



# ICELAND HIGHLANDS TREK

ICELAND • TREK • TOUGH

## ABOUT THE CHALLENGE

Iceland is a land of incredible contrast and beauty. Its wild volcanic landscapes, mountains, glaciers, hot springs, geysers and waterfalls, combined with its rich history, literature and folklore make it a fascinating country to explore.

This fascinating and diverse short trek takes us through Iceland's classic highland landscapes, with fascinating geothermal areas and wild rugged panoramas, through the magnificent trekking mecca of Landmannalaugar.

This is a tough and challenging trek through a remote and wild environment – and presents a rare opportunity to witness a landscape which is changing before our eyes.

## ICELAND HIGHLANDS TREK • 5 DAYS

Hike the black sand deserts, glacial rivers and deep gorges of Iceland help make a difference to the lives of all those affected by brain tumours.

### Day 1: Fly London to Reykjavik

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We fly to Keflavik International Airport and transfer approx 45 mins to our hotel in central Reykjavik. After time to prepare our kit, we meet for dinner and a detailed trip briefing.

Night hotel.

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## Day 2: Reykjavik – Emstrur – Álftavatn

After a hearty breakfast we drive to the dramatic highlands, stopping to look at the magical, breath-taking views of Markarfljótsgljúfur canyon, before hiking north with wonderful views to the lake of Álftavatn. We cross Mælifellssandur, an inland desert of black sand, bright green hills rising above it. It's dramatic, beautiful and very wild. We cross a few glacial rivers and streams; the biggest have bridges, but we'll be doing some wading. It's an inspiring landscape which will whet your appetite for tomorrow! We camp by the lake.

Night camp.

**Drive approx 3 hours; trek approx 5-7 hours (15km)**

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## Day 3: Álftavatn – Landmannalaugar

A tough day ahead of us, as we set out on the fantastic trek to Landmannalaugar, an oasis in the middle of the highlands. We ascend steeply up ravines and gullies to the plateau of Hrafninnusker at 800m – this is challenging terrain, but the scenery of multi-coloured hills and rocks is inspiring. From the plateau we can see across the volcanic Torfajökull massif, one of the biggest geothermal areas in Iceland. The smell of sulphur is strong in the air, and the rock is richly coloured with mineral deposits

brought up from the depths of the Earth. The trail eventually descends down between the bizarre, seemingly unnatural rock structures of the Brennisteinsalda lava flow; we'll come across areas of geothermal activity in the form of steaming vents and hot springs. We finally reach the colourful rhyolite hills of Landmannalaugar, a welcome sight after a long, tiring day.

Night camp.

**Trek approx 7-9 hours (24km)**

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## Day 4: Landmannalaugar – Landmannahellir – Reykjavik

Leaving Landmannalaugar's colourful landscapes, we continue our trek across the highlands. Our route is dominated by the beautiful lakes and lava-fields of the Dómadalur valley, an area of black rock and vibrant green vegetation shaped by volcanic eruptions. We drop into stunning gorges, trek between rocky peaks and finally come to grassier meadows. As we approach the end of our trek we should get good views of the moberg (table mountain) of Lodmundur, formed in a volcanic eruption beneath an earlier icecap. After the obligatory photos, we jump into our waiting vehicles and return to Reykjavik for an evening of celebrations.

Night hotel. (Dinner not included)

**Trek approx 6-7 hours (13.5km)**

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**Day 5: Fly Reykjavik to London** After free time to explore, we head off to the airport for our afternoon flight.

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## CHALLENGE INFORMATION

### DETAILED INFORMATION

#### Flight Information

Group flights leave from London Heathrow or Gatwick, (we regret that we are unable to book connecting flights), and are booked through Discover Adventure Ltd under ATOL licence 5636. By travelling with Discover Adventure you are protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA). We do not always use the same airline for each destination; if you wish to know the probable carrier please call for details. You will usually receive confirmed flight details several months before departure. Our itineraries are always based on current flight schedules and are therefore subject to change by the airline. If you prefer to book your own flights please ask us for a land-only cost.

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#### Roomshare Arrangements

Accommodation is usually on a twin-share basis in hotels or camp. Occasionally we may use hostel-style accommodation. Please tell us if you know somebody else on the trip that you would like to share with and we will try our best to accommodate your request. If you don't know anyone else in the group don't worry, we always pair you up with someone of the same gender, and a similar age where possible. We do not charge a single supplement if you are a solo traveller.

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#### Accommodation

We stay at a good, well-located hotel in Reykjavik in twin-share rooms. Please be warned that hotel rooms in Iceland are traditionally small! On trek we camp in shared two-man expedition tents (ie sleeping-room only). campsites are remote, with basic facilities but incredible views. The group helps to set up and break camp.

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#### Food & Dietary Requirements

The food provided is plentiful, often local in style and freshly-cooked, and will give you plenty of energy. Sometimes we enjoy a buffet-style lunch-stop, other times we might have packed lunches. On some trips we stop at small local restaurants. Dinners are generally eaten in camp or at the hotel, depending on accommodation. In some regions there may be less variety than you are used to,

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and in others fresh meat or produce can be harder to come by. Any meals not included are listed in the itinerary and are generally on travel / free days, giving you the opportunity to explore and try other culinary experiences! There is always something to suit different budgets.

Being vegetarian or having other dietary requirements is not usually a problem provided you let us know well in advance. Please do not expect as much variety as you would have access to at home – we may be in very rural or remote areas and among people of a different culture who may not understand your requirements, however willing they are to help. If you know there are plenty of foods you cannot eat we strongly recommend you bring extra snacks from home so you can top up your energy supply. Please feel free to ask us for advice.

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### **Leaders & Trip Support**

Your trip will be led by experienced Discover Adventure leaders. Our leaders are selected for their experience in harsh wilderness environments, knowledge of travel in remote areas, friendliness and approachability, sense of humour and ability to safely and effectively deal with any situation that arises. They are also trained in expedition first aid. You are in very safe hands with a Discover Adventure leader. Usually leaders are based in the UK or other English-speaking countries and lead for us regularly throughout the year in many different countries. In some instances, trips are led by in-country guides with a wealth of knowledge about the region; they have been trained by us to provide the level of support expected on a Discover Adventure trip.

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### **Trip Doctor**

An expedition doctor or medic accompanies the group (dependent on group size.) Their role is to look after the well-being of the whole group and deal with any incidents. They help the leaders to ensure the trip runs smoothly, and encourage you when things get tough. The total number of crew looking after you will depend on the final size of your group, but at Discover Adventure we pride ourselves on our high leader: participant ratio and believe it leads to greater trip enjoyment as well as excellent trip safety.

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### **Local Support Crew**

Our local support crew is made up of local guides, assisted by drivers, porters, cooks and other support staff, depending on the type of trip. Local guides know the area well, and are a great source of knowledge about local lifestyles. The Discover Adventure crew work closely with the local crew to ensure your trip runs smoothly and safely. In some destinations we work together as a team with local guides to help set up or break camp, or prepare meals. Your leader will arrange a collection of tips for the local support crew at the end of your trek, and you will be provided with a guideline

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amount in advance. Tipping is not obligatory, but once you see how hard they work on your behalf you will be happy to donate something!

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### **Luggage**

Your luggage, food, water and equipment is transported for you from one night-stop to the next. If there is easy road access this is done by vehicle; if not porters, mules or even camels might carry your bags, depending on the destination and terrain.

Space is limited and hard-sided luggage is not suitable, so it is essential that your kit is packed in a soft bag, rucksack or expedition kitbag. Ask us about our specially-designed low-cost kitbags if you don't have one already. You should also bring a small daypack to carry for items needed during the day as you will not have access to your main luggage until the evening.

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### **Trip Safety**

Your safety, and that of the rest of the group, is our highest priority. Our trips are designed and planned with safety in mind. Your crew will be equipped with communication devices (eg phones, radios and/or emergency satellite phones), medical kit and other safety apparatus appropriate to the destination. Our leaders always have access to our 24-hour emergency UK back-up. They are responsible for safety on the trip, and will make any changes to the itinerary they deem necessary, should local conditions dictate. Pre-trip administration - such as medical questionnaires and travel insurance as appropriate - is all done with your safety in mind.

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## **PREPARING FOR THE CHALLENGE**

### **Clothing**

We plan our trips around the optimal weather conditions, but could still be exposed to bad weather at any time. It is vital you are prepared for all conditions. We provide you with a detailed packing kit-list on registration, as well as details on useful discounts you are entitled to as a Discover Adventure customer. We are always available if you need advice.

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### **Fitness Levels**

This is designed to be a challenge, and it is vital that you train sufficiently for it. We will supply you with a thorough training guide once you have registered. We expect all participants to train hard in advance, but we respect everyone's limits and do not expect everyone to maintain the same pace.

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Inadequate training is likely to have an impact not just on your chances of completing the challenge, but enjoying it too - and we want you to have the time of your life!

Our challenges attract people of all levels of experience and fitness, all ages and backgrounds. We design our challenges so that everyone can go at their own pace: this is not a race. For logistical and safety reasons we sometimes need to re-group, so the front-runners may find themselves waiting for the slower ones. Please relax, and remember that this is a team effort that enables people to achieve their personal goals and earn sponsorship.

## Passport & Visa / Vaccinations

Entry requirements vary depending on your destination and nationality. It is your responsibility to ensure your passport is up-to-date and any visas are obtained in good time. For further information please see our Factsheet and Visa information page.

Your routine UK schedule of vaccinations should be up-to-date (especially tetanus). We recommend you check Fit For Travel for further details. You should always check with a GP or travel clinic for up-to-date travel health advice as it does change.

## TREK TRAINING WEEKEND

**£160 Special Offer - Only when you book at the same time as registering for your main challenge**

Discover Adventure Trek Training Weekends take place in Snowdonia National Park, Wales. This training weekend is designed to put you through your paces to enable you to gauge fitness levels and gain advice from our experienced leaders.

## GRADE | TOUGH (3)

Trip grades range from Challenging (1) to Extreme (5).

TOUGH trips involve tough terrain, with some very rigorous days; weather, altitude and/or basic living conditions will add to the challenge. They demand good stamina, fitness and a determined attitude.



Discover Adventure reserves the right to change the route or itinerary for safety reasons should local conditions dictate.

Please note: This document was downloaded on 28 May 2017, and the challenge is subject to change.