



NICHE



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Iceland: Women's Wellness & Culture

Dates: 4-13 August 2019

Tour Leaders: Sue Kissinger



Adventure Tours
University of Wisconsin - Stevens Point

Overview

This all-inclusive tour shares the beauty of Northern Iceland – far away from the throngs of tourists – and helps you relax, refresh and recharge through cultural/historic, recreational, culinary and wellness experiences. Designed for women and by women (Herdis and Sue), cultural/historic highlights include: visits to the Museum of Icelandic Textiles, the Herring Era Museum, the Museum of Prophecies and the Hrafnagil Handicraft Market and Festival. Additional highlights include: hiking in Jökullslárgljúfur canyon, riding Icelandic horses, whale watching excursion, swimming in the local hot pools and shopping in Reykjavik. We'll also indulge in plenty of local fish and lamb, plus traditional Icelandic foods (no putrefied shark!) Wellness experiences include: the solitude of the North Atlantic, drinking wine in the midnight sun, soaking in a beer spa and relaxing in the Mývatn Nature Baths.

Iceland is an island of 103,000 km² (39,756 sq. miles) with a population of approximately 340,000, the least densely populated country in Europe. Over half of the population lives in the beautiful, modern city of Reykjavik, leaving the rest of the island dotted with small villages and majestic undeveloped scenery. Iceland's summers are surprisingly warm, lush and green, with days lengthening until midsummer, when the sun dips down to the horizon but never sets. There are more than 170 geothermal pools scattered throughout the country and we will relax in several of them through the week. This women's only adventure will take us from Reykjavik and across the northern coast of Iceland to the beautiful city of Akureyri and the mysterious area surrounding Mývatn. Join together with the kindship of fellow women and take in some of the best sites, sounds, smells and tastes that Iceland has to offer.

Tour Leaders



Sue Kissinger

Sue (pictured left) has travelled extensively throughout the United States, Canada, Central America, Africa and Europe. She has worked at UWSP for more than 26 years and is currently a career specialist in the Academic and Career Advising Center. Sue has a B.S. and M.S. in Forestry from UWSP. She has lead 17 UWSP international trips, including seven to Iceland, her favorite place to visit! Four of Sue's seven Iceland tours have been in collaboration with local Icelandic guide Herdis Fridriksdottir (pictured with Sue; right).



Herdis Fridriksdottir (in-country guide)

Born, raised, and having lived most her life in Iceland, Herdis Fridriksdottir now lives on the Golden Circle nearby Geysir hot spring and Gullfoss waterfall. Herdis has a diverse background; holding an B.Sc in Forestry and a M.Sc in Land Use in Developing Countries from the University of Copenhagen. She also has an MPM degree M.Sc in Project Management from the University of Reykjavik. Herdis loves to travel and has been to over 30 countries in most corners of the world. She loves to share her country with new friends and is now a certified guide and licensed for bus driving. As the owner and founder of Understand Iceland, a small tour operator that specializes in welcoming groups from the US to Iceland, their motto is "Come as a guest - leave as a friend"

Itinerary

Day 1 (Sunday, 4 August) - Ease into it!

Travelers arrive very early at the airport in Keflavik (KEF) and meet the tour leader and local guide. After collecting luggage, the group will enjoy breakfast at the Viking Museum in Keflavik and travel via motor coach into Reykjavik where we will visit the Perlan for a beautiful view of the city and lunch. After checking into our guesthouse, we'll enjoy a stroll around town. *Overnight in Reykjavik at Álfhóll Guesthouse.*



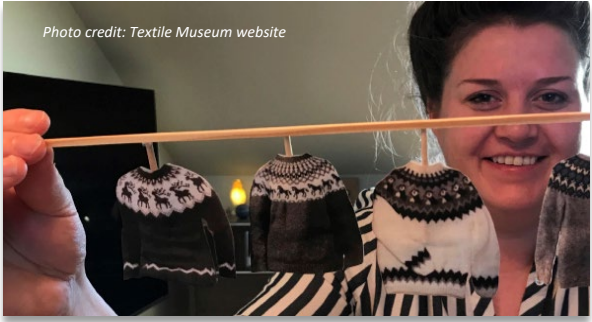


Photo credit: Textile Museum website

Day 2 - Sagas and Textile Museum

After enjoying breakfast at the guesthouse, we will head north towards Borgarnes where we will learn about Icelandic history at the Settlement Center. After lunch, our journey continues north to the town of Blönduós where we will visit the [textile museum](#), have dinner and settle into our cottages, complete with hot tubs. *Overnight in Blönduós Cottages.*

Day 3 - Blönduós - Fortune Tellers and Fur

Visit the Museum of Prophecies where a fortune teller will 'predict' your future using ancient runes. We then visit Gestastofa Sútarans, a Tannery Visitor Center and gift shop. Swim in the beautiful pool at Hofsós until we head to Siglufjörður for an evening of Moroccan food (yes, we said Moroccan) and bar hopping! *Overnight at Siglunes Guesthouse in Siglufjörður.*



Photo credit: Sundlauginhofsosi



Photo credit: Tannery Visitor Center



Photo credit: Bjorbodin website

Day 4 - Siglufjörður - Herring Museum - Beer Baths

Peruse the Herring Era Museum before driving to Hauganes to imbibe in beer (extra) and a beer bath! When bathing in beer, you'll sit in a big tub filled with beer, water, hops and yeast. The beer is in the early stages of fermentation, so the low pH will tighten and soften your hair follicles and cleanse your hair and skin. Beer is also a great source of B vitamins and many other nutrients and has anti-inflammatory effects. After we complete our spa treatments and have lunch, head to the beautiful "Capital of the North," Akureyri, for the evening. *Overnight in Akureyri.*

Day 5 - Godafoss Waterfall, Myvatn Lake and Dimmuborgir Lava

After breakfast, we continue east for a stop at the beautiful and historic Godafoss waterfall. Enter the mystic Lake Mývatn area where we'll hike in the geothermal and unique lava formations of Dimmuborgir. After our hikes, refresh in the healing waters of the Mývatn Nature Baths before driving over the moonscape of Möðrudalsræfi, "a once in a lifetime experience." *Overnight in Möðrudalur.*



Day 6 - Canyons, Waterfalls and Whale Watching



Heading further east, experience the most powerful waterfall in all of Iceland – Dettifoss. The breathtaking power of this waterfall will blow you away (literally)! Wear your rain gear too as the spray from the massive falls is prominent! Then, don your hiking shoes for an amazing hike through the awe-inspiring geology of Ásbyrgi and the Jökulsárgljúfur Canyon. Ásbyrgi translated to “Shelter of the Gods” and legends claim the steep walls of this canyon were created by Odin’s eight-legged flying horse from Norse mythology. Jökulsárgljúfur means glacial-river-canyon and it is aptly named for Iceland’s longest river canyon. It contains beautiful vistas, echo caves and unique rock formations. The evening will be spent in the beautiful village of Húsavík, the Whale Capital of Iceland! *Overnight in Húsavík at the Arbol Guesthouse.*

Day 7 - Whale Watching - Handicraft Market

We will depart from the Húsavík harbor after breakfast for a morning whale watching tour where you get a chance to see humpback whales, white-beaked dolphins and harbour porpoise as well as puffins and all kinds of sea birds. After lunch we will head back towards Akureyri, stopping at the annual Hrafnagil Handicraft Market and Festival ... shopping anyone? Check out their [website](#) for more details. We then return to Akureyri for a relaxing evening. *Overnight at Overnight in Akureyri.*



Day 8 - Horseback Riding and Burial Rites

You can't spend time in Iceland and not take a ride on the famous Icelandic Horses – the only breed of horse in Iceland! You can choose from a 1- or 2-hour ride on these gentle beasts as we explore the countryside around the Syðra Skörðugil farm. Later, explore the restored turf houses at the Glaumbær museum before visiting the valley where Agnus Magnúsdóttir lived and died. Learn about her story and the culture of this remote part of Iceland. After a brief stop at the amazing Grábrók Volcanic Crater, we return to Reykjavik for the remainder of our tour. *Overnight in Reykjavik at Álfhóll.*

Day 9 - Reykjavik - Explore on Your Own - Farewell Dinner

After breakfast at the guesthouse, you will have a free morning to explore Reykjavik to do more sightseeing, take some photos, do some shopping, visit a museum, attend a concert at Harps, go to a local swimming pool, take a shuttle to the Blu Lagoon, eat a hot dog or cinnamon roll... the day is yours to have fun! *(Lunch on your own) Overnight in Reykjavik at Álfhóll.*



Day 10 (Tuesday, 13 August) - Exploring Reykjanes Peninsula and Depart for Home

After breakfast at the guesthouse, we will explore the Reykjanes peninsula, including the beauty of Brimketill and Gunnhver and the unique Bridge Between Continents. A quick lunch in Keflavik before we are dropped off at the airport for our afternoon flights home.



All photos (except those credited) taken by tour leader Sue Kissinger.

Cost and Details

COST: \$4,399* (total USD) **Due to the high cost of Iceland tourism and the volatility of the Krona (Iceland's currency), the final cost will depend on the number of travelers and exchange rate at time of final payment (and will not exceed an additional \$450).*

MY OWN ROOM: not available

INCLUDED: The cost includes all lodging, based on double occupancy, all meals (except one lunch during your free day in Reykjavik,) all group land transfers with motor coach, 1 tour leader & local guides, all group activities (as listed above), all equipment rental, traveler's handbook and orientation.

NOT INCLUDED: Roundtrip airfare, extra activities/sites, extra purchases (such as souvenirs, alcoholic beverages, snacks and lodging sundries), local driver and guide tips, laundry services and travel insurance.

PLEASE NOTE: With weather and other uncontrollable variables, some activities/lodgings/schedules/meals may change prior to or during the tour. This tour will accommodate a variety of fitness levels; however, it is best to be in fair physical/mental shape.

TOUR LEADER: Sue Kissinger

GROUP SIZE: 16-20 **CONTACT:** Trevor Roark (program manager), 715-340-8186, adventure.tours@uwsp.edu

BOOKING: Book online with a credit card OR print booking form, complete and mail along with \$300 (pp) nonrefundable deposit.

WEBSITE: uwspadventuretours.com

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