

ICELAND

It's Out of This World



FROM THE SUMMER'S ENDLESS DAYLIGHT and the colorful auras of the northern lights to the bowl-shaped calderas, lava fields and bubbling mud pots, the landscapes of Iceland are truly unearthly.

PORT OF CALL REYKJAVIK

Europe's northernmost capital is walk-able, vibrant and chock full of restaurants, a thriving music scene and weekend nightlife. The boutiques along Laugavegur showcase ultra-modern clothes, jewelry, fish skin handbags and Icelandic woolens. The Hallgrímskirkja Church affords scenic views, and is a short walk from the harbor, where from April to August ferries visit Puffin Island for an upclose look at these iconic creatures. Baejarins Bestu, which boasts Bill Clinton and Metallica's James Hetfield as patrons, is the place for a *pylsur* (lamb hotdog).



Reykjavik is a perfect base for exploring Iceland's natural wonders. From September through April, northern lights excursions venture outside of the city for a glimpse of nature's lightshow, the aurora borealis. Iceland's most popular day trip is to the Golden Circle, the 190-mile route which includes Geysir (the namesake of all geysers) and Strokkur, which spouts 60-foot jets of steam every few minutes; Gullfoss, the powerful 105-foot double cascade waterfall, and Þingvellir National Park, where you can stand on both European and North American sides of the Mid-Atlantic ridge.

To the north, a quick flight from Reykjavik, the Lake Myvatn region offers other-worldly landscapes shaped by earth's fury – the Apollo 11 crew came to the lava fields in Eldhraun to train for their moon walk. Hverfjall is a tuff ring volcano, where one can hike to the edge of the giant tephra crater. Dimmuborgir is the site of unique formations created from a lake of molten lava. Haverarond, a fumarole field, is a bizarre swath of earth; cream color soil literally boils, filling the air with sulfur steam as the earth bubbles mud.

Iceland is gaining fame as an adventure travel destination, with options including snowmobiling, horseback riding, super jeep tours, hiking, and world-class dives, including the Silfa rift – the crack between the American and Eurasian continents, which offers unrivalled visibility from the lava-filtered glacial water.

NOTES: Spa

The Ultimate Layover: Iceland's Blue Lagoon

A soak in the geothermal waters of The Blue Lagoon is a sure cure for jetlag, and with Icelandair's current policy of no fee stopovers, the ultimate transatlantic layover is a thirty minute ride from the Keflavik airport.

Iceland's Blue Lagoon will delight even veteran spa enthusiasts. The setting is ethereal. The entrance path is flanked by black lava that looks like over-baked brownies, and mist rises from the enormous aquamarine lagoon framed by volcanic mountains in the distance.

The milky, mineral-laden 100°F water is said to have vast healing powers, especially for psoriasis (clinic on site). There are pots of white silica mud to soften and rejuvenate the skin and in-water spa treatments like deep relaxing massage or full body cleansing.

The locker room offers high tech security, or upgrade to a VIP locker for a more deluxe and private experience. There's even a place to stash your luggage. Light bites are available, or dine at Lava, offering delectable Icelandic fare.

