

# WILD PHOTOGRAPHY HOLIDAYS



## ULTIMATE MIDSUMMER EAST ICELAND FJORDS, PUFFINS AND BLUE ICE TOUR

### HIGHLIGHTS

- Tranquil fjords and snow capped mountains
- Puffins, arctic terns, seals and more
- Icelandic poppies
- Icelandic horses and optional horse riding
- Luminous icebergs floating in a turquoise lagoon
- The Diamond Beach, ice on black volcanic sand
- Hours of ambient light
- Purple lupin fields
- Dramatic waterfalls
- Colourful old houses
- South coast Locations
- Walter Mitty's longboard run
- Flight across Iceland

### INTRODUCTION

Introducing a magical new photographic trip far from the madding crowd with some of the best midsummer landscapes that Iceland has to offer the adventurous photographer. During the month of June we enjoy the summer solstice. Essentially it is light all day with the sun disappearing only briefly. There are several hours of ambient light with endless sunrises and sunsets, a superb time to be in Iceland! We photograph the remarkable and less visited fjords of East Iceland together with the unique blue Ice locations of Iceland's south coast. At this time of year it does not go dark in Iceland, we are blessed with magical ambient light that often goes on and on... in addition to the fabulous landscapes this is also prime

time for photographing the huge number of birds breeding in Iceland during the summer, we expect to have several very close encounters with many comical and iconic Atlantic Puffin. June is also an excellent time to photograph lovely fields of Purple Lupins and Icelandic poppies with a back drop of snow capped mountains. Our journey begins with an included flight from Reykjavik's domestic airport to the the capital of the North, Akureyri where we will meet you before driving to the little north east village of Bakkagerði, Borgarfjörður Eystri where we find ourselves in the land of Elves, Puffins and Reindeer. Here we will be based right alongside the fjord surrounded by impressively shaped snow streaked rhyolite mountains. Our second base is the quirky village of



Seyðisfjörður. Describing itself as a place of singing waterfalls and peculiar characters the place is well known for its alternative 'creative community' and colourful old houses. The film 'Secret Life of Walter Mitty' has a famous scene where Ben Stiller longboards down the mountain road into this very village. En route to the south we will stay in the eastern fjord of Eskifjörður. Our adventure continues as we head south to explore the spectacular photographic locations of the South around and west of Iceland's Vestrahorn. Locations include the vast glacier tongues of Europe's largest ice cap, Vatnajökull, the Jökulsárlón Glacier Lagoon and the world famous Diamond Beach. This photographic tour offers some of the very best midsummer landscapes to be found in Iceland and you can be sure to return home with some first class images and a bunch of great memories.

#### DAILY ITINERARY

##### Days 1,2&3: Bakkagerði and Puffins

Fly over Iceland from Reykjavík to arrive in Egilsstaðir one of East Iceland's larger towns with a population of

around only 2300 people where we will be waiting to transfer you to our accommodation. It is approximately a forty minutes drive over a mountain pass to the tiny village of Bakkagerði. A scenic pass takes us up close to the snow streaked Dryrfjöll Mountains before dropping dramatically downwards towards the sea to eventually to arrive in Bakkagerði our base for the next three nights. We stay in divinely positioned accommodation that has some lovely hot tubs overlooking the fjord. Our photographic locations are diverse including a very accessible Puffin nesting area close to the harbour. There is a hide where we can go to observe and photograph a multitude of these iconic little birds coming and going after fishing for eels or defending their burrows from other more predatory seabirds. We can also wander around the harbour area freely where there are lots of interesting things going on including a small Kittiwake colony where we get very close to these noisy nesting birds with their chicks. There are many unusually shaped mountains providing a superb back drop to vast Lupin fields. A stronghold of elves and the Hidden People, the 'Elf' mountain Álfab-



jörg in the village provides a great all round viewpoint. One of the highlights of our stay here will surely be the drive along an unbelievably wild and remote track to photograph the abandoned fjord of Loðmundafjörður. This off the beaten track location is home only to an Eider farm, many nesting birds, a small mountain hut and a tiny chapel set in unbelievably lush and photogenic surroundings.

Blábjörg Guest House (B,L,D)

##### Day 4-6: To Seyðisfjörður the Artists' Village

This morning we drive over a mountain pass to spend time in Húsey a coastal area of remarkable isolation, peace and great beauty. There is no village here, just a working farm and the old farmhouse. The farm has many horses and offers daily treks to see the seals. In the coastal rivers here are found about 12-15% of Iceland's seal population. Of course it is wonderful to walk here too, the terrain is flat and accessible by foot, the choice is yours. The Great and Arctic Skua are very prolific and there are many lovely pools in the area where we find Red Throated Divers and Red Necked Phalaropes. The



birds can be photographed against the striking back drop of the snow capped Dryrfjöll Mountains. In mid afternoon following a picnic lunch we will head to Seyðisfjörður, perhaps stopping high above the village at a stunning viewpoint down the valley to the Fjord below. The film 'Secret Life of Walter Mitty' has a famous scene where Ben Stiller longboards through lovely wild landscape down the mountain road right into the village, this is that place! Our accommodation is in Hotel Snæfell, one of the loveliest of many old houses in the village. Our base is the beautifully renovated schoolhouse is where we eat,

socialise, review images and generally hang out together. We will stay here for three nights. Locations Include, a great variety of lovely and accessible waterfalls, Icelandic Poppies, a possible boat trip (weather dependent) to the magnificent bird cliffs of Skálanes, colourful wooden houses, floating ice lake on the mountain pass of Fjarðarheiði plus some rather spectacular fjord vistas. Snæfell Hotel (B,L,D)

#### **Day 7: Mjóifjörður to South East Iceland**

Today we will make an early start from Seyðisfjörður to visit what is perhaps one of East Iceland's most out there and remote fjord, Mjóifjörður. By the fjord in a little village of the same name lives one of the smallest communities in Iceland, just forty people. The steep mountain road leading to the village is closed in winter and then the village can only be accessed by boat. The valley itself is startling in it's green-ness and the number of waterfalls that tumble down the vertiginous mountain-sides. Perhaps the most impressive is our first photo-



graphic location, a huge cascade called Klifbrekkufossar. Down in the fjord itself we find an interesting old wreck, a remnant from the days when this fjord was a whaling station. We will spend the morning exploring before driving back to the main road and on to our next location Eskifjörður. Our private cottages are on a lovely peninsula that juts out into the fjord and has 360 deg vistas. Cottages Eskifjörður (B,L,D)

### **Day 8–9: Southeast Iceland and Blue Ice Locations**

Following a leisurely breakfast at our hotel, we depart for our drive to southeast Iceland hopefully making a short detour to photograph the lovely Folaldafoss a fine and shapely waterfall that can be viewed from close to the road or by taking a twenty minute walk to it's base. Now it is full steam ahead to Iceland's south coast where we may linger a while to photograph the iconic locations of Stokksnes and Vestrahorn. We will arrive in time for dinner at our hotel in the Vatnajökull National Park. The area is well known to photographers and although it will be busy compared to the Eastern fjords, the locations are nonetheless stunning. We are perfectly situated and to

get the best light for our subjects and we will have a flexible itinerary often revisiting worthwhile locations which will include:

#### **Stokksnes and Vestrahorn**

The jagged rocks and ridges of Vestrahorn make a fine backdrop to a black sand beach.

#### **Jökulsárlón (Glacier Lagoon)**

Ethereal icebergs of all shapes and sizes float serenely in the turquoise waters of this world famous lagoon. There is a also massive Arctic Tern colony here.

#### **Breiðamerkursandur (Diamond Beach)**

A black sand beach with sparkling ice formations, a totally unique experience.

#### **Fjallsárlón Glacier Lagoon**

A less visited location combining shapely mountains, lush green vegetation, silvery winding streams, black sand with a big sculptured glacier that catches the light in a surreal fashion.

Hotel (B,L,D)



### **Day 10: To Reykjavík via Photographic Locations of South Iceland**

This morning we will take a final visit to the GlacierLagoon, basically photographers could visit this location a thousand times and never tire of its magic. During our drive back along the south coast to Reykjavík we will take time to photograph a variety of locations depending on the light and the weather conditions. These may well include Vík Sea Stacks and various waterfalls. Back in the city we will go out together for a final celebratory meal.

Reykjavík Hotel (B)

### **Day 11: Homeward flights**

After breakfast guests will transfer to Keflavík, Iceland's international airport for homeward flights.

### **JOINING ARRANGEMENTS AND TRANSFERS**

There will be one single transfer meeting the internal evening flight from Reykjavík to Egilsstaðir. This flight is included in the price of the holiday. The flight departs from Reykjavík's Domestic Airport around 19:00 and you



will need to be at the airport at the latest 45 mins before. For the exact flight details please check our website or call our office. If you prefer to stay in Reykjavík the night before this flight, we can arrange a hotel for you, although this is not included in the price of the holiday. It is totally possible to travel from most European airports to make the internal Iceland connection in the same day. The flight to Egilsstaðir takes around one hour and departs from Reykjavík's domestic airport which is close to the BSÍ Flybus Terminal. Return Flybus tickets are included in the price of this holiday and will be sent to you in advance of your arrival. It is important that you

let the office know the times of your international flights well in advance of your arrival in Iceland. The journey into Reykjavík takes about forty five minutes. If you plan to fly through to Egilsstaðir the same day that you arrive in Iceland, then you will need a flight that arrives in Keflavík International Airport by no later than 15:30 on Day 1. Please contact the office for advice if there is anything that you do not understand.

#### **Flybus Airport Transfer**

The Flybus is included in the price of this holiday and it is the most convenient way to get from Iceland's international airport to Reykjavík and back. The coach takes you

to the BSÍ central bus station. There you will be directed to a smaller bus that will take you to the domestic airport.

#### **WHAT'S INCLUDED**

- 10 nights accommodation
- Flight to Egilsstaðir
- All Meals
- All transport
- Photographic tutors/tuition
- Flybus airport transfer
- Transfer from Egilsstaðir Airport on Day 1

#### **WHAT'S NOT INCLUDED**

- International flights
- Alcoholic beverages
- Travel insurance
- Snacks and drinks except where specified

#### **ACCOMMODATION**

Our accommodations are without exception beautifully located and a good standard. In Seyðisfjörður we will stay in Snæfell Hotel next to the fjord and rooms will have private bathrooms or the close by beautifully converted schoolhouse with 2 large bedrooms, large lounge area and kitchen with a shared bathroom. In Bakkagerði our accommodation overlooks the fjord and has outdoor hot tubs. It has been newly renovated and the single or double rooms are of a high standard with shared bathrooms. In the south east we stay in a hotel with private bathrooms. In Reykjavík we stay in a city centre hotel in rooms with private bathrooms. If you have any questions relating to the accommodation then please feel free to



contact us. The price of this trip is based on two people sharing a room. If you are a single traveller choosing this option you will be teamed up with another participant of the same gender. If you prefer a single room throughout the trip then please make this clear at the time of booking. There will be an extra charge as is indicated on our website.

#### **FOOD**

We will eat our evening meal and breakfast together at our accommodation or in restaurants belonging to our

accommodation. The food will always be local, varied and according to your dietary requirements. Lunches will generally be 'Al Fresco' to allow for maximum time in the field, although occasionally they may be eaten at our accommodation. Please ensure that any special dietary needs are mentioned on the booking form.

#### **ALCOHOL**

This is rather expensive in Iceland, you may want to buy some when coming through the Duty Free at the interna-

tional airport, it is relatively cheap here. Wine, beer and spirits are available in the restaurants where we eat.

#### **SPENDING MONEY**

Icelandic Krona (ISK) can be withdrawn 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 small purchases.

## TRAVEL INSURANCE

It is recommended that you take out appropriate insurance to cover personal accident, medical costs, repatriation and loss of baggage. We 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, 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 April/May in the UK. 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 trousers that you can move in easily 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. If you have any questions feel free to contact us at anytime before the trip.

## SUGGESTED CLOTHING & EQUIPMENT

- Warm trousers (not jeans)

- Long sleeved thermal tops and leggings
- Long sleeved shirt/tee-shirt
- Light fleece/wool jumper
- Warm fleece type jacket
- Waterproof Jacket
- Waterproof trousers
- Warm socks
- Lightweight walking boots/shoes
- Wellington boots
- Light warm hat
- Gloves
- Casual clothes for hotel wear
- Sun cream, sunglasses & sun hat



- Small basic first aid to include plasters, blister repair e.g. Compede, needle/cotton & any personal medicines
- Small penknife

#### 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.

- As long a telephoto lens as you own and are comfortable to carry in the field. Tele zooms of 80–400mm or 150–600mm are a good choice.
- 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.

#### 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.

#### OUTDOOR TRAVEL

This is an outdoor travel photography holiday and the itinerary will be dependent on the vagaries of the weather.

er, 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 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](#)

