

# Gateway to Greenland & the Faeroes

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For many visitors Iceland provides a stepping stone to the wild, mysterious lands of Greenland and the Faeroes. Both are easily accessible and, although the journey may seem expensive, once you've come this far it's more cost effective than planning a separate trip. Air Iceland's regular summer flights to Kulusuk, Nerlerit Inaat (Constable Point) and Narsarsuaq make it easy to tag on a trip to Greenland, while regular flights to Vágur in the Faeroes allow you to discover these little-visited islands once used as a stopping point for Viking explorers.

## GETTING THERE & AWAY

### Air

**GREENLAND**  
Iceland's main domestic carrier, **Air Iceland** (Flugfélag Íslands; ☎ in Iceland 570 3030; www.airiceland.is), flies from the domestic airport in Reykjavík to Kulusuk in east Greenland (two hours, Monday to Saturday June to mid-September) and twice weekly to Nerlerit Inaat (two hours) further north and Narsarsuaq in south Greenland (three hours). In winter there are twice-weekly flights to Kulusuk and one flight per week to Nerlerit Inaat. The cheapest one-way fare on all flights to Greenland is Ikr16,500.

The isolated communities of Kulusuk and Nerlerit Inaat serve as jumping-off points for Tasiilaq and Ittoqqortoormiit respectively. **Air Greenland** (☎ 34 34 34; www.airgreenland.com) runs a helicopter service from Kulusuk to Tasiilaq (Dkr1081) and from Nerlerit Inaat to Ittoqqortoormiit (Dkr625).

Twice-weekly Air Greenland flights go from Kulusuk to Kangerlussuaq (Dkr2616 one way, 1¼ hours), where you can connect to any community on the west or south coast.

## FAEROES

In summer, Air Iceland has flights between Reykjavík and Vágur in the Faeroes five times a week (cheapest one-way fare Ikr13,000, 1¼ hours), while there are flights three times a week in winter.

The Faeroese airline **Atlantic Airways** (☎ 341 000; www.atlanticairways.com) covers the same route three times weekly throughout the year for a similar fare.

## Sea

**Smyril Line** (www.smyril-line.com) car ferries link Iceland to Denmark and Norway, and travel via Tórshavn in the Faeroes. In summer the ferry also brings passengers from Scotland (currently from Lerwick in the Shetlands but possibly direct from Aberdeen in future). If you're travelling between Iceland and mainland Europe, you'll get a two- or three-day stopover in the Faeroes either there or back. See p328 for details.

## TOURS

To get the most out of a short trip to Greenland or the Faeroes you may wish to join an organised tour. Day trips to Greenland include cultural activities laid on by local Inuit villagers but are very artificial; to experience any sense of real life you need to stay overnight. Kulusuk and nearby Tasiilaq are among Greenland's most traditional communities, and they offer excellent opportunities for hiking, dogsledding, ski-trekking and kayaking. Most tours to Greenland can be expanded to take in remote Ittoqqortoormiit, from where you can access the exceptionally beautiful but little-visited Northeast Greenland National Park.

Operators in Greenland and Iceland:  
**Air Iceland** (www.airiceland.is) Runs popular Greenland day tours (Ikr33,865 to Ikr43,745, Monday to Saturday mid-May to mid-September), and a two-night package to Tasiilaq (Ikr81,550 to Ikr97,400).

**Nonni Travel** (Map p213; ☎ 461 1841; www.nonni.travel.is; Brekkugata 5, IS-602 Akureyri) Has a great range of adventure trips around Greenland, including dogsledding, ski-trekking, hiking and cultural tours in Scoresby Sund, Ittoqqortoormiit and Narsarsuaq. Also helps plan and

prepare itineraries for independent travel in the Faeroes. Day tours to Greenland from Akureyri cost Ikr39,590 to Ikr49,210.

**Red House** (☎ 981650; www.east-greenland.com; PO Box 81, Naparnqumut B 1025, DK-3913 Tasiilaq) Socially-responsible Greenlandic company offering a huge range of hiking, trekking, skiing, climbing, dogsledding, kayaking and hunting trips with experienced guides. Also offers daytrippers to Kulusuk a chance to cruise through the icebergs and take a dogsled tour on a glacier.

Other operators:

**Arctic Adventure** (☎ 33 25 32 21; www.arctic-adventure.dk; 30 Reventlowsgade, DK-1651 Copenhagen V) Danish company offering well-organised hotel-based tours around Iceland and trips across to Greenland.

**Arcturus Expeditions** (☎ 01432-850886; www.arcturusexpeditions.co.uk; PO Box 41, Hereford, HR1 9DP) English polar specialist, with a range of dogsledding, hiking and skiing trips to Greenland as well as cruises throughout the arctic.

**Discover the World** (☎ 01737-218800; www.discover-the-world.co.uk; 29 Nork Way, Banstead, Surrey, SM7 1PB) Friendly and popular British tour operator to Iceland, Greenland and Scandinavia, with plenty of adventure and wildlife itineraries.

**Great Canadian Travel Company** (☎ 204-949 0199; www.greatcanadiantravel.com; 158 Fort St, Winnipeg, Manitoba R3C 1C9) Canadian operator with various activity-based tours to Iceland and Greenland.

**Nordwind Reisen** (☎ 08331 87073; www.nordwindreisen.de; Maximilianstrasse 17, D-87700 Memmingen) German company offering a huge range of tours around Iceland, Greenland and the Faeroes, with accommodation in hotels, farmhouses and hostels.

**Regent Holidays** (☎ 01983-864212; www.regent-holidays.co.uk; 31a High St, Shanklin, Isle of Wight, PO37 6JW) English company with an extensive range of guided and independent tours of Iceland and Greenland.

**Scantours** (☎ 800-223 7226; www.scantours.com; 3439 Wade St, Los Angeles, CA 90066-1533) American company running four- to eight-day trips from Iceland to the Faeroes plus many other Greenland and Iceland tours.

## GREENLAND

As remote, wild and exotic as Iceland may seem to first-time visitors, it's positively pedestrian when compared to the splendours of Greenland. Nothing quite prepares you for the raw power of nature and the majestic scenery of this incredible place. Four times the size of France but with a population of just 56,500, it's a truly wild and humbling country. The sheer vastness of the icecap, the size of the

icebergs, the tenacity of the wildlife and the stoical attitude of the wonderful people will stay with you for life.

Travel here requires a combination of plane and helicopter flights and ferries through iceberg-strewn bays. Once at your destination you can choose to hike, ski, dogsled or kayak around the local area to see the towering peaks on the east coast, the gargantuan icebergs in Disko Bay or the surprisingly green fields of the south. Independent travel is easy to arrange, but there are plenty of all-inclusive packages if you'd rather let someone else do the planning.

For more information on Greenland, contact **Greenland Tourism** (☎ 32 83 38 80; www.greenland-guide.gl, www.greenland.com; PO Box 1139, Strandgade 91, DK-1010, Copenhagen). Alternatively, pick up Lonely Planet's *Greenland & the Arctic*.

## FAEROES

Flung out into the North Atlantic, halfway between Norway and Iceland, the Faeroes seem almost to lie on the edge of the earth. Their remote location and low media profile lend them a genuine air of mystery, and in many ways the fiercely independent residents of these 18 wind-scoured islands remain closer to their Viking roots than any of their neighbours.

Their ancestors can be traced back to the first seafaring explorers who set out from southern Norway in the 9th century and claimed Orkney, the Shetland Islands, Iceland and Greenland – and maybe even America. Today most people earn a living from farming or fishing and the laid-back atmosphere of the small and cosy villages is more reminiscent of the Scottish islands than Iceland. The landscape, too, resembles the Scottish highlands with Munro-like peaks and towering grass-topped sea cliffs, mobbed by nesting sea birds.

The capital, Tórshavn, is on the west coast of the largest island, Streymoy, while the airport is on Vágur, the next island south. Car ferries and tunnels link the various islands, providing access to remote fishing and farming villages and humbling ocean landscapes. Somehow, this is exactly how you expect the North Atlantic to look.

For more information on the Faeroes, contact the **Faeroe Islands Tourist Board** (☎ 298 355 800; www.tourist.fo; undir Bryggjubakka 17; FO-110 Tórshavn, Faeroe Islands), or see www.faroeislands.com.

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