

WILD PHOTOGRAPHY HOLIDAYS



SOUTH ICELAND'S AURORA, DIAMOND BEACH & ICE TOUR

HIGHLIGHTS

- Luminous icebergs floating in a surreal turquoise lagoon
- Bizarre glacial landscapes up close
- Accommodation close to glacier lagoon
- Sunrises and sunsets in dramatic locations
- Weird ice formations on black volcanic sand
- Ephemeral Aurora Borealis (northern lights)
- Photograph the surreal ice caves
- Spectacular scenery of Iceland's south coast
- Basalt columns and sea stacks, Vík beach
- Waterfalls: Seljalandsfoss, Skógafoss, Svartifoss

"...I can't thank you (Martin) and Geraldine enough. Between the photo opportunities, suggestions and

tips, food, and just great company, this was one of the best photo trips we've been on."

Jack & Ellen, February 2015

INTRODUCTION

South Iceland has some of the most spectacular and easily accessible ice and glacial phenomena in Europe, awe-inspiring mountain scenery, Skaftafell National Park, several glacial lagoons, black beaches festooned with sparkling sea washed ice sculptures, incredible waterfalls, the famous Jökulsárlón glacier lagoon, and magnificent views of Iceland's highest mountain Hvannadalshnúkur from the Svínafellsjökull glacier. This trip will give us sunrise and sunset opportunities in well chosen locations with several

chances to capture Aurora Borealis; the Northern Lights. Our varied locations give a really diverse range of natural phenomena and remarkable landscapes. The surreal arctic environment of the glacier lagoon was the location for films such as James Bond's Die Another Day, 'A View to a Kill' and 'Lara Croft – Tomb Raider'. Other films shot in the area include 'Game of Thrones' 'The Secret Life of Walter Mitty' and Christopher Nolan's 'Interstellar' & 'Batman Begins'. Our main base is just ten minutes drive from the Jökulsárlón.

The unusual locations are inspiring allowing participants an opportunity to produce exceptional images. Evening tutorials including image development, image presentations and night shooting of the Aurora can be expected.



Whilst on location tutors will be working alongside participants offering technical and creative advice, practical help and encouraging a sound photographic decision-making process. Whether you are a beginner with your first DSLR or are considerably more advanced, this workshop will take you to the next level of proficiency and you will have a lot of fun with like-minded people.

ICE PHOTOGRAPHY IN BRIEF

The Jökulsárlón glacier lagoon and its glacial surroundings are a dream location for photographers due to the sheer diversity of subjects. 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; we will have plenty of time for long strolls along the shores of the lagoon allowing careful observation of the subtle changes in the ice landscape. The icebergs slowly make their way through the lagoon and out into the sea. Some of them are washed up onto the nearby black sand beach where they appear as glossy ice sculptures – here we can get up really close to the ice. The la-

agoon is really suited to abstract landscape photography, whilst the ice on the beach offers great potential for both close-up and big sky landscapes.

Glacial ice is unique in its appearance. Some ice is crystal clear and bends light in beautiful ways with prismatic effects. The ice caves that we photograph are excellent examples of this phenomenon due to the fact that it has travelled for thousands of years and any air bubbles that were trapped in the ice have been squeezed out by the enormous force of the glacier. Some ice is less clear and assumes a radiant turquoise colour, while other ice appears totally black and impenetrable like Obsidian. The black colour is due the presence of rock materials from the base of the glacier.

DAILY ITINERARY

Day 1: Arrival in Reykjavík

Participants will be arriving on a variety of flights, Flybus tickets will be sent out in advance. The first night accommodation in a three star Reykjavík city hotel is included. We will meet for introductions and briefing at



19:00 before heading out into the city for dinner which is included in the price of the tour.

Hotel Reykjavík

Day 2: Reykjavík to Vík

Leaving after breakfast to take advantage of all the daylight hours. As we travel along the south coast our locations en route include the classic waterfalls of Seljalandsfoss and Skógafoss. During the afternoon we will arrive in Vík famed for its black beaches, sea stacks and basalt columnar architecture including Reynishellir a superb basalt cave. This location lends itself to both abstract, mono and unusual landscape photography. Our hotel is just five minutes walk from one of Vík's beaches with great views of the sea stacks.

Hotel Vík

Day 3: To Skaftafell National Park

This morning we may revisit the black beaches of Vík and/or Dyrhólaey depending on the light and what we managed to capture the previous day. This session will be fol-



lowed by a journey along the wild and awe-inspiring south coast of Iceland. We pass through vast lava fields and huge glacial sandurs, mountains and glaciers stopping whenever the light and subjects are inspiring. By mid-afternoon we should have arrived at the Svínafellsjökull glacier where we will encounter and photograph remarkable close up perspectives of bluish green crevasses and the milky brown lagoon. This surreal icy landscape includes vistas of Iceland's highest mountain; Hvan-nadalshnjúkur. There is sometimes a beautiful ice cave although it is worth noting that we can never predict what these natural phenomena will be like until we arrive as they are constantly changing. Driving East in the early evening we will take our first short look at the Jökulsárlón glacier lagoon; a location that we will become increasingly familiar with over the coming days.

For the next four nights we are based in a comfortable guesthouse beautifully located by the Atlantic Ocean just forty minutes from Skaftafell National Park and only ten minutes from the Jökulsárlón.

Hotel Hali (4 nights)

Day 4–6: Southeast Iceland Locations

Our base is very well situated for all our locations; just a ten minute drive to the glacier lagoon and the black sand beach. Both locations are excellent for both sunrises and Aurora; we can be there in a very short time. Our daily locations are chosen in conjunction with the weather or the Aurora forecasts. We have to be very flexible to get the best images and we will often revisit worthwhile locations. With this in mind here is an overview of locations for days 4–6 in no particular order...

Breiðamerkursandur beach – here we find the sea washed ice and icebergs; a particularly good place to be at sunrise when the sun brings out the colours and striking structure of the ice; an excellent subject in its own right or as interesting foreground detail.

Jökulsárlón glacier lagoon – we will photograph here on several occasions in varying light conditions.

Fjallsárlón glacier lagoon – a remote less visited location with a dramatic glacial and mountain backdrop.

Mountain landscape locations – east of our accommodation including small lakes with great reflections.

Natural ice caves – the Vatnajökull glacier is Europe's largest ice cap, we will photograph an ice cave depending on the conditions.

Svínafellsjökull glacier – we get really close to the complex and jumbled glacier with its blue green ice and

sometimes we photograph in an ice cave depending on conditions.

Secret Locations – as you can imagine from tutors who know Iceland intimately, we have quite a few secret locations up our sleeves!

Day 7: Return to Reykjavík

This morning we will take a final visit to the glacier lagoon and beach for sunrise and morning light; basically photographers could visit this location a thousand times and never tire of its magic. After lunch we drive back to Reykjavík arriving in time for dinner.

Hotel Reykjavík

Day 8: Transfer to International Airport

Today participants can choose to leave on any flight as the transfers are always timed to connect to the flights. Check out from the hotel is around midday but hourly extensions can be purchased.

JOINING ARRANGEMENTS AND TRANSFERS

The trip officially starts on Day 1 with a meeting at the first night hotel in Reykjavík for introductions and a trip briefing followed by dinner together. Wild Photography Holidays services finish after breakfast on the final day of the trip.

Flybus Airport Transfer

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.

It's easiest to purchase your ticket at the Reykjavik Excursions desk in the arrivals hall, but you can also do it [in advance online](#). For hotel transfers you need a Flybus Plus Return ticket. All major credit/debit cards are accepted. If you need any help booking your tickets, please contact our office.

The Flybus transfer is not included in the price of the holiday.

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Hotels 7 nights
- All meals
- Transport
- Photographic tutor/tuition

WHAT'S NOT INCLUDED

- International flights
- Transfers from/to Iceland's international airport
- Alcoholic beverages
- Snacks and beverages other than with meals
- 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, out of Reykjavík we will stay for 5 nights in scenically located hotels with twin or single rooms with private bathroom facilities. If you prefer a single room throughout the trip then please make this clear at the time of booking, there is no extra charge for this.

FOOD

We will eat dinner and breakfast in the hotel restaurant. Lunch will be eaten in a variety of places close to our

photographic locations. 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

some 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, Belgi-



um, 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 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:

- 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
- Casual clothes for hotel wear
- Sun cream, sunglasses

- Head torch
- Small, basic first aid to include plasters, blister repair
- Penknife

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/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.
- A camera with interchangeable lenses such as a digital SLR or a compact system camera/mirrorless 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,



17–70mm mid-range and a 70–200mm or longer tele zoom.

- Spare camera (highly recommended)
- 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. At least one neutral density filter in the range of 4–6 stops would be a good addition to your kit.
- Lens cloth
- Sensor cleaning device (optional)
- Lightweight 'trekking' absorbent towel for drying cameras and equipment

- 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. All of the places we stay in have 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

The **Skaftafell Map** scale: 1:100,000 and 1:25,000 provides a good overview of the area surrounding Skaftafell National Park. There is also a more precise map of the area around Skaftafell and Morsárdalur on the reverse of the map.

The **Touring Map of West and South Iceland** scale 1:25,000 shows Snæfellsnes, Southwest Iceland, all of South Iceland east of Skaftafell to the area north of the glacier. The map has contour lines and shading at 50 m intervals. Visit ferdakort.is for information about these and other maps.

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.co.uk. This book is popular and often out of stock here in Iceland.

Icelandic Bird Guide, Jóhann Óli Hilmarsson 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 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.

LINKS

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

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