received the Booking confirmation email from saddletravel.com.

Please arrange to arrive at Reykjavik Airport on the first day by 15.30. You will be collected from the meeting point in Reykjavik at 17.30.

Please book your departure flights on the last day after 19.30 or add an extra night in Reykjavik.

What to bring

You will be provided with the following items: saddlebags, waterproofs, riding hat, reusable water bottle in Iceland. Any riding gear you are bringing needs to be dry-cleaned/disinfected prior to arrival as Icelandic horses are not vaccinated against any equine diseases present in other countries.

Please use the packing list as a guideline, bearing in mind the time of year you are riding.

- Riding boots that are also comfortable to walk in
- Warm jacket or overcoat.
- Warm (woollen or fleece) sweater
- Waterproof jacket
- Warm socks and gloves
- Riding trousers
- Tracksuit or casual, loose clothes
- Slippers to wear in the accommodation
- Swim suit
- Towel
- Camera
- Sunglasses

Climate

Icelandic weather is known to be unpredictable and changing several times a day. A beautiful day can suddenly turn windy and rainy (and vice versa). You might experience temperatures close to 0°C, please be prepared for anything and dress in layers.

Health

For health and vaccine recommendations, please consult your healthcare provider at least 8 weeks before your trip.

Country specific information can also be found at the National Travel Health Network and Centre website: <https://travelhealthpro.org.uk/countries>.

Travel documents

For entry requirements to Iceland for UK citizens, please visit the Foreign Travel Advice website: <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/iceland/entry-requirements>

For any other nationalities, please contact your local embassy to check entry requirements.

Having the correct travel documents is entirely your responsibility.



Currency & Tipping

We recommend bringing some local currency if staying in Reykjavik before or after the ride. No extra currency is needed while on the ride itself. Tipping is not expected.

Cancellation policy

Payment & Cancellation Terms - saddletravel.com

Holidays are confirmed with a 20% non-refundable deposit. The full balance is due 56 days before the start date.

If you cancel your booking less than 56 days before the start date of your trail we are entitled to receive full payment, less refunds as follows:

42 days or more before booking date - 50%

30 days or more - 30%

less than 30 days - nil

Insurance

All saddletravel.com customers are required to take out appropriate travel insurance that covers horse riding and holiday cancellation. Proof of insurance details will be required during the booking process.



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