

# WILD PHOTOGRAPHY HOLIDAYS



## ICELAND HIGHLANDS WATERFALLS AND CANYONS PHOTOGRAPHY EXPEDITION

### HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDE

- Sensational journey into some of Europe's last wilderness areas
- Areas seldom visited by other photographic tours
- Spectacular waterfalls: Gullfoss, Aldeyjarfoss, Dettifoss, Selfoss & Goðafoss
- Vast water filled crater of Askja
- Exciting locations for sunrises and sunsets
- Colourful geothermal & volcanic phenomena of Mývatn
- Kerlingarfjöll, the 'Ogress Mountains'
- Hveravellir
- Ásbyrgi and the Jökulsárgljúfur Canyon
- The Golden Circle
- Flight across Iceland

### GENERAL SUMMARY

Introducing a breathtaking expedition that will include the remote, vast and uninhabited interior of Iceland. This is a remarkable place for landscape photography. The expedition will give us access to areas that are beyond the normal scope of visitors, an untouched wilderness, awesome waterfalls, volcanic landscapes, national parks, impressive canyons and wild geothermal areas. This is a remarkable opportunity for serious landscape photographers who are prepared to put in that 'extra mile' for their images. As always, our expedition allows a certain amount of flexibility. We are always prepared to change our plans to make the maximum use of the prevailing light and weather.

### DAILY ITINERARY

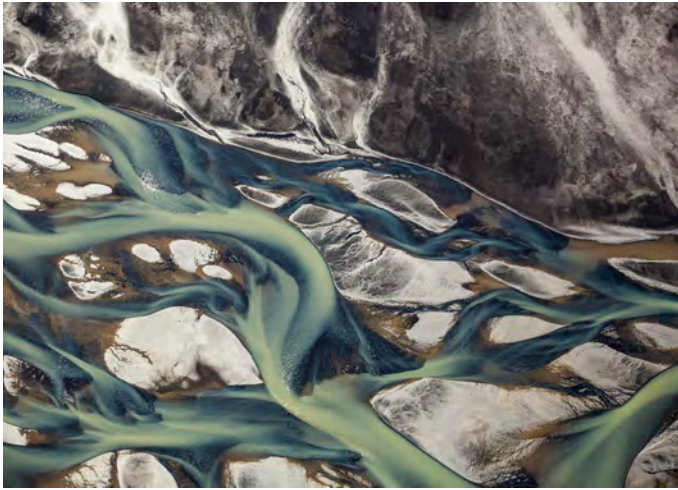
#### Day 1: Arrive Reykjavík

Transfer from Iceland's international airport to our city centre hotel. We meet at 19:00 for introductions and a trip briefing before heading out for dinner together.

Accommodation: City Hotel

#### Day 2: Reykjavík – Golden Circle – Kerlingarfjöll

Leaving Reykjavík we head North West towards the national park of Þingvellir, Geysir and the magnificent waterfall of Gullfoss. This is the first of our 'big six' and is right of the edge of Iceland's interior highlands. The huge volume of water has its origins in the glacier Langjökull. Leaving Gullfoss we are truly in the wilds as we head



along the famous Kjölur highland route to our first location Kerlingarfjöll. Our accommodation here is simple bunk beds and facilities are shared. It will be warm and cozy inside as the location is one of Iceland's premier geothermal areas, hot water is used for heating. Our meals will be taken in the restaurant.

Accommodation: Mountain Chalet

### Day 3: Around Kerlingarfjöll and Hveradalir

Today we photograph the geothermal area around Kerlingarfjöll; this is where ice and fire meets. We will take the 3 km marked trail through Hveradalir where we encounter steaming pools, colourful earth and exploding blue/grey mud pools. The mountain massif of Kerlingarfjöll, the Ogress' Mountains; 800–1500 m are dominant in the chain of mountains and glaciers framing the Kjölur area. The mountain massif contains one of the largest high temperature areas of the country. There is a lovely hot tub to relax in close to our accommodation.

Accommodation: Mountain Chalet

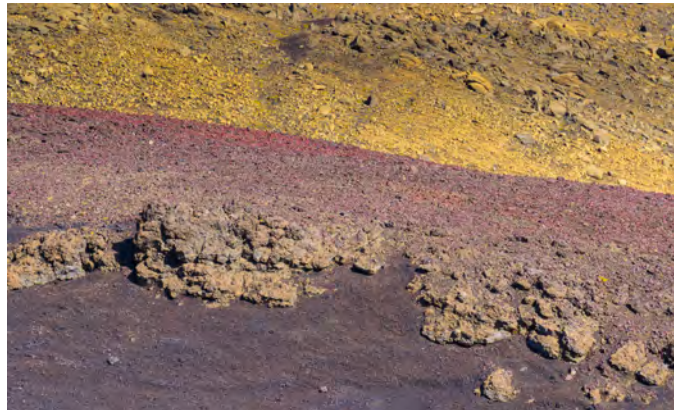
### Day 4: To Goðafoss

Continuing along the Kjölur Highland Route we arrive at Hveravellir a unique nature reserve situated in the middle of the west highlands between the glaciers Langjökull and Hofsjökull. There are beautifully shaped smoking fumaroles and sky blue, boiling water. A bathe in the pools here is definitely recommended. After lunch we continue North until we join Iceland's ring road which will take us through Iceland's northern Capital and from here it is a short distance to the beautiful waterfall Goðafoss. Our hotel is just 500m from the main falls and we are perfectly situated for some great shots at both sunset and sunrise.

Accommodation: Country Hotel

### Day 5: Herðubreiðarlindir and Askja

After photographing Goðafoss at sunrise, we enjoy a good breakfast before packing and setting off on our journey away from civilisation and into the interior. We cross the vast Ódáðahraun. The day is spent travelling with plenty of photographic stops on the way. Our vehicles usually encounter three or four interesting river crossings before lunch. The whole area lies in the rain shadow of the ice-



cap glacier Vatnajökull so precipitation is minimal. We will probably have lunch beneath the unusually shaped Herðubreið, the sixth highest peak in Iceland (1677 m) known as the "Queen of Icelandic Mountains"; its top looks like a crown. Here we will find ourselves in a small oasis of greenery surrounded by one of the largest lava flows in the world. The area around Herðubreið was declared a protected area in 1974. The banks of the river and the Grafarlönd area are rich in diverse vegetation contrasting beautifully with the rich earthy colours of the interior desert. We continue our drive across the Ódáðahraun to the mountain massif Dyngjufjöll. Its highest point is Mount Þorvaldsfjall (1510 m), rising to the south above the strikingly blue water of Öskjuvatn. Water filled the caldera that remained following the eruption of Askja in 1875. We are based close to the interesting and forboding canyon, Drekagil, the Canyon of Dragons. It is just a short drive through fairly recent lava fields to Askja. Our accommodation is a modern, warm mountain chalet with alpine style bunks and shared facilities. Our meals for the

two days that we stay here will be prepared and cooked by the guides.

Accommodation: Mountain Chalet

### **Day 6: Askja**

We will spend the whole day exploring the area around Öskjuvatn. When the lake originally formed it was warm, but today it is frozen over for most of the year. Öskjuvatn, 220 m deep, is one of the deepest lakes in Iceland. Víti is a smaller explosion crater on the northeast shore of Öskjuvatn. It contains a geothermal lake of mineral-rich, sulphurous, opaque, milky blue water. It is often a comfortable temperature for swimming. The colours are superb. There are remarkable vistas from the various ridges of the caldera and it is common to see good examples of obsidian, a naturally occurring black volcanic glass formed as an extrusive igneous rock. The area is absorbing photographically and we will spend the whole day here.

Accommodation: Mountain Chalet

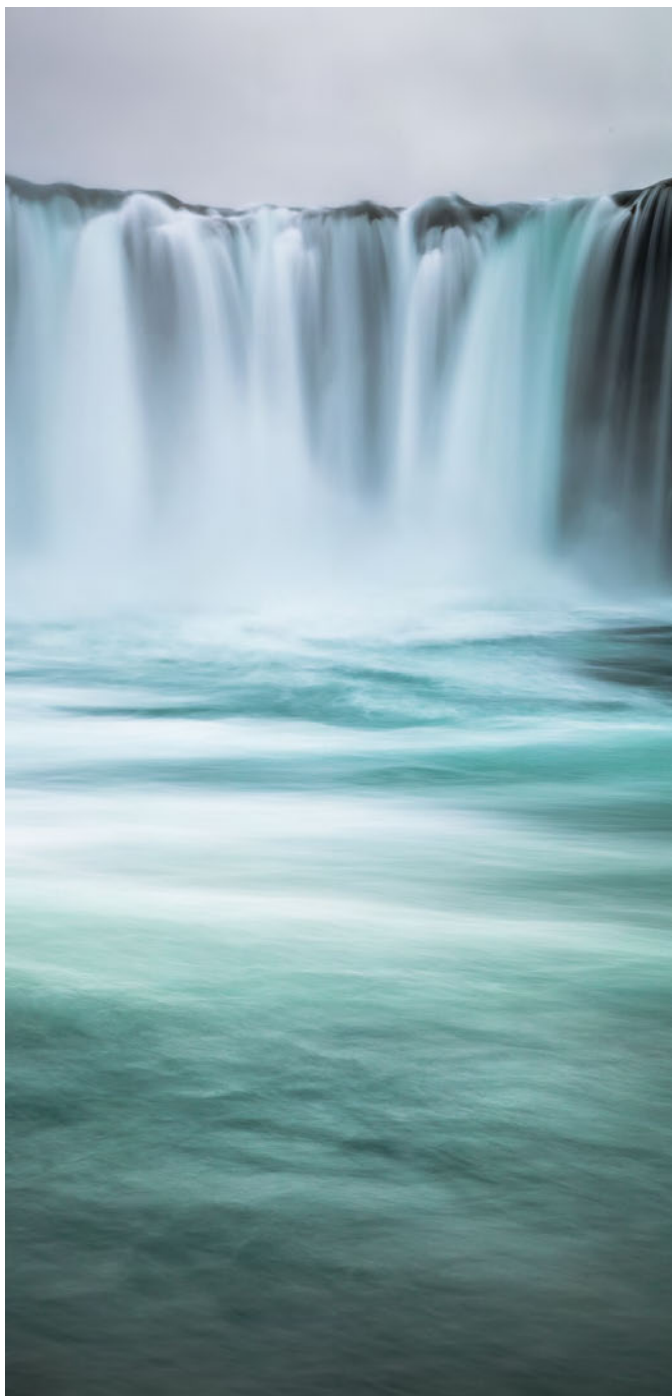
### **Day 7: Return to Mývatn**

Today we travel back to Mývatn with plenty of photographic opportunities en route. Time permitting we'll take a detour to the remote waterfall of Hafragilsfoss in the national park of Jökulsárgljúfur. We should arrive at our hotel early evening. For those of you requiring a little rest and relaxation there is the option of visiting the deliciously warm geothermal lagoon of Mývatn's nature baths.

Accommodation: Hotel Lake Mývatn

### **Day 8: Lake Mývatn and surroundings**

Today we will explore the wildly contrasting area around Lake Mývatn. This area is world famous for its geothermal



activity and lies bang on the boundary of the North American and the Eurasian tectonic plates. The plates move apart at a rate of about two centimetres a year. Volcanic lava wells up between them and fills up the rift. The volcanic activity in the area is considerable. Mývatn's surroundings are varied in landscape and amazing geological formations – we will have a busy time fitting them all in! It is likely that we will visit the Mount Krafla area with lava fields, a startling blue crater lake Víti and steaming fissures. The bubbling geothermal area of Námaskarð, black lava pillars and arches at Dimmuborgir and the weird black ash crater of Hverfjall. The whole area is a kaleidoscope of unbelievable colour and textures. The lake itself home to a remarkably diverse number of waterfowl.

Accommodation: Hotel Lake Mývatn

### **Day 9: Aldeyjarfoss**

About hours drive from Mývatn on the Sprengisandur we will encounter one of Iceland's most impressive and least photographed waterfalls, Aldeyjarfoss. Few photographers venture here. The location is quite simply stunning. By Iceland standards this is not a high fall but it is very shapely and there are many different viewpoints that we can use. The waterfall originates from Vatnajökull, Europe's largest icecap. The river passes through the Highlands and plummets into a shapely amphitheatre of basalt columns before flowing down into a steep sided canyon. Weather permitting we will spend the day here before driving back to Mývatn.

Accommodation: Hotel Lake Mývatn



### Day 10: Dettifoss & Selfoss

Today will take in two outstanding and totally different waterfalls in the national park of Jökulsárgljúfur. Our waterfalls plummet into the canyon, which is rather like a miniature replica of the Grand Canyon in Arizona. The west banks of Dettifoss and Selfoss are easily reached by well-marked trails and there are several interesting vantage points where we can photograph from. The waterfall Dettifoss was used in the dramatic opening scene of the film Prometheus. Rainbows in the spray of the falls are a common and beautiful sight. We continue along the west bank of the canyon to Ásbyrgi, a gigantic, horseshoe-shaped rock formation at the end of the Jökulsárgljúfur. Our hotel is just 10 minutes drive from here.

Accommodation: Country Hotel

### Day 11: Húsavík to Reykjavík

Today we are well placed to explore the incredible rock formations in the canyon. Hljóðaklettur translated loosely as the 'Whispering Rock' is the most famous in a series of amorphous basalt rock formations along the Jökulsá Canyon floor. There are several well marked trails that give us

some excellent vantage points for this unique location. Late afternoon we travel to Húsavík for our evening flight to Reykjavík.

Accommodation: City Hotel

### Day 12: Airport Transfer

We take an early morning transfer from our hotel to Keflavík International airport for homeward flights.

### JOINING ARRANGEMENTS AND TRANSFERS

Further joining information will be sent out to participants approximately 2 weeks before the start of the trip. The expedition officially starts on Day 1 with a transfer from Keflavík International Airport to the first night hotel in Reykjavík. Participants should aim to arrive in the afternoon of Day 1. On day 12 there will be a transfer to Keflavík International Airport for homeward flights which can be scheduled for anytime during this day.

### WHAT'S INCLUDED

- 7 hotel nights
- 4 mountain chalet nights.
- All meals except dinner on Day 12



- All transfers
- All transport
- Reykjavík to Húsavík flight
- Photographic tutors/guides

### NOT INCLUDED

- International flights
- Alcoholic beverages
- Extra hot beverages and soft drinks
- Travel insurance

### ACCOMMODATION

We will be using a variety of accommodation. In Reykjavík we will stay in a 3 star hotel close to the city centre. Outside Reykjavík we will stay for 3 nights in a scenically located hotel close to Lake Mývatn, 1 night in a hotel by Goðafoss, 1 night in a simple hotel near Ásbyrgi. All hotels have twin or single rooms with private bathroom facilities. In the interior highlands we stay for 4 nights in warm mountain chalets with shared facilities. For the mountain chalets you will need to bring a summer season sleeping bag. The single supplement is only for the hotel nights.

## FOOD

We eat well. In 'civilisation' we will eat in local or hotel restaurants. In Askja meals will be cooked by ourselves.

## ALCOHOL

This is rather expensive in Iceland; it might be worth considering bringing a bottle of your favourite 'tipple' especially to drink in the remote areas! we will make sure that we call at the local Vínbúð (off license) en route from the city. All the restaurants that we eat in serve alcohol.

## SPENDING MONEY

Since the crisis of October 2008 the Icelandic Króna has devalued dramatically against all currencies meaning that foreign tourists will get more for their money. At the moment it is difficult to get ISK before arriving, this can be done easily at the airport ATM machine on arrival. Credit cards are accepted in all places except the Askja Mountain Chalet

## PASSPORT AND VISA REQUIREMENTS

A passport valid for at least three months beyond length of stay required by all except nationals of Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain and Sweden who are only required to produce national identity cards issued by the competent authorities in their countries of origin.

Visas are not required but a return ticket will need to be shown by those with Australian, Canadian and USA nationals.



## LANGUAGE

Icelanders speak Icelandic; they also tend to speak rather good English.

## CLIMATE

Iceland's climate is tempered by the Gulf Stream. Summers are mild and winters rather cold, the weather is very changeable at all times of the year, in Reykjavík there may be rain, sunshine, drizzle and snow all in the same day. Mývatn and the interior is in the rain shadow of the Vatnajökull and tends to be dry although it can snow or rain and occasionally be windy. Most importantly for us, the lack of pollution means that the clarity of the light is often exceptional with phenomenal 'big skies' and really atmospheric cloud patterns.

## CLOTHING SUGGESTIONS

As we will often be standing around in one location it's important to have some warm clothes. The best solution to temperature control is to have a number of layers available from lightweight thermal underwear through mid-layer insulation to a windproof jacket. A warm down jacket is great for standing around. For the lower body choose a pair of warm trousers. There are numerous makes and types of warm trousers to choose from, just ensure that the cut is generous to allow freedom of movement. We will frequently be walking in snow and on ice so good quality warm walking boots are recommended.

## CLOTHING

If you have any questions feel free to contact us at any time before the trip:

- Pair warm trousers, fleece lined are great

- Thermal tops e.g. 'smartwool' (base layer)
- Thermal leggings e.g. 'smartwool' (base layer)
- Light fleece/wool jumper
- Duvet jacket, down or synthetic
- Waterproof jacket
- Waterproof trousers
- Quality warm walking socks
- Leather/waterproof walking boots
- Warm hat
- Fleece neck-warmer
- Light warm gloves
- Warm windproof over-mittens
- Casual clothes for hotel wear
- Sun cream, sunglasses
- Head torch
- Basic first aid items
- Summer weight sleeping bag
- Swimwear and towel

#### PHOTOGRAPHIC EQUIPMENT/INFORMATION

- Camera bag or backpack such as the Flipside or Trekker series designed by Lowepro.
- Any extra equipment that doesn't fit in your camera bag/hand luggage will need to go in a hard case that can be put in the aircraft hold.
- Spare camera (optional)
- Sturdy tripod – not only useful for low light photography but also for accurate framing and composition of landscape and close-up images.
- Cable release – mechanical or electronic remote to avoid shake on long exposures.
- Neutral density, graduated filters and polariser, if you use these.

- Lens cloth
- Sensor cleaning device
- Lightweight 'trekking' absorbent towel for drying cameras and equipment
- Camera rain cover for camera and camera bag.
- Sufficient memory cards for the whole holiday as it may not be possible to buy more during the trip.
- Film users should bring enough film, as it may not be possible to buy in many places.
- A laptop with the image editing applications of your choice, essential for checking and presenting images during the trip and for one-on-one sessions with the tutor. The remote mountain chalets have no Wi-Fi.
- Backup storage device (optional)
- Spare batteries and chargers
- All the electrical sockets are European two-pin, so you might need a travel plug adapter.

#### MAPS AND BOOKS

Iceland maps can be bought at [Ferdakort](#)

Maps are also for sale in the local shops/garages. Small maps for around 400 ISK are available locally in the different areas we visit.

**Flowering Plants and Ferns of Iceland**, *Hörður Kristínsson*  
ISBN 9979-3-1723-X

This is the definitive guide to almost all the plant life in Iceland. It is in English and can be ordered from Amazon. This book is popular and often out of stock here in Iceland.

**Icelandic Bird Guide**, *Jóhann Óli Hilmarsson* is also in English and available from Amazon.

#### BOOKING THIS HOLIDAY

Fill in the [online booking form](#), or give us a call on +44 (0)1630 647828.

#### PARTNERS

Non-photographer partners will be very welcome although this primarily a photography holiday we also visit some very beautiful and relaxing places. If any participants do not wish to join the photographic sessions they will be able to relax in and around the accommodation. The cost will be the same for photographers and non-photographers.

#### OUTDOOR TRAVEL

This is an outdoor travel holiday and the itinerary is dependent on the weather, local conditions and other variables. Wild Photography Holidays may use their discretion to change the itinerary should conditions dictate this; your health, safety and enjoyment will always be our primary concern when making such changes.

#### MORE INFORMATION

We hope that this information has answered some of your questions about the holiday; it doesn't hope to answer everything. If you have any questions please get in touch.

#### LINKS

View [images and information for this tour](#) on the website. Read about our [approach to teaching photography](#)