

## UW Alumni Iceland Adventure

Contact: Dr. Anne Alexander | [aalex@uwyo.edu](mailto:aalex@uwyo.edu)

Join UW economist Dr. Anne Alexander, who's taken several classes of incoming University of Wyoming students to Iceland, on a 10-day journey across one of the most beautiful, wild, and stunning landscapes in the world. Go back in time to the settlement days of the Vikings and immerse yourself in the modern culture of Iceland. Revel in the cinematic landscape of this land of fire and ice, roaring waterfalls, towering mountains, vast glaciers, other-worldly lava fields, rumbling volcanoes, delicate fauna, and kind, hospitable, and generous people. The first 16 travelers who make a non-refundable deposit will be accepted on this journey.

**Trip Dates: Depart U.S. April 5, 2024, return to U.S. April 15, 2024**

### Price:

UW Global Engagement Fee \$500/person

Double room nightly plus all inclusions, below, 4328 €/person (approximately \$4700 as of September 2023)

(Supplement for single room 625€ )

### What's included:

#### Guide & transport:

- Expert guidance and insights from Dr. Alexander at every step along our journey.
- Arrival transfer with private bus via Blue Lagoon & city tour Reykjavik with local, trained English-speaking guide
- Roundtrip 8 days in private bus with local, trained English-speaking guide
- Departure transfer in private bus

#### Accommodation:

- 9 nights in rooms with private bathroom in Comfort-Class hotels

#### Meal plan:

- Daily breakfast included at each hotel
- One lunch at Friðheimar
- 7 x dinner in the countryside (everywhere except for Reykjavik)

#### Excursions and entrances

- [Blue Lagoon](#) Comfort entrance (including towel and one drink).
- [Perlan](#) Observation desk.
- [Bjarnarhöfn](#) Shark Museum.
- [Glaumbær](#) entrance.
- [Forest Lagoon](#) entrance (including towel).
- [Friðheimar](#) greenhouse visit with tomato soup buffet.

Also included in the price: 11% VAT

## What's not included:

- Airfare/flights – see below for best flight recommendations
- Drinks other than water with dinners (coffee, hot tea, and juice included in breakfasts)
- Two dinners in Reykjavik
- Most lunches except April 14, 2024 (we will stop for lunches, don't worry! We will also stop at grocery stores for you to grab road snacks and/or meals)
- Personal travel insurance
- Passport, Global Entry/PreCheck, or ETIAS travel authorization fees.

## Itinerary (subject to change due to weather and the fact that travel is usually best done without worrying too much....)

April 5, 2024 - Depart Denver International Airport, see flight recommendation below. We strongly advise that you take the recommended flights; one bus will pick us all up at the same time from Keflavik.

April 6, 2024 – Arrive Keflavik International Airport, local driver and guide pickup; we'll transfer to the famed [Blue Lagoon](#) to shake off the long flight; we then head out for a Reykjavik city tour, where you'll see the soaring Hallgrímskirkja, the lovely church designed to mimic the emblematic basalt columns of Iceland, as well as the Harpa, Hofdi, Sun Voyager, the modern Icelandic Parliament, Laugavegur, and the [Perlan](#); we will then check into to chic [Hotel Alda](#); dinner is on your own (note: Hotel Alda is in the heart of downtown Reykjavik and many great restaurants are nearby – get out and explore the area to help recover from jet lag!)

April 7, 2024 – We'll have breakfast (included) at the hotel; we then start our journey around Iceland! After departing Reykjavik, we drive across the beautiful west of Iceland to the Snaefellsness peninsula, with stunning views of Snæfellsjökull and stops along the way to marvel at the scenery potentially including Ytri Tunga Beach and Arnarstapi; we'll visit the [Bjarnarhöfn](#) Shark Museum, where the owner will tell of generations of his family's tradition of catching and preserving Greenland shark (we'll get to try some!); we continue on to the colorful Danish-style town of Stykkisholmur, where we end the day at the modern [Fosshotel Stykkisholmur](#) (dinner included).

April 8, 2024 – We'll have breakfast (included) at hotel, then commence our day driving across the stunning Skagafjörður fjord area, with possible stops along the way including Búðardalur and Siglufjörður; next, we visit [Glaumbær](#), the homestead of Guðríður Þorbjarnardóttir the Far Traveler and Þorfinnur Karlsefni, both of whom lived for a time in North America and Greenland before “retiring” to Iceland. Next, we'll enjoy some relaxation at the [Forest Lagoon](#) and finish the day in the vibrant town of Akureyri at the lovely [Hótel Kea](#) (dinner included).

April 9, 2024 – We'll have breakfast (included) at the hotel; this morning, you'll have time on your own to explore Akureyri, including time to check out the charming downtown area, the church (try to count the steps!), the art museum, or the botanical gardens; we then drive to the incredible other-worldly environs of Lake Myvatn, one of the most ecologically and geologically unique areas of Iceland, exploring our surroundings along the way; we'll arrive at the end of the day at the stunning [Hótel Laxá](#) and have dinner (included).

April 10, 2024 – We start with breakfast (included) at the hotel; then we're off to explore the Myvatn area, including possible stops at Dimmuborgir, home of the strange Yule Lads of Icelandic Christmas lore, as well as the Grjótagjá cave (famous for a Game of Thrones cameo), the Skútustaðagígar pseudo-craters, Goðafoss (the waterfall of the gods), and Dettifoss (the mightiest waterfall in Europe); we end the day at [Fjalladyrd](#), a bucolic farm/hotel at the edge of the northern Icelandic highlands, where you might see arctic foxes, happy dogs, and friendly goats. Dinner is included.

April 11, 2024 – We have breakfast (included) at the hotel; today our adventure continues as we drive across the north and east Icelandic highlands and explore the Eastfjords of Iceland; the stunning Vatnajökull, the largest glacier on the island, comes into view. Along the way we'll stop in Egilsstaðir, the largest town in East Iceland, and home to the Lagarfljót worm, a purported lake monster! Enjoy the stunning beauty of the numerous fjords and the wildness of the highlands as we go. Tonight we will end near Höfn at the inviting [Hótel Jökull](#). Dinner is included.

April 12, 2024 – We start with breakfast (included) at the hotel; today we begin our discovery of the South Coast, including visiting the Glacier Lagoon, or Jökulsárlón, as well as the stunning Diamond Beach. We will stop along the way as we move forward at numerous scenic spots in the vast and stunning Skaftafell National Park, the largest national park in Iceland and home to Vatnajökull. We end our day at the modern [Fosshótel Núpar](#) near Kirkjubæjarklaustur. Dinner is included.

April 13, 2024 – We have breakfast (included) at the hotel, then we continue our explorations of the South Coast, including possible stops along the way to include the beautiful town of Vik and the Reynisfjara beach (warning – don't turn your back or get too close to the water here – it's beautiful but very unpredictable! Listen to our guide and do NOT discount what they say). There may be puffins near Vik, but they may still be at sea – so keep your eyes peeled! We'll also see some of the most famous waterfalls in the world today, the stunning Seljalandsfoss (if conditions permit, you might go behind this waterfall!) and Skogafoss, which you can climb the 527 steps to the top of and which routinely produces glorious rainbows. The day ends near the town of Hella at the charming [Stracta Hotel](#), where dinner is included.

April 14, 2024 – We start with breakfast (included) at the hotel. Today we will spend time enjoying the famed Golden Circle, seeing Gullfoss, Geysir (after which all geysers are named), and Þingvellir National Park, or Parliament Plains, where the chieftains of old held their annual gathering to govern and settle their differences, and where Iceland reclaimed its independence in 1944. We will also stop along the way to tour the [Friðheimar](#) Greenhouse and enjoy a tomato soup lunch buffet; we will then make our way back to the capital city of Reykjavik, where we end our day back at [Hotel Alda](#). Dinner this evening is on your own.

April 15, 2026 – Breakfast is available at the hotel, and today our journey comes to an end, but we will hit a couple of sites near the capital before returning to Keflavik International Airport (return flight recommendation below). Bless (Icelandic for “goodbye!”) and bon voyage to you all!

## Flights –

We recommend that you fly out of Denver International Airport on the below flights. This gets us all to **Reykjavik at Keflavik International Airport early in the morning of April 6. One bus will pick us up as a group that morning. No additional pickup times are available.**

Recommended flights out of and into Denver International Airport are:

- Icelandair FI670, nonstop DEN to KEF, departure 4:45 PM Denver time April 5, arrival 6:00 AM KEF time April 6
- Icelandair FI671, nonstop DEN to KEF, departure 4:45 PM KEF time April 15, arrival 7:00 PM Denver time April 15

Pro tip: consider booking your seats on the left-hand side of the flight en route to Keflavik, which will allow you to see Greenland, and potentially the aurora, on your way. On the way back, similarly, try to book on the right-hand side of the plane.

## Important details:

In order to enter Iceland, you should:

- Make sure that your **passport does not expire earlier than October 16, 2024** (you must have at least 6 months of valid passport time left to enter Iceland).
- At this time, as of Jan. 1, 2024, all U.S. visitors to European Union countries, including Iceland, **may need to apply for and receive [ETIAS travel authorization](#)**. Your travel document (passport) must be no more than 10 years old, which should not be a problem for U.S. travelers; it must not expire within 3 months of travel. The application fee is 7€. We will update as we learn more about this requirement, as it's still in a fluid state.

**We also recommend that you purchase travel insurance in case of emergency or extraordinary circumstances.**

## Deposit and full payment due dates:

**Non-refundable deposit: \$1,000 USD is due at booking; deposit should be sent no later than December 1, 2023.**

**Balance of full payment: Due by January 8, 2024. We will let you know the exact USD amount due based currency exchange rates in January 2024.**

## Readings to explore for UW Alumni Iceland Adventure

### Sagas and Viking scholarship:

1. *Beyond the Northlands: Viking Voyages and the Old Norse Sagas*, by Eleanor Rosamund Barraclough (2016, Oxford University Press). This book explores the many far-flung travels of the Vikings, overlaying them with the sagas to explore the landscapes that shaped the stories and myths both of and about the Norse.
2. *River Kings: A New History of the Vikings from Scandinavia to the Silk Road*, by Cat Jarman (2021, Simon and Schuster). In this book, the author uses her bioarcheology background to trace the route of a Carnelian bead found at a Viking burial site in England across the globe to explore the incredible network of trade and migration that the Vikings brought in their wake.
3. *The Sagas of the Icelanders*, translated by Jane Smiley (any edition). This is a compendium of the famous sagas of the Icelanders, one of the richest literary accomplishments in Europe and still revered and read by Icelanders to this day.
4. *The Far Traveler: Voyages of a Viking Woman*, by Nancy Marie Brown (2007, Harcourt). Learn about this most extraordinary Viking woman, Guðríður Þorbjarnardóttir the Far Traveler, who lived in Greenland, Vinland (North America), and Iceland, pilgrimaged to Rome, and married three times, twice into the family of Eirik the Red, finally settling down in the north of Iceland, where her farmstead and legacy live on.
5. *The Real Valkyrie: The Hidden History of Viking Warrior Women*, by Nancy Marie Brown (2021, St. Martin's Publishing Group). Learn how scholars are using bioarcheology, history, and sagas to understand how female warriors, and Norse women generally, wielded more power and autonomy than most of us ever dreamed of.

### **Fun and informative non-fiction**

1. *How Iceland Changed the World: The Big History of a Little Island*, by Egill Bjarnason (2021, Penguin Books). A lighthearted and wonderful tour of pivotal ways in which Iceland has impacted the world, spanning 1,200 years!
2. *The Little Book of Tourists in Iceland* (Little Books Publishing, 2017) and *The Little Book of The Icelanders* (Little Books Publishing, 2014), both by Alda Sigmundsdottir. Irreverent and fun explorations of how Icelanders see you when you are a tourist, and the quirks of Icelanders.

### **If you like mysteries or Nordic Noir**

1. Anything by Yrsa Sigurdardottir. Be prepared to sleep with a light on.
2. Anything by Arnaldur Indridason. Be prepared to be in suspense.
3. *Burial Rites* by Hannah Kent (Little, Brown and Co., 2013). This book is a historical fiction account of Agnes Magnúsdóttir's final days, set in the early 1800's, as she awaits her execution - what will actually be the final execution in Iceland. Did she do it? Was it justified? You'll have to read to find out!

### **If you want to explore Iceland's most famous and revered national heroes' lives/writings:**

1. *Song of the Vikings: Snorri and the Making of Norse Myths*, by Nancy Marie Brown (2014, St. Martin's Griffin; Reprint edition - January 7, 2014). This is about one of the most influential men in early Icelandic commonwealth history and the writer of most of the famed sagas, as well as what we know about the Norse, their religion, and their history pre-1000 AD. Snorri Sturluson was born in 1179, and became an influential poet, historian, and chieftain, as well as a prolific author and respected lawspeaker in Iceland's parliament. Snorri was assassinated in 1241 for political skulduggery. He's a complex dude!
2. Anything by Halldor Laxness - born near Reykjavik in 1902, his first novel was published when he was seventeen. The undisputed master of contemporary Icelandic fiction, and one of the outstanding novelists of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, he wrote more than sixty books, including novels, short stories, essays, poems, plays, and memoirs. In 1955 he was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature. Laxness died in Iceland in 1998.