

# Directory

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## ACCOMMODATION

There's no shortage of accommodation in Iceland and a huge range of places to stay, from luxury hotels to mountain huts, camp sites, hostels, homely farmhouses, guesthouses and summer hotels set in rural schools. Iceland's best-kept secret is the sleeping-bag option (designated 'sb' in this guide) offered by numerous guesthouses and some hotels. For a fraction of the normal cost you'll get a bed without a duvet or blanket; just bring your own sleeping bag and you can keep costs down substantially.

In this guide accommodation reviews are listed according to price, with budget doubles costing up to Ikr9000, midrange doubles

Ikr9000 to Ikr18,000, and top-end doubles going for more than Ikr18,000. Many hotels and guesthouses close during the winter; where this is the case, opening times are shown in the review. If no opening times are shown, accommodation is open all year. We've given summer prices throughout; in winter most guesthouses and hotels offer discounts of between 20% and 45%. Between June and mid-August it's a good idea to book all accommodation in advance.

## Camping

*Tjaldsvæði* (organised camp sites) are found in almost every town, at farmhouses in rural areas and along major hiking trails. The best sites have washing machines, cooking facilities and hot showers, but others just have a cold-water tap and a toilet block.

Wild camping is possible in some areas but in practice is often discouraged. In national parks and nature reserves you must camp in marked camp sites, and you need to get permission before camping on fenced land in all other places. Icelandic weather is notoriously fickle, though, and if you intend to camp it's wise to invest in a good-quality tent.

When camping the usual rules apply: leave sites as you find them, use biodegradable soaps, carry out your rubbish and bury your toilet waste away from water sources. Campfires are not allowed, so bring a stove. Butane cartridges and petroleum fuels are available in petrol stations and hardware shops, though you can often pick up partly-used canisters left behind by departing campers at the camp sites in Reykjavík and Keflavík.

Camping with a tent or campervan/caravan usually costs between Ikr600 and Ikr800 per person, with most camp sites open from June to August only. The free directory *Útilega – Tjaldsvæði Íslands* (available from tourist offices) lists many of Iceland's camp sites.

## Emergency Huts

**ICE-SAR** (Icelandic Association for Search & Rescue; ☎ 570 5900; www.icesar.is) and **Félag Íslenskra Bifeiðaeigenda** (Icelandic Automobile Association; ☎ 562 9999; www.fib.is) maintain bright-orange survival huts on high mountain passes and along remote coastlines. The huts are stocked with food, fuel and blan-

## PRACTICALITIES

- Iceland uses the metric system – distances are in kilometres and weights are in kilograms.
- The electrical current is 240V AC 50Hz (cycles); North American electrical devices will require voltage converters.
- Most electrical plugs are of the European two-pin type.
- Iceland uses the PAL video system, like Britain and Germany, and falls within DVD zone 2.
- The daily free paper *Morgunblaðið* is in Icelandic but features cinema listings in English.
- For tourist-oriented articles about Iceland in English, check out the glossy quarterly magazine **Iceland Review** (www.icelandreview.is).
- Iceland's two TV stations show Icelandic programmes during the day and American imports in the evening.
- Radio station RUV (Icelandic National Broadcasting Service, FM 92.4/93.5) has news in English at 7.30am Monday to Friday.
- Most hostels and hotels have satellite TV featuring other European channels.

kets and should only be used in an emergency. Users should sign the hut guestbook stating which items have been used, so they may be replaced for future users.

## Farmhouse Accommodation

Throughout Iceland accommodation is available in rural farmhouses, many of which offer camping and sleeping-bag space as well as made-up beds and summer cabins. Most either provide meals or have a guest kitchen, some have outdoor hot pots (hot tubs) or a geothermal swimming pool, and many provide horse riding. A sign by the roadside signals which farmhouses provide accommodation and what facilities they offer. Rates are similar to guesthouses in towns with sleeping-bag accommodation costing Ikr1800 to Ikr3000 and made-up beds from Ikr3000 to Ikr5500 per person. Breakfast costs about Ikr900, while an evening meal (usually served at a set time) costs Ikr1800 to Ikr3000.

About 150 farmhouses are members of **Ferðapjónusta Bænda** (Icelandic Farm Holidays; Map pp68-9; ☎ 570 2700; www.farmholidays.is; Síðumúli 2, IS-108 Reykjavík), which publishes an annual members' guide. Twenty-five are wheelchair accessible – see the website for details.

## Guesthouses

The Icelandic term *gistiheimilið* (guesthouse) covers a wide variety of properties from family homes renting out a few rooms to custom-built minihotels. These places can vary enormously in character from stylish, contemporary options

to others overwhelmed by net curtains and chintzy décor. Most include a buffet-style breakfast in the price (expect to pay about Ikr900 if not), and some also offer sleeping-bag accommodation and have guest kitchens.

As a general guide, sleeping-bag accommodation costs Ikr1800 to Ikr3500 (not including breakfast), double rooms from Ikr5000 to Ikr11,000 and self-contained units from Ikr6000 to Ikr15,000 per night.

Many Icelandic guesthouses open only from June to August; others take in students in the winter months – especially in Reykjavík.

## Hotels

Every major city and town has at least one business-style hotel, usually with comfortable but innocuous rooms with private bathroom, phone, TV and sometimes minibar. The hotels also have decent restaurants serving vaguely Icelandic food. Summer prices for singles/doubles start at Ikr9000/11,000 and include a buffet breakfast. Prices can drop substantially outside peak season (June to mid-September),

## BOOK ACCOMMODATION ONLINE

For more accommodation reviews and recommendations by Lonely Planet authors, check out the online booking service at www.lonelyplanet.com. You'll find the true, insider lowdown on the best places to stay. Reviews are thorough and independent. Best of all, you can book online.

and many hotels offer cheaper rates if you make your booking on the internet. Two of the largest local chains are **Fosshótelis** (☎ 562 4000; www.fosshotel.is), and **Icelandair Hotels** (☎ 444 4000; www.icehotels.is), which also runs the Edda chain (see below).

Holders of a **Skanplus card** (www.skanplus.com; €12) receive discounts of 10% to 40% on all Fosshótelis.

### SUMMER HOTELS

Once the school holidays begin, many schools and colleges become summer hotels offering simple accommodation in rooms or in a classroom. Summer hotels open from early June to late August and are run by local town or village councils or by **Edda Hótelis** (☎ 444 4000; www.hoteledda.is). All Edda hotels have their own restaurant, and many have geothermal swimming pools. The four Edda PLUS hotels are three-star places where all rooms have private bathroom, TV and phone. Expect to pay Ikr1700 to Ikr2200 for sleeping-bag accommodation, Ikr5800/7200 for a single/double with washbasin and Ikr10,3000/12,900 for a single/double at an Edda PLUS.

### Mountain Huts

Private walking clubs and touring organisations maintain *sæluhús* (mountain huts) on many of the popular hiking tracks around the country. The huts are open to anyone and offer sleeping-bag space in basic dormitories. Some also have cooking facilities, camp sites and a warden. The huts at Landmannalaugar and Þórsmörk are accessible by 4WD, and you can get to the huts in Hornstrandir by boat, but most are only accessible on foot. Even so, it's a really good idea to book with the relevant organisation as places fill up quickly.

The main organisation providing mountain huts is **Ferðafélag Íslands** (Icelandic Touring Association; Map pp68-9; ☎ 568 2533; www.fi.is; Mörkin 6, IS-108 Reykjavík), which owns 34 huts around Iceland, some maintained by local walking clubs. The best huts have showers, kitchens, wardens and potable water; they cost Ikr2200 for nonmembers. Simpler huts cost Ikr1200 for nonmembers and usually just have bed space, toilet and a basic cooking area. Camping is available at some huts for around Ikr800 per person. GPS coordinates for huts are included in the destination chapters.

The following also provide huts:

**Austurleið SBS** (☎ 898 0355; www.austurleid.is) At Húsadalur in Þórsmörk.

**Ferðafélag Akureyrar** (Touring Club of Akureyri; Map p213; ☎ 472 2720; www.ffa.is) Runs huts and most camp sites in the northeast, including the Askja Way.

**Útivist** (☎ 562 1000; www.utivist.is) At Bárar and Fimmvörðuháls Pass in Þórsmörk.

### Summer Houses

The summer house is a national institution in Iceland, with small self-catering cottages in natural beauty spots all over the country. Some Icelanders rent out their summer homes in high season for about Ikr25,000 to Ikr30,000 per three-night stay (minimum required) or Ikr44,000 to Ikr65,000 per week. Many advertise through **Viatour** (☎ 425 0300; www.viatour.is).

### Youth Hostels

Iceland has 26 excellent youth hostels, administered by the **Bandalag Íslenskra Farfugla** (Icelandic Youth Hostel Association; ☎ 553 8110; www.hostel.is; Sundlaugavegur 34, IS-105 Reykjavík). All hostels offer hot showers, cooking facilities, luggage storage and sleeping-bag accommodation, and most offer private rooms. If you don't have a sleeping bag, you can hire sheets and blankets for Ikr600 per stay. Many hostels close for the winter, so check reviews in this book or online for information on opening times.

Members of **Hostelling International** (HI; www.hihostels.com) pay Ikr1600 to Ikr1900 for a dorm bed; nonmembers pay roughly Ikr300 extra per night. Single/double/triple rooms cost roughly Ikr3900/6600/8250. Children aged five to 12 years pay half price. To become a member you should apply in your home country before travelling.

### ACTIVITIES

Iceland's dramatic scenery, vast tracts of wilderness and otherworldly atmosphere make it a superb playground for outdoor enthusiasts. The rugged interior and scenic coastline offer some fantastic opportunities for hiking (p52) – Þórsmörk, Landmannalaugar and Hornstrandir are particularly popular destinations – as well as horse riding (p53). Sea kayaking (p55) through dramatic fjordland scenery is also popular in many towns around the coast, and sea angling is also gaining in popularity. With Iceland's light traffic, cycling (p51) is a fantastic way to travel there. The majestic icecaps offer stunning scenery for ice trekking (p54), snowmobiling (p55) or for the

more experienced – ice climbing (p54) – while the meltwater forms mighty rivers that provide plenty of whitewater rafting (p56) opportunities. During the winter months skiing (downhill and cross-country, p55) and snowboarding (p55) are popular, and a range of newer activities such as diving (p51), potholing and snowkiting (p55) are just beginning to take off. For something more leisurely, almost every town has a geothermal swimming pool and a golf course, and many coastal areas offer fantastic opportunities for bird-watching (p51) and whale watching (p56).

### BUSINESS HOURS

Reviews throughout this book do not mention opening hours unless they differ from the standard opening hours below:

**Banks** 9.15am to 4pm Monday to Friday.

**Café-bars** 10am to 1am Sunday to Thursday and 10am to between 3am and 6am Friday and Saturday.

**Cafés** 10am to 6pm.

**Off-licences (liquor stores)** Variable; many outside Reykjavík only open for a couple of hours per day.

**Offices** 8am to 4pm Monday to Friday.

**Petrol stations** 9am to 10pm.

**Post offices** 8.30am or 9am to 4.30pm or 5pm Monday to Friday.

**Restaurants** 11.30am to 2.30pm and 6pm to 10pm.

**Shops** 9am to 6pm Monday to Friday, 10am to noon or 4pm Saturday.

**Supermarkets** 10am to 11pm.

### CHILDREN

Iceland is a fairly easy place to travel with children, and although there aren't many activities provided especially for younger travellers, the dramatic scenery, abundance of swimming pools, and the friendliness of the locals help to keep things running smoothly. For more general advice on travelling with children, look for Lonely Planet's *Travel with Children*.

### Practicalities

Children are warmly welcomed in Iceland and a range of discounts on transport and admission fees reflects this. On internal flights and tours with Air Iceland, children aged two to 11 years pay half fare and infants under two fly free, while most bus and tour companies offer a 50% reduction for children aged four to 11 years. Most tour companies and almost all museums and swimming pools offer 50% discounts for children under 12.

The changeable weather and frequent cold and rain may put you off camping as a family, but children aged two to 12 are usually charged half price for farmhouse and some other accommodation. Under twos can usually stay free. The larger hotels usually have cots and children's menus available, but you'll rarely find these in guesthouses. Many restaurants in Reykjavík and larger towns offer discounted children's meals, and most have high chairs.

Toilets at museums and other public institutions usually have dedicated nappy-changing facilities; elsewhere, you'll have to improvise. Attitudes to breast feeding in public are generally relaxed. Formula, nappies and other essentials are available everywhere, but it's hard to find child-care facilities. Best bet is to ask at the tourist office.

All the international car-hire companies offer child seats for an extra cost (these should be booked in advance), but you may want to bring your own to be safe. All cars in Iceland have front and rear seatbelts, including taxis. Buses sometimes have belts, but these are not compatible with child seats.

### Sights & Activities

Once you've decided on a family holiday in Iceland one of the biggest considerations will be what to see and where to go, as distances can be long between attractions. It may be a good idea to limit yourself to one particular part of the island in order to avoid boredom-induced tantrums and frequent bouts of carsickness.

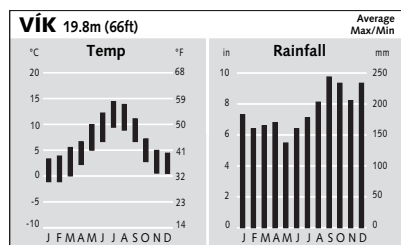
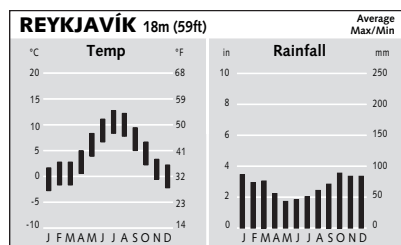
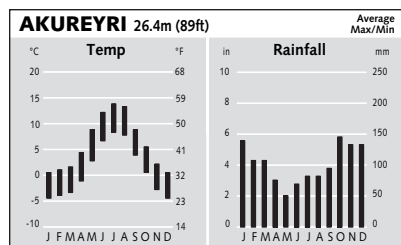
Reykjavík is the most child-friendly place in Iceland simply because it has the greatest variety of attractions and facilities. The family fun park and zoo (p79) are popular attractions, and local children can be seen feeding the birds on Tjörnin (p78) every day. The most suitable museums for older children are the open-air Árbæjarsafn (p76) and the dramatic Saga Museum (p75).

Almost every town in Iceland has a geothermal swimming pool, often with a children's play pool, water slides, and hot pots where adults can relax while the children play. Another activity ideal for children is whale watching – top spots include Reykjavík (p75), Húsavík (p241), Keflavík (p108) and Ólafsvík (p164). The short, mild-mannered Icelandic horses appear to have been specifically bred with children in mind, and horse farms all over the country offer riding by the hour from Ikr2500 – see p53.

Children will also enjoy some of the more lively geothermal areas, such as Geysir (p120), where the Strokkur geyser erupts at 10-minute intervals, and Mývatn (p227), where the abundance of odd features, lava fields and steaming vents can provide several days of entertainment for families. If you're driving long distances, the waterfalls just off Rte 1 in southwest Iceland are worthwhile detours to keep children amused, and the glaciers Sólheimajökull (p139) and Vatnajökull (p279) are also right next to the main road. Adults and children alike find the icebergs at Jökulsárlón (p291) fascinating and walks around lava fields can be spiced up with tales of elves and other little people – elf-spotting tours are available in Hafnarfjörður (p103).

## CLIMATE CHARTS

Icelandic weather is unpredictable at the best of times, with bright, sunny days reverting to



cold, wet and miserable conditions within a matter of hours. Rainfall in Iceland is fairly consistent throughout the year, but, because temperatures plummet in winter, it often falls as snow from September to May. The south and west coasts are usually the wettest parts of the country, with the north and east enjoying generally drier but colder conditions in winter. Areas with geothermal activity are often noticeably warmer than surrounding areas. Temperatures drop considerably as you go up into the mountains, particularly around the icecaps. For more information on weather in Iceland and the best time to travel, see p19.

## COURSES

It is possible to study in Iceland, but most of the courses on offer are only open to exchange students in the process of studying for a relevant academic qualification at a university overseas. One summer course that is open to nonstudents is the **Snorri Program** (☎ 551 0165; www.snorri.is; Öðinngata 7, Reykjavík, IS-101 Reykjavík), a residential work and study programme aimed at Americans with Icelandic ancestors. The **Sigurður Nordal Institute** (☎ 562 6050; www.nordals.hi.is) offers a 70-hour summer course in Icelandic that combines classroom learning with museum visits and excursions. The University of Iceland and **Denmark's International Study Program** (www.dis.dk) offer a six-week course, including various field trips, examining the unique biology and geology of Iceland.

Most horse farms, sea-angling operators and ski fields also offer lessons in their respective fields.

## CUSTOMS

Iceland has quite strict import restrictions. Duty-free allowances for travellers over 20 years of age are 1L of spirits (22% to 79% alcohol) and 1L of wine, or 6L of foreign beer (instead of wine or spirits). Alternatively, you can just bring in 2.25L of wine. People over 18 can bring in 200 cigarettes or 250g of other tobacco products. You can also import up to 3kg of food (except raw eggs, meat or dairy products), provided it doesn't cost more than Ikr13,000. This may help self-caterers to reduce costs.

To prevent contamination, recreational fishing and horse-riding clothes and equipment require a veterinarian's certificate stating that they have been disinfected. Alternatively, officials can disinfect gear when you arrive (Ikr1800 to Ikr2200).

Many people bring their cars on the ferry from Europe – special duty-waiver conditions apply for visitors staying up to one month, but vehicles cannot be sold without payment of duty.

Permits must be obtained in advance to import firearms, drugs, plants, radio transmitters and telephones (except GSM mobile phones). Contact the **Directorate of Customs** (☎ 560 0300; www.tollur.is; Tryggvagötu 19, 150 Reykjavík). Animals can only be brought in with the permission of the authorities and must be quarantined. Plants, animals (including bird eggs and eggshells) and 'natural objects' (particularly stalagmites and stalactites) may not be taken out of Iceland.

For a full list of customs regulations, see www.tollur.is.

Any purchases you make in Iceland over Ikr4000 (at a single point of sale) may be eligible for a 15% VAT refund. Shops offering VAT refunds display a special 'tax-free shopping' sign in the window. You'll need to fill out a form in the shop and present it at the airport, ferry terminal or some tourist offices before you leave to collect your rebate. Note that goods must be exported within 30 days of purchase. See www.icelandrefund.com for details of the scheme.

## DANGERS & ANNOYANCES

Iceland has a very low crime rate and in general any risks you'll face while travelling here are related to the unpredictable weather and the geological conditions.

Whether travelling in summer or winter, visitors need to be prepared for inclement conditions. The weather in Iceland can change without warning, and it's essential for hikers to get a reliable weather forecast before setting off – call ☎ 902 0600 or visit www.vedur.is/english for a daily forecast in English. Extreme cold can be dangerous when walking around glaciers and throughout the country in winter, so proper clothing is essential. Even those driving in winter should carry food, water and blankets in their car. Emergency huts are provided in places where travellers run the risk of getting caught in severe weather, and car-hire companies can provide snow tyres or chains in winter.

When hiking, river crossings can be dangerous, with glacial runoff turning trickling streams into raging torrents on warm summer days. High winds can create vicious sand-

storms in areas where there is loose volcanic sand. It's also worth noting that hiking paths in coastal areas are often only accessible at low tide, so seek local advice and obtain the relevant tide tables from the **Icelandic Hydrographic Service** (☎ 545 2000; Seljavegur 32, IS-101 Reykjavík).

When visiting geothermal areas, stick to boardwalks or obviously solid ground, avoiding thin crusts of lighter-coloured soil around steaming fissures and mud pots. You also need to be careful of the water in hot springs and mud pots – it often emerges out of the ground at 100°C. Always get local advice before hiking around live volcanoes. In glacial areas beware of dangerous quicksand at the end of glaciers, and never venture out onto the ice without crampons and ice axes (even then, watch out for crevasses).

One risk most travellers must face is dangerous driving on Iceland's roads. Locals universally ignore the speed limit, cut corners and weave out of their lanes. For more information on driving in Iceland, see p333.

## DISCOUNT CARDS

Students and the elderly qualify for discounts on internal flights, some bus fares, tours and museum entry fees, but you'll need to show proof of student status or age.

Seniors (67 years or older) qualify for significant discounts on internal flights and ferry fares – any proof of age should suffice.

The **International Student Identity Card** (ISIC; www.isic.org) is the most widely recognised form of student identification. Cardholders under 26 get substantial discounts (up to 50%) on internal flights, ferries, museum admissions and some bus fares. Some restaurants and bars also offer student discounts. All young people under 26 with proof of age can get special stand-by fares on internal flights.

## EMBASSIES & CONSULATES

Up-to-date details of embassies and consulates within Iceland and overseas can be found (in English) on the Icelandic Ministry of Foreign Affairs website www.mfa.is.

## Icelandic Embassies & Consulates

Following is a partial list of Icelandic embassies and consulates in other countries.

**Australia** (☎ 02-9365 7345; iceland@bigpond.net.au; 16 Birriga Rd, Bellevue Hill, Sydney 2000, New South Wales)

**Canada** (☎ 613-482 1944; www.iceland.org/ca; 360 Albert St, Suite 710, Ottawa ON K1R 7X7)

**Denmark** (☎ 33 18 10 50; www.iceland.org/dk; Strandgade 89, DK-1401 Copenhagen K)

**Faeroe Islands** (☎ 30 11 01; info@faeroeyard.fo; JC Svabosgøta 31, Box 65, Tórshavn)

**Finland** (☎ 09 612 2460; www.islanti.fi; Pohjoisesplanadi 27C, Fin-00100 Helsinki)

**France** (☎ 01 44 17 32 85; www.iceland.org/fr; 8 Ave Kléber, F-75116 Paris)

**Germany** (☎ 030-5050 4000; www.iceland.org/de; Rauchstrasse 1, DE-10787 Berlin)

**Greenland** (☎ 98 12 93; kelly@greenet.gl; c/o Hotel Angmagssalik, Sulup Aqq B725, Postbox 117, Tasiilaq)

**Ireland** (☎ 01-872 9299; jgg@goregrimes.ie; Cavendish House, Smithfield, Dublin)

**Japan** (☎ 03-3447 1944; emb.tokyo@mfa.is; 4-18-26 Takanawa, Minato-ku, Tokyo 108 0074)

**Netherlands** (☎ 431 33 13; robbie@reved.nl; 2nd fl, Strawinskylaan 3037, Amsterdam)

**New Zealand** (☎ 09-379 4720; ebarratt@sanford.co.nz; c/o Sanford Ltd, 22 Jellicoe St, Auckland)

**Norway** (☎ 2323 7530; www.iceland.org/no; Stortingsgata 30, NO-0244 Oslo)

**Sweden** (☎ 08 442 8300; www.iceland.org/se; Kommandörsgatan 35, SE-114 58 Stockholm)

**UK** (☎ 020 7259 3999; www.iceland.org/uk; 2a Hans St, London SW1X 0JE)

**USA** (☎ 202-265 6653; www.iceland.org/us; 1156 15th St NW, Suite 1200, Washington DC 20005-1704)

## Embassies & Consulates in Iceland

Although many countries have some kind of representation in Iceland, this is often merely just a trade representative working for an Icelandic company. A handful of countries do have formal embassies in Reykjavik:

**Canada** (Map p72; ☎ 575 6500; rkjvk@international.gc.ca; Túngata 14)

**Denmark** (Map p72; ☎ 575 0300; www.ambreykjavik.um.dk; Hverfisgata 29)

**Finland** (Map pp68-9; ☎ 510 0100; www.finland.is; Túngata 30)

**France** (Map p72; ☎ 551 7621; www.ambafrence.is; Túngata 22)

**Germany** (Map pp68-9; ☎ 530 1100; embager@internet.is; Laufásvegur 31)

**Ireland** (☎ 554 2355; davidsch@islandia.is; Ásbúð 106, 210 Garðabær)

**Japan** (Map pp68-9; ☎ 510 8600; japan@itn.is; 6th fl, Laugavegur 182)

**Netherlands** (Map pp68-9; ☎ 533 1002; holland@holland.is; Borgartún 33)

**Norway** (Map pp68-9; ☎ 520 0700; www.noregur.is; Fjólugata 17)

**Sweden** (Map pp68-9; ☎ 520 1230; www.sweden.abroad.com; 4th fl, Lágmúli 7)

**UK** (Map pp68-9; ☎ 550 5100; www.britishembassy.gov.uk; Laufásvegur 31)

**USA** (Map p72; ☎ 562 9100; www.usa.is; Laufásvegur 21)

## FESTIVALS & EVENTS

True to their Viking roots, Icelanders love to party and a host of enthusiastic celebrations is held all over the country throughout the year. The following list details the main national festivals, but there are also loads of lively regional festivals – see the individual destination chapters for further information. Reykjavik has a particularly hectic festival calendar. For upcoming festivals and events, visit [www.musik.is](http://www.musik.is) or the ‘what’s on’ section of [www.exploreiceland.is](http://www.exploreiceland.is).

### January to March

**Porrablót** The Viking midwinter feast (18 January to 16 February) is marked with stomach-churning treats such as *hákarl* (putrid shark meat) and *svið* (singled lamb’s head).

**Bolludagur** (Bun Day) In preparation for Lent, on the Monday before Shrove Tuesday children are encouraged to pester adults with coloured sticks and solicit vast numbers of *bullur* (cream buns).

**Sprengidagur** (Shrove Tuesday) ‘Bursting Day’ is another pre-Lenten celebration, an excuse for a traditional feast of salted mutton and pea soup.

**Óskudagur** (Ash Wednesday) Another excuse for children to menace adults, this time by collecting money for goodies and tying small sacks of ash on their backs.

**Beer Day** A celebration of the legalisation of beer in 1989 takes place on 1 March – with buckets of the stuff on tap.

**Festival of Light** Reykjavik hosts a celebration of light and darkness in late February or early March, with concerts, ghost stories, parades and fireworks.

### April

**Sumardagurinn Fyrsti** (First Day of Summer) Icelanders celebrate this welcome day on the first Thursday after April 18, with carnival-type celebrations and street parades, particularly in Reykjavik.

**Easter** The usual Easter-egg hunts, followed by smoked lamb for dinner. Last Sunday in April.

### May

**Rite of Spring** An alternative festival of world music takes place in Reykjavik in May, featuring everything from jazz to folk and blues.

**Reykjavik Art Festival** ([www.artfest.is](http://www.artfest.is)) Iceland’s premier cultural festival is in late May, with two weeks of local and international theatre performances, film, dance, music and visual art.

### June

**Sjómannadagurinn** (Sailors’ Day) The biggest party of the year in fishing villages is on the first Sunday in June, with drinking, rowing and swimming contests, tugs-of-war and mock-ups of sea rescues.

**Independence Day** The country’s largest festival is on 17 June, celebrating the granting of independence from Denmark in 1944. Expect lots of drinking, dancing, music and parades.

**Midsummer** The longest day of the year (24 June or thereabouts) is celebrated with lots of partying. Some superstitious souls even roll naked in the midsummer dew for its ‘magical’ healing powers.

### August

**Verslunarmannahelgi** (August Bank Holiday, first weekend in August) A long weekend where Icelanders flock to rural festivals, family barbecues, massive rock concerts and wild camp-site parties. Vestmannaeyjar residents use this weekend for the massive Þjóðhátíð, which began as Vestmannaeyjar’s celebration of the making of Iceland’s constitution in 1874 (local residents missed it due to bad weather).

**Culture Night** Midmonth, Reykjavik turns out in full for a night of art, music, dance and fireworks.

**Reykjavik Marathon** ([www.marathon.is](http://www.marathon.is)) This race takes place on the same day as Culture Night, with full and half-marathons and fun runs for the fabulously fit.

**Gay Pride** ([www.gaypride.is](http://www.gaypride.is)) Merriment and wild costumes as thousands parade carnival-style through the streets of Reykjavik to an open-air stage show featuring live music and entertainment. It’s on the third weekend of the month.

### September

**Réttir** The annual farmers’ roundup of sheep, accompanied by festivals in the highlands.

**Reykjavik Jazz Festival** ([www.jazz.is](http://www.jazz.is)) On the last weekend of the month, this festival attracts international names as well as Iceland’s leading jazz musicians.

**Reykjavik International Film Festival** ([www.filmfest.is](http://www.filmfest.is)) In late September or early October, this 10-day event features the hottest new international films as well as seminars and workshops.

### October

**Fyrsti Vetrardagur** (First Day of Winter) On the third Saturday of the month families get together to mourn the passing of summer. It’s generally a low-key affair.

**Iceland Airwaves** ([www.icelandairwaves.com](http://www.icelandairwaves.com)) Reykjavik is home to this cutting-edge music festival at the end of the month. It features four days of top DJs, international live music and hard-core partying.

### November & December

**Unglist** (Young Art Festival) In the first week of November in Reykjavik, this festival features theatre, music,

visual art, photography and fashion from the city’s younger artists.

**New Year’s Eve** Dinner, bonfires, fireworks, parties and clubbing on 31 December till the early hours to celebrate the arrival of the new year.

## FOOD

Eating is going to be one of the main expenses of any trip to Iceland. If you choose to eat out, your evening meal could easily cost as much as your bed for the night. For the purposes of this book, restaurants with average main courses costing under Ikr1000 are classified as budget, those from Ikr1000 to Ikr3000 are midrange and those with main courses above Ikr3000 are top end.

The best way to keep costs down is to cook for yourself. Most places offering hostel beds or sleeping-bag space have guest kitchens, and supermarket prices are reasonable. For campers it’s worth noting that most supermarkets also have a microwave where you can heat up purchases, and some also serve free coffee. The next cheapest option is to eat at the fast-food grills and snack bars found in most villages (usually at the petrol station), where you can pick up a burger, chips and a drink for about Ikr500, but the food is unhealthy and quickly becomes tedious. At formal restaurants, expect to pay Ikr1800 to Ikr4000 for main courses. Pizza restaurants are a cheaper bet, with main courses around Ikr1500. Otherwise, opt for the good-value lunch buffets and eat a smaller meal in the evening. Even in the best restaurants, tipping the staff is not expected; service is always included in the bill.

You’ll find more information on food and special dishes on p57.

## GAY & LESBIAN TRAVELLERS

Icelanders have a fairly open attitude towards gays and lesbians, though the gay scene is quite low-key, even in Reykjavik (see p67). Aggression against gays and lesbians is rare. The main gay and lesbian organisation is **Samtökin ’78** (Map p72; ☎ 552 7878; office@samtokin78.is; 4th fl, Laugavegur 3, IS-101 Reykjavik), which doubles as an informal gay community centre with a drop-in café (open 8pm to 11pm Monday and Thursday). Other useful sources of information on news, events and entertainment venues include the websites <http://gay.mis.is> and [www.gayice.is](http://www.gayice.is). Several companies offer tours to Iceland with a gay focus – try an Internet search using the terms ‘gay tours iceland’.

## HOLIDAYS

Icelandic public holidays are usually an excuse for a family gathering or, when they occur at weekends, a reason to rush to the countryside and go camping. If you're planning to travel during holiday periods, particularly the August holiday, you should book camping areas, mountain huts and transport well in advance, particularly in popular areas such as Þórsmörk. Icelandic hotels and guesthouses generally shut down from Christmas Eve to New Year's Day.

### Public Holidays

National public holidays in Iceland:

**New Year's Day** 1 January

**Easter** March or April (Maundy Thursday and Good Friday to Easter Monday; changes annually)

**First Day of Summer** First Thursday after April 18

**Labour Day** 1 May

**Ascension Day** May or June (changes annually)

**Whit Sunday and Whit Monday** May or June (changes annually)

**Independence Day** 17 June

**Shop & Office Workers' Holiday** First Monday in August

**Christmas** 24 December to 26 December

**New Year's Eve** 31 December

### School Holidays

The main school summer holiday runs from June to August, which is when most of the Edda and summer hotels open up. There are big student parties when school breaks up and when school restarts, so popular camping areas may be packed out. Þórsmörk is the venue for a huge student bash in July, which is either a reason to come or a reason to stay away. The winter school holiday is a two- to three-week break over the Christmas period (December to January).

## INSURANCE

Although Iceland is a very safe place to travel, theft does occasionally happen and of course illness and accidents are always a possibility. A travel-insurance policy to cover theft, loss and medical problems is strongly recommended. Always check the small print to see if the policy covers any potentially dangerous sporting activities, such as trekking, rock climbing, horse riding, skiing or snowmobiling. For more information on the health aspects of travel in Iceland, including insurance, see p335. For information on motor insurance, see p331.

### ARE YOU OLD ENOUGH?

Iceland has legal minimum ages for many activities:

**Voting** 18 years.

**Drinking** 20 years.

**Driving** 18 years (20 to 25 years for car hire, depending on the company).

## INTERNET ACCESS

You'll find public internet access available in most Icelandic libraries, even in small towns. These are by far the best and cheapest places to check your mail, with most offering internet access for about 1kr100 to 1kr200 per hour – a fraction of the cost of hotels or net cafés. Reykjavík and some larger towns have private internet cafés, and most top-end hotels, youth hostels and tourist offices have internet terminals with fast and reliable connections.

Wi-fi access is becoming more common in Iceland and with a wireless-enabled laptop you'll be up and running in seconds. Some hotels do still have wired access however, and to use your own laptop you'll need either a dial-up account with global access numbers or an account with a local internet service provider (ISP) – the main provider in Iceland is **Siminn** ([www.siminn.is](http://www.siminn.is)). Most hotels have telephones in the bedrooms, but you should bring an adapter with the correct type of telephone jack – Iceland uses RJ11 jacks like the USA.

For information on useful websites about Iceland, see p22.

## LEGAL MATTERS

Icelandic police are generally low-key and there's very little reason for you to end up in their hands. It's worth knowing, however, that drink-driving laws are very strict – one drink can put you over the legal limit of 0.05% blood-alcohol content. The penalty is loss of your licence plus a large fine. If you are involved in any other traffic offences – speeding, driving without due care and attention etc – you may be asked to go to the station to pay the fines immediately.

Drunk and disorderly behaviour may land you in a police cell for a night, but you will usually be released the following morning. Take note, however, that the penalties for possession, use or trafficking of illegal drugs are strict; these activities usually incur long prison sentences and heavy fines.

If you are arrested by the police, they can notify your embassy or consulate, or anyone else you specify, on your behalf. Lawyers are not provided by the state in Iceland, but the police can arrange a lawyer for you at your own expense. You can generally be held for 24 hours without being charged, and you can only be searched if you give consent, unless they have reason to be suspicious.

## MAPS

The best maps of Iceland are produced by **Landmælingar Íslands** (National Land Survey of Iceland; ☎ 430 9000; [www.lmi.is](http://www.lmi.is); Stillholt 16-18, IS-300 Akranes), and they cover the entire nation in fine detail. You can order any of these maps online or by mail, or pick them up at bookshops and tourist offices around the country.

The best map for driving around Iceland, the 1:500,000 *Ferðakort Touring Map* (1kr787) includes all the larger villages and roads, and many small farms and B&Bs. The more in-depth 1:200,000 *Road Atlas* (1kr2614) has full mapping plus details of accommodation, museums, swimming pools and golf courses.

More detailed maps include the 1:250,000 maps of Westfjords and north Iceland, west and south Iceland, and northeast and east Iceland (1kr1084); a 1:25,000 map of Skaftafell (1kr787); and 1:100,000 hikers' maps for Hornstrandir, Húsavík/Lake Mývatn, and Þórsmörk/Landmannalaugar (1kr787).

The tourist offices of the various regions produce useful maps showing sites of tourist interest and they stock the free tourist booklet *Around Iceland*, which has bags of information and town plans.

## MONEY

Iceland is an almost cashless society where the credit card is king. Icelanders use plastic for even small purchases and as long as you're carrying a valid card you'll have little need for travellers cheques and will only need to take out a limited amount of cash.

For information on costs, see p20.

## ATMs

Almost every town in Iceland has a bank with an ATM where you can withdraw cash using MasterCard, Visa, Maestro or Cirrus cards. Íslandsbanki ATMs also allow withdrawals with a Diners Club card. You'll also find ATMs at larger petrol stations and in shopping centres.

## Cash

The Icelandic unit of currency is the generally stable króna (1kr). Coins come in denominations of one, five, 10, 50 and 100 krónur. Notes come in 500-, 1000-, 2000- and 5000-króna denominations. For exchange rates, see inside the front cover.

## Credit & Debit Cards

Icelanders use credit and debit cards for nearly all purchases, and major cards such as Visa, MasterCard, Maestro and Cirrus – and to a lesser extent American Express, Diners Club and JCB – are accepted in most shops, restaurants and hotels. You can also pay for the Flybus from the international airport to Reykjavík using plastic – handy if you've just arrived in the country. If you intend to stay in rural farmhouse accommodation or visit isolated villages it's a good idea to carry enough cash to tide you over.

## Moneychangers

The Icelandic love of plastic makes changing foreign currency almost unnecessary. However, if you prefer more traditional methods of carrying cash then foreign-denomination travellers cheques and banknotes can be exchanged for Icelandic currency at all major banks. Most banks charge a small commission fee for the transaction, but Landsbanki Íslands offers the service free of charge. Out of normal banking hours, you will have to rely on the poor rates and high charges of commercial exchange offices, or hope that your hotel or guesthouse can help you out.

## Tipping

As service and VAT are always included in prices, tipping isn't required in Iceland.

## Travellers Cheques

Travellers cheques in major currencies such as euros, US dollars, UK pounds and Danish krone are accepted by all banks and by the commission-hungry private exchange offices.

## POST

The **Icelandic postal service** (Pósturinn; [www.postur.is](http://www.postur.is)) is reliable and efficient, and rates are comparable to those in other Western European countries. An airmail letter or postcard to Europe costs economy/priority 1kr65/75; to places outside Europe it costs 1kr70/95. You'll

find a full list of postal rates for letters and parcels online.

The best place to receive poste restante is the central post office in Reykjavík – tell potential correspondents to capitalise your surname and address mail to Poste Restante, Central Post Office, Pósthússtræti 5, IS-101 Reykjavík, Iceland.

## SHOPPING

Typical Icelandic souvenirs include traditional woolen sweaters, dried fish and trolls of all descriptions. You'll also find a good selection of T-shirts and silver jewellery inspired by Icelandic runes. Products such as candle holders made from volcanic rock are becoming popular and CDs of Icelandic music can be good buys. For less traditional souvenirs such as high-quality ceramics, try the boutiques and galleries on Skólavörðustígur in Reykjavík.

If you're making any purchases over Ikr4000 it's worth claiming back the permitted 15% VAT refund. For more details of the scheme, see p317.

Normal opening hours for shops are listed on p315.

## SOLO TRAVELLERS

There's no difficulty in travelling alone in Iceland, but if you fancy hooking up with other travellers the Reykjavík City Hostel is an excellent place to start. The noticeboard here usually has lots of messages from other travellers, and, as with all hostels, the communal kitchens can be the starting point for many shared trips and interesting friendships.

Another place you may be able to find travel companions is Lonely Planet's **Thorn Tree** (<http://thorn.tree.lonelyplanet.com>) – post a message on the forum's Scandinavia branch and see if any other travellers are going to be in Iceland when you are. Failing all that, you may want to join an organised adventure tour – see p333 for listings of tour companies operating in Iceland.

## TELEPHONE & FAX

Iceland Telecom **Síminn** ([www.siminn.is](http://www.siminn.is)) provides all phone, mobile phone and internet services in the country. Public payphones can usually be found at post offices and public places such as bus or petrol stations, and most now accept credit cards as well as coins. Public fax services are provided at most post offices.

### EMERGENCY NUMBERS

For police, ambulance and fire services in Iceland, dial ☎ 112.

The telephone directory and *Yellow Pages* are in Icelandic, but directory-inquiries operators usually speak English. Telephone directories are alphabetised by first name, so Guðrun Halldórsdóttir would be listed before Jón Einarsson. There's an online version of the phone book at [www.simaskra.is](http://www.simaskra.is).

Service numbers:

**Directory inquiries (local)** ☎ 118.

**Directory inquiries (international)** ☎ 1811.

**Operator assistance** ☎ 115.

**Reverse-charge (collect) calls** ☎ 533 5019 for assistance.

## Mobile Phones

Iceland has the highest per-capita mobile phone use in the world and uses the GSM network in populated areas. The NMT network covers the interior and other remote regions; to have coverage in these areas you'll need to hire an NMT phone locally. Visitors with GSM or multiband phones will be able to make roaming calls, providing the service has been activated – contact your local phone company for more information.

If you're going to be in Iceland for a while it may be worth buying a local prepaid SIM card (Ikr2500 including Ikr2000 of free call credit) that will allow you to make calls at local rates. You can get additional prepaid cards at shops and petrol stations. You'll need an unlocked phone for this to work. Alternatively, you can rent a mobile phone (GSM or NMT) from **Síminn** (☎ 550 6000; [www.siminn.is](http://www.siminn.is); Ármúli 27, Reykjavík) for around Ikr400 per day plus deposit.

## Phone Codes

There are no area codes in Iceland, so you can dial the seven-digit number from anywhere in the country for the same price. For international calling, first dial the international access code ☎ 00, then the country code (listed in telephone directories), the area or city code, and the telephone number. International call rates are the same around the clock. To phone Iceland from abroad, dial the local international access code, the country code (☎ 354) and the seven-digit phone number. Toll-free numbers in Iceland begin with ☎ 800, and

most seven-digit mobile phone numbers start with an eight.

## Phonecards

The smallest-denomination phonecard (for use in public telephone boxes) costs Ikr500, and can be bought from post offices and Síminn telephone offices. Low-cost international phone cards are also available in many shops and youth hostels.

## TIME

Iceland's time zone is the same as GMT/UTC (London), but there is no daylight-saving time. So from late October to late March Iceland is on the same time as London, five hours ahead of New York and 11 hours behind Sydney. In the northern hemisphere summer, it's one hour behind London, four hours ahead of New York and 10 hours behind Sydney.

## TOURIST INFORMATION

Icelandic tourist-information offices are helpful, friendly and well informed and can be invaluable in assisting you to find accommodation, book tours or see the best an area has to offer. Employees usually speak several European languages including English.

Most tourist offices provide the useful booklets *Around Iceland* (a general tourist guide), *Iceland On Your Own* (a public-transport guide) and *Áning* (a guide to accommodation). All are free and published annually. If you plan to stay in farmhouse B&Bs, pick up a copy of *The Ideal Holiday*, a guide to farmhouse accommodation.

The **Icelandic Tourist Board** (Map p213; ☎ 535 5500; [www.icetourist.is](http://www.icetourist.is); Lækjargata 3, IS-101 Reykjavík) is the umbrella organisation in charge of tourism. There are tourist offices at **Keflavik International Airport** (☎ 425 0330; [www.reykjanes.is](http://www.reykjanes.is)) and in Reykjavík at the **Main Tourist Office** (Upplýsingamiðstöð Ferðamanna; Map p213; ☎ 590 1500; [www.visitreykjavik.is](http://www.visitreykjavik.is); Aðalstræti 2). Reykjavík also has several private tourist-information offices, and there are council-run information offices in towns and villages around the country.

The main regional tourist offices:

**East Iceland** (☎ 471 2320; [www.east.is](http://www.east.is); Kaupvangur 10, IS-700 Egilsstaðir)

**North Iceland** (Map p213; ☎ 462 7733; [www.eyjafjordur.is](http://www.eyjafjordur.is), [www.northiceland.is](http://www.northiceland.is); Hafnarstræti 82, IS-600 Akureyri)

**Southeast Iceland** (☎ 478 1500; [www.east.is](http://www.east.is); Hafnarbraut 30, IS-780 Höfn)

**Southwest Iceland** (☎ 483 4601; [www.southiceland.is](http://www.southiceland.is); Sunnumörk 2-4, IS-810 Hveragerði)

**Westfjords** (☎ 456 5121; [www.westfjords.is](http://www.westfjords.is), [www.westfirdir.is](http://www.westfirdir.is); Aðalstræti 7, IS-400 Ísafjörður)

**West Iceland** (☎ 437 2214; [www.west.is](http://www.west.is); Hyrnan Complex, IS-310 Borgarnes)

Icelandic Tourist Board offices overseas:

**Denmark** (☎ 32 833 741; [www.visiticeland.com](http://www.visiticeland.com); Islands Turistråd, Strandgade 91 oppgang C, 2 loft, 1401 København K)

**Germany** (☎ 6102 254 388; [www.icetourist.de](http://www.icetourist.de); Isländisches Fremdenverkehrsamt, City Center, Frankfurter Strasse 181, D-63263 Neu-Isenburg)

**USA** (☎ 212-885 9700; [www.goiceland.org](http://www.goiceland.org); 655 Third Ave, New York, NY 10017)

If you arrive in a town after the tourist office has closed, the local petrol station is generally a good bet for information on the area.

## TRAVELLERS WITH DISABILITIES

Iceland is on a par with most of northern Europe when it comes to access for travellers with disabilities. International and internal flights can accommodate most disabilities, but some flights use small aircraft that may be unsuitable for the mobility impaired. The car ferries *Baldur* and *Herjólfur* have facilities for wheelchairs, but public buses generally don't have lifts or ramps, with the exception of Reykjavík city buses. Many hotels, restaurants and large shops have facilities for people with disabilities, and there are reduced admission fees for most museums, galleries and tourist attractions. Air Iceland and Smyril Line offer discounts for disabled travellers on flights and ferries.

For more details of facilities for disabled people – including wheelchair-accessible hotels and tours – contact the tourist office in Reykjavík or get in touch with **Sjálfsbjörg** (☎ 550 0300; [www.sjalfsbyjorg.is](http://www.sjalfsbyjorg.is); Hátún 12, IS-105 Reykjavík).

The Icelandic company **Hopferdathjonusta Reykjavíkur** (☎ 587 8030; [hrtravel@simnet.is](http://hrtravel@simnet.is); Brunastadir 3, IS-112 Reykjavík) specialises in tours for the disabled and may be able to help or advise on planning a trip around the country.

The UK-based website **Door-to-Door** ([www.dptac.gov.uk/door-to-door](http://www.dptac.gov.uk/door-to-door)) is a good starting point when planning overseas travel, and has a helpful section on air travel and getting to and from UK airports. In the USA you'll get similar, valuable information from the **Society for Accessible Travel & Hospitality** (☎ 212-447 7284;

www.sath.org; 347 5th Ave, Suite 610, New York, NY 10016) or **Accessible Journeys** (☎ 610-521 0339; www disabilitytravel.com; 35 West Sellers Ave, Ridley Park, PA 19078). **Access Able Travel** (www.access-able.com) has a world-wide travel forum where you can post questions about disabled travel.

## VISAS

Citizens of Schengen nations (Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain and Sweden) can enter Iceland as tourists for up to three months with a valid identity card. Citizens of the European Economic Area (EEA), including Ireland and Britain, do not require visas for stays up to three months. To stay longer you must apply for a residence permit, which is only available from Icelandic embassies or consulates overseas.

Citizens from America, Australia, New Zealand, Japan and Canada can travel without a visa for up to three months within any six-month period; this period is deemed to begin on the first entry to any Schengen nation. Other nationalities need a visa from an Icelandic consulate before arriving – see p317 for details of Icelandic embassies and consulates around the world. The fee varies depending on nationality, and the visa typically allows a three-month stay. Officials will usually request proof that you have sufficient funds for your visit and an onward plane or boat ticket.

## VOLUNTEERING

A volunteering holiday is a good (and relatively cheap) way of getting intimately involved with Iceland's people and landscape. One of the most popular programmes is run in conjunction with **Umhverfisstofnun** (UST, Environment & Food Agency; <http://english.ust.is/of-interest/ConservationVolunteers>), recruiting up to 100 volunteers each summer for work on practical conservation projects around the country.

For an overview of other possibilities and projects, try **Volunteer Abroad** (www.volunteerabroad.com) or **Working Abroad** (www.workingabroad.com), both of which list projects from a variety of sources.

Alternatively, you can try the following organisations:

**British Trust for Conservation Volunteers** (www.btcv.org) Short-term conservation work in Skaftafell and Jökulsárgljúfur National Parks, as well as Mývatn and Fjallabak Nature Reserves in association with the Icelandic Ministry of Environment. Volunteers pay BTCV a fee (roughly

UK£300 to UK£500 for 10 to 14 days) for accommodation and food costs and must pay for their own transport to a designated pick-up point.

**Earthwatch** (www.earthwatch.org) Scientific expeditions where volunteers pay full costs (roughly UK£1000 for eight days) to participate. Recent Iceland expeditions included geological fieldwork on the glaciers of Skaftafell National Park.

**Service Civil International** (www.sciint.org) Network of voluntary organisations facilitating participation in short-term volunteering projects working with local community groups; projects include conservation, tree planting, trail building, eco-villages, and archaeological and festival work. Volunteers pay a membership and administration fee (UK£145) to their local branch and make their own way to a project, but once they're there all food and accommodation is provided free of charge.

**United Planet** (www.unitedplanet.org) Long-term (six- to 12-month) projects including humanitarian service, language and intercultural training, cultural learning activities, and exploration. Costs (US\$5000 to US\$7000) cover housing, insurance and a language course.

## WOMEN TRAVELLERS

Women travelling alone in Iceland should encounter few problems, though common-sense precautions apply – walking around city streets alone after dark and hitching alone are not really recommended. When out on the town in Reykjavík be prepared for the advances of Icelandic men – if you think they're being too forward, just make this clear and they will leave you be. In rural areas pubs and restaurants are often combined and attract mainly couples during the week, so single women should have few problems.

In Reykjavík, rape-crisis advice is available from the women's organisation **Stígamót** (☎ 562 6868; www.stigamot.is).

## WORK

Citizens of EEA countries do not require a work permit to apply for jobs in Iceland; all other citizens must secure a job offer and work permit before arriving. Work permits are generally only granted to fill seasonal job shortages or for highly skilled professions that are underrepresented in Iceland. For information on residence permits, visit the **Icelandic Directorate of Immigration** (www.utl.is).

Although unemployment is low in Iceland (about 3.1%), it can be difficult to find work, especially if you are looking for anything better than cleaning, waiting tables or seasonal farm work. For all other work, companies may

be reluctant to hire foreigners who cannot speak Icelandic.

The website of **Vinnumalastofnun** (Directorate of Labour; ☎ 515 4800; www.vinnumalastofnun.is) is a good source of information on living and working in Iceland and has links to the Eures job-search facility (<http://europa.eu.int/eures>), which lists public-employment jobs

online. EU-flagged vacancies are those where Icelandic language skills are not essential. If you're interested in doing farm work, **Ninukot** (☎ 487 8576; www.ninukot.is; Skeggjastaðir, 861-Hvólsvölur) is an employment agency specialising in farm placements.

See opposite if you wish to do voluntary work in Iceland.

# Transport

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## GETTING THERE & AWAY

Iceland has become far more accessible in recent years with a greater variety of flights and destinations available. Ferry transport is also possible and makes a good alternative for European travellers wishing to take their own car to the country.

You can book your flights, tours and rail tickets online at [www.lonelyplanet.com/travel\\_services](http://www.lonelyplanet.com/travel_services).

### ENTERING THE COUNTRY

As long as you are in possession of the right documentation, immigration control should be a quick formality at the air or ferry port where you arrive. Citizens of Schengen nations, the European Economic Area (EEA), the US, Australia, New Zealand, Japan and Canada can travel in Iceland without a visa for up to three months. Other nationalities require a visa; for more information, see p324.

### AIR Airports & Airlines

Iceland's main international airport is **Keflavik International Airport** (KEF; ☎ 425 0600; [www.keflavikairport.com](http://www.keflavikairport.com)), 48km west of Reykjavik. Internal flights and those to Greenland and the Faeroe

### THINGS CHANGE...

The information in this chapter is particularly vulnerable to change. Check directly with the airline or a travel agent to make sure you understand how a fare (and any ticket you may buy) works and be aware of the security requirements for international travel. Shop carefully. The details given in this chapter should be regarded as pointers and are not a substitute for your own careful, up-to-date research.

Islands use the small **Reykjavik Domestic Airport** (REK) in central Reykjavik. A couple of international flights per week land at tiny **Akureyri Airport** (AEY), in Iceland's 'second city' in the north.

### AIRLINES FLYING TO & FROM ICELAND

Only a handful of airlines fly to Iceland and all have great safety records.

- Air Iceland** (NY; ☎ 570 3030; [www.airiceland.is](http://www.airiceland.is))
- Atlantic Airways** (RC; ☎ Faeroes 341 010; [www.atlanticairways.com](http://www.atlanticairways.com))
- British Airways** (BA; ☎ 421 7374; [www.britishairways.com](http://www.britishairways.com))
- Iceland Express** (HW; ☎ 550 0600; [www.icelandexpress.com](http://www.icelandexpress.com))
- Icelandair** (FI; ☎ 505 0700; [www.icelandair.net](http://www.icelandair.net))
- SAS** (SK; ☎ 505 0300; [www.scandinavian.net](http://www.scandinavian.net))

### Tickets

The best ticket deals to Iceland are available online, but don't assume that budget airlines are always offering the best rates. With increasing competition on these routes it's well worth checking all possible options before booking.

### Australia & New Zealand

To get to Iceland from Australia or New Zealand, you will need to connect through Europe or the USA. Travel agents can book you all the way through to Keflavik, or you can buy a discount ticket to London, Copenhagen or New York and then arrange your onward ticket to Iceland online or through an airline (see p327).

### Continental Europe

Icelandair has regular flights between Keflavik and Copenhagen (from Dkr1737), Oslo (from Nkr2934), Stockholm (from Skr2085), Paris (from €308), Frankfurt (from €388) and Amsterdam (from €340). The flight time is roughly 3½ hours.

Icelandair also has seasonal flights between Keflavik and Barcelona, Berlin, Helsinki, Madrid, Milan, Munich and Zürich, taking between six and nine hours.

Iceland Express flies year-round 14 times weekly between Keflavik and Copenhagen (from Dkr2120, three hours). In summer, there are also between two and four flights weekly between Keflavik and Alicante (Spain; from €370, four hours), Berlin, Frankfurt, Friedrichshafen (all from €300, 3½ hours), Gothenburg and Stockholm (both Skr3000, three hours); and twice-weekly flights from Copenhagen to Akureyri (Dkr3300, three hours).

SAS operates direct flights from Keflavik to Oslo (Nkr3000, 2¾ hours) three times a week.

### UK & Ireland

**Icelandair** (☎ 0870 7874020; [www.icelandair.net](http://www.icelandair.net)) has flights to Keflavik from London Heathrow (from £163, three hours) at least twice daily. Between April and October there are flights

from Glasgow (from £161, two hours) four or five times per week, and two flights per week from Manchester (from £172, 2½ hours).

**Iceland Express** (☎ 0870 2405600; [www.icelandexpress.com](http://www.icelandexpress.com)) flies twice daily (less frequently in winter) from London Stansted to Keflavik (from £139, three hours), and twice weekly to Akureyri (from £177, three hours).

**British Airways** (☎ 0870 8509850; [www.britishairways.com](http://www.britishairways.com)) has also begun a London to Keflavik route, flying up to five times a week from Gatwick (from £142, three hours).

From Ireland, the cheapest way is to fly with **Ryanair** ([www.ryanair.com](http://www.ryanair.com)) from Dublin to London Stansted, where you can catch the Iceland Express flight to Keflavik. **Wallace Travel Group** (☎ 01 8347888) offers three- and four-night packages direct from Dublin.

### USA & Canada

Icelandair flies daily between Keflavik and Boston and most days between Keflavik and Baltimore, Minneapolis, New York, Orlando and Washington DC. A summer service departs from San Francisco four times weekly. You can also include Iceland as a free stopover on the way to Britain or continental Europe. Online return fares from New York to Reykjavik start at US\$650. From Canada, you need to connect through the USA, Copenhagen or London.

### CLIMATE CHANGE & TRAVEL

Climate change is a serious threat to the ecosystems that humans rely upon, and air travel is the fastest-growing contributor to the problem. Lonely Planet regards travel, overall, as a global benefit, but believes we all have a responsibility to limit our personal impact on global warming.

#### Flying & Climate Change

Pretty much every form of motorized travel generates CO<sub>2</sub> (the main cause of human-induced climate change) but planes are far and away the worst offenders, not just because of the sheer distances they allow us to travel, but because they release greenhouse gases high into the atmosphere. The statistics are frightening: two people taking a return flight between Europe and the US will contribute as much to climate change as an average household's gas and electricity consumption over a whole year.

#### Carbon Offset Schemes

Climatecare.org and other websites use 'carbon calculators' that allow travellers to offset the level of greenhouse gases they are responsible for with financial contributions to sustainable travel schemes that reduce global warming – including projects in India, Honduras, Kazakhstan and Uganda.

Lonely Planet, together with Rough Guides and other concerned partners in the travel industry, support the carbon offset scheme run by climatecare.org. Lonely Planet offsets all of its staff and author travel.

For more information check out our website: [www.lonelyplanet.com](http://www.lonelyplanet.com).



## SEA Ferry

**Smyril Line** (in Seyðisfjörður ☎ 472 1111; www.smyril-line.com) has a car ferry from Bergen (Norway) or Hanstholm (Denmark) to Seyðisfjörður in east Iceland, stopping on the way at Tórshavn in the Faeroes. When travelling from Hanstholm to Seyðisfjörður there is a two-night stopover in the Faeroes on the outbound journey, and when travelling from Bergen there is a three-night stopover on the return journey. The service also calls at Lerwick (Shetland Islands) from May to September and Scrabster (Scotland) from mid-June to August. The Lerwick and Scrabster schedule may change after summer 2007, however, so check the website for up-to-date information.

Passengers have a choice of couchettes (bed-seats) or one- to four-berth cabins. From Hanstholm to Seyðisfjörður, the one-way couchette fare for a car and two passengers is €535/400/240 in high/mid/low season, from Bergen the fare is €440/325/200. Passengers travelling with a motorbike or bicycle from Hanstholm pay €1815/1380/856, while foot passengers on the same route pay €1560/1195/755. High season runs from mid-June to mid-August, midseason from mid-May to mid-June and low season fares apply from mid-September to mid-May. Children, seniors and students qualify for reduced rates year-round.

The company also offers a variety of packages including accommodation in the Faeroes and Iceland.

## Cargo Ship

The Icelandic cargo carrier **Eimskip** (☎ 525 7000; www.eimskip.com), accepts passengers on its vessels *Detifoss* and *Godafoss* from mid-April to mid-October. Because the shipping route loops around, the shortest journey from Europe to Reykjavík is from Gothenburg or Fredrikstad (four days). See the website for a full schedule. The trip from Rotterdam costs €1124 per person (€806 for the return journey) and €488 for a car.

## GETTING AROUND

### AIR

Iceland has an extensive network of domestic flights, which locals use almost like buses. In winter a flight can be the only way to get

### DEPARTURE TAX

A tax of Ikr930 applies for each one-way leg, paid when you buy your ticket for domestic flights or those to the Faeroes or Greenland. Taxes are included in the price for all international flights.

between destinations, but weather at this time of year can play havoc with schedules.

See the Iceland Airline & Ferry Routes map (opposite) for the current routes operating in Iceland.

**Air Iceland** (☎ 570 3030; www.airiceland.is) operates flights between Reykjavík and Akureyri (Ikr10,565, 45 minutes, around seven flights daily), Egilsstaðir (Ikr11,975, one hour, three or four daily) and Ísafjörður (Ikr10,565, 40 minutes, two to four daily). From Akureyri there are regular flights to Grímsey (Ikr8090, 25 minutes), Vopnafjörður (Ikr10,190, 45 minutes) and Þórshöfn (Ikr10,190, 1¼ hours).

Landsflug (City Star) operates flights to smaller airstrips, including Vestmannaeyjar, Sauðárkrúkur, Höfn, Bildudalur and Gjógur. All bookings should be made through Air Iceland.

### Air Passes

Air Iceland offers a couple of air passes, which must be purchased either outside Iceland or in Icelandic travel agencies catering for foreign visitors. The Air Iceland Pass is available with four/five/six sectors for Ikr30,300/34,400/39,500. There's an extra tax of Ikr930 for each departure and the maximum validity is one month. Fly As You Please gives 12 consecutive days of unlimited flights in Iceland for Ikr47,000, excluding airport taxes. Children under 12 pay half rates.

### Air Charters & Air Sightseeing

**Flugfélag Vestmannaeyjar** (☎ 481 3255; www.eyjflug.is) runs charter flights over to Vestmannaeyjar from tiny Bakki airport, about 20km south of Hvolsvöllur. Other charter airlines include **Emir Air** (☎ 562 4200; www.emir.is), at Reykjavík airport, and **Mýflug** (☎ 464 4400; www.myflug.is), at Mývatn.

### BICYCLE

Cycling through Iceland's dramatic landscape is a fantastic way to see the country, but you should be prepared for some harsh conditions

along the way. Gale-force winds, driving rain, sandstorms, sleet and sudden flurries of snow are all possible at any time of year.

It's essential to know how to do your own basic repairs and to bring several puncture-repair kits and spares, as supplies are hard to come by outside the city. Reykjavík has several well-stocked bike shops. Two of the best include **Örninn** (☎ 588 9890; Skeifan 11d, IS-108 Reykjavík) and **Markið** (☎ 553 5320; Ármúli 40, IS-108 Reykjavík).

If you want to tackle the interior, the Kjölur route has bridges over all major rivers, making it fairly accessible to cyclists. A less challenging route is the F249 to Þórsmörk. The Westfjords also offers some wonderful cycling terrain, though the winding roads and steep passes can make for slow progress.

### Transporting Bicycles

Most airlines will carry your bike in the hold if you pack it correctly. You should remove the pedals, lower the saddle, turn the handlebars parallel to the frame and deflate the tyres. Domestic airlines charge Ikr3200 per bicycle; buses charge between Ikr600 and Ikr1000, but space may be a problem.

If you've brought your own bicycle along you can store your bike box at the camp site in Keflavík for free for the duration of your visit.

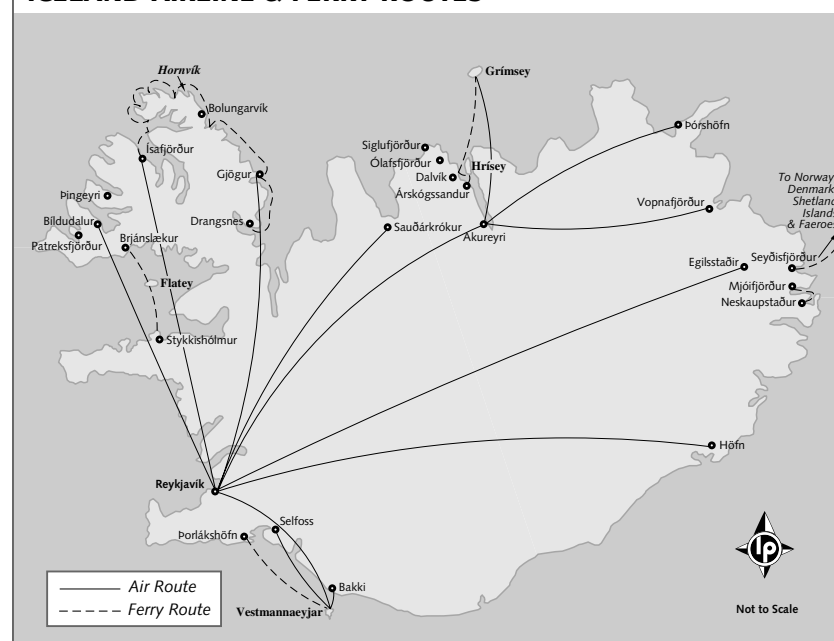
### Hire

Various places around Iceland rent out mountain bikes, but these are generally intended for local use only and aren't up to long-haul travel. If you intend to go touring, bring your bike from home.

### BOAT

Several ferries operate in Iceland. The car ferry *Herjólfur* sails between Þorlákshöfn and Vestmannaeyjar, and the *Baldur* sails between Stykkishólmur, Flatey and Brjánslækur – both run year-round. Passenger ferries include the *Sævar* between Arskógssandur and Hrísey, the *Sæfari* between Dalvík and Hrísey or Grímsey, and the *Anný* between Neskaupstaður and Mjóifjörður. Small summer-only ferries run from Reykjavík's Sundahöfn harbour to the island of Viðey, and from Ísafjörður and Drangsnæs to stops at Hornstrandir in the Westfjords.

## ICELAND AIRLINE & FERRY ROUTES



## BUS

Iceland has an extensive network of bus routes with services operated by a number of bus companies. All are members of the consortium **BSÍ** (Bífreidastöð Íslands; ☎ 562 1011; www.bsi.is), based in the BSÍ bus terminal on Vatnsmýrarvegur in Reykjavík. The booking desk sells tickets and distributes the free *Ísland á Eigin Vegum* (Iceland on Your Own) brochure, which contains timetables. From June to August there are regular buses to most places on the Ring Rd, and to larger towns in the Westfjords and on the Reykjanes and Snæfellsnes peninsulas. During the rest of the year services are limited or nonexistent. In small towns and villages buses usually stop at the main petrol station.

Main bus companies:

**Austurleið-Kynniserðir** (☎ 545 1717; www.austurleið.is) South and east Iceland.

**Flybus** (☎ 562 1011; www.flybus.is) Reykjavík to Keflavík airport.

**SBK Travel** (☎ 420 6000; www.sbk.is) Keflavík and Reykjanes.

**Stjörnubílar** (☎ 456 5518; www.stjornubilar.is) Westfjords.

**Trex-Hópfærdamiðstöðin** (☎ 587 6000; www.trex.is) West and north Iceland.

## Bus Passes

BSÍ offers several bus passes that can save you money on longer journeys. However, passes bought late in the summer season can be next to useless once buses switch to their very irregular winter service (usually on 1 September).

Some options:

**Full-Circle Passport** (Ikr21,300) Buses run June to August. Valid for one circuit of the Ring Rd in one direction, stopping wherever you like.

**Full-Circle Passport Extended** (Ikr25,500) Buses run mid-June to August. As above, but allowing travel from Reykjavík to Akureyri through the interior (via the Kjölur route), and between Kirkjubæjarklaustur and Hella via Landmannalaugar.

**Full-Circle Passport Including Westfjords** (Ikr31,400) Buses run June to August. Same as the Full-Circle Pass but taking in a wider western route to include the Westfjords, reached via the ferry *Baldur* (from Stykkishólmur).

**Highland Passport** (3/5/7/9/11 days Ikr13,000/20,500/26,900/32,800/37,900) Buses run mid-June to August. Valid on bus routes in the southern highlands and through the interior.

**Omnibus Passport** (7/14/21 days Ikr23,100/37,000/45,000) Buses run mid-May to mid-September. Unrestricted travel on most scheduled buses (excluding highland and interior routes).

## CAR & MOTORCYCLE

Driving in Iceland gives you unparalleled freedom to discover the country and, thanks to good roads and light traffic, it's all fairly straightforward. One major route, mostly paved, circles the country and beyond it fingers of pavement or gravel stretch out to most communities. Outside the Ring Rd (Rte 1) you are likely to pass no more than a handful of cars each day, even in high season.

In coastal areas driving can be spectacularly scenic and incredibly slow as you weave up and down over unpaved mountain passes and in and out of long fjords. Even so, a 2WD vehicle will get you almost everywhere in summer.

In winter heavy snow can cause many roads to close and mountain roads generally remain closed until the end of June. For up-to-date information on road and weather conditions, visit [www.vegagerdin.is](http://www.vegagerdin.is).

## Bring Your Own Vehicle

Car hire in Iceland is expensive, and taking your own vehicle to the country may not be as daft as it sounds. Drivers must carry the vehicle's registration documents, proof of valid insurance (a 'green card') and a driving licence. Import duty is initially waived for one month, so you must either re-export the vehicle within this period or apply for an extension, which is valid for an additional two months. For more information, contact the **Directorate of Customs** (☎ 560 0300; www.tollur.is; Tryggvagötu 19, 150 Reykjavík).

## Driving Licence

You can drive in Iceland with a driving licence from the US, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and most European countries. If you have a licence from anywhere else you may need to get an international driving licence, which is normally issued by the local automobile association in your home country.

## Fuel & Spare Parts

There are regularly spaced petrol stations around Iceland, but in more remote areas you should check fuel levels and the distance to the next station before setting off on a long journey. Unleaded petrol costs about Ikr134 per litre, diesel about Ikr128 per litre. Leaded petrol isn't available. Most smaller petrol stations are unstaffed, you simply swipe your credit card in the machine, enter the maximum amount you wish to spend and

## FOUR-WHEEL FOLLY

Four-wheel drive vehicles, especially the souped-up versions available in Iceland, can cause enormous damage to the already fragile environment and for the most part are completely unnecessary. Only the Jeep tracks and mountain roads (designated with an 'F') are 4WD only. Off-road driving is prohibited by law everywhere in Iceland, as tyre tracks can scar the landscape for years. These vehicles also guzzle petrol and have high carbon emissions, further adding to their environmental impact. Consider hiring a conventional vehicle instead and joining a Jeep tour for any mountain trips.

fill up. You will only be charged for the cost of fuel put into your vehicle. It's a good idea to check that your card will work at a staffed station while it is open, just in case you have any problems.

Icelandic roads can be pretty lonely, so carry a jack, a spare tyre and jump leads just in case. Although the Icelandic motoring association **Félag Íslenskra Bífreidæigenda** (FÍB; ☎ 414 9999; www.fib.is; Borgartún 33, Reykjavík) is only open to residents of Iceland, if you have breakdown cover with an automobile association affiliated with ARC Europe you may be covered by the FÍB – check with your home association.

## Hire

Hiring a car is the only way to get to many parts of Iceland, and, although rates are expensive by international standards, they compare favourably against bus or internal air travel. The cheapest cars on offer, usually a Toyota Yaris or similar, cost from Ikr6900 per day. The cheapest 4WD vehicles cost from Ikr12,900 per day. Rates include unlimited mileage and VAT.

To rent a car you must be 20 years old (25 years for a 4WD) and you will need to show a valid licence. When deciding check the small print, as additional costs such as extra insurance, airport pick-up charges and one-way rental fees can really rack up. You can also check sites such as [www.holidayautos.co.uk](http://www.holidayautos.co.uk) and [www.travelsupermarket.com](http://www.travelsupermarket.com) for a comparison of rates between rental agencies.

Note that most hire companies, regardless of whether they have an airport office, pick you up with the car at the airport and collect

the car from there or from your hotel. Some car-rental agencies in Iceland:

**ALP/Budget** (Map pp68-9; ☎ 562 6060; www.budget.is; www.alp.is; Reykjavík Domestic Airport, Keflavík International Airport)

**Arctic** (Map pp68-9; ☎ 421 2220; www.arctic.is; Idjstjug 1, IS-230 Keflavík)

**Átak** (☎ 554 6040; www.atak.is; Smiðjuvegur 1, IS-200 Kópavogur)

**Avis** (Map pp68-9; ☎ 591 4000; www.avis.is; Reykjavík Domestic Airport, Keflavík International Airport)

**Bilaleiga Akureyrar/National** (Map pp68-9; ☎ 568 6915; www.eurorent.is; Reykjavík Domestic Airport, Keflavík International Airport)

**Europcar** (Map pp68-9; ☎ 565 3800; www.europcar.is; Reykjavík Domestic Airport, Keflavík International Airport)

**Geysir** (Map p107; ☎ 893 4455; www.geysir.is; Holtsgata 56, IS-260 Njarðvík)

**Hasso** (☎ 555 3330; www.hasso.is; Smiðjuvegur 34, IS-200 Kópavogur)

**Hertz** (Map pp68-9; ☎ 505 0600; www.hertz.is; Reykjavík Domestic Airport, Keflavík International Airport)

**Rás** (☎ 426 7100; www.ras.is; Keflavík International Airport)

**Saga** (☎ 421 3737; www.sagacarrental.is; Keflavík)

**Sixt** (☎ 540 2222; www.sixt.is; Reykjavík)

## Insurance

If you are bringing your own vehicle into Iceland you'll need a so-called 'green card', which proves that you are insured to drive while in Iceland. Green cards are issued by insurance companies in your home country. Contact your existing insurer for details.

When hiring a car check the small print carefully; as most vehicles come with third-party insurance only you'll need to take out additional Collision Damage Waiver (CDW) to cover you for damage to the hire car. Also check the excess (the initial amount you will be liable to pay in the event of an accident) as this can be surprisingly high.

Hire vehicles are generally not covered for damage to the tyres, headlights and windscreen, or damage caused to the underside of the vehicle by driving on dirt roads, through water or in sandstorms. Some policies also prohibit 'off-road driving'. This usually only refers to mountain roads (F roads) and Jeep tracks, but check with the car-hire company to be sure. Car-hire agreements do not cover damage to the hire car caused by collisions with animals, and if you do hit an animal you may be required to compensate the owner.

## ROAD DISTANCES (KM)

Akureyri	---																			
Borgarnes	315	---																		
Egilsstaðir	265	580	---																	
Höfn	512	519	247	---																
Ísafjörður	567	384	832	902	---															
Reykjavík	389	74	698	459	457	---														
Selfoss	432	117	640	402	500	57	---													
Seyðisfjörður	292	607	27	274	859	680	667	---												
Stykkishólmur	364	99	629	618	391	173	216	656	---											
Vík	561	246	511	273	630	187	129	538	345	---										
	Akureyri	Borgarnes	Egilsstaðir	Höfn	Ísafjörður	Reykjavík	Selfoss	Seyðisfjörður	Stykkishólmur	Vík										

## Parking

Other than in central Reykjavík parking in Iceland is easy to find and free of charge. For information on parking in the capital, see p99.

## Road Conditions &amp; Hazards

Good road surfaces and light traffic make driving in Iceland relatively easy, but there are some specific roads hazards that drivers will encounter. Not all roads are sealed, and the transition from sealed to gravel roads is marked with the warning sign *Malbik Endar* – slow down to avoid skidding when you hit the gravel. In most cases roads have two lanes with steeply cambered sides and no hard shoulder; be prepared for oncoming traffic in the centre of the road, and slow down and stay to the right when approaching blind rises, marked as *Blindhæð* on road signs. You'll also need to be prepared to give way when approaching single-lane bridges, *Einbreið Brú*.

Most accidents involving foreign drivers in Iceland are caused by the use of excessive speed on unsurfaced roads. If your car does begin to skid take your foot off the accelerator and gently turn the car in the direction you

want the front wheels to go. Do not brake. In other areas severe sandstorms can strip paint off cars and even overturn them; areas at risk are marked with orange warning signs.

In winter make sure your hire car is fitted with snow tyres or chains, carry blankets, food and water, and take extra care when driving on compacted snow. Always brake gently to avoid skidding, and check road conditions on [www.vedur.is/english](http://www.vedur.is/english) before setting out.

Roads suitable for 4WD vehicles only are F-numbered. Always travel in tandem on these roads and carry emergency supplies and a full tool and repair kit. Always let someone know where you are going and when you expect to be back. River crossings can be extremely dangerous, as few interior roads are bridged. Fords are marked on maps with a 'V', but you'll need to check the depth and speed of the river by wading into it – do not attempt this without a life jacket and lifeline. To cross the river use a low gear in 4WD mode and cross slowly and steadily without stopping or changing gear.

You'll find useful information and a video on driving in Iceland at [www.umferdarstofa.is/id/2693](http://www.umferdarstofa.is/id/2693).

## ROAD RULES

- Drive on the right
- Front and rear seat belts are compulsory
- Dipped headlights must be on at all times
- Blood alcohol limit is 0.05%
- Mobile-phone use is prohibited except with a hands-free kit
- Children under six must use a car seat

## Speed limits

- Built-up areas 50km/h
- Unsealed roads 80km/h
- Sealed roads 90km/h

## HITCHING

Although Iceland is generally a very safe place to travel, hitching is never entirely without risk, and we don't recommend it. If you choose to hitch, travel in pairs and let someone know where you are going. Hitching is really only possible in Iceland during the summer months, but even so traffic is light and you can be in for some long waits. If you can plan ahead, check *Samferða* ([www.samferda.net](http://www.samferda.net)), a new travel site connecting willing drivers and would-be passengers on Icelandic journeys.

## LOCAL TRANSPORT

## Bicycle

You can hire bicycles for local riding from some tourist offices, hotels, hostels and guesthouses. The standard daily charge is about 1kr1700 per day, plus a deposit (a credit-card imprint will usually suffice). Helmets are a legal requirement for all children aged under 15.

## Bus

Reykjavík has an extensive network of local buses running out to all the suburbs, including Kópavogur and Hafnarfjörður. There are also local bus networks in Keflavík, Akureyri and Ísafjörður.

## Taxi

Most large towns have some kind of taxi service, but expect to pay at least 1kr1000 for a short journey of around 3km.

## TOURS

Although joining a bunch of other travellers on an organised tour may not be your idea of an independent holiday, Iceland's rugged terrain and high costs can make it an appealing option. Tours can save you time and money and can get you into some stunning but isolated locations where your hire car will never go. Many tours are by bus, others by 4WD or super-Jeep, and some by snowmobile or light aircraft. Most tours give you the option of tacking on adventure activities such as whitewater rafting, kayaking, snowmobiling, horse riding and ice trekking.

There are usually substantial discounts for children and for making bookings online, so shop around before making any decisions. The following is a list of some of the best companies around; you'll find other specific tours and tour operators covered in the destination chapters.

**Activity Group** (☎ 580 9900; [www.activity.is](http://www.activity.is)) This group of adventure-tour companies offers activities all over Iceland, including snowmobile tours, whitewater rafting, dogsledding and ATV rides. It has a base at the Húsafell recreation centre in west Iceland.

**Air Iceland** (☎ 570 3030; [www.airiceland.is](http://www.airiceland.is); Reykjavík Domestic Airport, IS-101 Reykjavík) Iceland's largest domestic airline runs a wide range of combination air, bus, hiking, rafting, horse riding, whale watching and glacier day tours around Iceland from Reykjavík and Akureyri. It also runs day tours to Greenland and the Faeroes from Reykjavík.

**Dick Phillips** (☎ 01434-381440; [www.icelandic-travel.com](http://www.icelandic-travel.com); Whitehall House, Nenthead, Alston, Cumbria, CA9 3PS) British-based Dick Phillips runs a specialist Icelandic travel service, and has decades of experience leading wild hiking, cycling and skiing trips.

**Explore Adventures** (☎ 562 7000; Laugavegur 11, IS-101 Reykjavík) Adventure-tour company offering glacial hiking, snorkelling, kayaking, caving, canyoning, ice climbing, climbing, hiking and cycling day tours from Reykjavík.

**Ferðafélag Íslands** (Icelandic Touring Association; Map pp68-9; ☎ 568 2533; [www.fi.is](http://www.fi.is); Mörkin 6, IS-108 Reykjavík) Leads summer treks in Hornstrandir, Landmannalaugar and Þórsmörk, and also has some bus tours and cross-country skiing trips.

**Guðmundur Jónasson Travel** (Map pp68-9; ☎ 511 1515; [www.gjtravel.is](http://www.gjtravel.is); Borgartún 34, IS-105 Reykjavík) This ever-popular company offers multiday bus tours with light hiking each day. It's an excellent option for active people who'd rather not make their own arrangements.

**Highlanders** (Map pp68-9; ☎ 568 3030; [www.hl.is](http://www.hl.is); Suðurlandsbraut 10, IS-108 Reykjavík) This super-Jeep operator offers tours up to Landmannalaugar, Hekla,

Langjökull and along the south coast. It also offers rafting on the Þjórsá river in southwest Iceland.

**Iceland Excursions** (Allrahanda; Map pp68-9; ☎ 540 1313; www.icelandexcursions.is; Höfðatún 12) Offers a comprehensive and inexpensive range of day trips around the Golden Circle, south coast, Snæfellsnes and Landmannalaugar, plus Northern Lights tours, horse riding, fissure diving, snorkelling and super-Jeep trips.

**Iceland Rovers** (☎ 567 1720; www.icelandrovers.is; PO Box 8950 Reykjavík) Runs a range of adventure day tours to Hekla and Landmannalaugar, Northern Lights tours, and history and geology tours.

**Ísafold Travel** (☎ 544 8866; www.isafoldtravel.is; Suðurhraun 2b, IS-210 Garðabær) Tailor-made tours for small groups and individuals, including angling, geology, hiking, photography, wellness, and women-only tours.

**Mountain Guides** (☎ 587 9999; www.mountainguide.is; Vagnhöfði 7, IS-110 Reykjavík) This adventurous company offers a wide range of hiking and climbing tours, including day trips to Heiðmörk (near Reykjavík), Hengill and Sólheimajökull, and a series of ice-climbing and trekking tours around Skaftafell. It also provides equipment rental and private guiding for more serious climbers.

**Mountain Taxi** (☎ 544 5252; www.mountain-taxi.com) This company runs all-year 4WD tours covering popular tourist sites such as the Golden Circle, Landmannalaugar, Hekla volcano, Mýrdalsjökull and Fjallabak as well as multiday and winter Jeep tours.

**Mountaineers of Iceland** (☎ 581 3800; www.mountaineers.is; Krókhála 5a, IS-110 Reykjavík) Specialises in adventure tours, including day trips to the Golden Circle and Hengill, multiday super-Jeep expeditions, snowmobile and photographic tours, snowmobiling, glacier tours, river rafting, kayaking, canyoning and horse riding.

**Nonni Travel** (Map p213; ☎ 461 1841; www.nonnitravel.is; Brekkugata 5, IS-602 Akureyri) The main tour agent in Akureyri, Nonni Travel offers rafting, horse riding, whale-watching, super-Jeep and Arctic Circle tours as well as excursions to Greenland.

**Reykjavík Excursions** (Kynnisferðir; Map pp68-9; ☎ 562 1011; www.re.is; BSÍ bus terminal, Vatnsmýrarvegur 10, Reykjavík) Reykjavík's most popular day-tour agency, with a comprehensive range of year-round tours.

**Touris** (☎ 897 6196; www.tour.is; Frostaskjól 105, IS-107 Reykjavík) This super-Jeep operator offers Golden Circle tours with an off-road highland drive, and 4WD tours to Langjökull, Þórsörk and Landmannalaugar.

**Útivist** (Map pp68-9; ☎ 562 1000; www.utivist.is; Laugavegur 178, IS-105 Reykjavík) This recommended organisation runs friendly informal trekking trips and covers just about every corner of Iceland. It also runs one of the mountain huts at Þórsörk.

**Vestfjarðaleið** (☎ 562 9950; www.vesttravel.is; Hesthál 10, IS-110 Reykjavík) This friendly company runs day trips to Þórsörk, Landmannalaugar, Snæfellsnes and the Golden Circle, as well as a five-day hiking trip from Landmannalaugar and Þórsörk and four-day hikes from Hengill to Þingvellir.

**Vesturferðir** (☎ 456 5111; www.vesturferdir.is; Aðalstræti 7, IS-400 Ísafjörður) The main tour company in the Westfjords, Vesturferðir offers a huge range of tours in the surrounding area, including various day trips and multiday hikes to Hornstrandir.

**Youth Hostel Travel Service** (Map pp68-9; ☎ 553 8110; www.hostel.is; Sundlaugavegur 34, IS-105 Reykjavík) In conjunction with other companies, the hostel association organises a wide range of tours, including sightseeing, horse riding, glacier trips, rafting, trekking and whale watching.

# Health

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Travel health depends on your predeparture preparations, your daily health care while travelling and how you handle any medical problem that does develop. If you do fall ill while in Iceland you will be very well looked after, as health care is excellent.

## BEFORE YOU GO

Prevention is the key to staying healthy while abroad. A little planning before departure, particularly for pre-existing illnesses, will save trouble later – see your dentist before a long trip, carry a spare pair of contact lenses and glasses, and take your optical prescription with you. Bring medications in their original, clearly labelled containers. A signed and dated letter from your physician describing your medical conditions and medications, including generic names, is also a good idea. If carrying syringes or needles, be sure to have a physician's letter documenting their medical necessity.

### INSURANCE

If you're a citizen of the EU, a European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) entitles you to reduced-cost emergency medical treatment in Iceland. It doesn't cover nonemergency medical treatment, dental treatment, ambulance

### CHECK BEFORE YOU GO

It's usually a good idea to consult your government's travel-health website (if available) before departure:

**Australia** [www.smarttraveller.gov.au](http://www.smarttraveller.gov.au)

**Canada** [www.travelhealth.gc.ca](http://www.travelhealth.gc.ca)

**UK** [www.dh.gov.uk/PolicyAndGuidance/HealthAdviceForTravellers](http://www.dh.gov.uk/PolicyAndGuidance/HealthAdviceForTravellers)

**USA** [www.cdc.gov/travel](http://www.cdc.gov/travel)

travel or emergency repatriation home. The EHIC has replaced the old E111 form, which ceased to be valid in January 2006. The easiest way to apply for an EHIC is online – check your country's Department of Health website for details; in the UK, you can also pick up a postal application form from post offices.

Citizens from other countries should find out if there is a reciprocal arrangement for free medical care between their country and Iceland. If you do need health insurance, strongly consider a policy that covers you for the worst possible scenario, such as an accident requiring an emergency flight home. Find out in advance if your insurance plan will make payments directly to providers or reimburse you later for overseas health expenditures. The former option is generally preferable, as it doesn't require you to pay out of pocket in a foreign country.

### RECOMMENDED VACCINATIONS

The World Health Organization (WHO) recommends that all travellers should be covered for diphtheria, tetanus, measles, mumps, rubella and polio, regardless of their destination. Since most vaccines don't produce immunity until at least two weeks after they're given, visit a physician at least six weeks before departure.

### INTERNET RESOURCES

The WHO's publication *International Travel and Health* is revised annually and is available online at [www.who.int/ith](http://www.who.int/ith). Other useful websites include [www.mdtravelhealth.com](http://www.mdtravelhealth.com) (travel-health recommendations for every country, updated daily), [www.fitfortravel.scot.nhs.uk](http://www.fitfortravel.scot.nhs.uk)

(general travel advice), [www.ageconcern.org.uk](http://www.ageconcern.org.uk) (advice on travel for the elderly) and [www.maristopes.org.uk](http://www.maristopes.org.uk) (information on women's health and contraception).

### FURTHER READING

*Health Advice for Travellers* (currently called the 'T7.1' leaflet) is an annually updated leaflet by the Department of Health in the UK, and is available free of charge in post offices, or on page 460 of Ceefax (BBC2). It contains general health information, details of legally required and recommended vaccines for different countries, details of reciprocal health agreements and information about the EHIC.

Lonely Planet's *Travel with Children* includes advice on travel health for younger children. Another recommended reference is *The Traveller's Good Health Guide*, by Ted Lankester (Sheldon Press).

## IN TRANSIT

### DEEP VEIN THROMBOSIS (DVT)

Blood clots may form in the legs during plane flights, chiefly because of prolonged immobility – the longer the flight, the greater the risk of developing a clot. The chief symptom of DVT is swelling or pain of the foot, ankle or calf, usually but not always on just one side. When a blood clot travels to the lungs, it may cause chest pain and breathing difficulties. Travellers experiencing any of these symptoms should immediately seek medical attention.

To prevent DVT on long flights you should walk about the cabin, contract leg muscles and wiggle your ankles and toes while sitting, drink plenty of fluids, and avoid alcohol and tobacco.

### JET LAG & MOTION SICKNESS

To avoid jet lag (common when crossing more than five time zones) try drinking plenty of nonalcoholic fluids and eating light meals. Upon arrival, get exposure to natural sunlight and readjust your schedule (for meals, sleep and so on) as soon as possible.

Antihistamines such as dimenhydrinate (Dramamine) and meclizine (Antivert, Bonine) are usually the first choice for treating motion sickness. A herbal alternative is ginger.

## IN ICELAND

### AVAILABILITY & COST OF HEALTH CARE

High-quality health care is readily available, and for minor, self-limiting illnesses, pharmacists can dispense valuable advice and over-the-counter medication. They can also advise when more specialised help is required. Doctor's appointments cost 1kr700, with a 25% reduction for children under the age of 16.

The standard of dental care is usually good; however, it's sensible to have a dental checkup before a long trip.

### TRAVELLER'S DIARRHOEA

It's very unlikely that you will suffer diarrhoea in Iceland. The tap water is absolutely safe to drink and is probably less contaminated than bottled water, since it generally flows straight from the nearest glacier.

If you are susceptible to upset stomachs, do what you would do at home: avoid dairy products that contain unpasteurised milk, make sure your food is served piping hot throughout, and avoid buffet-style meals.

If you are unlucky enough to develop diarrhoea, be sure to drink plenty of fluids, preferably an oral rehydration solution (eg dioralyte). If diarrhoea is bloody, persists for more than 72 hours or is accompanied by fever, shaking, chills or severe abdominal pain, you should seek medical attention.

### ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARDS

#### Giardia

Giardia is an intestinal parasite that lives in the faeces of humans and animals and is normally contracted through drinking water. Problems can start several weeks after you've been exposed to the parasite, and symptoms may sometimes remit for a few days and then return; this can go on for several weeks or even longer. The first signs are a swelling of the stomach, followed by pale faeces, diarrhoea, frequent gas and possibly headache, nausea and depression. If you exhibit these symptoms you should visit a doctor for treatment.

Although most unpopulated areas in Iceland serve as sheep pastures, there seems to be very little giardia; however, while most people have no problems drinking untreated water from streams and rivers, there's still a possibility of contracting it. If you are unsure, purify your drinking water by boiling it for

10 minutes or use a chemical treatment such as iodine.

### Hypothermia & Frostbite

Proper preparation will reduce the risks of getting hypothermia. Even on a hot day in the mountains, the weather can change rapidly – carry waterproof garments and warm layers, and inform others of your route.

Acute hypothermia follows a sudden drop of temperature over a short time. Chronic hypothermia is caused by a gradual loss of temperature over hours.

Hypothermia starts with shivering, loss of judgment and clumsiness. Unless rewarming occurs, the sufferer deteriorates into apathy, confusion and coma. Prevent further heat loss by seeking shelter, wearing warm, dry clothing, drinking hot, sweet drinks, and sharing body warmth.

Frostbite is caused by freezing and the subsequent damage to bodily extremities. It is dependent on wind-chill, temperature and the length of exposure. Frostbite starts as frostnip (white, numb areas of skin), from which complete recovery is expected with rewarming. As frostbite develops, however, the skin blisters and becomes black. Loss of damaged tissue eventually occurs. You should wear adequate clothing, stay dry, keep well hydrated and ensure you have adequate calorie intake to prevent frostbite. Treatment involves rapid rewarming. Avoid refreezing and rubbing the affected areas.

### Insect Bites & Stings

Mosquitoes are found even in Iceland – they're not as ferocious as their southern cousins and may not carry malaria, but they can cause irritation and infected bites. Use a DEET-based insect repellent.

Bees and wasps cause real problems only to those with a severe allergy (anaphylaxis). If you have such an allergy, carry EpiPen or similar adrenaline injections.

### Seasickness

The sea around Iceland is an unpredictable beast. Things can sometimes get rough aboard whale-watching trips, or on the little ferries

that run to islands off the coast of Iceland (eg to the Vestmannaeyjar or to Grimsey).

If you're feeling queasy, fresh air and watching the horizon may help, as this balances the sensations in the inner ear and the visual information received by the eyes. If possible, move to the centre of the boat where the rocking is least pronounced, and try lying down and closing your eyes or sucking on crystallised ginger. If you are vomiting a lot, be sure to rehydrate with liquids.

It's usual to take seasickness medication half an hour before you sail. Bring your preferred brand from home, or buy over-the-counter medications such as Dramamine from a pharmacist before your journey. Seasickness medication is not available on board any of the Icelandic boat services.

### TRAVELLING WITH CHILDREN

All travellers with children should know how to treat minor ailments and when to seek medical treatment. Make sure the children are up to date with routine vaccinations and discuss any possible travel vaccines well before departure, as some vaccines are not suitable for children under a year.

Remember to avoid contaminated food and water. If your child is vomiting or has diarrhoea, lost fluid and salts must be replaced. It may be helpful to take rehydration powders for reconstituting with boiled water.

Children should be encouraged to avoid and mistrust any dogs or other mammals, because of the risk of diseases. Any bite, scratch or lick from a warm-blooded, furry animal should immediately be thoroughly cleaned.

### SEXUAL HEALTH

Condoms are widely available, and can be found most easily at *apótek* (pharmacies) and supermarkets. When buying condoms, look for a European CE mark, which means they have been rigorously tested, and then keep them in a cool, dry place or they may crack and perish.

Emergency contraception is most effective if taken within 24 hours after unprotected sex. It's available from the national hospital in Reykjavík, and at other hospitals around Iceland.

# Language

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Icelandic is a Germanic language, one of the family that includes German, English, Dutch and all the Scandinavian languages except Finnish. It's the nearest thing in existence to Old Norse, the language spoken by the Vikings. In fact, modern Icelandic has changed so little since the Settlement that even children can read the language of the 12th- and 13th-century sagas without difficulty. Interestingly, Icelandic still retains the ancient letters 'eth' (ð) and 'thorn' (þ) that existed in Old English but have disappeared from modern English.

Icelanders are proud of their literary heritage, and they are particularly conservative when it comes to the written word. To avoid having to adopt foreign words for new concepts, neologisms (new words) are created. Neologisms, such as *útvarp*, 'radio', *sjónvarp*, 'television', *tölva*, 'computer', and *þota*, 'jet', are just a few that have become part of the Icelandic vocabulary in the last 50 years.

Icelanders are a rather informal people. A person is very rarely addressed by title and/or surname. Icelanders use the ancient patronymic system, where *son*, 'son' or *dóttir*, 'daughter' is attached to the genitive form of the father's or, less commonly, the mother's, first name. The telephone book entries are listed according to first names.

Most Icelanders speak English, and often as many as three or four other languages, so you'll have no problems if you can't muster any Icelandic. While any attempts you do make to speak the lingo will certainly be

much appreciated, Icelanders are so unused to hearing their language spoken with a foreign accent that you might be greeted by a blank look and a shout of 'Ha?'. If you'd like a more in depth guide to Icelandic, pick up a copy of Lonely Planet's *Scandinavian Phrasebook*.

You should be aware that the complex grammar of Icelandic can lead to confusion, especially when you're trying to read bus timetables and find names of towns, which can be spelled several different ways. For example, the sign that welcomes visitors to the town of Höfn in the southeast reads *Velkomin til Hafnar*. In grammatical terms, Hafnar is the dative form of Höfn.

## PRONUNCIATION & ALPHABET

Most letters are pronounced as they are in English. The trickier ones are listed below. Stress generally falls on the first syllable.

If you're searching for words in an Icelandic dictionary, index or telephone book, be aware that ð, þ, æ and ö have their own separate places in the alphabet. Ð usually comes between d and e, and the other three letters usually appear at the very end of the alphabet.

### Vowels

á	as the 'ow' in 'cow'
é	as the 'ye' in 'yet'
i, y	as the 'i' in 'hit'
í, ý	as the 'i' in 'marine'
ó	as in 'note'
ö	as the 'er' in 'fern', without the 'r' sound
ú	as the 'oo' in 'cool'
æ	as th 'y' in 'cry'
au	as the word 'furry' without 'f' or 'rr'

### Consonants

Ð ð	as the 'th' in 'lather'
Þ þ	as the 'th' in 'thin'
dj	as the 'j' in 'juice'
f	as in 'farm'; as the 'v' in 'van' between vowels or at the end of a word; as the 'b' in 'big' before l or n
hv	as 'kv'
j	as the 'y' in 'yes'
ll	as the 'ddl' in 'fiddle'

p	as in 'pit'; before s or t, it's as the 'f' in 'fit'
r	always trilled

## ACCOMMODATION

<b>Do you have any rooms available?</b>	<i>Eru herbergi laus?</i>
<b>May I see it?</b>	<i>Má ég sjá það?</i>

<b>I'd like (a) ...</b>	<i>Gæti ég fengið ...</i>
<b>single room</b>	<i>einstaklingsherbergi</i>
<b>double room</b>	<i>tveggjannaherbergi</i>
<b>a bed</b>	<i>rúm</i>

<b>camping ground</b>	<i>tjaldstæði</i>
<b>guesthouse</b>	<i>gistiheimili</i>
<b>hotel</b>	<i>hótel</i>
<b>motel</b>	<i>gistihús</i>
<b>youth hostel</b>	<i>farflugalaheimili</i>

<b>Where is a ... hotel?</b>	<i>Hvar er ... hótel?</i>
<b>cheap</b>	<i>ódyrt</i>
<b>nearby</b>	<i>nálægt</i>
<b>clean</b>	<i>hreint</i>

<b>Could you write the address, please?</b>	<i>Gætir þú skrifað niður heimilisfangið?</i>
<b>Do you have any rooms available?</b>	<i>Eru herbergi laus?</i>

<b>I'd like ...</b>	<i>Gæti ég fengið ...</i>
<b>a single room</b>	<i>einstaklingsherbergi</i>
<b>a double room</b>	<i>tveggjannaherbergi</i>

## CONVERSATION & ESSENTIALS

<b>Hello.</b>	<i>Halló.</i>
<b>Good morning/afternoon.</b>	<i>Góðan daginn.</i>
<b>Good evening.</b>	<i>Gott kvöld.</i>
<b>Good night.</b>	<i>Góða nótt.</i>
<b>Goodbye.</b>	<i>Bless.</i>
<b>Excuse me.</b>	<i>Afsakið.</i>
<b>Sorry.</b>	<i>Mér þykir það leitt.</i>
<b>Thank you.</b>	<i>Takk fyrir.</i>
<b>You're welcome.</b>	<i>Ekkert að þakka.</i>
<b>Yes.</b>	<i>Jái.</i>
<b>No.</b>	<i>Nei.</i>
<b>How are you?</b>	<i>Hvernig hefur þú það?</i>
<b>Well, thanks.</b>	<i>Gott, takk.</i>
<b>Cheers!</b>	<i>Skál!</i>
<b>What's your name?</b>	<i>Hvað heitir þú?</i>
<b>My name is ...</b>	<i>Ég heiti ...</i>
<b>Where are you from?</b>	<i>Hvaðan ert þú?</i>
<b>I'm from ...</b>	<i>Ég er frá ...</i>

<b>Do you speak English?</b>	<i>Talar þú ensku?</i>
<b>I (don't) understand.</b>	<i>Ég skil (ekki).</i>
<b>What does ... mean?</b>	<i>Hvað þýðir ...?</i>

## HEALTH & EMERGENCIES

<b>Help!</b>	<i>Hjálp!</i>
<b>I'm lost</b>	<i>Ég er villt/villtur. (f/m)</i>
<b>I'm sick</b>	<i>Ég er veikur</i>
<b>Go away!</b>	<i>Farðu!</i>

<b>antibiotics</b>	<i>fúkalyf</i>
<b>condoms</b>	<i>smokkar</i>
<b>contraceptive tampons</b>	<i>getnaðarvörn vatttappar/tampónar</i>

<b>Call ...!</b>	<i>Náði í ...!</i>
<b>a doctor</b>	<i>lækni</i>
<b>the police</b>	<i>löggregluna</i>
<b>an ambulance</b>	<i>sjúkrabil</i>

<b>Where is a ...?</b>	<i>Hvar er ...?</i>
<b>chemist</b>	<i>apótek</i>
<b>dentist</b>	<i>tannlæknir</i>
<b>doctor</b>	<i>læknir</i>
<b>hospital</b>	<i>sjúkrahús</i>

## NUMBERS

0	<i>núll</i>
1	<i>einn</i>
2	<i>tveir</i>
3	<i>þrír</i>
4	<i>fjórir</i>
5	<i>fimm</i>
6	<i>sex</i>
7	<i>sjö</i>
8	<i>átta</i>
9	<i>níu</i>
10	<i>tíu</i>
11	<i>ellefu</i>
12	<i>tólf</i>
13	<i>þrettán</i>
14	<i>fjórtán</i>
15	<i>fimmtán</i>
16	<i>sextán</i>
17	<i>sautján</i>
18	<i>átján</i>
19	<i>nítján</i>
20	<i>tuttugu</i>
21	<i>tuttugu og einn</i>
30	<i>þrjátíu</i>
40	<i>fjörutíu</i>
50	<i>fimmtíu</i>
60	<i>sextíu</i>
70	<i>sjötíu</i>
80	<i>áttatíu</i>

90	<i>níutíu</i>
100	<i>eitt hundrað</i>
1000	<i>eitt þúsund</i>

**SHOPPING & SERVICES**

I'm looking for (a/the) ...	<i>Ég er að leita að ...</i>
bank	<i>banka</i>
city centre	<i>miðbænum</i>
market	<i>markaðum</i>
police	<i>lögreglunni</i>
post office	<i>pósthúsinu</i>
public toilet	<i>almenningsalerni</i>
telephone centre	<i>símstöðinni</i>
tourist office	<i>upplýsingaþjónustu fyrir ferðafólk</i>

What time does it open/close?	<i>Hvenær er opnað/ lokað?</i>
I'd like to buy ...	<i>Mig langar að kaupa ...</i>
How much is it?	<i>Hvað kostar þetta?</i>
Where is the toilet?	<i>Hvar er snyrtingin/klósettið?</i>
Where can I get Internet access?	<i>Hvar get ég fengið að nota internetið?</i>
I'd like to send an email.	<i>Mig langar til að senda tölvupóst.</i>

**TIME & DATES**

Monday	<i>mánudagur</i>
Tuesday	<i>þriðjudagur</i>
Wednesday	<i>miðvikudagur</i>
Thursday	<i>fimmtudagur</i>
Friday	<i>föstudagur</i>

Saturday	<i>laugardagur</i>
Sunday	<i>sunnudagur</i>

What time is it?	<i>Hvað er klukkan?</i>
today	<i>í dag</i>
tomorrow	<i>á morgun</i>

**TRANSPORT & DIRECTIONS**

Where is a/the ...?	<i>Hvar er ...?</i>
Could you write the address, please?	<i>Gætir þú skrifað niður heimilisfangið?</i>
How do I get to ...?	<i>Hvernig kemst ég til ...?</i>
Is it far from here?	<i>Er það langt hédan?</i>
near	<i>nálægt</i>
far	<i>langt í burtu</i>
Go straight ahead.	<i>Farðu beint áfram.</i>
Turn left.	<i>Beygðu til vinstri.</i>
Turn right.	<i>Beygðu til hægri.</i>
Can you show me (on the map)?	<i>Getur þú sýnt mér (á kortinu)?</i>

bus stop	<i>strætisvagnabíðstöð</i>
ferry	<i>ferja</i>
ticket office	<i>miðasala</i>
first	<i>fyrst</i>
next	<i>næst</i>
last	<i>síðast</i>

What time does the ... leave/arrive?	<i>Hvenær fer/ kemur ...?</i>
boat	<i>báturinn</i>
bus	<i>vagninn</i>
plane	<i>flugvélin</i>
tram	<i>sporvagninn</i>



# Glossary

See p57 in the Food & Drink chapter for useful words and phrases dealing with food and dining. See the Language chapter (p338) for other useful words and phrases.

**á** – river (as in Laxá, or Salmon River)

**álfar** – elves

**álfhóll** – ‘elf hillock’; small wooden house for elves, often seen in Icelandic gardens

**Alþingi** – Icelandic parliament

**bær** – farm

**basalt** – hard volcanic rock that often solidifies into hexagonal columns

**bíó** – cinema

**bolla** – cream bun

**brennivín** – local schnapps

**caldera** – crater created by the collapse of a volcanic cone

**dalur** – valley

**eddas** – ancient Norse books

**ey** – island

**fjörður** – fjord

**foss** – waterfall

**franskar** – chips

**fumarole** – vents in the earth releasing volcanic gas

**gata** – street

**geyser** – spouting hot spring

**gistiheimilið** – guesthouse

**gjá** – fissure, rift

**glíma** – Icelandic wrestling

**goðar** – chieftan

**hákarl** – putrid shark meat

**harðfiskur** – dried fish

**hestur** – horse

**huldúfólk** – hidden people

**höfn** – harbour

**hot pot** – Jacuzzi-like spa pool, found at swimming baths and some accommodation

**hraun** – lava field

**hver** – hot spring

**icecap** – permanently frozen glacier or mountain top

**Íslands** – Iceland

**jökull** – glacier, icecap

**jökulhlaup** – glacial flooding caused by volcano erupting beneath an icecap

**kirkja** – church

**Landnámabók** – comprehensive historical text recording the Norse settlement of Iceland

**laug** – hot spring

**lava tube** – underground tunnel created by liquid lava flowing under a solid crust

**lón** – lagoon

**mörk** – woods or forest

**mudpot** – bubbling pool of superheated mud

**nes** – headland

**nunatak** – hill or mountain completely surrounded by a glacier

**puffling** – baby puffin

**pylsa** – hot dog

**Ragnarök** – in Norse mythology, the end of the world as the gods are destroyed in a battle with evil, following which a new order will emerge

**reykur** – smoke, as in Reykjavík (literally ‘Smoky Bay’)

**runtur** – ‘round tour’, Icelandic pub crawl or aimless driving around town

**sagas** – Icelandic legends

**samloka** – sandwich

**sandur** – glacial sand plain

**scoria** – glassy volcanic lava

**shield volcano** – gently sloped volcano built up by fluid lava flows

**skáli** – hut; snack bar

**skyr** – Icelandic yogurt

**sundlaug** – heated swimming pool

**tephra** – rock/material blasted out from a volcano

**tjörn** – pond, lake

**torg** – town square

**vatn** – lake (as in Mývatn, or Midge Lake)

**vegur** – road

**vents** – natural clefts where hot steam emerges from the ground

**vík** – bay

**vogur** – cove, bay

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