

# WILD PHOTOGRAPHY HOLIDAYS



## ICELAND IN WINTER

### EASTERN FJORDS, AURORA AND BLUE ICE TOUR

#### HIGHLIGHTS

- Glacial lagoons and icebergs
- Remote wild locations
- Vestrahorn and Stokksnes
- Fjords of East Iceland
- Frozen waterfalls
- Aurora Borealis
- Abandoned farmhouses
- Long haired Icelandic sheep
- Icelandic horses in snowy landscapes
- Dramatic coastal mountains
- Black ice-strewn beaches
- Vatnajökull Europe's largest glacier
- Lovely well-located accommodation

#### INTRODUCTION

Our new winter photographic tour combines an exploration of some of Iceland's little visited locations in Iceland's eastern fjords with some of the iconic southern gems that are quite rightly famous. We start out with a flight from Reykjavík over the vast Vatnajökull Glacier to East Iceland where we will meet all participants at Egilsstaðir airport. The Eastern fjords are a relatively undiscovered, they are particularly magnificent in the wintertime. In total we spend four nights amidst the dramatic snow covered basalt mountains that drop abruptly down into the eastern fjords. Our first accommodation is Seyðisfjörður, the 'artists village' where we will stay amongst the colourful wooden houses the iconic feature of this village. From this location we will photograph

frozen waterfalls, black sand beaches, abandoned farmhouses set against a back drop of snow covered rocky peaks. The low winter light on the fjord is ever shifting and occasionally snow storms will pass through allowing us to create some exciting 'blizzard' enhanced images. Moving further north over a high mountain pass we spend two nights in the tiny picturesque village of Bakkagerði, delightfully located looking out over the bay where Harlequin Ducks winter. The village is a fabulous spot for the aurora as it faces into the vast northern sky. Travelling south along the edge of the eastern fjords we spend a whole day with lots of varied stops en route for photography. We arrive early evening at our accommodation on the south East tip of Iceland close to the world class location Vestrahorn on the Stokksnes Peninsula, a



wonderful place to photograph the aurora over the striking rocky spires with reflections in the wet black sand. Our last base is on the southern coast of Iceland just ten minutes drive from the Glacier Lagoon and the Diamond Beach. The Jökulsárlón glacier lagoon and its glacial surroundings are a dream location for photographers due to the sheer diversity of subjects.

#### WHO IS THIS TOUR SUITABLE FOR

This tour would be perfect for photographers new to Iceland as a photographic venue or indeed photographers who have travelled to Iceland previously to more known locations and wish to explore some off-the-beaten-track locations together with some of the classic south east locations. Maybe some folks just have a need to get back to Iceland, we understand this only too well! This tour can easily be combined with our North Iceland photography tour which runs directly before this. Our tutors are happy to work with photographers who wish to develop their iPhone skills, our gallery indicates images that were taken with iPhones. The tuition generally will be

suitable for photographers at all levels although we do recommend that participants familiarise themselves with the settings of their own cameras before joining us.

#### DAILY ITINERARY

##### Day 1: Arrive in Reykjavik

There will be an included Flybus transfer from the international airport to our first night hotel in Reykjavík. The hotel is included in the price of the holiday although dinner will not be. Our photographic guides and tutors will meet you for the first time on Day 2 at Egilsstaðir Airport.

Reykjavík City Hotel

##### Days 2,3: To Seyðisfjörður the Artists' Village

This morning there will be an included group taxi transfer from the hotel to Reykjavík's domestic airport in time to catch the 7.30 am flight to Egilsstaðir, this is one of East Iceland's larger towns with a population of around only 23,000 people. We will be waiting to transfer you to our accommodation. It is approximately a fifty minutes drive to the village of Seyðisfjörður. We will have a brief



introductory meeting and maybe a coffee at the airport before heading over to Seyðisfjörður. On route we will stop high above the village at a sunrise viewpoint down the valley to the Fjord below. The film 'Secret Life of Walter Mitty' has a famous scene where Ben Stiller long-boards through lovely wild landscape down the mountain road right into the village, this is that place although in its winter attire the vistas are more dramatic. The small town's centre is known for its many original early 19th-century timber houses and the picturesque setting around the lagoon. Our accommodation is authentic and beautifully renovated. Locations around Seyðisfjörður include a variety of lovely and accessible frozen waterfalls, sheer sided snow covered basalt peaks dropping down to the fjord, abandoned farmhouses, and 'sheep-houses'. The residents, Icelandic long haired sheep roam along the edge of the fjord. We will stay here for 2 nights.

Aldan Hotel Seyðisfjörður (B,L,D)





#### **Days 4,5: Bakkagerði**

This morning after breakfast we head further north to our first photographic location on a dramatic snowy pass close to the imposing Dyrfjöll Mountains. Shifting light over these vast coastal mountains will provide an ever-changing landscape for photographers. Dropping dramatically downwards towards the sea we eventually arrive in Bakkagerði our base for the next two nights. This is one of Iceland's most attractive coastal villages although during the winter months visitors will be few. We stay in beautifully positioned accommodation that has some lovely hot tubs overlooking the bay. Our photographic locations are diverse. There are many unusually shaped

mountains providing a superb back drop to our landscapes, rafts of Harlequin duck often float close to the shore and an interesting ice choked estuary winds its way to the open sea. We will also be able to wander around the harbour, small fishing vessels often land bring in good catches of fish, especially Cod. Bakkagerði is stronghold of elves and the 'Hidden People', the 'Elf' mountain Álfabjörg in the village provides a great all round viewpoint. Blábjörg Spa Guest House (B,L,D)

#### **DAY 6: COASTAL FJORD DRIVE TO VESTRAHORN**

Today we travel south along the edge of the eastern fjords. Our day will be productive with lots of varied

stops en route for photography. We will arrive early evening at our accommodation on the southeast tip of Iceland close to the world class location of Vestrahorn on the Stokksnes Peninsula. The dramatic peaks of this spiky mountain rise directly from a wild beach of black sand filled with undulating sand dunes and coastal vegetation providing a stark contrast to the snow covered peaks. This is a wonderful place to photograph the aurora arching over the striking rocky spires with colourful reflections in the wet black sand. This location is also a great spot to photograph the Milky Way.

Höfn Hotel (B,L,D)

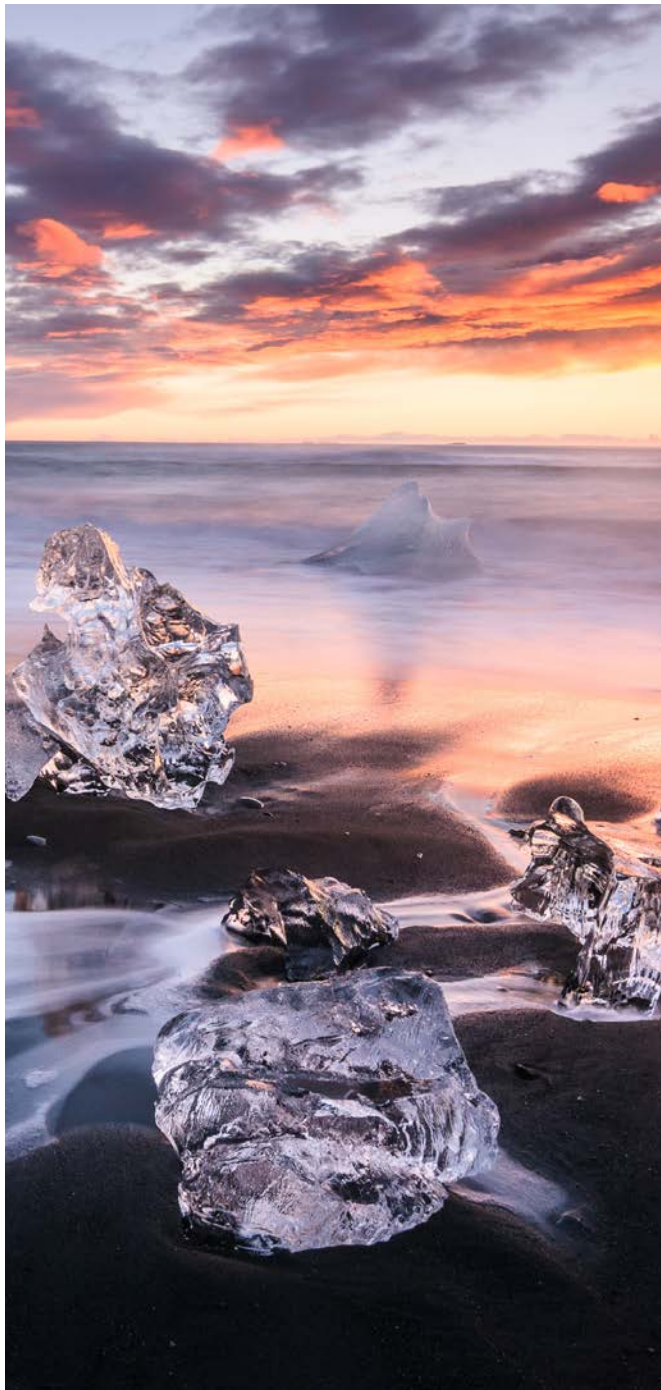
## DAYS 7,8: TO THE GLACIER LAGOON & DIAMOND BEACH

Following a sunrise shoot of Vestrahorn and breakfast we drive for around one hour to our last base on the southern coast of Iceland just ten minutes from the Glacier Lagoon and Diamond Beach, in both we can get up really close to the ice. The Jökulsárlón lagoon and its glacial surroundings are a dream locations for photographers due to the sheer diversity of subjects. Here we find some of the most spectacular ice and glacial phenomena in Europe. There is remarkable mountain scenery, Skaftafell National Park, several glacial lagoons, black beaches festooned with sparkling sea washed ice, the famous Jökulsárlón glacier lagoon and magnificent views of Iceland's highest mountain Hvannadalshnjúkur. We will spend 2 days exploring this unique landscape where large chunks of ice are constantly breaking off the glacier filling the lagoon with an ever changing landscape of unusually shaped floating icebergs of subtle colours and one of the world's most impressive locations for aurora photography. The lagoon is well suited to abstract landscape photography, whilst the ice on the beach offers great potential for both intimate and big-sky landscapes. There will be an optional opportunity to photograph in an ice cave.

Hotel Gerði (B,L,D)

### Day 9: South Coast Locations en route to Reykjavik

Today we drive back to Reykjavík with opportunities to photograph as we travel west along the south coast. Our locations en route include the classic waterfalls Skógafoss & Seljalandsfoss plus the infamous sea stacks from the township of Vík. We will arrive back in Reykjavík



early evening in time to head out to town for a final celebratory meal together.

Reykjavík City Hotel (B,L,D)

### Day 10: Homeward Flights

This morning there will be an included Flybus transfer to the international airport for homeward flights.

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### WHAT'S INCLUDED

- 7 nights accommodation with private rooms and bathrooms
- 2 nights accommodation with private rooms and shared bathrooms
- Flight Reykjavík-Egilsstaðir
- Airport transfer to domestic airport on Day 2
- Airport transfers to and from the international airport on Days 1&10
- All meals except one dinner on Day 1

### WHAT'S NOT INCLUDED

- International flights
- Travel Insurance
- Beverage and snacks between meals
- Optional ice cave visit
- Alcohol
- Anything not mentioned above

### JOINING INSTRUCTIONS

Participants will have a Flybus transfer included to our first night hotel in Reykjavík and they will be responsible for their own dinner, we can offer suggestions. There will be a group taxi to pick up participants for a short transfer





to the domestic airport in time for the first flight east to Egilsstaðir depart 7:30 am arrive 8:30 am. WPH staff will meet the flight in Egilsstaðir.

### **FLYBUS AIRPORT TRANSFER**

The Flybus transfer is included in the price of the holiday. You will be sent your tickets online shortly before your departure date. The Flybus is the most convenient way to get from Iceland's international airport to your hotel and back. The buses run all day and the bus stop is right outside arrivals. The bus takes you to the BSÍ central bus station. There you will be directed to a smaller bus that will take you to your hotel.

### **ACCOMMODATION**

We will be using a variety of accommodation. In Reykjavík we will stay in a 3 star hotel close to the city centre. In the country we will stay in scenically located family run hotels with the exception of Vestrahorn where we stay in a comfortable hotel just outside Höfn. The price is based on single rooms. Double or twin rooms are

available for friends and couples who wish to share. If you would like us to book extra hotel nights before or after the main trip dates then please get in touch with the office.

### **FOOD**

We will generally eat dinner in the hotel restaurants, lunch will be in a variety of locations and breakfasts will always be at our hotels. Please let us know when you book if you have any special dietary requirements.

### **ALCOHOL**

This is rather expensive in Iceland, it might be worth considering bringing a bottle of your favourite 'tipple'! All the restaurants that we eat in serve alcohol.

### **SPENDING MONEY**

Icelandic Krona can be easily obtained at the airport ATM machine; these are plentiful throughout Iceland. There will be opportunities to buy presents and souvenirs



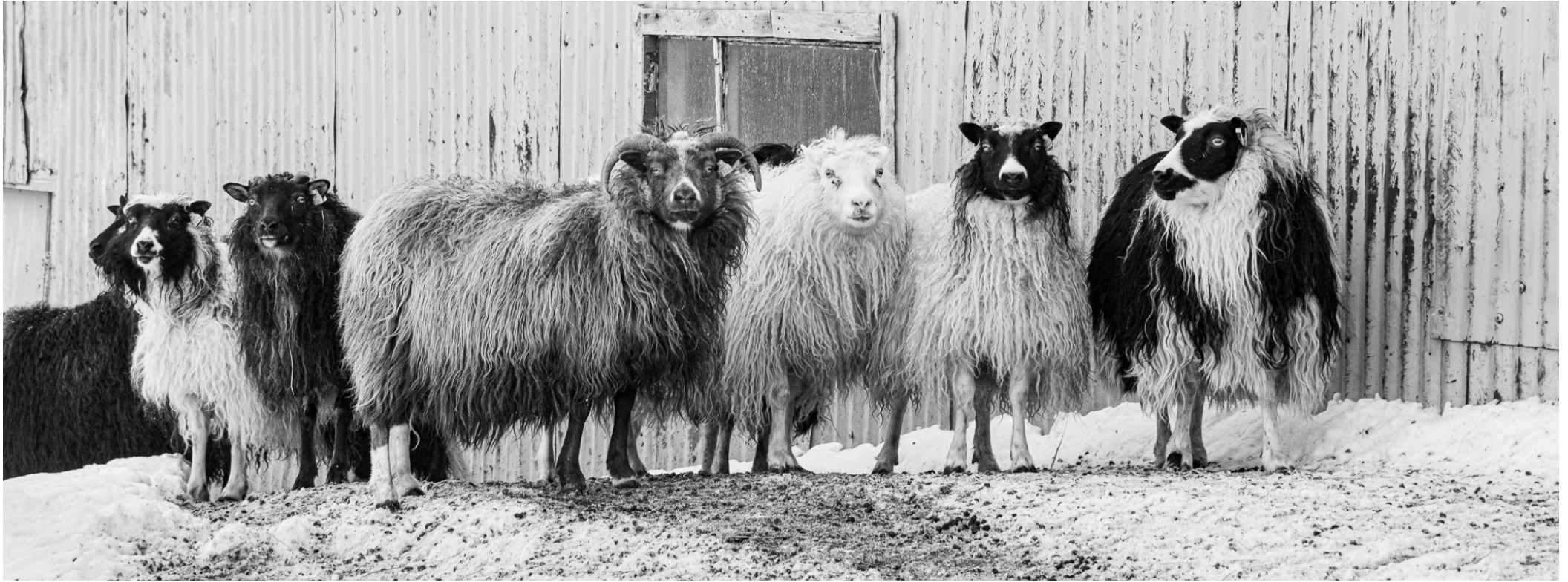
in many of our locations. Credit cards are accepted in all places for even very cheap purchases.

### **TRAVEL INSURANCE**

It is recommended that you take out appropriate insurance to cover personal accident, medical costs, repatriation and loss of baggage. We will need a copy of your travel insurance at the time of booking.

### **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 authorities in their countries of origin. Visas are not required but a return ticket will need to be shown by Australian, Canadian and USA nationals. Other nationalities please enquire before booking.



### 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. Expect temperatures to be down to -7°C on occasions (see clothing list). 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 sometimes be walking in snow and on ice so good quality warm walking boots are recommended. A pair of wellington boots can be useful on the

beach but these are not essential if space/weight is an issue.

### CLOTHING

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

- backpack to contain camera gear and few spare items
- 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
- 'hot-hands' or similar, [www.hothandsdirect.com](http://www.hothandsdirect.com)
- casual clothes for hotel wear



- sun cream, sunglasses
- head torch
- small, basic first aid to include plasters and any medications of a personal nature

### ICE GRIPS

Note the following applies to January, February or March departures only. For your own safety we advise you to

bring with you a pair of ice grips to put on your boots. These grips are very straightforward to use and will allow you to walk safely on icy or slippery surfaces. You will hardly know that you are wearing them unlike spiky crampons. You will be advised when to wear them by our guides.

There is a variety of makes and designs. We have found the rubber ones with coils and a velcro strap to work best. The strap is important as it ensures that you don't lose them. For an example see the Yaktrax Pro. You might want to check in a local outdoor store first. They usually have a selection of suitable models.

### PHOTOGRAPHIC EQUIPMENT AND INFORMATION

- In addition to your chosen camera equipment you will need to carry a day pack that will also hold a few extra items such as water, spare layer etc. Specially designed camera rucksacks like F-Stop, Lowepro and Peak design will be fine.
- A camera with interchangeable lenses such as a digital SLR or a mirrorless system camera.
- A set of lenses to cover the whole range from wide-angle to telephoto, for example...  
for full-frame cameras: 16–35mm wide-angle, 24–105mm mid-range and a 70–200mm or longer tele zoom. For crop format cameras: 10–20mm wide-angle, 17–50mm mid-range and a 70–200mm or longer tele zoom.
- Spare camera
- Sturdy travel tripod for low light photography
- Remote release to avoid shake on long exposures

- Neutral density, graduated filters and polariser, if you use these. Please do not buy especially for this tour.
- Lens cloth
- Sensor cleaning device (optional)
- 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 or tablet 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.
- Backup storage device (optional)
- Spare batteries and chargers



### BOOKING THIS HOLIDAY

Fill in the [online booking form](#), or give us a call on +44 (0)1270 440222.

### LINKS

View [images and information for this tour](#) on the website.

Read about [our approach to teaching photography](#)

- All the electrical sockets are European two/three-pin, so you might need a travel plug adapter on sale at airports.

### 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 walks/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.