

WILD PHOTOGRAPHY HOLIDAYS



NORTHWEST ICELAND

NORTHERN LIGHTS WILD BEACHES AND FJORDS

HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDE

- Remote landscapes
- Wild black-sand beaches
- Spectacular lava fields
- Ferry to Westfjords
- Rauðisandur beach
- Sea arches & sea stacks
- Boat trip to see Orcas (optional)
- Abandoned houses
- Snæfellsjökull glacier
- Icelandic horses
- Volcanic craters and lakes
- Iconic Kirkjufell mountain
- Remote aurora locations

INTRODUCTION

One of Iceland's best kept secrets is undoubtedly the country's north-west corner, most usually known as The Westfjords. Isolation has preserved this area as a relatively unspoiled wilderness. Largely uninhabited and not easy to get to, especially in winter, Iceland's Westfjords are packed with superb and atmospheric locations, a must for any photographer who is serious about the Icelandic landscape. Wild Photography Holidays have recently returned from their first trip with an intrepid group of returning guests, all keen to check out the potential of this 'out there' location.

Read what participant and photographer [Steve Lewis had to say](#) about our adventure.

Highlights include four nights at the beautifully located Hotel Látrabjarg in the Northwest Fjords. The hotel opens up in the winter just for our group and our hosts do a really fine job of looking after us. The hotel is situated almost at the very western tip of Europe, indeed a wild, unique and beautiful part of Iceland. Returning by ferry from the west fjords, we have a night in Grundarfjörður on the north coast of Snæfellsnes peninsula, maybe we are lucky enough to witness a brilliant aurora over iconic mountain Kirkjufell on this our last night in the field! Our last day will be spent exploring the special locations around this area, for example the magnificent Berserkjahraun or some fabulous 'secret' beach locations that we have up our sleeves.



Photographer Albert Normandin travelled with our group, he had this to say about the trip:

“Iceland was an incredible mix of wild weather and natural beauty, so amazing!!! I had many friends tell me how great it was before I arrived, but their descriptions did not come close to how incredible it really is.

After doing this trip with Wild Photography Holidays, I can see no reason to do it any other way. As many people have been asking about my trip and many more will, I will be happy to tell them that the only way to do this adventure is with WPH, and to let them lead you to Iceland... thanks to Geraldine and Martin for leading us all and keeping us safe. The passion they have for finding the right locations and those beautiful moments, saved the day so many times. Through all kinds of weather, and some very wild road conditions, they pushed on. We got there and it was great!”

Albert 2016

DAILY ITINERARY

Day 1: Arrive Reykjavík

Arrival and transfer to our Reykjavik Hotel. Meeting for introductions and a trip briefing before heading out to town for dinner.

Day 2–3: Snæfellsnes

Leaving the city behind we take a scenic route to Snæfellsnes. Our journeys are frequently punctuated by photography stops depending on the prevailing light and weather. Our coastal hotel is beautifully situated for all our locations. Once we have settled into our hotel we will begin to explore the area. Sparkling fjords, dramatic volcanic peaks, sheer sea cliffs, sweeping golden beaches, interesting rock architecture including sea arches and vast lava flows all contribute to make the fascinating landscape of the Snæfellsnes Peninsula. The area is crowned by the glistening ice cap Snæfellsjökull, immortalised in Jules Verne’s Journey to the Centre of the Earth.

Hotel Framnes

Day 4–7: the Westfjords

In the morning we head north to Stykkishólmur for the ferry that takes us across to Brjánslækur in the far North West. The ferry takes around two and a half hours with a chance of spotting Whales and Dolphins en route. There are generally few people on board, just local people going to see families or truck drivers who carry supplies to these remote NW towns and villages. Once on land we drive through spectacular coastal scenery and a high mountain pass before making our way on a little used road to our very comfortable coastal Hotel Látrabjarg. This is our home for the next four nights. Whilst we are



here there are a variety of locations depending on the light and the weather.

Day 8: Ferry to Stykkishólmur

This afternoon we make the return journey to by road and ferry to Stykkishólmur. From here it is a short road journey to Grundarfjörður. We spend the night here in a small family run hotel close to the waterfront. Just five minutes from the hotel is Kirkjufellsfoss (waterfall) and Kirkjufell. If the aurora show this is a very fine location for those iconic shots!

Day 9: Locations en route to Reykjavik

After sunrise and breakfast we will begin the journey back to Reykjavík. En route we have several good locations given good light and weather. We expect to be back in the city for the early evening where we will enjoy a celebratory dinner in a restaurant close to our hotel

Day 10: Transfer to the Airport

Today participants can choose to leave on any flight as the Flybys transfers are timed to connect to all flights.



LOCATIONS SNÆFELLSNES

Below is an overview for our locations in no particular order during the three days we are based in Snæfellsnes.

Snæfellsjökull Glacier

The seaward slopes are particularly worthy of attention, with ropes of lava winding their way downhill. Weather permitting we travel to the snow line for some unusual close-up images.

Sea Cliffs

The cliffs around the Snæfellsnes coastline are precipitous, majestic and very attractive with a huge variety of differing and interesting rock formations, that are easy to access for some great images.

Beaches

Snæfellsnes has black sand beaches of volcanic origin this generally gives some really unusual images. One fine example is the black beach of Djúpalónssandur with its strange lava formations, including Gatklettur, a rock with a hole giving unusual vistas through to a tranquil turquoise lagoon.

Sea Stacks and Arches

There are a variety of stacks and arches around the peninsula providing fine dramatic photographic subjects.

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.

Kirkjufell Mountain

The chameleon shape of this mountain is well known to all Icelandic landscape photographers. It provides striking images both at sunrise and sunset; it's also amazing to see the northern lights swirling high above its rocky ridges.

Berserkjhraun

Situated between Grundarfjörður and Stykkishólmur this dramatic lava field flowed some 3,000 to 4,000 years ago and is young enough to retain all kinds of convoluted shapes, with fascinating colour and textural contrasts in the rocks and thick mosses.



LOCATIONS WESTFJORDS

Ólafsviti Lighthouse and Beach

This is an excellent location just 15 minutes from the hotel. It is suitable for both for day and night time photography. A single farm sits alone by a wild beach with a scenically placed lighthouse. Across the ocean are endless headlands of typical North West mountain ridges. At night we return here for Aurora photography.

Rauðisandur Beach

Possibly the most iconic beach in the North West. During the summer there are some visitors to this vast expanse of red sand flats. In winter we will be alone. A high and atmospheric mountain pass must be crossed before we are rewarded with a magnificent vista. Sheer cliffs and mountains stretch to the most westerly tip of Europe. The sea changes from turquoise to slate grey reflecting the prevailing weather conditions. There is also a lovely waterfall, a tiny church and two isolated farms.

Látravík

This is the coastal area right by our hotel. A long beach flanked by mountains and silvery freshwater inlets that meander down the U-shaped flat valley to the sea.

Patreksfjörður

This is the name given to the long Fjord where we are based. A road goes all the way around the Fjord giving us access to lots of different locations by the Fjord. The actual town of Patreksfjörður, the largest in the area had 561 inhabitants according to the 2013 census. It is a working fishing town and it is interesting to photograph the fishing industry here.

Abandoned Houses

The whole area is rich in sites where we find abandoned houses, farms, vehicles and boats and even an odd plane or two. There is even an abandoned airport!

THE LEARNING PROCESS

This workshop is all about photography and lots of it! Whilst on location tutors will be working alongside participants offering technical and creative advice, practical help and encouraging a sound photographic decision-making process.

Evening tutorials including image development, image presentations and night shooting of aurora can be expected. 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.



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

- 10 hotel nights
- Transport
- 2 ferry journeys
- Photographic tuition

WHAT'S NOT INCLUDED

- International flights
- Airport transfers
- Alcoholic beverages
- Snacks and beverages other than with meals
- Travel insurance
- Whale watching trips

ACCOMMODATION

We will be using a variety of accommodation. In Reykjavik we will stay in a 3 star hotel close to the city centre. In the country we will stay in scenically located coastal hotels. The price is based on single rooms, there are no single supplements. Double or twin rooms are available for friends and couples who wish to share.

FOOD

We will generally eat dinner in the hotel restaurants except for the first night in Reykjavik when we will eat at a restaurant in the city. 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

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.

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 & EQUIPMENT

- Down or artificial fibre duvet jacket – we wear [Rab](#)
- Warm trousers that allow flexibility of movement
- Long sleeved thermal tops and leggings
- Light fleece/wool jumpers
- Thicker warm fleece type jacket
- Waterproof jacket
- Waterproof trousers
- Warm socks, a few pairs
- Warm Boots good for walking in
- Warm hat
- Neck warmer such as 'Buff'
- 1–2 pairs warm gloves that enable using camera controls whilst wearing
- Casual clothes, jeans etc for hotel wear
- Indoor shoes/slippers
- Sun cream and sunglasses
- Ski poles useful for walking in snow.
- Head torch
- Small basic first aid & any personal medicines
- Small towel
- [HotHands](#) or similar hand warmers
- Wash kit
- Ice grips, see below



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 AND 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 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 (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 photography 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.

PARTNERS

Although this is primarily a photography holiday, non-photographer partners will be very welcome as there are many options and interesting possibilities in addition to taking photographs.

MORE QUESTIONS?

While we hope that this information has answered most of your questions about the holiday, we know it will not give you all the information you need. If you have any more questions, please get in touch. Talking to us on the phone (we will always call you back) can often be a quick way of sorting out individual questions. It also helps us to get to know each other before the holiday.

BOOKING THIS HOLIDAY

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

LINKS

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