

WILD PHOTOGRAPHY HOLIDAYS



NORTHERN LIGHTS AND KILLER WHALES

WEST ICELAND

HIGHLIGHTS

- Northern lights
- Two boat trips to see Orcas
- Snæfellsjökull Glacier
- Mount Kirkjufell in Grundarfjörður
- Fishing Villages
- Vast lava fields
- Black beaches
- Sea arches and sea stacks
- Volcanic craters and lakes
- Harbour front Hotel
- Sightseeing in Reykjavik

GENERAL SUMMARY

This is a well established itinerary based on Iceland's stunning Snæfellsnes Peninsula, West Iceland. In addition to our usual well chosen landscape locations we will hopefully photograph two of Iceland's most iconic attractions; the aurora and killer whales. Our base is a family run hotel right on the harbour front with a great restaurant and outdoor hot tubs. We are really handy for our two boat trips out into the bay of Grundarfjörður. The Orcas hunt here during the winter months; they are following the herrings. The feast of herrings is also enjoyed by a multitude of sea birds including Gannets and Sea Eagles. In the evenings our focus will be firmly on the northern lights.

There will be an opportunity at the end of the trip to explore Iceland's capital city Reykjavik.

This exciting Iceland trip packs a great deal into each day. In addition to the day time photography sessions we will be out at night whenever the northern lights show up! There will also be time scheduled enabling us to relax or wander in the surrounding landscape, work on our images, receive post-processing tuition and enjoy viewing sessions of each others work. This a real photographic adventure and lots of fun with like minded people.



DAILY ITINERARY

Day 1: Arrival and transfer to Reykjavik

Participants should aim to arrive by the afternoon today. A fly-bus transfer to our city hotel is included. We will meet in the early evening for introductions and a trip briefing followed by a welcome dinner in a traditional Icelandic city restaurant.

Hotel accommodation (D)

Day 2–5: Grundarfjörður Snæfellsnes

After breakfast we will travel to our base in Grundarfjörður which is perfectly situated and central to all our landscape locations, the harbour and our northern light photography spots.

Hotel accommodation (B,L)

PHOTOGRAPHIC LOCATIONS ON SNÆFELLSNES

There are many photographic locations on Snæfellsnes. During our four days based here, we will make decisions according to the prevailing conditions and after consultation with participants. Needless to say we have some superb locations up our sleeve. These could well include:

Snæfellsjökull Glacier

The seaward slopes are particularly beautiful, with ropes of lava winding their way downhill. Weather permitting we will make an ascent to a point where we have 360° vistas of the surrounding mountains and ocean.

Fishing Villages

Fishing is still the mainstay of the remote Icelandic communities that we encounter, we will have opportunities to photograph as the boats and fishermen come in with their catches.

Sea Cliffs

The cliffs around the Snæfellsnes coastline are precipitous, majestic and very attractive with a huge variety of differing, interesting rock formations that are easy to access and offer some great images. These include the stunning sea arch Gatklettur and Hellnar's superb hole in the cliff. All offer great opportunities for both crisp and soft water effects.



Beaches

Snæfellsnes is unusual as it boasts both white and black sand beaches. The latter are more common in Iceland as the sand is generally of volcanic origin and generally gives some really unusual images. One fine example is the black beach of Djúpalónssandur with its strange lava formations and the bizarre surrounding landscape.

Green Moss Lava Fields

These are vast and cover huge areas below the glacier, they are interesting to photograph alone or as fine foreground for other subjects.

Mount Kirkjufell

A beautifully shaped and symmetrical free standing mountain. Kirkjufell gives us superb sunrise and sunset shots with great reflections in the wet sand/water. This is also one of our favourite places for photographing the Northern Lights.

Berserkjhraun

The weird landscape was formed when the lava here

flowed some 3,000 to 4,000 years ago. It is young enough to retain all kinds of convoluted shapes. There are fascinating colour and textural contrasts in the rock and also thick mosses.

Grundarfjörður Bay

We head out into the bay twice during our trip to photograph the Orcas. The herring cycle normally lasts around twelve years so this means that the Orcas will be around for a few years to come! Last season the Orcas were prolific and were even spotted swimming in the harbour.

Day 6: Sunrise in Grundarfjörður, sightseeing in Reykjavik

After a sunrise shoot around Kirkjufell Mountain we enjoy a leisurely breakfast. Mid-morning we return to Reykjavik in time for lunch followed by a free afternoon to explore Iceland's interesting capital city.

Accommodation Reykjavik Hotel (B,L)

Day 7: Transfers and Homeward flights

Transfer to Reykjavik International airport and homeward flights. WPH services finish after breakfast.

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- All Accommodation 6 hotel nights
- All meals
- All transport
- Location guide
- Photographic tutor
- Boat trip to photograph Orcas
- Whale guide



WHAT'S NOT INCLUDED

- International flights
- Transfers from and to Iceland's International Airport
- Alcoholic beverages
- Snacks and beverages other than with meals
- Travel Insurance

JOINING ARRANGEMENTS AND TRANSFERS

We will meet for the first time as a group on Day 1 at the hotel in Reykjavík 19:00 for introductions, a trip briefing and dinner together.

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.

ACCOMMODATION

We will stay for 6 nights in good quality hotel accommodation with private bathroom facilities. Please enquire at the time of booking about a single room supplement.

FOOD

Most of the time we will eat dinner in a local or hotel restaurant. Breakfasts will always be at our hotel. Please let us know 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'!

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

We require 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 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, there may be rain, sunshine, drizzle and snow all in the same day. As far as we can make a guess, expect weather that is probably similar to a UK Winter. Due to the gulf stream it is warmer than many imagine. 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

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. For the lower body choose a pair of man-made fibre windproof trousers rather than jeans as the latter take a very long time to dry should we be caught in a shower and provide little protection against wind-chill when wet. We will sometimes walk across uneven terrain so good quality lightweight walking boots are recommended.

CLOTHING & EQUIPMENT

- If you have any questions feel free to contact us at any time before the trip:
- Trousers, warm, quick dry, windproof
- Thermal leggings
- Thermal tops
- Down jacket or similar
- Light fleece/wool jumper
- Warm fleece type jacket
- Waterproof jacket

- Waterproof trousers
- Warm socks
- Waterproof walking boots
- Wool/fleece hat
- Warm gloves
- Casual clothes for hotel wear
- Sun-cream,
- Sunglasses!
- Swim-wear
- Small lightweight towel
- Small torch
- Small basic first aid, plasters, blister repair & personal medicines

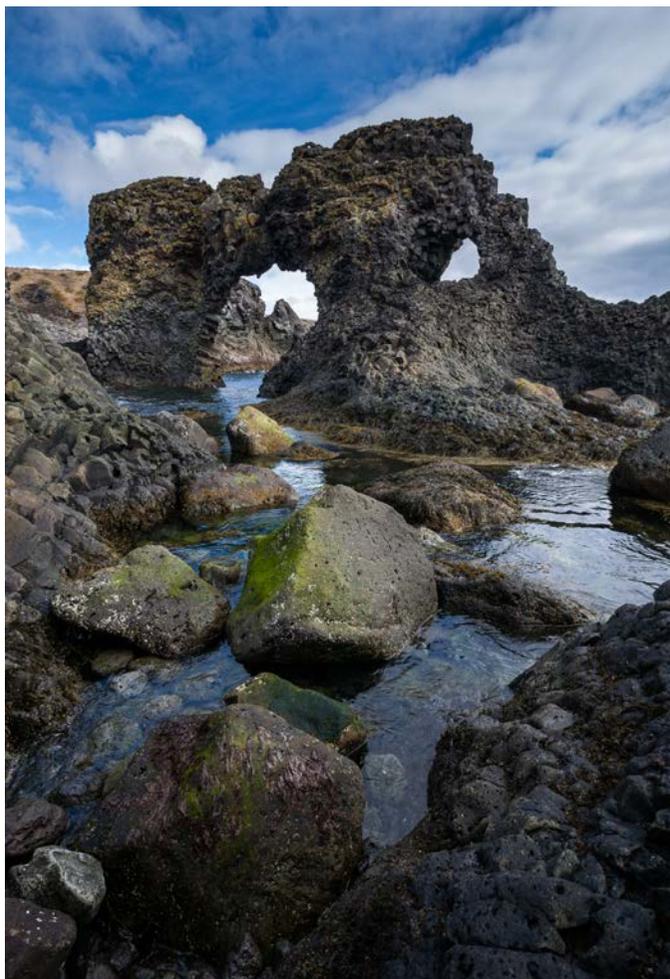
ICE GRIPS

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.
- Although not essential camera filters such as neutral density, graduated filters and polarisers can be useful. 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 & BOOKS

There will be maps for sale in the local shops/garages. Small maps are available locally in the different areas we visit. To buy maps visit ferdakort.is

Snæfellsnes & Borgarfjörður 1:200.000 and Southwest Iceland activity map 1:75.000, both can be found in the section 'special maps'.

Flowering Plants and Ferns of Iceland by 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 by Jóhann Óli Hilmarsson also in English and available from Amazon.

NEED 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.

BOOKING THIS HOLIDAY

Contact us [through our website](#), where you can also fill in the [online booking form](#), or phone +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 photography holiday and the itinerary will be dependent on the vagaries of 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.

LINKS

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

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