



SADDLETRAVEL.COM

Kjölur Trail

Weight limit: 110kg / 17,3 stone

Nearest airport: Reykjavik Keflavik

7 days / 6 nights / 6 days riding

The Kjölur route is an ancient riding trail crossing Iceland's uninhabited highland, intimately associated with many dramatic events in Icelandic history. Visit the popular attractions of Gullfoss waterfall and Geysir hot springs before heading to the interior of Iceland, passing glaciers, hot springs and the fascinating wilderness of the highlands. Ride North between glaciers and spend a night close to a creeping glacier tongue. Hot springs await you at Hveravellir, like an oasis in the desert. Continue towards Northern Iceland reaching one of its many green and beautiful valleys, your final destination.



The Riding

Ride with a free running herd of horses and experience the diversity of the Icelandic horse in its natural environment, far from civilization, and how Icelanders travelled in the old days with a herd of free-running horses. Every rider gets the chance to try 2 or 3 different horses each day.

This trail is for experienced riders with several years of experience in riding regularly on all

kinds of terrain. You'll ride up to 45 km, 4-9 hours per day mostly in the gait tölt with a herd of free-running horses, which requires a certain speed. Participants must be able to mount a horse with little assistance.

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 & Tack

During this holiday you will be riding Icelandic horses. The native breed to Iceland is known to be tough, robust and hardworking, ideal steeds for the challenging terrain and changing weather. The horses are home-bred and live in a natural herd roaming large meadow expanses. Every guest will ride 2-3 different horses each day which develops riding skills. 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 and dining

Accommodation during the trail is at farms, guesthouses, community centres and simple mountain huts in a sleeping bag. Some mountain huts in the highlands only have cold water and no showers.

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. Lunch is either packed in saddle bags or the cook meets the group.

Allergies or special dietary requirements can be catered for with advance notice.

Luggage will be transferred by car between the overnight stops. Please pack light and bring only one piece of luggage.



Itinerary

Every other tour goes in the opposite direction.

Day 1: Arrival

Arrive at Keflavik International Airport and take the Flybus to BSI main bus station. You'll be greeted at the bus station or at your hotel/ guesthouse in Reykjavik and driven to Vellir farm near Hveragerði where you'll be lodged at a guesthouse. The group will get to know each other over dinner. The day will end with a detailed description of the tour.

Day 2: Hveragerdi – Myrkholt

Start the day with a detailed introduction and get to know the horses during a short ride. After lunch, go by car to the beautiful area of Biskupstúngur. Ride on soft paths and cross a river. End the day at the farm Myrkholt, close to the hot springs at Geysir. Riding time and

distance: 20 km, 4 hrs

Day 3: Myrkholt – Fremstaver

Riding from Myrkholt, with the first stop at Gullfoss. From Gullfoss, ride into the wilderness, a black desert of stones and sand. Follow river Hvítá to the West reaching Mt. Bláfell, 1160 m above sea level, with a beautiful view over the southern part of the Kjölur route. Weather permitting, see three glaciers, the famous Eyjafjallajökull, Hofsjökull and Iceland's second largest glacier Langjökull, as well as the volcano Hekla and Mt. Hlödufell. Spend the night south of Bláfell in a mountain hut.

Riding time and distance: 27 km, 5-6 hrs

Day 4: Fremstaver – Árbúdir

Continue east along Mt. Bláfell and cross the Hvítá River on a bridge and pass Ábóta waterefall, where the ancient Kjölur highland route starts. Kjölur is the oldest road between South and North Iceland, it is mostly even and on average about 700 m above sea level. On your way, enjoy panoramic views over the Langjökull and Hofsjökull glaciers and the picturesque Kerlingarfjöll mountains. Follow the Svartá River to a mountain hut and spend the night.

Riding time and distance: 30 km, 6-7 hrs.

Day 5: Árbúdir – Hveravellir

The day starts with the ride toward Hvítárnes, a grass-rich area changing its character in the summer when the green flower Fífa turns white and fluffy. Reach the Kjalhraun lava field, which looks like the keel of a ship. Ride west of Kjalhraun through a narrow cleft to the circular Thjófadalur valley (the Valley of Thieves), hidden behind the mountains. It is one of the few places along Kjölur that is rich with grass. Ride over a little mountain comb called Thröskuldur and follow a smooth path to Hveravellir where you can enjoy a relaxing bath in the hot springs.

Riding time and distance: 45 km, 8 hrs.

Day 6: Hveravellir – Áfangi

Before saddling up the horses, explore the beautiful nature surrounding Hveravellir, one of the biggest geothermal areas in Iceland. There was an outlaw hideout here in the old days and your trail passes the ruin of the hut of the outlaw Fjalla-Eyvindur. Continue north over the river Seydisá and along the mountains Sandkúlufell, Hanskafell and Saudafell, and spend the night in a mountain hut called Áfangi.

Riding time and distance: 32 km, 6-7 hrs.

Day 7: Áfangi – Vatnsdalur – Reykjavik

Head over the Eyvindarstadaheidi Moor, very far from civilization in North Iceland. Ride with the mountains behind and glaciers all around you. Pass the big lake of Blöndulón which was created when building the hydroelectric power plant by the Blanda River. Continue on soft riding paths and mountain roads and end the tour in the green valley of Vatnsdalur. From here you'll return to Reykjavik by bus.

Riding time and distance: 28 km, 5-6 hrs.



The price includes

- 6 full days of riding
- English speaking guide
- Shared accommodation
- Breakfasts
- Lunches
- Evening meals
- Transfers to/from Reykjavik
- Raingear
- Helmets

Not Included

- Flights
- Transfers from airport to Reykjavik and back
- Tips

International flights & Transfers

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

Please plan your flights to/from Reykjavik as follows:

Arrive at Reykjavik by 15:00 on Day 1 of your holiday.

Departure flight on Day 7 any time after 21:00. It might be easier for you to stay overnight in Reykjavik and fly home the day after your holiday ends.

For transportation from the airport to Reykjavík (BSI main bus station, hotels or guesthouses) please take the Flybus (operated by Reykjavik Excursions). This service is NOT included in the price.

Participants will be picked up at BSI main bus station in Reykjavík at 17:30-18:00. Guests arriving earlier can be picked-up from guesthouses or hotels in Reykjavik.



What to bring

We recommend wearing your riding boots when travelling and carrying one set of riding clothing in your hand luggage, so should your luggage not make it to the destination you'll still be able to ride.

Please do not use large and bulky suitcases and bring only one piece of luggage with you as there is a limited amount of space in the trailer. If you need more luggage for travelling in Iceland before / after the tour you are welcome to store it at the base during the trail. Raingear and hard hats are provided.

- Comfortable riding trousers
- Riding or hiking boots with a thick sole for walking over rocks. Hiking boots are fine if they are not too broad for the stirrups. High riding boots might get uncomfortable, rubber boots are unsuitable.
- Chaps
- Riding gloves
- Wind & waterproof coat (good rain gear is provided at your destination) •
- Thin hat & buff to wear under your helmet and to cover your neck •
- Bumbag

- Long thermal underwear
- Woollen socks
- Warm layers such as woollen jumper or fleece
- Sleeping bag & small travel pillow (bring a flat sheet if you use your sleeping bag as a duvet)
- Flynet (can be purchased at your destination)
- Comfortable clothing for evenings
- Light weight shoes to wear after riding
- Sun cream & lip balm
- Sunglasses – these are a must to protect your eyes from the sun and dust. We recommend wrap-around sunglasses that hug your face
- Swimming costume & towel
- Camera + spare batteries
- Power bank
- Plug adapter
- Insect repellent & bite cream
- Personal medication

Please note: Used boots, riding wear etc. must be disinfected before arrival in Iceland. This is because infectious diseases can easily be brought into the country, which poses a great danger for the horses. Riding wear is normally washed, and shoes, helmets and body protectors are cleaned with iodine or some other fluid disinfectant. **Used riding gloves and all used leather articles (e.g. chaps) are prohibited.**

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 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

The local currency in Iceland is the Icelandic króna (ISK). However, paying with cash is uncommon and the preferred paying method is usually by credit or debit card.

Tipping your guide is at your discretion.

Riding declaration

"I am prepared for long hours in the saddle at fast pace and over all kinds of terrain. I'm able to mount and dismount with little assistance. I do not suffer from any illness or disability that could prejudice my safety or that of others."



Booking conditions

You are booking with the riding holiday operator, these are their booking conditions:

- All complaints must reach Eldhestar within 5 days from departure from Iceland. Otherwise possible compensation is not valid.
- Eldhestar reserves the right to alter tours and itineraries due to weather or road conditions. All programs can be changed or cancelled at any moment during the trip to assure the safety of the clients and staff of Eldhestar and other business partners in case of combo tours.
- No responsibility is accepted for losses, expenses due to delays, changes of flights, or other services or because of strikes, accidents, sickness, damage, negligence, weather, war, changes in schedules, or other similar causes.
- Eldhestar and other partners in case of combo tours do not assume responsibility for

accidents or death that can be traced to the participant's negligence, acts of third parties or exterior circumstances such as weather, natural occurrences, war or other similar causes.

Cancellation policy

Payment & Cancellation Terms
saddletravel.com

Holidays are confirmed with 20% non-refundable deposit.

The full balance is due 56 days before 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%
28 days or more - 30%
less than 28 days - nil

Travel 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 booking process.

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