



ICELAND'S WESTFJORDS & NORTH COAST 7 DAY EXPEDITION CRUISE

Geologically, Iceland is one of the youngest countries on Earth. It's a land of spectacular geology that is rich in wildlife, culture and human history. On this voyage, you'll explore Westfjords, one of the remotest and most pristine regions in Iceland—ideal for nature hikes and bird and whale viewing. Discover diverse landscapes including thundering waterfalls, lava fields that breath steam and verdant valleys that stretch beyond the horizon. Atlantic puffins can be found in large numbers in Iceland, and you'll have many opportunities to encounter these charismatic birds nesting in their burrows. Note: In order to experience some of the incredible scenery of Iceland, a number of the shore excursions on this itinerary require coach travel away from the coast.



ITINERARY

Day 1 Arrive in Reykjavik

Having made your way to Reykjavik, you will be met by a representative of Aurora Expeditions and transferred to our group hotel. Upon arrival at your included hotel, please visit the Aurora Expeditions hospitality area where you can leave your luggage and enjoy refreshments if arriving prior to 4pm. Whilst here you can collect your luggage cabin tags speak with our ground operations team, who may have information to share with you about pre-embarkation or to provide you with information about where to dine, withdraw cash or purchase last minute items from a local pharmacy or supermarket.

The remainder of your time is at leisure. All meals today are at your own expense.

Accommodation: The Grand Hotel Reykjavik



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Day 2 Embarkation

This morning, please ensure your cabin luggage is fitted with cabin tags clearly labelled with your name and cabin number. Your luggage will be collected from your hotel and transferred directly to the port for clearance and delivered to your cabin ahead of your arrival on board. Please keep any valuables or personal items with you throughout the day.

Embark on an unforgettable journey starting with a scenic drive through Reykjavik to Perlan taking in panoramic views of the city from the observation deck. Visit the iconic Hallgrímskirkja Church before strolling down vibrant Skólavörðustígur street filled with charming shops and restaurants. Conclude the walk at the modern Harpa Concert Hall, with leisure time to relax before an exquisite local lunch. Returning to the pier we will visit Bessastaðir, the presidential residence of Iceland, before embarking the Syvllia Earle at 2pm. After boarding, there's time to settle into your cabin before our important safety and Zodiac briefings before we 'throw the lines' to begin our Iceland adventure. This evening, meet your expedition team and crew at the Welcome Dinner.

Day 3 Patreksfjörður & Dynjandi - Westfjords

Over the next three days, we explore the Westfjords region featuring outstanding landscapes with jaw-dropping views of dramatic fjords carved by ancient glaciers, sheer table mountains that plunge into the sea and pristine North Atlantic vegetation.

At Patreksfjörður, a shore excursion by coach takes us to Latrabjarg cliffs. As Europe's largest bird cliff, Latrabjarg is home to millions of seabirds, such as puffin, razorbill, fulmar and guillemot. Enjoy the impressive variety of natural wonders and

unspoiled nature. Latrabjarg also happens to be the westernmost point in Europe, east coast of the North American continent on the other side of the Atlantic.

Immerse yourself in the tranquillity of the afternoon as we cruise northward, taking in breathtaking landscapes and keeping a watchful eye for whales. Later, we'll embark on a Zodiac landing to witness the awe-inspiring power of Dynjandi waterfall.

Day 4 Thingeyri - Westfjords

Thingeyri, a quaint village nestled on a slender strip of land, graces the shores of one of Iceland's most picturesque fjords, Dýrafjörður. Much like many other coastal settlements in Iceland, the village's culture and industry have been intricately woven with the influence of the sea over centuries. The surrounding landscape is adorned with towering mountains, lending a distinctive charm to the scenic expanse that envelops Thingeyri. This idyllic region is often hailed as the "Alps of the Westfjords," especially the highland area nestled between the majestic fjords of Dýrafjörður and Arnarfjörður. The beauty of Thingeyri lies not only in its coastal simplicity but also in the dramatic backdrop of high mountains that paints a captivating portrait of this Icelandic village.

Personalise your expedition with our included 'Your Choice' experiences that best suits your interests and level of fitness.

****Option 1 - That Viking Thing Experience ****

Duration: 2 hours + free time

Level of difficulty: Easy



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Today you will step back in time and learn about the Viking ways and how the hardy Norse people lived off the land. Walk through a recreated Viking area, learning about what is fact and what is fiction in the many stories you've heard about the famous Vikings. A short hike brings you to the old ruins of the Viking meeting place called a Thing - the closest translation in English is 'parliament.' Step inside the interactive Viking Museum for a chance to dress up in authentic hand-sewn Viking clothing, take photographs, drink Icelandic Viking beer, bake your own Viking bread, and explore the museum - all part of learning more about Viking ways.

****Option 2 - Sandafell Mountain Hike ****

Duration: 3 hours

Level of difficulty: Moderate-Difficult (dependent on fitness level)

For avid explorers, Iceland is littered with hidden gems, and possibly the best-kept secret of all is the Westfjords. Lying in the most north-westerly area of the island, this sprawling area of natural beauty is truly a hiker's paradise. Rocky peaks, deep crevices, and charming Icelandic towns all add to the appeal of the Westfjords, not to mention the various hiking trails snaking across the unusual countryside. Today we will hike Sandafell, offering gorgeous views over the town, surrounding mountains and the water below.

Return to the ship via Zodiac after your shore excursion.

Day 5 Vigur Island & Isafjordur

This morning's landing is by Zodiac, bringing you ashore at the enchanting island of Vigur, a rare jewel in the Ísafjarðardjúp fjord. Home to only a handful of people, yet millions of seabirds, Vigur offers a glimpse into an untouched world. Birdwatchers may add rare species to their lists, while others simply wander along the shoreline or follow gentle trails across the island's rolling green hills. Puffins, Arctic terns, eider ducks, and black guillemots nest here in astonishing numbers, creating an unforgettable symphony of sound and movement. Along the way, discover traditional eiderdown farming, historic buildings, and the island's tiny post office -- the smallest in Iceland. With its vibrant birdlife, sweeping views, and authentic Icelandic heritage, a visit to Vigur is truly a once-in-a-lifetime experience. Return to the ship by Zodiac, carrying memories of one of Iceland's most treasured gems. Later, we visit Isafjordur, surrounded by sheer mountains and steeped in history, evident in its preserved wooden architecture. Delight in its lively cultural scene and abundant outdoor activities.

Day 6 Snaefellsnes Peninsula

Grundafjordur is the starting point of our adventures on the Snaefellsnes Peninsula, gateway to Snaefellsjokull National Park. Snaefellsnes Peninsula is an area of diverse landscapes that is characterised by lava fields and glistening fjords and home to a vast array of birdlife. The area is crowned by the magnificent, ice-capped Snaefellsjokull volcano, a 700,000-year-old dormant subglacial volcano, visible from Reykjavik on a clear day and immortalised in Jules Verne's Journey to the Centre of the Earth.

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**Option 1 - Highlights of Snaefellsnes Peninsula **

Duration: 7 hours including lunch

Level of difficulty: Easy

Terrain: Uneven surfaces, walking across sand and through lava fields, some steps, some moderate accents and descents in places. Our first stop will be the iconic Mount Kirkjufell, a favourite among photographers and known to many as a filming location for the TV show "Game of Thrones". Not far from this majestic mountain is a waterfall that completes the picturesque scene.

Next, you'll visit Snaefellsjokull National Park, encompassing a large area of Snaefellsnes Peninsula's western tip. For the more active, explore some incredible hiking trails, or simply enjoy your drive through the park and take in the beauty that surrounds you. Continue to the dramatic black pebble beach of Djupalonssandur, where you can marvel at the black sands and colossal rock formations, volcanic landscapes, and remains of a 1948 shipwreck. Following lunch, re-join the coach to travel to Buðir, a picturesque hamlet surrounded by the stunning landscapes of the Snaefellsnes Peninsula. Stop to admire Buðakirkja, the 19th-century church and explore the area before embarking the ship in Arnarstapi.

**Option 2 - Coastal Trails & Lava Caves **

Duration: 7 hours including lunch

Level of difficulty: Moderate. Hike - 3.40km/2.1 miles one way. Tech difficulty: easy, approx. 1-2hr.

Terrain: Hiking over lava fields, rocky terrain, slippery when wet. Elevation 52 metres / 173 feet. Good mobility is required. Vatnshellir Cave involves walking unsupported on uneven surfaces in limited lighting and navigating two 30 metre spiral staircases in both directions. We strongly recommend that you wear comfortable and sturdy footwear, as the volcanic rock can be quite difficult to traverse. It does get cold in the cave, so do remember to bring a jacket.

Upon disembarkation, we will stop will be the iconic Mount Kirkjufell, a favourite among photographers and known to many as a filming location for the TV show "Game of Thrones". Not far from this majestic mountain is a waterfall that completes the picturesque scene.

Next, you'll step into the 8,000-year-old Vatnshellir Cave, replete with stunning geology, fascinating rock formations, and colourful volcanic rock. We will meet at our base near the cave, where your friendly guide will provide you with all the equipment that you need, including a helmet and headlamp, before we descend the spiral staircase into this subterranean wonderland. The tour meanders through the path of the lava flow around 200 meters into a large cave that lies around 35 meters beneath the

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surface of the earth, where we will be greeted by some rainbow-coloured volcanic rocks and incredible petrified lava formations.

Following lunch, re-join the coach and travel to Arnarstapi and hike the coastal trail that connects the two villages of Arnarstapi and Hellnar. Now a National Reserve, this easy level hike encompasses geology, wildlife, amazing photo opportunities, folklore and most of all adventure. This old trail takes us along the wild shoreline with a view of the ocean and extraordinary columnar basalt and lava cliff formations on one side and stunning mountains and Snaefellsjokull Glacier on the other. The cliffs are alive with a wide range of bird species such as the Arctic Tern, the kittiwakes, gulls and fulmars.

****Option 3 - Land of Fire Hiking ****

****Duration:**** 7 hours including lunch

****Level of difficulty:**** Moderate-Difficult (dependent on fitness level). Hike 1 - 5.6km/3.5 miles. Tech difficulty: easy, approx. 2hr 30min. Eldborg - Length: 6.64km / 4.12 miles. Tech difficulty: moderate, approx. 1hr 30min. Elevation: 50-100 meters / 164-328 ft.

****Terrain: ****Hiking over lava fields, rocky terrain, slippery when wet. Good fitness and mobility are required. We strongly recommend that you wear comfortable and sturdy footwear, as the volcanic rock can be quite difficult to traverse. Many steps, some steep accents and descents in places.

The Land of Fire and Ice is well-known for its incredible landscapes and contrasting terrains that include several natural and geological wonders rarely found anywhere else on Earth. The unique geological history of Snaefellsnes will draw you in where you can explore sites revealing Iceland's unique geological history up close. Your first stop is at Eldborg crater, located on a short volcanic rift, just 200 metres in diameter, and 50 metres deep. It is the largest crater on this rift and was created in an eruption which occurred somewhere between 5000 and 6000 years ago. Unlike many of Iceland's volcanoes, it has a very classic shape, with smooth sloping sides and a very definite crater. A marked hiking path leads through a shrub-covered lava field to the top of the crater offering incredible views of Snaefellsnes National Park.

We continue to the symmetrical, hexagonal-shaped basalt columns at Gerðuberg Cliffs. Stand in awe at these impressive cliffs, a natural marvel that spans 500 metres. To enjoy the best view, take a walk by the structures. Climbing up the cliff is possible but to really soak in the views of this geological structure, it's best to enjoy a walk alongside the cliffs.

Following an early lunch, re-join the coach and head for the Pufubjarg bird cliff, home of nesting puffins and fulmars. From here, hike along the rugged coastline to witness the exceptionally beautiful Londrangar basalt cliffs, a geologic wonder that looks like a huge rock castle. There are many local birds here, and they are a noisy bunch. Puffins, but especially fulmars, nest in the many cavities in the two pillars. From here you hike across a pretty lava field covered in moss to Malarrif,



where you can see the lighthouse and explore the beach.

Return to the ship via Zodiac after your shore excursion.

Day 7 Disembark in Reykjavik

During the early morning, we cruise into Reykjavik and disembark at approximately 8.00 am. Farewell your expedition team and fellow passengers as you continue your onward journey. Transfer options are as follows:

1. Direct to Keflavik Airport.
2. Direct to The Grand Reykjavik (this option is only available if your hotel was booked by AE Expeditions).
3. Bus Stop #1 - Raðhus - City Hall where you can make your own way to city hotels.
4. For late afternoon and evening airport departures, Bus Stop #1 - Raðhus - City Hall where we will hold your luggage on the coach until your departure to the airport at 1pm. Enjoy free time in the city until your departure.

****Note: **Do not book flights departing prior to 12.00 pm on the day of disembarkation, as we may experience delays at the conclusion of the voyage.**

Please note:

Itineraries are subject to change.



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YOUR SHIP: SYLVIA EARLE

YOUR SHIP: Sylvia Earle

VESSEL TYPE:

LENGTH:

PASSENGER CAPACITY:

BUILT/REFURBISHED:

Sylvia Earle made her inaugural cruise in 2022; she honours the highly accomplished marine biologist, oceanographer and explorer, Sylvia Earle. As the first female chief scientist of the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and named by Time Magazine as its first Hero for the Planet in 1998 - this vessel pays tribute to Sylvia's long standing conservation efforts for marine protected areas and ocean wildlife. Sylvia Earle will be actively involved in the development of her namesake. The streamlined Ulstein X-BOW® cuts through the swell so you feel fewer vibrations and disturbances, and makes quicker transits through waves. It also helps reduce fuel consumption by up to 60%[^]. Experience the Glass Atrium Lounge inside the bow, featuring huge windows and superb views to the front of the ship. In between landings, enjoy the heated saltwater open air swimming pool and jacuzzis on board the Sylvia Earle and watch the world go by, or experience our gym, sauna or enjoy a massage (additional cost) in the Wellness centre. Sylvia Earle carries many Zodiacs, which you can board via four dedicated, sea-level launching platforms. These platforms make boarding the Zodiacs as quick, efficient and safe as possible, minimising wait times and getting you

closer to the action for longer. Dining One of the most important parts of any expedition is the food! Whatever adventures the day holds, you will be fuelled-up with hearty meals and delicious morning/afternoon teas cooked by our onboard chefs. Meals are a great time to soak up the expedition camaraderie in our open seating dining area. Share stories with your fellow travellers and ask our expedition team questions that may have come up during the day. Tea, coffee and snacks are available 24 hours a day, and our chefs offer different menu options and courses for each meal. Enjoy the range of house wine, beers and soft drinks included with dinner after a long day in the wild. We also invite you to join your captain and expedition team for informal Captain's Welcome and Farewell drinks, with complimentary beverages and cocktail appetisers, followed by a 3 course meal. Responsible Travel We believe that preserving and protecting the environment is of the utmost importance and this is reflected in several features of the Sylvia Earle. The Sylvia Earle will boast one of the lowest polluting marine engines in the world due to low energy consumption, high fuel-efficiency and a streamlined design to deliver an 80% reduction in emissions. The ship can also utilise virtual anchoring to hold its position using a combination of GPS, steering technology, propellers and thrusters. This protects the sea floor and minimises the damage caused by conventional anchors. Compared to Tier

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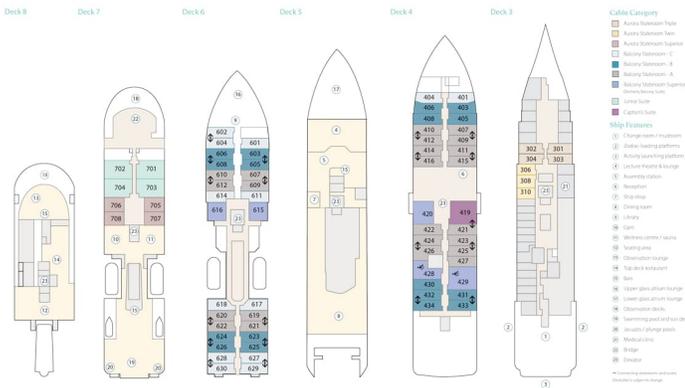


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