ICELAND

Northern Lights Winter Trek







ACTIVITY	ACCOMMODATION	CHALLENGE FACTORS	DURATION:	GRADE
Trek	Hotel	Cold	5 days	

Iceland, on the edge of the Arctic Circle, is home to some of Europe's wildest volcanic landscapes. Its mountains, glaciers, hot springs, geysers and waterfalls form an unforgettable backdrop to our winter adventure, as we trek through dramatic geothermal valleys. We even get the chance for a dip in a natural geothermal river!

This is an adventurous hike through a land of incredible contrast and natural beauty. The winter conditions, often with snow underfoot, makes the walking more challenging, but no technical expertise or prior experience is required.

Our base in Laugarvatn, within Iceland's Golden Circle, allows us to visit many impressive natural wonders, including Geysir and Gullfoss. And every evening, the dark skies above our hotel offer the chance to see the magical Northern Lights, Aurora Borealis – the icing on the cake on this memorable challenge!

This trip generates around **51 kg of CO_2 per person.** Because of our commitment to responsible travel, **we offset 100% of these emissions**, including flights booked with us.

DETAILED ITINERARY

Day 1: Depart London to Keflavik; Reykjanes Peninsula

Depart London and fly to Keflavik, on southern Iceland's Reykjanes Peninsula. This area is a UNESCO Global Geopark, known for its rugged lava fields, striking coastline and geothermal activity. The drive to our hotel is an impressive introduction to these volcanic landscapes, but we usually have time to detour to some of the most impressive sights, such as colourful geothermal mud pools and steam vents, dramatic coastal scenery, and the Bridge Between Continents – where tectonic plates are slowly pulling apart. Stops on this flexible afternoon are dependent on time and local conditions – but all will serve to whet your appetite for the days to come!

Our hotel lies in the small village of Laugarvatn, where after dinner and a trip briefing, we have our first opportunity to watch for the Aurora Borealis (Northern Lights). Appearing in many colours, most commonly pale green and pink, as ripples or clouds of light, they can be vividly bright. Night hotel.

Drive approx. 1-3 hours (depending on stops)

Day 2: Þingvellir and Golden Circle

This full day combines a beautiful hike with the famous highlights of Iceland's Golden Circle. We drive the short distance to Þingvellir (Thingvellir) National Park, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and one of Iceland's most important historical and geological landmarks. Set in a stunning rift valley with towering cliffs and Iceland's largest natural lake, Þingvellir is arguably more dramatic in winter, and offers wonderful hiking. We follow horse tracks and old sheep trails that undulate through this spectacular rift landscape, passing historic sites and lava fields with rewarding views over Þingvallavatn lake. Our exact route will depend on conditions, but expect this to be a fairly strenuous day in the wilderness! Later, we meet our vehicles and continue around the Golden Circle to visit two of Iceland's most well-known natural wonders: Geysir, where the active Strokkur geyser regularly erupts, and the impressive Gullfoss waterfall. Back at the hotel, you may wish to check out the neighbouring outdoors spa (additional cost). Warmed by geyser steam, this is a fabulous way to unwind – and if you're lucky, you'll see the Northern Lights from the most natural kind of warm bath! Night hotel.

Trek approx. 8-10km; 4-5 hours

Day 3: Nesjavellir Geothermal hike

A short drive away, Nesjavellir lies within one of Iceland's most active geothermal regions. Dominated by the enormous Hengill volcano, this dramatic landscape is a fascinating mixture of rugged mountains, moss-covered lava fields, steaming vents, bubbling mud pots and boiling springs. This whole region is a powerful reminder of the forces of nature shaping the land around us. Nesjavellir's underground natural heat is used to provide hot water and heating for the Reykjavik area – a perfect example of Iceland's abundant renewable energy. We'll explore the varied trails through this colourful, otherworldly landscapes, either on foot or by snowshoe, depending on conditions. Snow-shoeing is great fun, and no previous experience is necessary! A short transfer takes us back to base, where we have dinner and another chance to see the Northern Lights. Night hotel.

Trek approx. 10-14km; 4-6 hours

Day 4: Reykjadalur Hike & Geothermal River Bathing; transfer to Reykjavik

Known as 'Steam Valley', Reykjadalur is a beautiful geothermal valley known for its colourful hills and hot springs. Our trail takes us gradually uphill, enjoying wonderful views of the mountains around us. Venturing deeper into the valley, the geothermal activity becomes more visible (though the smell of sulphur has accompanied us for a while!) Steam rises from the ground, and the vents and mud-pools are surrounded by colourful minerals. Warm streams flow through the valley, and our highlight today is the chance to bathe in one! A truly Icelandic experience, we enjoy a relaxing soak in a naturally warm geothermal river, surrounded by dramatic, unique scenery – a trekking highlight that is hard to beat! We then hike back down the valley, meet our vehicles and drive to Reykjavik. We head out to the old harbour area of this exciting city to celebrate our adventure and achievements. Night hotel.

Trek approx. 7-8km; 3-4 hours

Day 5: Fly Reykjavik to London

We usually have the morning free to explore Reykjavik, before heading off to the airport for our flight home.

(Lunch not included)

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Return flights from London to Reykjavik (Keflavik)
- All transport and transfers as part of itinerary
- All accommodation in hotel (twinshare)
- All meals except where specified
- Discover Adventure crew (number dependant on group size)
- Local mountain guides & drivers
- Vehicle support and back-up equipment
- Entry to any sites visited as part of the itinerary
- Airline taxes
- **We offset 100% of the carbon emissions from your trip, including flights booked with us**

WHAT'S EXCLUDED

- Travel insurance
- Any meals specified 'not included' in the itinerary
- Personal spending money, souvenirs and drinks
- Tips for the local guides and support crew
- Fees for any optional sites, attractions or activities
- Any applicable surcharges as per Terms and Conditions

GRADE | YELLOW

All our trips are designed to provide a challenge. Trips are graded Yellow, Orange or Red, in increasing level of challenge. This trip lies within the **YELLOW** range.



The grade is determined by factors such as terrain, distance, climate, altitude, etc. Each colour grade has a **spectrum** which reflects the difficulty of these factors. Trip duration, accommodation and living conditions are also taken into account. Some sections will feel more challenging than others, but the grade reflects the overall trip. Unusual weather

conditions can also have a significant impact.

The Accommodation icon indicates the living conditions while trekking/cycling. While there are usually several factors that present a challenge, the Challenge icon indicates the trip's most challenging element, for most people.

Trip grading explained

CHALLENGE INFORMATION

DETAILED INFORMATION

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.

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 medical incidents. They help the crew 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.

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 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!

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 appropriate communication devices (eg phones, radios), 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.

Flight Information

Group flights usually leave from London Heathrow or Gatwick but may also depart from regional airports, and are booked through Discover Adventure Ltd under ATOL licence 5636. You will usually receive confirmed flight details several months before departure. We do not always use the same airline for each destination and low cost airlines may be used for short haul flights. If you wish to know the probable carrier and flight times, please call for details.

By travelling with Discover Adventure you are protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA). 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.

Accommodation

We stay in a comfortable hotel in a small village, well-located for our trekking region. Rooms are mainly twin-share with en-suite facilities. There is a nearby spa we can use during free time (charge applies). In Reykjavik, we stay in a good, well-located hotel in twin-share rooms. Please be warned that hotel rooms in Iceland are traditionally small!

Roomshare Arrangements

Our trips are sold on a shared accommodation basis, usually twin-share. Occasionally we may use hostel-style accommodation.
You can tell us if you are travelling with someone else on the trip when you book or within your passenger portal, and we will do all we can to accommodate this request. It is important that both people complete the room share request on their bookings. For customers booking and travelling together, including same-sex couples, a double bed can be requested if available.
If you're not familiar with anyone in the group, rest assured, we always pair you with someone of the same gender (as per the information you provided when booking, or passport markers), and a similar age where possible. We're actively working to improve our system's gender restrictions to be more inclusive, and we've recently made significant strides in this area. If you identify differently from the gender marker on your passport and would like to discuss this before booking, please feel free to reach out to us.

Single Supplements

In most standard hotels, we can usually offer a limited number of single rooms. This is upon request, on a first-come, first-served basis, and additional charges apply. In more communal accommodation, single rooms are rarely an option. We do not charge a single supplement if you are a solo traveller in a shared room.

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 at our accommodation each evening. In some regions there may be less variety than you are used to, 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, or 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.

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 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.

PREPARING FOR THE CHALLENGE

Challenge Grading

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that present a challenge, the Challenge icon indicates the trip's most challenging element, for most people.

Trip grading explained

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. 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, fitness and ability as well as all ages and backgrounds. We design our challenges so that everyone can go at their own pace: this is not a race. If you have concerns about your fitness or if you have reduced mobility please do contact us for a confidential chat about whether this challenge is appropriate for you.

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.

Terrain

We generally trek on well-maintained dirt and rocky paths, often with a layer of snow. It can be icy too, and there may be snow-drifts and stream crossings. If it has been mild, paths can be muddy. Hills are not particularly steep or high, but feel more challenging due to winter conditions. Trekking days are shorter than is typical of our challenges because of daylight hours, but the winter conditions make it physically demanding and energy-sapping, and we have fewer breaks to avoid getting cold.

Clothing & Kit

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, with plenty of information, and we are always available if you need advice.

Passport & Visa / Vaccinations

Entry requirements vary depending on your destination and nationality. It is your responsibility to ensure your passport is valid, and any visas are obtained in good time. Check the FCO's advice on entry requirements for your destination to be sure. Please ensure you allow plenty of time to apply for your visa; we will provide you will all necessary information 6 weeks prior to depature to assist with your application.

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

Foreign Travel Advice

For the latest travel advice from the Foreign & Commonwealth Office including security and local laws, plus passport and visa information, check www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice.

Travel Insurance

Travel Insurance is compulsory on all of our challenges outside of the UK; we strongly suggest that you arrange insurance cover as soon as your booking with us is confirmed, or as soon as you're able to purchase some, and at least 8 months prior to travel. Should you need to cancel prior to departure, you will need insurance to cover the costs involved (registration fee and any trip costs depending on cancellation date).

We all hope never to need it, and thankfully most of the time we don't, but on those rare occasions when you do, you want it to cover you as best it can. Whilst it's a fairly boring admin task relating to your trip of a lifetime, it is really important you ensure that you have adequate cover for the type of challenge you are taking part in as well as medical emergencies, evacuation and repatriation, so make sure you're happy with the level of cover. There are lots of suppliers out there, with a wide range in levels of cover; generally speaking, you get what you pay for! Get and pay for the right level of cover and then you can go on your adventure not having to worry about the what-if's. For more details click here.

Once your travel insurance is arranged, just remember to let us know the policy number and 24-hr medical emergency phone number provided by your insurers.

Cancelling your booking

In the unfortunate circumstance that you need to cancel your booking, we would ask that you notify us in writing either by email or post. Your cancellation will be considered effective from the date the notice is received. Registration, administration and amendment fees are non refundable and, depending on your payment option and how close it is to your challenge departure date, you may be liable for a cancellation charge.

Full details of all cancellation charges may be found in the Terms and Conditions of booking.

Group Size

Your booking is part of a group challenge, and the tour costs and fundraising targets listed on our website are based on a minimum number of participants which is shown on the challenge Our typical groups run with approximately 15-25 participants; however you may find your group is smaller or larger than this.

We will confirm at least 12 weeks prior to departure that your challenge is guaranteed to run. Occasionally it may be possible to still run the challenge with less than the minimum numbers, subject to a small group supplement. If we think a small group supplement may be necessary, we will discuss this with you as soon as possible, usually 5 months before your departure date.

Minimum numbers and groups sizes may vary on Bespoke Charity challenges. If you are booked onto a bespoke challenge please contact your charity for full details.

Passenger Portal

We have a Passenger Portal which will give you more details of the challenge itself. It also enables you to see any outstanding information we need, the countdown to your challenge departure, see your outstanding balance, make payments and update your contact details. You can access this via the following link - Passenger Portal Log in.





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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 20 Nov 2026, and the challenge is subject to change.