

## **ICELAND: Geothermal Wonderlands**

**August 27 - September 6, 2010**

**11 days**



**1-877-402-8687**  
**UniquePhotoTours.com**

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Evansville, IN 47735-3637  
(877)402-TOUR

## HIGHLIGHTS

- Reach inaccessible areas throughout the country by traveling in a 4x4 vehicle designed to ford rivers and cross volcanic terrain.
- Photograph blue-tinted icebergs floating in Jokulsarlon Glacial Lagoon & icebergs stranded on a remote black sand beach. Overnighting at a nearby farmhouse allows for evening and early morning photography.
- Spend 3 nights in Myvatn to explore an eerie lava field of contorted crags, bubbling cauldrons, pseudo-craters and 60-foot lava pillars.
- Photograph majestic fjords, sleepy fishing villages, idyllic farms & forests along coastal roads in the east.
- Hike around Fjallabak Nature Rsrv. & Landmannalaugar where rhyolite mtns. are intense neon green from geothermal activity.
- Visit 19<sup>th</sup> century farmsteads with grass-roofed homes.
- Photograph a Nordic woman with Icelandic horses, and a man in volcanic terrain on 2 model shoots.
- Walk coastal cliffs. See basalt sea stacks & waterfalls.
- Soak in steamy mineral waters at the Blue Lagoon.
- Hike along the Valley of Smoke in a volcanic, geothermal hotspot.
- Explore remote glaciers, geysirs, streaming fumaroles and mineral colored lakes in the interior highlands. Access to photograph sights early morning and night made possible by staying overnight in a mountain hut and our hired 4WD.
- Be accompanied by 3 published photographers: a local driver guide who is an accomplished nature photographer and your tour leaders.
- Learn how to create dramatic landscape images with off camera flash, gels, filters and reflectors through informal presentations in the field.

## NOTES

## Additional Information

Camera equipment you plan to bring:

Any concerns or health risks that we should know about?

Is there anything you are particularly interested in learning or photographing during the tour?

Thank you sincerely for choosing Unique Photo Tours, LLC !

Kim and Dave Walker

## ICELAND Geothermal Wonderlands

11 Day Photo Tour

*Note: Tour begins and ends in Keflavik International Airport, Iceland*

### ITINERARY

#### **Day 1 - August 27 (Friday): Lava fields & Blue Lagoon**

Overnight flight with early morning arrival in Keflavik Intl Airport. Our driver guide, who is one of Iceland's most prolific stock nature photographers, will pick us up in a 4WD supervan designed to access off-road sights. Heading south, we'll explore Reykjanes Peninsula, a landscape of vast lava fields, bubbling mud, small fishing villages and coastal sea cliffs. We'll photograph scenes around the Blue Lagoon, a milky-blue mineral pool carved out of lava where steam turbines from a neighboring power plant lend a sci-fi atmosphere to the bathers soaking in steamy waters.

After lunch at the Lava restaurant, we'll have an opportunity to soak in the Blue Lagoon before checking into our hotel in the small town of Hveragerdi. Ensuite rooms, overlooking a river, are named for artists represented on the gallery walls. An optional late afternoon hike through the Valley of Smoke will take us past steaming streams, gurgling mud pools and geothermal hotspots.

*Frost & Fire Hotel (L, D)*

#### **August 28 (Sat): Geysirs & the Volcanic Interior**

The interior of Iceland is impassable most of the year. Even when the frozen highlands begin to melt in mid-summer, 4WDs are still required to cross rivers, climb slippery slopes, maneuver deep sand and dodge potholes in this barren desert landscape where Apollo astronauts came to train. Of the 3 interior routes, we'll be traveling along Kjolur mountain route, where some of the most interesting geothermal sites exist. We'll stay overnight in a mountain hut to access the volcanic sites at Hveravellir in the best light of day.

This morning en route to the interior, we'll stop at the famous Geysir Hot Spring. Hissing steam vents, colorful mineral pools and an erupting geyser are just 4 miles from Iceland's

most popular waterfall, Gullfoss. Its massive curtain cascade drops 69 ft into a gorge.

The majority of our day will be spent in the interior. Sites to explore include Hofsjokll & Langjokull Glaciers and Kerlingafjoll Geothermal area, a vast volcanic region with hotspots, icy glaciers, marshy plains, floating icebergs, and rhyolite mountains colored neon green. The dramatic highlight along this route is the oasis of Hveravellir, a vivid blue mineral pool encrusted with white silica in a landscape of barren desert plains. There are no hotels in the interior. We'll have sleeping bags in a dormitory room, hot water (but no showers), and share a cooperative meal in a mountain hut that hosts up to 35 people.

***Hveravellir mountain hut (no electricity) (B, L, D)***

**August 29 (Sun): Turf Farm, Icelandic Horses & Model**

After breakfast, we'll travel north along the Kjölur track through the Interior Highlands. At Skagafjörður Fjord we'll visit a restored 19<sup>th</sup> century turf farmstead, where grass-roofed buildings still hold primitive belongings inside maze-like interiors. This region is famous for breeding and showing Icelandic horses. We'll visit a horse farm to photograph the horses and a local female dressed in traditional woolens to capture some iconic images.

Heading east, we'll reach Akureyri, a thriving fishing port on Iceland's longest fjord. In town we'll have time to wander past shops, museums and an Art Deco twin spire church. Driving to Myvatn, we'll enter a volcanic region of steam vents, craters, lava fields, bubbling mud cauldrons, and psuedocraters that belong to the Krafla volcanic system which last erupted in 1984. We'll spend 3 nights here. Our hotel is noted for its rooms, lakeside views and great food like lamb, salmon and arctic char.

***Hotel Reykjahlid (B, L, D)***

**Registration Form: ICELAND - Geothermal Wonderlands**

August 27-Sept 6, 2010

**Tour Price:** The price for this tour beginning and ending in Keflavic, Iceland is \$5,500 US if paid by personal check. Credit card payment is 3% more (\$165) for a total of \$5,665.

**Registration:** After reading the itinerary, trip notes, Terms and Conditions, please return this form along with your deposit of \$1,000. Each participant must sign and return a separate Tour Participant Agreement which you will receive with your deposit receipt.

\_\_\_I have read and accept the Terms & Conditions for this photo tour. (Required)

\_\_\_I'm traveling alone, but wish to share a room. Please find me a MALE or FEMALE roommate. If we are unable to match you with another participant, there will be a single supplement fee of \$600.

\_\_\_I prefer to room alone, and am enclosing an additional \$600 single supplement fee for the 8 nights that a private room will be available. I understand that double occupancy may be necessary in the farmhouse, and that dorm rooms are expected in the mtn. hut.

**Participant Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Please circle:** Male or Female

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Email:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Enclosed is my deposit (plus single supplement if desired) of \$\_\_\_\_\_ to secure a space on the Iceland Geothermal Wonderlands Photo Tour.**

Make Checks Payable to: **Unique Photo Tours, LLC**

Mail completed form(Front/Back) to: **PO Box 3637**

**Evansville, 47735-3637**

To make deposit by credit card with 3% fee: (Circle) M/C or VISA

**Billing Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Cardholder Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Card Number:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Exp.Date (mm/yy)**\_\_\_\_\_

**Security Code:** \_\_\_\_\_

**August 30 (Monday): Volcanic Wonderlands**

Our local driver/photography guide will lead us to the most interesting spots in this vast Myvatn-Krafla region. There are steaming fissures, strange lava formations and craters to explore. One highlight is Dimmuborgir, the Dark Castles, a surreal scene of contorted crags, lava chutes and 60 ft pillars created from molten lava. Expect to spend a couple hours walking along loop trails around the bizarre formations. Elsewhere, a half-hour ascent leads to the crater rim of Hverfell, a 459 ft hole which resulted 2,000 years ago when rising magma met with groundwater, creating a rare tephra explosion.

Striking features surround Krafla volcano. Mineral pools and eerie plains stained in brilliant psychedelic shades look otherworldly in the Hverir geothermal field, while hissing steam vents and bubbling mud gurgle steps away from the boardwalk trail. The Leirhnjukur lava field is perhaps even stranger. The earth is tinged in more subtle colors, but moss and weird textures are sprouting inside the fissures.

***Hotel Reykjahlid (B, L, D)***

**August 31 (Tuesday): Volcanic Wonderlands**

Another day is devoted to the Myvatn-Krafla region. We may photograph a cluster of pseudocraters at Skutustadagigar, migratory birds at Myvatn Lake, a church that narrowly escaped being swallowed by lava, or return to areas that warrant another visit. Alternatively this afternoon, we could visit Dettifoss, Iceland's biggest waterfall, or head north to Husavik, a small whaling village.

***Hotel Reykjahlid (B, L, D)***

**September 1 (Wednesday): Coastal Fjords**

Leaving Myvatn, we'll travel to eastern Iceland, the country's least visited region. En route we'll stop to photograph turf homes at Saenautasel, a farm abandoned in 1875 after a volcanic eruption covered it in ash. It is one of the most remote farms, and an excellent example of Iceland's Nordic heritage.

Next, we'll stop in the capitol of the east, Egilsstadir, before

descending to villages along the coast. Mountain roads hug the shore where picturesque fishing villages sit at the base of fjords with steep slender slopes. We'll devote most of our time to Seydisfjordur, a village of bright homes clustered along a harbor sheltered by snow-capped mountains and an 11 mile fjord. Our accommodations are inland, on the shores of Lagarfljot Lake in an area reforested with larch, spruce, birch and willow trees.

### ***Hotel Hallormsstadur (B, L, D)***

### **September 2 (Thursday): Eastfjords & Floating Icebergs**

We'll spend the morning exploring the Eastfjords, a scenic region of deep fjords, small fishing villages and farms scattered along coast. Traveling south, we'll drive along the eastern part of Vatnajokull, a massive ice cap covering over 3,000 square miles. The highlight feature of this region is Jokulsarlon, a lagoon full of floating blue-tinged icebergs. Calved from a glacier, they are irregularly shaped and sized and marbled with sediment. We may also see seals bobbing amid the ice. We'll have ample time to photograph this lagoon both this evening and early the next morning, when the crystal clear waters are calm and reflective, by staying overnight in a cozy farmhouse with shared facilities.

### ***Hali Guesthouse (B, L, D)***

### **September 3 (Friday): Stranded Icebergs & Skaftafell Natl Park**

Early morning photography at the Jokulsarlon glacial lagoon or surrounding area. Our local photography guide, Haukur, will drive us to less visited sites in Skaftafell Park to photograph glacial tongues, floating icebergs and calving ice. At another special place, Fjallsarlon, there's a good chance we'll see icebergs stranded on a black sand beach. This afternoon, back at Jokulsarlon, there's an optional tour (\$30) to take a 40 minute boat ride among the floating ice.

### ***Hotel Laki (B, L, D)***

### **September 4 (Saturday): Landmannalaugar Mountains**

A 4WD is necessary for accessing the northern part of  
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### **Recommended Camera equipment:**

- **A** camera backpack
- **2** camera bodies (handy to have 2 different lenses ready & great to have in case one malfunctions)
- **Assorted** lenses: wide 17-35mm, medium 28-70mm, telephotos like 70-200mm, macro and extension tubes. Optional teleconverter.
- **Filters:** polarizing, UV to protect your lens from blowing sand, and split-neutral density (graduated, and hard edge)
- **Dust** proof camera bag. Ziplocks (small and large) for batteries, & memory cards, also protect camera from sand!
- **Tripod** (preferably with ball head) & cable release.
- **Camera** manual. Knowledge of how to change f/stop and shutter speed on your camera prior to the tour - including how to make these adjustments in Aperture Priority, as well as Manual Mode. The better you know your camera, the easier it will be to be creative.
- **Laptop** loaded with Photoshop is optional. There may be opportunities to learn new techniques, review procedures, and play with some of the images we are taking.
- **Extra** batteries, charger, extra memory cards. Bring plenty of memory cards. There are different philosophies on what size to use. We're in the camp that feels you have a greater risk when changing cards, so we use big ones 8GB & 16GB.
- **Portable** device for backing up images. We use the HyperDrive SPACE or Nexto Extreme which hold upwards of 100GB and runs off of batteries. Like other brands, it doesn't require a computer to backup your images. We always back up images on at least 2 drives for safety. These drives aren't as durable as we would like and we don't trust them.
- **Electricity** is 220v, 50 Hz. Bring a European 2 pin round plug adapter(s). A powerstrip or extension cord is very handy.
- **Off** camera flash if you have one. Silver/gold reflectors also very handy.
- **Model** releases for those who intend to sell images to stock agencies, submit for print or use on-line.

**Health & Safety:** Tap water in Iceland is pure, and safe to drink. Bring sun protection. Be cautious on ice, loose crumbly rock faces, slippery slopes and volcanic trails. If prone to motion sickness, consider medication or wrist bands to counter the windy coastal roads. Top notch modern hospitals staffed by English speaking doctors exist throughout the country except for the Interior Highlands.

**Money:** Change cash into Kroner at the currency exchange desk in the airport or withdraw from ATMs scattered around the country. A pin is required to make withdrawals from ATMs. Food and drink are highly expensive in Iceland (\$7 coke/\$15 beer not uncommon). All meals are included in the tour cost, but not beverages other than coffee, tea or water. No tipping necessary.

**Getting Here:** Icelandic Air flies to Keflavik Intl Airport direct from Boston (5 hours, 9:30pm departure-6:30am arrival next am), JFK New York (5.5 hours, 8:35pm departure-6:20am arrival), Seattle (7.25 hours, 4:30pm departure-6:45am arrival). Check for details at [www.Icelandair.com](http://www.Icelandair.com). Although there are some alternative routes that arrive in Iceland at 11:50pm, please select a flight that arrives around 6:30am on Aug 27 so that we can travel as a group from the airport on day one of our tour and travel south to the Peninsula described in the itinerary. (Or make arrangements to overnight in the Keflavik region on Aug 26 and not in Reykjavik.)

**What to bring:** Warm layered clothing, including long underwear. Windbreaker, and rain gear (coat and pants). Sturdy footwear. Swimsuit for mineral pools. Insect repellent (head net may be handy in Myvatn region), sunscreen, sunglasses, an optional hat with a strap.

Fjallabak Nature Reserve, where we'll spend the day exploring glacial valleys, black lava terrain, mossy volcanic peaks, steams and natural hot springs. Brilliant shades of luminescent green color the rhyolite mountains at Landmannalaugar, a premiere spot for hikers and landscape photographers. Geothermal activity in the area is responsible for creating the intense colors in the mossy mountains, which contrast strongly with the black lava terrain. We'll take short hikes to fully appreciate this region of the highlands.

***Leirubakki Hotel (B, L, D)***

### **September 5 (Sunday): Waterfalls, Coastal Cliffs & Model Shoot**

Today we'll travel along Iceland's dramatic southern coast and visit the major sites en route to Reykjavik. We'll see a massive sea arch at Dyrholaey promontory, a clifftop nesting ground for puffins (in the spring), and basalt sea stacks that reach 200 ft high beyond a black sand beach. Continuing on we'll stop at two of the area's most impressive waterfalls, Skogafoss and Seljalandsfoss, cascading glacier runoff. This afternoon we'll have another local, this time a long-haired man, pose for us in the volcanic terrain. By early evening we'll check into our 4 star hotel and have dinner downtown.

***Holt Hotel Reykjavik (B, L, D)***

### **September 6 (Monday): Departure**

Those who are going on to Greenland with us will depart around 8am for our 10am flight. Others will have free time to explore the capitol city of Reykjavik on their own until their airport transfer.

**(B)**

## **TERMS & CONDITIONS:**

**Tour price of \$5,500 includes:** 10 nights lodging (8 nights hotel with double occupancy, 1 night mountain hut dorm, 1 night farmhouse with shared facilities), **all meals**, land transportation in a 14 seat 4WD supervan with luggage trailer, an English-speaking local professional photographer driver guide, **hired models**, entrance fee to Blue Lagoon and turf farms, permit fees to access Interior Highlands, and 2 photo tour leaders.

**Price does not include:** international airfare from your home town to Keflavik International Airport, Iceland; soft drinks or alcoholic beverages; single supplement if private hotel room is desired (\$650); optional boat ride at glacial lagoon (\$30) or other optional tours that may be offered (whaling, glacier hiking, etc); wifi fees; laundry, phone calls or other personal expenses.

**Maximum group size: 8 participants**

**Deposit of \$1,000 is due at time of registration.** Single supplement is \$600. Final payment of \$4,500 is due by June 1, 2010.

**Cancellation Policy:** Applies only to written cancellations received by Unique Photo Tours, LLC. A participant will be refunded as follows: Full refund if canceled 180 days prior to tour start date. Full refund--minus the deposit--if canceled 120 days prior to tour start date. No refund for participants who cancel less than 90 days prior to tour start date. To assure fairness to all, no exceptions can be made for illness, inability to travel or sudden fear of terrorism. Please secure travel insurance for peace of mind. No refund will be issued for any unused services while on the tour. In the unlikely event that UPT leaders cancel the tour for any reason all deposits/payments will be fully refunded.

**Travel Insurance:** We urge you to acquire travel insurance that covers trip cancellation, interruption, equipment and baggage. Unexpected events that can affect a tour are always a possibility. Allow for such contingencies. Try these or other credible website for travel insurance: [www.travelguard.com](http://www.travelguard.com), [www.insuremytrip.com](http://www.insuremytrip.com), [www.quotetravelinsurance.com](http://www.quotetravelinsurance.com).

**Smoking:** We ask that there be no smoking where we are assembled as a group, where local regulation does not permit it, in the vehicles or where other participants may be bothered.

**Health:** Participants should be in good health and able to walk on uneven terrain. Participants under a doctor's care should seek advice about the appropriateness of this tour prior to registration. Submitting a registration form acknowledges that you have been cleared by your doctor to travel to this destination and are not an active risk for any reason to other participants.

## **TRIP NOTES:**

**Weather & Daylight:** Any and every day in Iceland is unpredictable. Expect abrupt changes. Be prepared for strong wind, rain, fog or even snow. Expect temps in late August to be around 50 degrees. Sunrise will be around 6am, and sunset around 9pm.

**Hiking:** Sturdy boots or hiking shoes with good ankle support and thick soles are necessary for maneuvering loose rocks in volcanic plains and withstanding sharp lava rocks which tend to shred rubber. Our 4WD vehicle will access many of the off-road sites, but frequent hikes are required to explore the area fully. Hikes are rated moderate and include some steep hills. Those who wish to skip a hike can photograph the immediate area or relax near the vehicle. In the Myvatn region, please stick on trails and boardwalks to avoid falling through thin crusts of light-colored earth in the geothermal areas. No swimming in bubbling mud!

**Model Shoot:** We have hired local people, not professional beauty models, to photograph in the Icelandic landscape. It is a great chance to become more comfortable photographing people, and adds another element to capturing the essence of this country. We will discuss different lighting options prior to the sessions, and perhaps illustrate different techniques for those who would like some input. We'll likely break up into smaller groups and take turns photographing and/or suggesting different poses or actions for our models. Those not photographing the models will have horses and landscapes to occupy the time.

**Electricity:** 220 volts, 50 Hz. Bring a 2 pin round plug adapter for appliances.