

## ICELAND

### Volcano and Ice Cap Trek

*This is an Open Challenge itinerary; you can take part on the dates shown and raise money for a charity of your choice. Itineraries for bespoke trips (run for sole charities) may differ slightly, and will have different dates and pricing schedules.*

**Duration:** 9 days / 8 nights

**Trip Grade:** Tough

**Dates:**

**7 Jul – 15 Jul 2012**

Payment Options:	2012
<b>Fundraising:</b>	
Registration Fee	£349
	+
Fundraising Target	£3200
<b>Self Payment:</b>	
Registration Fee	£349
	+
Trip Cost	£1280

*Please note Registration Fee is in addition to Trip Cost / Fundraising Target*

**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.**

**Our challenge takes us from the active Mt Hekla to Landmannalaugar and then south through the mountains to the permanent icecaps of Myrdals and Eyjafjallajokull, where you'll be able to see the effects of 2010's volcanic eruption.**

**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.**



Reykjavik; transfer from Keflavik International Airport to our hotel in the city. Night hotel.

#### **Day 2: Mt Hekla – Landmannahellir**

After an early breakfast we have a detailed briefing and then leave for the journey to Mt Hekla. We will spend approximately 3 hours trekking around the volcano area to discover the lava-flows resulting from the last eruptions, which took place in February and March 2000. From there we have an hour's bus journey to Landmannahellir where we camp for the night. Night camp (590m).

**Trek approx 6km / 3-4 hrs**

#### **Day 3: Landmannahellir – Landmannalaugar**

We leave from Landmannahellir with great views of the nearby moberg, or table mountain, of Lodmundur, formed in a volcanic eruption beneath an earlier icecap. The magnificent lakes and lava-fields of Dómadalshraun dominate the beautiful route we follow to the multicoloured mountains of Landmannalaugar. We trek over grassy meadows, pass between rocky peaks, and drop into stunning gorges before we are rewarded, at the end of the day, with the most spectacular view over the lava which flowed down the mountain in 1480. It is interesting to see the difference between this lava, and that from Mount Hekla, and we can see the effect that 500 years of climatic erosion and plant colonisation has had upon the rock. We can relax in the hot springs at the end of the day, and soak those aches away. Night camp (575m).

**Trek approx 13.5km / 6 hrs**



#### **ITINERARY**

**Day 1:**  
Fly  
London  
to

## Day 4: Landmannalaugar – Álftavatn Lake

Possibly the toughest day of the trip, we are now entering a remote and potentially hostile part of the route. For safety reasons, it is important to walk in groups, and to follow your guides' instructions. From Landmannalaugar we move on over the Hrafninnusker plateau at 800m. Walking up between the bizarre, seemingly unnatural rock structures of the Brennisteinsalda lava flow, we come across areas of geothermal activity in the form of steaming vents and hot springs. 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. We climb for most of the morning and may even cross snowfields left over from the long Icelandic winter. We reach the mountain hut at Söðull and



then the descent begins, heading south over rolling ridges of solidified lava before dropping steeply down

the Álftavatn valley - the views are tremendous. Exhausted from a full day's trek, we make our well-earned camp on the eastern shore of Álftavatn Lake. Night camp (537m).

**Trek approx 21km / 9-10 hrs**

## Day 5: Álftavatn Lake – Botnar

A less demanding day today; we trek across the predominantly flat area along the northwest region of the mighty Mýrdalsjökull Glacier towards Hattafell. We wade through the icy stream that skirts the camp and, after a few small climbs and descents through meandering gullies, we head out onto a sterile dusty volcanic plain. We rejoin the road for a short distance before cutting off to the left and heading between the small peaks of Útigönguhöfðar. The final part of the day sees us skirting beautifully coloured volcanoes before dropping into our campsite at Botnar (500m). For those who still have a little extra energy to burn, there is a chance to hike the 1km west to the edge of the Markarfljotsgljúfur canyon. Well over 100m deep, the rocks offer a stunning environmental niche for a number of plants and wildlife, most noticeably the storm petrels that nest in the canyon walls. One can only look on in envy as they glide

amongst the buffeting winds that gust along inside the canyon. Night camp (500m).



**Trek approx 14km / 6 hrs**

## Day 6: Botnar – Langidalur

Breaking camp we set off for Þórsmörk, Thor's Wood. We continue along the Markarfljót's canyon, dropping down into valleys and then climbing back out of them. The path is steep and slippery in places. We continue down the Þórsmörk glacial valley and are rewarded for our efforts by stunning views along the way of three separate glaciers: Mýrdalsjökull, Eyjafjallajökull and Tindfjallajökull. This landscape has changed since 2010's volcanic eruption beneath Eyjafjallajökull and your knowledgeable local



guides will be able to point out the changes. Our feet get a shock as we ford the icy Þröngá river, then it's a last push up and over Thor's Wood itself before we drop down to our campsite amongst the small trees and grassy slopes of Langidalur. Night camp (267m).

**Trek approx 14.5km / 8 hrs**

## Day 7: Þórsmörk – Eyjafjallajökull Glacier – Reykjavik



On our final day of trekking we hike our way out of the Þórsmörk Valley along the Krossa River. The scenery is spectacular and there is a chance to see a hidden valley along the way. We finish the hike in sight of the mighty Eyjafjallajökull glacier, where we can see close-up the effects of 2010's eruption. We make time for a group photograph before meeting the vehicles and travelling back to Reykjavik for our evening celebration.

*(Dinner not included)*

**Trek approx 10km / 5 hrs**

**Day 8: Free Day Reykjavik**

Today is free for you to enjoy the attractions of Reykjavik. There are lots of options: you can go whale-watching off the southern coast, or take a day-trip to visit the enormous Gullfoss waterfalls or the geyser area at Geysir. Or you may prefer to chill out in the capital and just watch the world go by. If you really want to reward yourself for your efforts on the trek, indulge yourself with a visit to the Blue Lagoon Thermal Spa. Night hotel.

*(Lunch and dinner not included)*

**Day 9:** Transfer to Keflavik International Airport; fly to UK.

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

## GENERAL INFORMATION

### TOUR COST

All accommodation is included as well as all flights and transfers; all meals except three as specified in the itinerary; all camping equipment (except sleeping bag and sleeping

mat) and entrance to any sites visited as part of the itinerary.

Experienced Discover Adventure leaders and doctor (depending on final group size) are also included, along with a local support crew of local guides, drivers and cooks (see Trip Support below).

It does not include personal travel insurance, airline fuel supplement if charged by the airline, tip for local crew or international departure tax. It also does not include any entrance fees to any optional sites or attractions you may wish to visit.

### Costs in Iceland

We recommend you budget for the following costs in-country:

- Tips for Local Crew (see below): £20-30

- Meals not included: £40-50

Remember to allow extra for drinks, souvenirs & other personal expenses. Bear in mind that alcoholic drinks are expensive in Iceland.

This recommendation is a guideline only. Please note that costs may fluctuate and we have no control over any changes.

**We strongly recommend you carry a credit card in case of personal emergency.**



### FLIGHT INFORMATION

Group flights leave from London Heathrow or Gatwick 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 are most likely to fly with IcelandAir. However, we don't always fly with the same airline so this is a guideline only. 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.**



### Connecting Flights

If you book flights to Heathrow or Gatwick, it is your responsibility to allow plenty of time for connections with the group flight and to cope with any flight schedule changes. Please be aware that the best deals allow little flexibility if you need to change them. We regret that we are unable to book connecting flights for you.

### Flying Separately

If you prefer to book your own flight please ask us for a land-only cost. You will be responsible for making your own arrangements for getting to the airport. We need to know if you do not require our group flight as early as possible; please complete the form in the information pack you'll be sent with your booking confirmation.

### ACCOMMODATION

Accommodation comprises of 5 nights camping and 3 nights in 2-3\* hotels in Reykjavik; these are of a reasonable but not luxurious standard. Be warned that Icelandic hotel rooms are traditionally small! We camp in two-man tents; you will be sharing with someone else on the challenge. The group helps to set up and break camp.



### FOOD

All food is included when camping. The food is great, will give you lots of energy, and there is plenty of it. 3 meals as specified in the itinerary are not included.

### Dietary Requirements

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 – Iceland relies on imports for much of its food. If you know there are plenty of foods you cannot eat you may wish to bring extra snacks from home so you can top up your energy supply. Please feel free to ask us for advice.

### Other Meals

Any meals not included are listed in the itinerary and are generally when we are in cities, where you are free to explore and try other culinary experiences. It is usually easy to find something to suit every budget.

### PASSPORT, VISA & VACCINATIONS

A valid ten-year passport is essential; it must be valid for at

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least 3 months after arrival into Iceland. There are currently no visa requirements for UK citizens.

We insist that you have had a Tetanus injection in the last 10 years and highly recommend protection against Polio.

**You should always check with a GP or travel clinic for up-to-date travel health advice as it does change.**



## TREKKING INFORMATION

### Terrain

We trek on terrain varying from wide dirt tracks to rough, rocky loose ground. At times we may be walking on old snow and there are some river crossings. There are steep inclines both up and down.

### Trekking Distances

You will trek approximately 80km on this trip overall. Because of the varied terrain, it's not possible to give more accurate daily distances. It's also more useful when training to think about the hours you need to walk for, and the type of terrain you will be trekking over!

### FITNESS WARNING: DESIGNED TO BE CHALLENGING!

This trek is designed to be challenging for those of good health and fitness, and is achievable for most people provided they train well in advance. We will supply you with a thorough training guide when you have registered. Training for the challenge is all part of the preparation and requires commitment! Without it, you will find the trek less enjoyable – and we want you to have the time of your life!

**We are always happy to talk through the trip in more detail with you if you are worried about your fitness at any stage.**

### Clothing & Equipment

We are trekking through remote terrain and could be exposed to bad weather at any time. The information below gives you an idea of the climate, but be prepared for all

weathers and temperatures. Weather conditions can change quickly in Iceland! 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.

### Weather

Average min-max temperatures and rainfall (mm) for Reykjavik:

July – August: 9 – 15°C; 53mm

Be prepared for strong winds, rain and lovely sunny skies, all in the same day! Iceland's weather is notoriously changeable.

### Fitness Levels

Our challenges attract people of all levels of experience and fitness, all ages and backgrounds. We expect all participants to train hard in advance to achieve this challenge, but we respect everyone's limits. 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 will find themselves waiting for the slower ones. Please relax, and remember that this is a team effort that enables people to achieve their personal

### TRAINING WEEKENDS: £129 SPECIAL OFFER

**Only when you book online at the same time as registering for your main challenge**

Discover Adventure Training Weekends in Snowdonia National Park are designed to help you prepare for your challenge. Whether you use the weekend to gauge your fitness, get your training back on track, boost your confidence, get advice or meet other trekkers, you're bound to find it incredibly useful!

*For dates and further information see our brochure or website.*

goals and earn sponsorship.

## TRIP SUPPORT

**Discover Adventure Crew**

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.

All our leaders are from the UK or other English-speaking countries. Most work for us on an ad-hoc basis and have 'real' jobs in-between trips! We never send our leaders to the same destination for months on end – we want them to be as enthusiastic about your trip as you are.



Although our leaders are trained in expedition first-aid, they are accompanied by an expedition doctor or medic (dependent on group size), who is there 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 number of crew looking after you will depend on the final size of your group, but an average-sized group in Iceland would be led by two leaders and a doctor. At Discover Adventure we pride ourselves on our high leader: trekker ratio and believe it leads to greater trip enjoyment as well as excellent trip safety.

### Local Support Crew

Our local support crew is made up of local guides, cooks and drivers; they are always friendly and approachable. Your local guide knows the local



area well and is a great source of knowledge about local customs and lifestyles. The Discover Adventure crew work closely with the local crew to ensure your trip runs smoothly and safely.

### Tips for Local Crew

Your leader will arrange a collection of tips for the local support crew at the end of your trek. Tipping is not obligatory, but once you see how hard they work on your behalf you will be happy to donate something! See 'Costs in Iceland' above for a guideline amount, your leader will let you know if there is any change to this guideline.

### Luggage

Vehicles support us on our trek. They carry all the luggage, food, water and camping equipment as well as providing emergency support.

Space is limited and hard-sided luggage is not suitable, so it is essential that your kit is packed in a soft sailing 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.

### 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 radios and emergency satellite phones, extensive medical kit and other safety apparatus where necessary. They always have access to our 24-hour emergency back-up in the UK. Our leaders 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 compulsory medical questionnaires and travel insurance – is all done with your safety in mind.



Please contact the Discover Adventure office with any queries, using the contact information at the foot of this page.

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## WORLDWIDE SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

Long before 'Responsible Tourism' became a recognised phrase, we designed and ran our trips to ensure they made minimum impact on the environment and a positive impact on the local communities we pass through. AITO, our Trade Association, has recognised the work we do in this area and has awarded us 5 stars as a Responsible Tour Operator.

### Discover Adventure Projects

We are supporting a tree-planting project in Peru and a children's home in Tanzania on a long-term basis. If you would like to 'give something back' please consider donating £5 to our projects when you sign up. Please see our website for more details.

### Carbon Offsetting

We encourage all our customers to offset emissions connected with their trip. You can offset at any time in the lead-up to departure by visiting Climate Care via our website and making a donation to a worthwhile project supported by them. Alternatively, if you wish to take more practical action in the UK you can volunteer for a day with BTCV and work on an environmental project local to you. Work may include construction footpaths, dry stone walling, creating wildlife habitats or planting trees in your community. Make your volunteer pledge by going to [www.btcv.org/dapledge](http://www.btcv.org/dapledge)

