

ICELAND Volcanic Wonderlands

8 day Photo Tour



August 14 – 21, 2011

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8 day Photo Tour
\$4,680

Note: **Tour begins and ends at Keflavik International Airport, Iceland**

August 13 (Sat) Fly from USA to Iceland

The five hour flight on Air Iceland departs NYC or Boston in the evening, and flies non-stop to Iceland. Although it is an overnight flight, don't expect a full night's sleep due to the time difference.

Day 1, August 14 (Sun): Free day on Reykjanes Peninsula

Early morning arrival (6:30am) at the Keflavik Intl Airport. The day is left open to accommodate differing rest needs. Some like to hit the tour running, while others prefer to rest up and adjust to the local time (6 hours ahead of central time). Our hotel is located near the famed Blue Lagoon, a milky-blue mineral pool carved out of lava. Even those with a short layover in Iceland try to visit this unusual place where steam turbines from a neighboring power plant lend a sci-fi atmosphere to the bathers soaking in steamy waters. Free shuttles are provided for guests during the Lagoon's operating hours, 9am-9pm. You may wish to rest at the hotel in the morning and soak in the natural springs all afternoon. There are relaxing in-water massages too. See info & fees at www.bluelagoon.com

For those who want to see and do more, there are 2 options:

1) Join the Salty Reykjanes tour at 8:30am (\$116). Photograph colorful hot springs around the peninsula and the coastal fishing village Grindavik. Visit a shark shack (tastes included), bird cliffs, a lighthouse, the land bridge between the continents, and a lava tube before ending at the Blue Lagoon at 4pm. Pay admission to enter the hot springs if you wish then catch the shuttle back to our hotel. See www.saltytours.is

2) Or take the 9am Volcano tour, which visits craters, lava caves, geysers and geothermal areas around Reykjanes peninsula (\$152). Up to 60 minutes is spent inside a lava tube where crawling is required for 3 meters before upright walking. Photography with tripods & flash is allowed. Tour ends at the Blue Lagoon or hotel at 3pm. See www.volcanotours.is

All tours need to be pre-booked prior to arrival. At 7pm, meet in the hotel for a tour orientation and slide show of the regions we'll visit this week. Dinner will follow.

Northern Light Inn (B, D)

Day 2, August 15 (Mon): Geysirs, Waterfalls & the Volcanic Interior

This morning our local guide, Haukur, who is one of Iceland's most prolific stock nature photographers, will pick us up in a 4WD supervan designed to access off-road sights. We'll head to the Interior, a region impassable most of the year. Even when the frozen highlands begin to melt in mid-summer, 4WDs are still required to cross rivers, maneuver deep sand and dodge potholes in this barren desert landscape where Apollo astronauts once trained. Of the 3 interior routes, we'll travel along the Kjölur mountain route, where the most interesting geothermal sites exist. Instead of rushing through during the day like other tours do, we'll stay overnight in a mountain hut to access

the Hveravellir geothermal site in better light, and linger to capture dramatic shots with the full moon.

Enroute to the Interior this morning, we'll stop and photograph the famous Geysir Hot Spring. Hissing steam vents, colorful mineral pools and an erupting geyser are just 4 miles from Iceland's most popular waterfall, Gullfoss. On sunny days, a rainbow appears in the mist over a massive curtain cascade thundering 69 ft down into a gorge. ----- After lunch, we'll head into the volcanic Interior Highlands, and check into a remote mountain hut near Kerlingarfjöll Mountains. After a midday rest, we'll continue 40 minutes further north to the geothermal area Hveravellir, where we'll spend the evening photographing. Steamy fumeroles and silica-encrusted mineral pools create an eerie landscape in these barren desert plains. Waiting for the full moon to rise and the sun to set at 9:45pm, we'll have a BBQ feast and the option to relax in a natural hot tub, so bring your swimsuit and towel. Late night transfer back to Kerlingarfjöll lodge.

Kerlingarfjöll Mtn huts (private rooms, ensuite) (B, L, D)

Day 3, August 16 (Tues): Witchy Mountains & Waterfalls

Sleep in after our late evening. Mid-morning we'll photograph the steam rising from folds in the Witch Mountains of Kerlingarfjöll Geothermal Area. The colors, dramatic shapes and billowing steam that appears to devour the hikers traipsing these mountains make this place one of my favorites! After a picnic lunch we'll drive along remote mountain tracks south of Hofsjökull Glacier. Passing through rough lava fields and black sands, we'll stop at waterfalls in Þjórsá river, Dynkur and Gljúfurleitarfoss. Around dinner time we'll arrive at our lodge located on the border of the scenic Fjallabak Area.

Hrauneyjar Highland Center (B, L, D)



Day 4, August 17 (Wed): Fjallabak Area – Landmannalaugar – Hekla Area

A 4WD is necessary for accessing the northern part of Fjallabak Nature Reserve, where we'll spend the day exploring glacial valleys, black lava terrain, mossy volcanic peaks and natural hot springs. Brilliant shades of luminescent green enhance the reddish rhyolite mountains at Landmannalaugar, a favorite spot for hikers and landscape photographers. Geothermal activity in the area is responsible for creating the intense colors in the mossy mountains, which contrast strongly with the black lava terrain. We'll hike 3-4 hours up, down and around slopes requiring moderate effort to capture the most stunning shots of this region (and get a tiny glimpse of Iceland's premiere 5 day trek). Those who prefer to stay on level ground can explore the immediate area where there is boardwalk leading to popular hot springs. After a full day in Landmannalaugar, we'll head back to our lodge for dinner. *Hrauneyjar Highland Center (B, L, D)*

Day 5, August 18 (Thurs): Fjallabak Area – Skaftafell National Park

A second day will be spent visiting other beautiful places in the Fjallabak Area including some of Haukur's secret spots, as this is his favorite area to photograph. We'll travel along remote tracks north of Mýrdalsjökull and in the late afternoon drive to Skaftafell National Park, a wilderness region known for its glaciers. Vatnajökull, a massive ice cap covering over 3,000 square miles, has several glacier tongues, and one of them, Svínafellsjökull, is within walking distance. But the highlight feature of this region is Jokulsarlon, a lagoon full of floating blue-tinged icebergs. Calved from a glacier, they are irregularly shaped and sized, and marbled with sediment. Seals often bob amid the ice. We'll have ample time to photograph this lagoon both early tomorrow morning and evening when the crystal clear waters are calm and reflective. We'll spend 2 nights here. *Hotel Skaftafell or similar (B, L, D)*

Day 6, August 19 (Fri): Floating Iceberg Lagoon

Leaving early from the hotel (sunrise is 5:30am) we'll spend a few hours shooting icebergs floating in Jokulsaflon lagoon. A short walk away is another fascinating place where there's a good chance we'll see icebergs stranded on a beach, appearing like crystals in the black volcanic sand. Tripods & ND filters come in handy to soften the crashing ocean waves.



The rest of the morning and early afternoon will be spent back at the hotel for those who are interested in a Photoshop session. David will demonstrate his typical workflow in Camera Raw (same as Lightroom) and process some of his images to show techniques he uses to alter, fix or enhance his pictures. Those who prefer to explore Skaftafell National Park instead can hike around the immediate area, join a guided 2 hour Glacier Walk (\$70) or take a 30-75 minute scenic flight (\$200-400). Late afternoon we'll head back to the lagoon as a group to photograph the icebergs. A 40 minute boat ride among the ice is another option (\$30). We'll dine in the area and stay for sunset photography around the lagoon before returning to our hotel.

Hotel Skaftafell or similar (B, L, D)

Day 7, August 20 (Sat): Waterfalls, Coastal Cliffs & Horse Farm

Today we'll travel along Iceland's dramatic southern coast and visit major sites such as the massive sea arch at Dyrholaey promontory and basalt sea stacks that reach 200 ft high beyond a black sand beach. Continuing on we'll stop at two of the area's most impressive waterfalls, Skogafoss and Seljalandsfoss. We'll also drive through the countryside where the volcano, Eyjafjallajökull, dumped all the ash down in the spring 2010. We will visit one of the farms affected by the ash, and visit with some farmers. They will show us their farm, and photos and explain to us (in Icelandic) about the eruption and the affect it had on them. Haukur will translate for us. These farmers plan to open an exhibit next April on the one year anniversary of the eruption in Eyjafjallajokull. They have created a short 15-20 minute film with clips from the eruption and the aftermath that we can also watch.

Icelandic horses are visible throughout this country, as are the numerous farms. Tonight we get closer to both. Our lodge tonight is a cozy guesthouse at a horse farm. We'll enjoy traditional Icelandic home cooking in a dining room with panoramic views of 3 glaciers and the volcano Hekla. Retire to one of the new private ensuite rooms or relax in the hot tub claiming the best view in Iceland.

Guesthouse Hestheimar, (private rooms ensuite) (B, L, D)

Day 8, August 21 (Sun): Model shoot with an Icelandic Horse & Departure

After breakfast we'll have a photo shoot with a teenaged Nordic girl and an Icelandic Horse at the horse farm. We'll have opportunities for both action shots of her riding and portrait shots with her horse. After lunch at the farm, we'll head to the international airport to catch our 5pm flights home. End of tour.

(B, L)

*Note that flights arrive NYC or Boston around 7pm the same day. Those with connecting flights usually require an overnight stay. We can recommend a convenient hotel with free airport shuttle in Boston.

Terms and Conditions:

Tour price of \$4,680 includes: 7 nights lodging in rooms with private facilities (double occupancy), all meals except lunch on day 1, airport transfers, land transportation in a 14 seat 4WD supervan with locked luggage trailer, an English-speaking local professional photographer guide/driver, Nordic model at the horse farm, permit fees to access Interior Highlands, 2 photo tour leaders, and tips for local photographer guide.

Price does not include: international airfare from your home town to Keflavik International Airport, Iceland; soft drinks or alcoholic beverages; single supplement if private hotel room is desired (\$550); optional boat ride at glacial lagoon (\$30) or other optional tours (peninsula tours, glacier hiking, sightseeing plane); admission to the Blue Lagoon (\$45); wifi fees; laundry, or other personal expenses.

Maximum group size: 9 participants. Minimum number to operate tour is 6 pax.

Deposit of \$1,000 is due at time of registration. Single supplement is \$550. Final payment of \$3,680 is due by June 15, 2011.

Cancellation Policy: Applies only to written cancellations received by Unique Photo Tours, LLC. A participant will be refunded as follows: Full refund if canceled 180 days prior to tour start date. Full refund--minus the deposit—if canceled 120 days prior to tour start date. No refund for participants who cancel less than 90 days prior to tour start date. To assure fairness to all, no exceptions can be made for illness, inability to travel or sudden fear of terrorism. Please secure travel insurance for peace of mind. No refund will be issued for any unused services while on the tour. In the unlikely event that UPT leaders cancel the tour for any reason all deposits/payments will be fully refunded.

Travel Insurance: We urge you to acquire travel insurance that covers trip cancellation, interruption, equipment and baggage. Unexpected events that can affect a tour are always a possibility. Allow for such contingencies. Try these or other credible website for travel insurance: www.travelguard.com, www.insuremytrip.com, www.quotetravelinsurance.com.

Smoking: We ask that there be no smoking anywhere we are assembled as a group, anywhere local regulation does not permit it, in the vehicles or where other participants may be bothered.

Health: Participants should be in good health and able to walk on uneven terrain. Participants under a doctor's care should seek advice about the appropriateness of this tour prior to registration. Submitting a registration form acknowledges that you have been cleared by your doctor to travel to this destination and are not an active risk for any reason to other participants.

TRIP NOTES:

Weather & Daylight: Any and every day in Iceland is unpredictable. Expect abrupt changes. Be prepared for strong wind, rain, fog or even snow. Expect temps in mid August to be around 60 degrees. Sunrise will be around 5:30am, and sunset around 9:45pm.

Hiking: Sturdy boots or hiking shoes with good ankle support and thick soles are necessary for maneuvering loose rocks in volcanic plains and withstand sharp lava rocks which tend to shred rubber. Our 4WD vehicle will access many of the off-road sites, but frequent hikes are required to explore the area fully. Hikes are rated moderate and include some steep hills. Those who wish to skip a hike can photograph the immediate area or relax near the vehicle. In geothermal regions, please stick to trails and boardwalks to avoid falling through thin crusts of light-colored earth. No swimming in bubbling mud!

Model Shoot: We have hired local people, not professional beauty models, to photograph in the Icelandic landscape. It is a great chance to become more comfortable photographing people, and adds another element to capturing the essence of this country.

Electricity: 220 volts, 50 Hz. Bring a 2 pin round plug adapter for appliances.

Health & Safety: Tap water in Iceland is pure, and safe to drink. Bring sun protection. Be cautious on ice, loose crumbly rock faces, slippery slopes and volcanic trails. If prone to motion sickness, consider medication or wrist bands to counter the windy coastal roads. Top notch modern hospitals staffed by English speaking doctors exist throughout the country except for the Interior Highlands.

Money: Change cash into Kroner at the currency exchange desk in the airport or withdraw from ATMs scattered around the country. A pin is required to make withdrawals from ATMs. Food and drink are highly expensive in Iceland (\$4 coke/\$10 beer not uncommon). All meals except one are included in the tour cost, but not beverages other than coffee, tea or water. No tipping in restaurants necessary.

Getting Here: Icelandic Air flies to Keflavik Intl Airport direct from Boston (5 hours, 9:30pm departure-6:30am arrival next am), JFK New York (5.5 hours, 8:35pm departure-6:20am arrival), Seattle (7.25 hours, 4:30pm departure-6:45am arrival). Check for details at www.icelandair.com. There is also an alternative route that arrives in Iceland at 11:50pm.

What to bring:

Warm layered clothing, including long underwear. More specifically, recommend 2-3 pants, optional jeans, 2 long sleeved light-weight fleece tops, 2 long sleeved shirts & 1 heavy sweater. Hat, gloves, scarf. (Think autumn weather in northern USA. Temps ranged from 59-66 F degrees during our last visit in late Aug-early Sept.) Rain gear (coat and pants). Waterproof boots with good ankle support for walking over uneven terrain like sloping mountains and lava rocks. Swimsuit for optional soaks in mineral pools.

Camera equipment:

- * 2 camera bodies (handy to have 2 different lenses ready & great to have in case one malfunctions)
- * Assorted lenses: wide angle 17-35mm, medium zoom 28-70mm, telephotos like 70-200mm, macro and extension tubes. Optional teleconverter.
- * Filters: polarizing, UV to protect your lens from blowing sand, and split/neutral density.
- * Protective rain cover for your camera. Also don't forget your lens shades! Ziplocs (small and large) for batteries, memory cards, and rain protection for your camera in a pinch.
- * Tripod (preferably with ball head) & cable release.
- * Camera manual. Knowledge how to change f/stop and shutter speed on your camera prior to the tour. The more familiar you are with your camera the more creative you can be.
- * Laptop loaded with PhotoShop is optional. There will be opportunities to learn new techniques and play with images during our tour.
- * Extra batteries, charger, extra memory cards. Recommend 8GB & 16 GB.
- * Portable device for backing up your images. A tiny HyperDrive SPACE holds 108 GB and doesn't need electricity—really handy for those not bringing a computer.
- * Electricity is 220v, 50 Hz. Bring a European 2 pin round plug adapter.
- * Off camera flash if you have one, and a 5-in-1 reflector.

NOTES

Reservation Form
Iceland: Volcanic Wonderlands
August 14-21, 2011

Tour Price: The price for this tour beginning and ending in Keflavik, Iceland is **\$4,680** if paid by personal check. *Credit card payment is 3% more (\$140) for a total of \$4,820.*

Registration: After reading the itinerary, trip notes, terms and conditions of the tour please return this reservation form along with your deposit of \$1,000. Each participant must sign and return a separate Tour Participant Agreement which you will receive with your deposit receipt.

_____ I have read and accept the **Terms & Conditions** for this photo tour.

_____ I'm traveling alone but wish to share a room. Please find me a MALE or FEMALE roommate. If we are unable to match you with another participant there will be a **single supplement fee of \$550.**

_____ I prefer to room alone, and am enclosing an additional **\$550 single supplement fee.**

Participant Name: _____ Circle: Male Female
Address: _____

Email: _____ Phone: _____

Passport number and date of issue:

Photography level and experience: amateur semi-pro professional

Camera equipment you plan to

bring: _____

Any concerns or health risks that we should know about?

Anything in particular you would like to learn or photograph during this tour?

Enclosed is my deposit (plus single supplement if desired) of \$ _____ to secure a space on the Iceland: Volcanic Wonderlands photo tour.

Make checks payable to: Unique Photo Tours, LLC

Mail completed form to: Box 3637, Evansville, IN 47735-3637

To make deposit by credit card plus 3% fee:

Cardholder Name & Billing Address: _____

Card type and number: _____ Security code(CVV): _____

Expiration date (mm/YYYY) _____