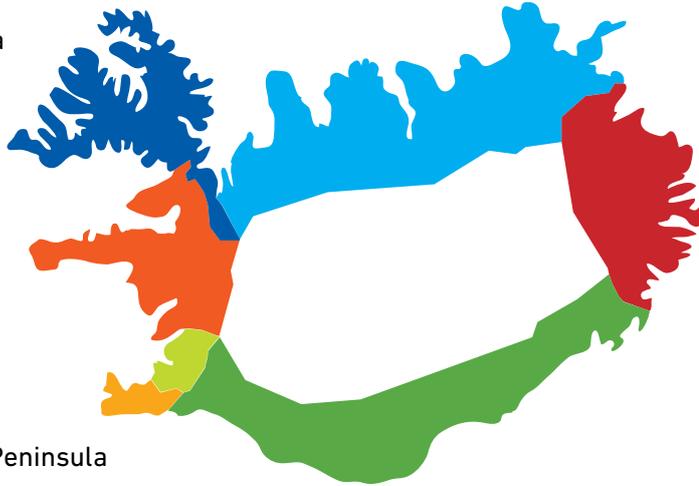


ICELAND IN FACTS

-  The Capital Area
-  West Iceland
-  Westfjords
-  North Iceland
-  East Iceland
-  South Iceland
-  The Reykjanes Peninsula



REYKJAVÍK

The buzzing capital of Iceland is Reykjavík (literally “Smoky Bay”). The small inlet where the city has risen was first named in 874 AD by Iceland’s first settler, Ingólfur Arnarson. He cast his high-seat pillars overboard for the pagan gods to wash ashore at the place where they wished him to make his home. He found his pillars in Reykjavík, and arrived at the name after seeing steam arising from geothermal springs in the area. Reykjavík and the surrounding area is home to about 222.500 people, and more than half the population lives in the capital region. The city is located on the south west coast of Iceland.

PEOPLE

Icelanders are mostly descended from Nordic settlers. Due to the relative geological and cultural isolation of past centuries, remnants of Iceland’s history abound. Iceland uses the old system of patronymics once common throughout Scandinavia. Children are surnamed with their father’s first name followed by a suffix “son” or “dóttir,” (son/daughter of). The majority of the population thus has relatively similar last names. Due to high standards in health care and a healthy diet, Iceland maintains one of the highest life expectancies in the world.

LANGUAGE

Icelandic is the national language directly derived from the Old Norse language spoken throughout much of Northern Europe. Iceland’s relative isolation has protected the original grammatical and vocabulary structure. As a consequence, speakers of Icelandic can still read ancient Norse manuscripts. Although modern, Icelandic has undergone changes of pronunciation and, of course, of vocabulary. English is spoken by the majority of the population, as English is a mandatory school subject from the age of ten.

RELIGION

Ninety per cent of the population belongs to the Lutheran Church; about one per cent is Roman Catholic. Although the first settlers were originally Pagan, Iceland converted to Christianity in 1000 AD through a parliamentary decision. Some remnants of paganism remain, mostly through symbolism and ceremonies.

CULTURE

Icelanders are largely descended from Nordic and Celtic settlers and still share a strong bond with Scandinavia today. Family is of ultimate importance and traditional family gatherings are a way of life. Children are a priority and Iceland boasts a higher birth rate than any country in the European Union. Pure products and a healthy natural environment have blessed Icelanders with one of the longest life expectancies in the world.

As a whole, Icelanders are creative and self-reliant. The level of education in the country is high, and interest in arts and culture is widespread. Like anyone else, Icelanders like to have fun. They work hard and play hard and love sharing their country with visitors. It’s no exaggeration: if you’ve been to Iceland once, you always have friends in Iceland.

ICELAND IN BRIEF

Official name: Iceland

Flag: Blue with a red cross outlined in white. The colours are symbolic for Iceland: red is for the volcanic fires, white recalls the snow and glaciers, and blue is for the skies above.

Population: 355.620 (Jan. 2018)
Median age is 35.6 years.

Capital city: Reykjavík. The largest municipalities are Reykjavík* (126.000); Kópavogur* (36.000); Hafnarfjörður* (29.500); Akureyri (19.000); Reykjanesbær (18.000). *cities in the capital region.

Government: Parliamentary constitutional republic.

Language: Icelandic, a North Germanic language derived from Old Norse. English is widely spoken and understood.

Religion: Predominantly Christian.

Currency: The Icelandic króna (plural krónur) –ISK.

Time: Iceland is on Greenwich Mean Time (GMT) throughout the year.

Size: 103,000 km² (40,000 sq. miles), slightly bigger than Hungary and Portugal, and slightly smaller than Cuba.

Glaciers: Glaciers cover 11,922 km² (4,600 sq. miles) of the island’s surface. Vatnajökull National Park is the largest national park in Europe.

Highest point: Hvannadalshnjúkur peak 2,110 m

Natural resources: Fish, hydropower, geothermal energy

Natural hazards: Volcanic activity, earthquakes, avalanches, glacial outburst floods.

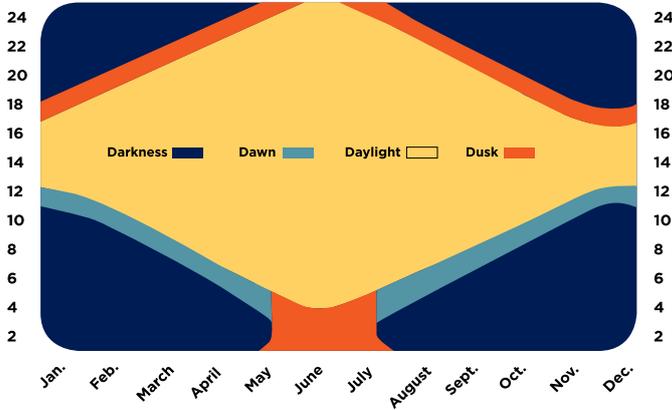
Helpful websites

- iceland.is
- inspiredbyiceland.com
- safetravel.is
- en.vedur.is (Icelandic Met Office)
- road.is
- statice.is
- en.island.is
- cb.is (Central Bank of Iceland)

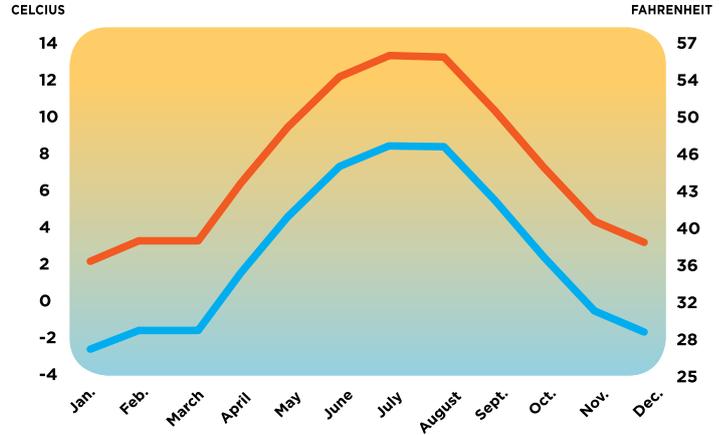
COME AND BE
INSPIRED BY ICELAND

ICELAND IN FACTS

DAYLIGHT HOURS IN REYKJAVIK



AVERAGE HIGH AND LOW TEMPERATURE IN REYKJAVIK



GEOGRAPHY

Iceland is an island in the Atlantic Ocean, located near the Arctic Circle, between Greenland and Norway. An island of 103,000 km² (40,000 square miles), it is about the same size as Hungary and Portugal, or Kentucky or Virginia. Iceland is the second largest island in Europe, following Great Britain, and the 18th largest island in the world.

The coastline is 4,970 km, and Iceland maintains a 200 nautical-miles exclusive economic zone. It takes approximately five hours to fly from New York to Reykjavík, and three hours from London. Iceland is the westernmost country in Europe.

Iceland is one of the youngest landmasses on the planet, and consequently home to some of the world's most active volcanoes. The island owes its existence to a large volcanic hotspot created by a fissure in the Mid-Atlantic Ridge, where the Eurasian and American tectonic plates meet.

Even today, the country is growing by about 5 cm per year, as it splits wider at the points where two tectonic plates meet. This geothermal activity gives Iceland unique access to abundant energy in forms of both hydropower and geothermal energy. The last volcanoes to erupt were Eyjafjallajökull in 2010 and Grímsvötn in 2011.

Iceland's highest peak is Hvannadalshnjúkur, standing 2,110 metres (6,852 ft) over sea level, and over 11 percent of the country is covered by glaciers, including Vatnajökull, the largest in Europe. Its land mass comprises glaciers (12,000 km²), lava (11,000 km²), sand (4,000 km²), water (3,000 km²) and pasture (1,000 km²).

Iceland is the least densely populated country in Europe (3.1 inh./km²). Almost 80% of the country is uninhabited, and much of its terrain consists of plateaux, mountain peaks, and fertile lowlands. There are many long, deep fjords and glaciers, including Europe's largest, Vatnajökull. Iceland has more land area covered by glacier than the rest of Europe. Its landscape's is characterized by waterfalls, geysers, volcanoes, black sand beaches and otherworldly steaming lava fields.

CLIMATE

Although Reykjavik is the world's Northern most capital, Iceland is warmed by the Gulf Stream, resulting in a surprisingly mild, coastal climate. The weather is also affected by the East Greenland polar current curving south-eastwards round the north and east coasts. The average summer temperature in Reykjavik is 10.6°C/51°F in July, with average highs of 24.3°C/76°F.

The warmest months are from June to September when visitors can witness the midnight sun. Alternately, Iceland's coldest months are November to January, when average winter temperature in Reykjavik are similar to New York City's, about 0°C/32°F in January (average highs are 9.9°C/50°C). Most descriptive of Iceland, however, are the interchangeable weather patterns. The weather can be very unpredictable and often changes in an instant. Due to its extreme geographical location, sun and rain at the same time can be quite common.