



SADDLETRAVEL.COM

Iceland Fire & Ice Trail

Weight limit: 95 kilos

Nearest airport: Reykjavik

5 days / 4 nights / 4 days riding



Stay in a unique area of exceptional beauty with volcanic formations, green valleys and hot springs, riding on scenic routes in varied terrain. Participants stay at Hótel Eldhestar and ride in the area surrounding the farm. Discover the fast-flowing, glacial waters of the Ölfusá river and see the hot, geothermal streams of Reykjadalur. At the end of each day, you can enjoy a soak in the hot tub, a good dinner and comfortable accommodation.

The Riding

Ride one of the friendly and willing Icelandic horses in its natural environment, far from civilization. Every rider gets the chance to try 2 or 3 different horses each day. You'll be covering 70 km over the course of the 4 days with between 4-6 hours riding 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 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 natural herd roaming large meadow 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's interior is inspired by the colours and materials found in Icelandic nature, genuine craftsmanship and age-old traditions. It 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: Ölfusá River Delta

Your guide meets you after breakfast for a short introduction before you get to know the horses. The program starts with a practical riding demonstration, followed by a few rounds in the riding hall or paddock. You'll then ride out between the volcanic mountains and the Atlantic ocean in southern Iceland. The tour begins on wide riding trails alongside green meadows, which are ideal for trying the special gait of the Icelandic horse, tölt. The trail continues along the river Gljúfurá to an old cemetery close to the mighty glacial river Ölfusá, where you'll stop for a lunch break and enjoy the panoramic view of the river delta and the famous volcanos Hekla and Eyjafjallajökull, weather permitting. Follow a grassy path further down to the soft, black lava sand on the river banks and through shallow water to the green islands in the river delta. You'll ride on soft ground on the islands, across sand and water, spotting various kinds of birds living in the wetlands of the nearby bird sanctuary Ölfusforir and ending the ride on trails along meadows before relaxing with coffee and home-baked cake at the hotel. Afterwards, you have the possibility to soften up in the comfortably warm hot tubs at Hotel Eldhestar.

Day 3

Today offers spectacular views as you ride along the slopes of Reykjafjall mountain and continue on riding trails surrounding the small village Hveragerði. The path then takes you through green forests to a colourful geothermal valley with hot springs. On the way towards the green hills surrounding the volcano Hengill, you'll have an opportunity to try the "tölt", the special gait of the Icelandic horse. The horses then take you at a leisurely pace up into the valley Reykjadalur. You'll pass the beautiful waterfall Djúpagilsfoss and some hot springs before reaching the Reykjadalur valley where you can experience a relaxing dip in a geothermal stream. During the ride down into the valley, enjoy panoramic views over the surroundings, the village Hveragerði, picturesque farmland, all the way down to the coastline, where you might see the Westman Islands. Continue along the mountain slopes again back to the farm, where coffee and home-baked cake are waiting for you. Today's ride includes about 30 minutes of hiking (four short walks).

Day 4: Ingólfstrail

After breakfast and check-out you'll start the day riding through a small river, a lava field and along meadows. On the way you'll enjoy the fascinating scenery of volcanic mountains towering over green hills and pastures, riding between large fields with grazing horses on excellent paths that are ideal for a brisk tölt. After lunch, head towards the table mountain Ingólfssfjall where the landscape changes dramatically at the foot of the mountain, and you can take a break between huge rocks, soft pillows of green moss and even some grazing sheep. On the way back to the farm, you'll ride along the mountain Reykjafjall, where both sheep and horses graze in the summer, with views over the surrounding area and the village of Hveragerði.

Day 5

After breakfast and check-out we take the horses in the trailer to the small fishing town Thorlákshöfn, where we start the tour with a ride on the long, black beach. We follow the scenic beach along the surf of the North Atlantic for a few kilometres, riding on soft black lava sand until we reach the beautiful area where the mighty glacial river Ölfusá meets the sea in a large delta. We then continue through shallow water at the edge of the river delta and ride on grassy river banks and along wetlands and meadows towards the farmland in the Ölfús area, where our farm Vellir is located. On our way we have plenty of opportunities to try the smooth gait of the Icelandic horse "tölt" on nice trails in beautiful scenery which seems to be far from civilization and enjoy spectacular views of mountains and the volcanos Hekla and Eyjafjallajökull, weather permitting. We also have good chances to see the sea- and wetland birds of various kinds living in the Flói Bird Reserve between the ocean shore and the river. After riding the bus takes you back to Reykjavik at about 16:15.



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

We recommend wearing your riding boots when travelling and carrying one set of riding clothing and your helmet in your hand luggage, so should your luggage not make it to the destination you'll still be able to ride. You will be provided with the following items: saddlebags, waterproofs, reusable water bottle. Riding gear 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

Thanks to the Gulf Stream, temperatures are usually moderate all year round. Average temperatures in Reykjavík are about 12°C during the summer months. 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 even in summer as well as T-shirt weather, 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

Book with confidence – Covid Guarantee:

If a ride operator is closed/you are unable to travel – due to lockdown:

1/ The deposit is reissued as a rebooking voucher to rebook anytime.

2/ Any balance payment will be refunded to you in full within 1 week of departure date.

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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