


<b>Passport</b>	Yes	Must be valid for at least 3 months after arrival in the country
<b>Visa</b>	No	Not required for British passport-holders
<b>Currency</b>	Krona	Divided into 100 aurar; can obtain before arrival
<b>Vaccinations</b>	x 1	Tetanus*
<b>Time</b>	GMT	When it is 12 noon in London during the British summer it is 11am in Reykjavik. In wintertime (October – March) it is the same as in the UK
<b>Language</b>	Icelandic	English is widely spoken
<b>Electricity</b>	220v	Plugs are two-pin 

\* See Health notes below

## VISAS:

No visa is required for British passport-holders; your passport must have at least 3 months' validity left. Other nationalities are always responsible for checking with their embassies or consulates for the latest information. Remember to check any regulations for countries you may transit during your flight.

## MONEY:

**Currency:** Costs in Iceland are not among the lowest in Europe; alcoholic drinks especially are not cheap. You can change travellers' cheques in all banks – most charge commission. There is no opportunity to change them on the trek so unless you are extending your stay it is better to take krona cash.

**Cards:** ATMs are widely available throughout the country; there are many throughout Reykjavik so it's easy to access more cash after your trip. Most places accept the major credit cards; many shops will accept US\$ cash.

## HEALTH:

For Vaccination advice see above. **Please note that you should always check with your GP/travel clinic for the latest health advice, as they are made immediately aware of any updates in World Health Travel requirements**

Iceland is a remarkably health-hazard-free country and it is considered safe to drink tap water, although if you know your stomach is easily upset by different minerals, a change in environment, etc, it is inadvisable to do this. Drastic changes in diet experienced while travelling can often make you susceptible to minor stomach ailments, such as diarrhoea. Adopt good hand-washing procedures to prevent bugs being passed around the group. Make sure you drink plenty of liquids, though try to avoid caffeine (remember it is also found in soft drinks).

Sunburn and windburn is also a risk. Drink lots of water, replenish your salt intake and protect yourself from the sun – a minimum sun-blocking factor of 15 is recommended or 30 if you are fair or burn easily. You can burn even on cloudy days or when you feel cold. Midges in Iceland can be plentiful and although their bites carry no disease they are a nuisance. Make sure you apply plenty of insect repellent.

## WEATHER:

Iceland's climate is one of the more unpredictable in Europe. Average temperatures for July to September range from 7 – 16°C, (it is usually colder inland than in Reykjavik) and they are among the sunniest months. Temperatures even in the winter are not as cold as would be expected from such a northerly location – due to warm currents and south-westerly winds. Rain and wind however are common, with more rain falling in Reykjavik and the south than inland and to the north. Blizzards, fog and gales are not uncommon at any time of year, though the weather inland is more stable. Rainfall in August and September averages 50 – 54mm in Reykjavik.

## SAFETY & SECURITY:

Iceland is a relatively safe country, but you should still exercise caution at all times particularly in Reykjavik. Use your common sense: wear a concealed money-belt with your flight ticket and cash inside and do not flash any valuables. Be careful at night and avoid walking or getting into taxis alone. As in most countries, pickpockets and petty thieves prey on easy targets such as careless or distracted tourists so be vigilant for both yourself and your companions.

## LANGUAGE:

Icelandic is very close to the Germanic family of languages. Most Icelandics also speak Danish, German and English – to a very high standard! Although people speak English it is always polite and fun to have a few phrases handy from your phrase book!

Hello / Goodbye – Hallo / Bless	Yes / No – Ja / Nei
Thank you (very much) – Takk (fyrir)	Please – Gaetir
I don't understand – Eg skil pao ekki	Sorry – Fyrirgefou
How much does this cost? – Hvae kostar petta	

## Numbers:

1 – einn	4 – fjórir	7 – sjö	10 – tíu	100 – hundrao
2 – tveir	5 – fimm	8 – átta	20 – tuttugu	
3 – brir	6 – sex	9 – níu	50 – fimmtiu	

## FOOD AND DRINK:

Most food available in Iceland is similar to that found in the rest of Europe and North America. Most consumables are imported, hence the high prices. Salads and vegetables are available but not widespread. Soups are common, and meaty stews and broths. A typical restaurant meal will consist of meat such as beef, chicken or lamb, boiled potatoes and (often tinned) vegetables and soup. Fish forms a large part of the Icelandic diet, and there is always boiled puffin if you want a change!

Traditional Icelandic foods are certainly more imaginative: you can choose between rams' testicles pickled in whey and stuffed into a cake; singed sheep's head (with eyes but without the brain); putrefied shark meat, and various other dishes involving bits of sheep, blood and stomachs. On a positive note for vegetarians, the breads and pastries are great. Worth trying is the rich yoghurt-like skimmed-milk-based skyr, which is often mixed with fruit flavours and sugar. Drinks in Iceland are as you would expect in any European country. Coffee is remarkably cheap and drunk everywhere. Alcoholic drinks are subject to high taxes and you must be aged 20 or over to buy them. The traditional drink is brennivín, which means burnt wine, made from potato schnapps. Its nickname is 'black death' but don't let that stop you!

## CULTURE:

As is common with other North Atlantic and Scandinavian countries, Iceland's predominant religion is Protestant Christianity. The Inuit people and other tribes such as the Saami living throughout the region worshipped their own gods and vestiges of their own religions still remain. The Norse gods such as Thor, Odin and Frey make up part of the culture and legend of the region and although it is unusual for them still to be worshipped openly they are still regarded with great respect.

**Tipping:** Service charges are included in bills, and tipping is not expected.

## RECOMMENDED READING:

Travel Guides (especially useful if extending your stay)	Fiction (a great way to get a feel for a region or culture)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Iceland - Lonely Planet</li> <li>- Rough Guide to Iceland</li> <li>- Scandinavian Europe phrasebook - Lonely Planet</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The Killer's Guide to Iceland – Zane Radcliffe</li> <li>- The Fish can Sing – Halldor Laxness</li> <li>- The Sagas of the Islanders – Jane Smiley</li> <li>- Hypothermia – Arnaldur Indridason</li> </ul>