



Iceland Northern Lights Astronomy Group Itinerary: 15-21 October, 2017

Iceland, October 15-21, 2017

(Departure from U.S. will be October 14, 2017)



A captivating aurora / Iceland Travel

Join *Sky & Telescope's* News Editor Monica Young for a one-week tour of Iceland — and the chance to see the Northern Lights! We'll explore this fascinating island's unique culture and geology during the day, then each night we'll venture into dark areas away from city lights to view Iceland's *aurora borealis*. The subtly colored, ever-changing aurora is a truly awe-inspiring spectacle not to be missed!

For more tour information, visit [Spears Travel](#)

If you're ready to book the trip, [click here](#).

Although the Northern Lights are elusive and unpredictable, we've chosen the time and location to maximize our chances of seeing one or more displays. Iceland always sits right under or near the auroral oval, the band around the Far North where auroras are most common. October is a good time for aurora-watching, as the nights are full and dark, and the weather prospects are better than deep winter. We have selected a week when moonlight won't interfere with nighttime viewing.

The friendly people of this island nation have a culture that's a fascinating mixture of both ultramodern elements and customs that date back to the original Viking settlers more than a thousand years ago. We'll stay at premium hotels both in and outside the capital city of

Reykjavík and sample delicious Icelandic cuisine. Iceland's tourist infrastructure is modern, and the nation is one of the cleanest and safest in the world. Most Icelanders speak at least some English, so it's very easy to interact with the local population.

During the trip, Monica Young will give lectures on astronomy, including a talk on the science of auroras.

Day 1, Sunday, 15 October: Arrival to Iceland – Breakfast – Reykjanes Peninsula – Reykjavik



Once you have landed at Keflavik Airport you will proceed through immigration and then collect your luggage. There is a duty-free shop located by the baggage carousel, which you can shop at on arrival while waiting for your luggage. Many items such as candy and snacks and drinks are less expensive here than at local shops.

If you are arriving early this morning (between 6:00 and 7:30am) from the US or Europe you will be met at Keflavik airport by an Iceland Travel tour guide and taken to a local restaurant, Vitinn, for a group breakfast, buffet style. (For those arriving in the afternoon or on an earlier date, you will be responsible for your own transfers on your day of arrival.)

After breakfast you will be transferred to your hotel for check-in.



This evening, enjoy a **group dinner** at a local restaurant in Hafnarfjordur, just a few minutes' drive from your hotel.

Overnight: [Hotel Vellir](#), Hafnarfjordur

Day 2 Monday, 16 October: Reykjanes Peninsula tour; Blue Lagoon visit

After breakfast at your hotel you will head out on a combination tour of the fascinating area of the Reykjanes Peninsula as well as a reviving visit to one of Iceland's most astonishing natural wonders.

Your tour explores [Hafnarfjordur](#) town, built on an ancient lava flow it is said to be home to many "hidden people"; the otherworldly surroundings of [Lake Kleifarvatn](#); [Krisuvík](#), a geothermal field where powerful jets of steam escape from deep below Earth's crust; the [Bridge Between Two Continents](#), by Reykjanes lighthouse, where you see a spectacular view of the Atlantic Ocean, and the port town of [Grindavík](#).



The Blue Lagoon / *Iceland Travel*

Next is the famous Blue Lagoon spa! The Blue Lagoon is a unique, man-made wonder; a lagoon with pleasantly warm, electric blue, mineral-rich geothermal water in the middle of a black lava field. The high natural levels of silica and minerals give the Lagoon its rich blue color and its healing power. The facilities include modern changing rooms and showers, an indoor geothermal pool, a winter garden, restaurants, and other services. Your entry and towel rental are included. Don't forget your bathing suit and water shoes, if you prefer to not go barefoot.

After your soak in the restorative waters you will be treated to a delicious dinner at the [Blue Lagoon Lava](#) restaurant, then returned to your hotel for overnight. With any luck the Northern Lights may make an appearance!

Overnight: [Hotel Vellir](#), Hafnarfjörður
Northern lights tour if conditions allow.

Day 3, Tuesday, October 17th: South Iceland



The Skálholt Cathedral / *Diego Delso*, [delso.photo](#) / License [CC-BY-SA](#)

Check out of your hotel after breakfast and drive via Reykjavík to the Hellisheiði Power Plant, driven by geothermal energy. Stop in the cute little town of [Hveragerði](#) and continue on to [Friðheimar Greenhouse](#) for an introduction to its vegetable production and a delicious lunch. Stop in [Skálholt](#), a venerable bishopric deeply revered in Icelandic history.

This afternoon check-in to your hotel for a two-night stay. Enjoy a group dinner at your hotel this evening. If the Northern Lights decide to make an appearance, all you have to do is step outside and marvel at nature's own light show!

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the Bridge Between Two Continents, by Reykjanes lighthouse, where you get a spectacular view of the Atlantic Ocean and the port town of Grindavík.

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[Hotel Laekur](#)

After your soak in the restorative waters you will be treated to a delicious dinner at the Blue Lagoon Lava restaurant, then returned to your hotel for overnight. With any luck the Northern Lights may make an appearance!

Overnight: [Hotel Laekur](#), Hella

Day 4, Wednesday, 18 October: South Shore Adventure

Take a journey today through the stunning landscape of Iceland's south coast. This is the land of Njal's Saga – a region of breathtaking scenery and legendary stories. During your guided tour you'll encounter the wonderful variety of the south: from the wide plains formed by glacial rivers, to the sheer sea cliffs of Dyrhólaey and the spectacular waterfalls of Seljalandsfoss and Skógafoss.

Along the way you'll experience unforgettable views of the Hekla and [Eyjafjallajökull](#) volcanoes and lunch in the beautiful, seaside village of Vík. Following lunch make a visit to the fascinating [Folk Museum at Skógar](#).

Overnight and dinner at [Hotel Laekur](#).
Northern lights tour if conditions allow.

Day 5, Thursday, 19 October: Golden Circle – Reykjavik – Northern Lights tour

Check out of your hotel after breakfast this morning and head out on the iconic Golden Circle route. Combining natural and historic wonders, you'll experience Iceland's landmark attractions in one incredible day. Take in the magnificent Gullfoss waterfall, the exploding hot



springs of Geysir (from which the English word *geyser* derives), and Thingvellir National Park, site of the 1,000-year-old Viking parliament. This is a geologically and historically fascinating area, not to be missed!

Continue on to Reykjavík, Iceland's capital city for check-in at the historic Hotel Borg. Dinner is on your own this evening at your choice of many local restaurants in the vicinity of the hotel. A wide variety of types and price points is available.

After dinner you will go on a Northern Lights tour. Watching the kaleidoscopic colors of the Northern Lights dance across the arctic sky is an unforgettable experience, and Iceland is one of the best places to see them. They are mostly observed on crisp, still evenings, and the tour heads away from the city lights to give you the best chance of witnessing this spectacular natural phenomenon.

Duration: 2.5–3 hours.

Overnight: [Hotel Borg](#), Reykjavík, Iceland



Day 6, Friday, 20 October: Reykjavik City Tour – Northern Lights tour



The perfect introduction to the many sights of Iceland's wonderful capital city. This fascinating excursion takes in all the city's major attractions, including: the old town centre and harbor, the Parliament, the national museum, the Laugardalur swimming pool, the Ásmundur Sveinsson Sculpture museum, the Pearl, the Harpa cultural center, the Höfði house (site of a famous 1986 summit), and the city's main landmark, Hallgrímskirkja. Along the way you'll also encounter Árbæjarsafn outdoor museum, where preserved buildings offer a fascinating glimpse into Reykjavík's past. And the city's salmon river is a reminder of the capital's connection to the surrounding landscape. The visit to the national museum in Reykjavik is included. There's no better way to come to grips with everything Reykjavík has to offer in just a few hours.

Duration: 3-4 hours (You can end the tour at your hotel or in the city center.

Overnight: Hotel Borg, Reykjavik, Iceland

Day 7, Saturday, 21 October: Reykjavik – Keflavik transfer

Following breakfast, you might want to take a short walk around downtown and do a bit of last-minute shopping before checking out of your hotel.

Farewell, Iceland, until next time

Góða ferð

Included:

A private coach with driver and guide for above itinerary
Accommodation: 18 double/twin rooms and 3 singles plus 2 singles for the driver and guide
2 nights of accommodation at Hotel Vellir in Hafnarfjordur
2 nights of accommodation at Hotel Laekur
2 nights of accommodation at Hotel Borg
Breakfast daily at hotels
Breakfast buffet on day 1 at local restaurant Vitinn
Dinner at local restaurant in Hafnarfjordur on day 1 (2 course meal, coffee/tea/natural spring water)
Entry and towel rental at the Blue Lagoon
Dinner at the Blue Lagoon restaurant
Two dinners at Hotel Laekur
Greenhouse visit and lunch at Fridheimar, Hveragerdi
Visit to Hellisheidi Power Plant
Visit to Skogar Folk Museum
Visit to the National Museum, Reykjavik

Not Included:

Entrance fees not mentioned above
Optional tours
Lunches not specified
Dinners in Reykjavik
Alcoholic beverages with meals
Meeting facilities
Unforeseen entry fees to nature sites
Porterage
Travel insurance
Free tour conductor