

ICELAND

DETAILED ITINERARY

FJORDS, GLACIERS, AND HOT SPRINGS

May 16/24

Now includes the Western Fjords



Puffins

Explore the rugged beauty of this North Atlantic island nation. For most people, the name Iceland conjures up little more than snow and ice. But it is much more than ice - in its sagas, puffins, glaciers, fjords, active volcanoes, lava fields and hot springs, you'll find the perfect blend of nature, culture and history.

We begin in the capital city of Reykjavik and continue south along the scenic coast, taking in lava fields, hot springs and bird cliffs enroute. See the remarkable Geysir, the geyser from which all geysers derive their name, and Hveravellir Hot Springs - an oasis of warmth amidst two interior glaciers. Experience the hospitality of Icelanders in the quaint coastal towns of Akureyri and Höfn, and enjoy an exciting whale watching trip from Husavik.

In Lake Myvatn - world famous for its bird life - we spend time visiting fishing villages, viewing the mystical Godafoss waterfall, walking through

FACTS & HIGHLIGHTS

- 13 land days • Maximum 16 travelers • Start and finish in Reykjavik • All meals included • Visit the remote and seldom explored Western Fjords • Enjoy a culinary workshop at a charming guesthouse • Visit Thingvellir National Park - a UNESCO World Heritage Site • Explore Lake Myvatn • Watch geysers erupt • Visit an Icelandic horse farm • Soak in hot springs and geothermal pools at Blue Lagoon • Travel by monster trucks to the ice cave at Langjökull glacier • Enjoy an amphibian boat tour on Jokulsarlon Glacier Lagoon

DEPARTURE DATES & PRICE

Jun 11 - Jun 23, 2024 - \$8895 USD
Jun 10 - Jun 22, 2025 - \$8995 USD

Activity Level: 2

Comfort Level: Some long and bumpy drives

ACCOMMODATIONS

Comfortable accommodation with private bathrooms. 1 night at a charming guesthouse where 4 rooms may share 2 bathrooms depending on the group size.

ELDERTREKS



SMALL GROUP
EXOTIC ADVENTURES
FOR TRAVELERS 50 PLUS

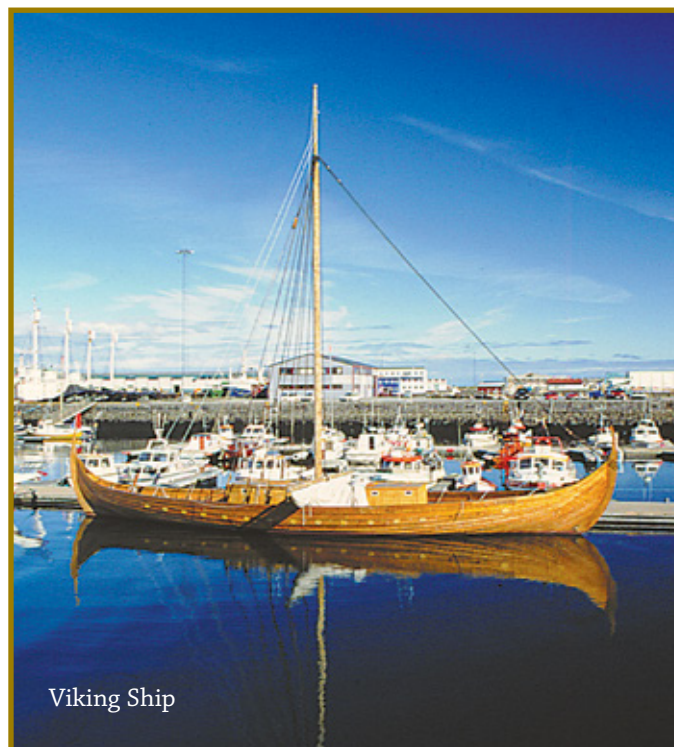
lava labyrinths, and visiting steaming sulphur pits of Hverarond. We visit the East Fjords - 18 million-year-old geological wonders that were carved out by glaciers during the last ice age. At Vatnajökull ice cap to the southeast, we visit Skaftafell National Park and a glacier lagoon. Accompanied by Icelandic mountain guides, explore the park's surrounding glaciers and be introduced to the "world of ice" that few people have seen.

Enroute to Reykjavik, stop to view Dyrholaey - a natural 400-foot high rock arch over the Atlantic Ocean that serves as a nesting point for thousands of puffins, guillemots and kittiwakes. Finally, spend a day exploring the fascinating capital city of Reykjavik. Join ElderTrek's adventure to the land of the midnight sun and learn about European life in the Arctic Circle.

DAY 1 ARRIVE IN KEFLAVIK, REYKJAVIK CITY SIGHTSEEING

Upon arrival in Keflavik, you are met at the terminal by your transfer driver. The drive takes us across the lavafields of the scenic north coast of Reykjanes Peninsula, a land version of the North Atlantic Rift Zone, to the colorful capital Reykjavik. The rooms will not yet be ready but luggage can be left at the reception until the afternoon. There may be time to stretch your legs and visit one of the many coffee shops within walking distance for a light breakfast.

We will meet our guide at the hotel's reception area at 12pm to commence the downtown city tour. We enjoy a gentle walk around the city's central lake, and through its adjoining streets and parks to see the Parliament House and the City Hall. From the downtown area, we take a short drive to the western seashore of Reykjavik to see great views of Snæfellsness Peninsula and the



Viking Ship



Traditional Houses



Husavik — one of the best places for whalewatching

surrounding mountains. We will also make a stop at Perlan, Hallgrímskirkja church and Harpa Music Hall. During the city tour we enjoy lunch at a local restaurant. Late afternoon will be free to spend at own leisure, until dinner.

Overnight in Reykjavik

DAY 2 GOLDEN CIRCLE WITH A TASTE OF ICELAND AND FRIÐHEIMAR VISIT

Today we take an excursion of the so-called Golden Circle. Our first stop is Thingvellir National Park, the site of the oldest democratic parliament in the world. We go for a walk in the park and explore the sights of the old parliament. Thingvellir became Iceland's first National Park in 1928 due to its important social heritage and natural beauty. The park is also the location where the North Atlantic Rift dividing the American and European tectonic plate is the most clearly seen, through its canyons and large cracks. In 2004, Thingvellir National Park was declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO.

After our exploration of Thingvellir we head to Laugarvatn Fontana where we visit the “geothermal bakery”. You will get to see where a pot of fresh traditional Icelandic rye bread is dug out from the

hot black sand and you will of course get a chance to taste the warm bread with some Icelandic butter. Next we head for the famous Geysir, the geyser from which all geysers derive their name. After earthquakes shook south Iceland in 2000, Geysir now erupts only once in a while, but its faithful deputy Strokkur (“churn”) shoots water every 10 to 15 minutes, over 100 feet into the air. A short distance from Geysir is the famous Gullfoss waterfall and below it the Hvitargljufur Canyon, a huge canyon formed after floods from the nearby glaciers, thousands of years ago. From Gullfoss we head back to Reykjavik with a stop at the interesting Friðheimar greenhouses. There we can see how the Icelandic farmers use the natural geothermal power to grow vegetables the whole year round. The greenhouses, warm and bright whatever the weather, offer a friendly welcome!

Horses have been bred at friðheimar since 1995. After the green house visit, we will attend a horse show. The show provides an insight into the story of this remarkable horse breed, which was brought to Iceland by the first settlers from Scandinavia around 900 AD. Whether on the farm or for overland transport, the horse has been the trusty companion of the Icelanders down the centuries,

and even today farmers ride into the highlands to round up their sheep in autumn. In modern times the horse has become the Icelanders

DAY 3 HISTORIC BORGARFJÖRÐUR & WATERFALLS WITH ICE CAVE ADVENTURE

In the morning we start our circle tour of Iceland, beginning with a drive along Hvalfjörður fjord where one of the most important naval stations in the North Atlantic during World War II was located. We visit Reykholt, one of Iceland's most historic sites and former home of the Saga writer, Snorri Sturluson (1179-1241) from 1206-1241. We stop at the splendid waterfalls of Hraunfossar and Barnafoss, and at Deildartunguhver; Iceland's largest hot spring (in terms of water production per second).

In the afternoon we kick the action into a higher gear and make our way to Langjökull glacier for a visit to the Ice Cave. We travel by monster trucks that can accommodate as many as 40 people to the entrance of the cave, 1200 meters above sea-level. The Ice Cave leads from the surface of the glacier

down to the deep undergrounds, where you will be able to view ice which has taken hundreds of years to develop. As you go deeper, the ice gets older and the color changes from white to deep-blue, perhaps the closest thing to travelling back in time to the Ice Age. Overnight in Reykholt.

DAY 4 THE WONDERS OF SNÆFELLSNES PENINSULA

Today we discover the mystical Snæfellsnes peninsula which is almost like a miniature of the whole country. There are white and black beaches, bird cliffs, spectacular mountains and volcanic craters, incredibly rich trout lakes and salmon rivers, lush valleys, unique harbors in charming fishing villages and a world-renowned glacier. We stop at the fair sandy beach at Búðir and then onwards to Arnastapi for a short walk along its magnificent columnar basalt formations teeming with birdlife in summer. We then circle the legendary Snæfellsjökull glacier which covers a powerful central volcano and is unquestionably the crowning jewel of the Snæfellsnes peninsula. We



Dettifoss Waterfall

continue along the northern shores of the peninsula driving through tiny fishing villages towards the picturesque town of Stykkishólmur.

Overnight in Stykkishólmur..

DAY 5 BREIÐAFJÖRÐUR BAY, LÁTRABJARG, PATREKSFJÖRÐUR

From Stykkishólmur we take the ferry Baldur and cross the Breiðafjörður Bay. After approximately 3 hours sailing across this scenic bay with its innumerable amount of small islands we reach the West Fjords. We drive to Látrabjarg, the westernmost point of Iceland and one of Europe's biggest bird cliffs, before checking in to our accommodation for the night in the southern West Fjords area.

Overnight at the southern Western Fjords.

DAY 6 THE WEST FJORDS & DYNJANDI WATERFALL

Today we continue our journey of the West Fjords, one of the most remote regions of Iceland. The landscape is breathtaking as we cross mountains and heaths and drive along the dramatic fjords at the foot of steep cliffs. We stop at Dynjandi, a beautiful waterfall that lies in the northern arm of the fjord Arnarfjörður and see the measures taken to protect the village Flateyri against avalanches.

We will make a stop at Bolungarvík to visit the point view on top of Bolafjall mountain. The place offers a staggering view over Ísafjarðardjúp, Jökulfirðir and some people say all the way to Greenland.

Continuing on to the charming town Ísafjörður and from there we drive along the numerous small and isolated fjords of Ísafjarðardjúp where we see abandoned farms and driftwood laden shores often teeming with seals.

Overnight at the Western Fjords.

DAY 7 HORSE FARM VISIT AND CULINARY WORKSHOP AT BRIMSLÓÐ GUESTHOUSE

From the West Fjords we continue our drive to the northern part of Iceland. We will make a stop at Kolugjúlfur. It is a breathtaking sight to walk on the viewing platform and watch the calm waters of the river suddenly leap and tumble onwards over so many impressive falls - a sight which will leave no one unmoved. We drive to the small village of Blönduós where we will find our accommodation for the night at Brimslóð Guesthouse. There we will take part in a private culinary workshop with the guesthouse owner, Mr. Gísli Egill, who is also a passionate food and cookery enthusiast and a trained tour guide. The workshop takes approx. 3 hours and ends with a delicious 3-course group dinner.

Overnight at Guesthouse Brimslóð

DAY 8 AKUREYRI AND THE MARVELS OF LAKE MÝVATN

Today we begin with a drive through the Skagafjörður region, an area known for horse breeding and many Icelandic horses can be seen grazing in the fields of the Skagafjörður valley. We visit the lush botanical gardens of Akureyri, the capital of northern Iceland and the biggest settlement outside Reykjavík. Then we cross the mountains east of Eyjafjörður and stop at the famous Goðafoss falls where the law speaker of the ancient Althing – the Icelandic parliament - threw the statues of the Nordic gods, after the forced adoption of Christianity in AD 1000. The falls and its surroundings are considered of mystical





nature. From the mist of the falls we head to Lake Mývatn, famous for its birdlife and volcanic formations. Lake Mývatn has the largest duck colony in Europe. Many other bird species are also found there, such as the great northern and red-throated divers, arctic terns, red-necked phalaropes, the gyrfalcon, merlin, various waders and other water birds. The lake is a true bird paradise and its natural beauty is really magnificent, with pseudocraters, lava fields, volcanoes, hot springs and lunar like lava formations. We visit Skutustadir pseudocraters, Dimmuborgir, lava labyrinths, the explosive crater in Hverfjall with its many geothermal pools of the area and the steaming sulphur pits of Hverarond, east of Mt. Namafjall. After exploring the wonders of Lake Mývatn we drive to our accommodation for the night in the Mývatn area.

Overnight at Mývatn.

DAY 9 HÚSAVÍK, WHALE WATCHING, JÖKULSÁRGLJÚFUR CANYON, EGILSSTAÐIR

The waters off the Húsavík coast are some of the best in the world for whale watching so in the morning we begin with a whale watching tour (weather permitting) on beautifully restored and seaworn oak boats, once used as fishing boats. Then we drive along the Tjörnes peninsula to Ásbyrgi, a beautiful horseshoe-shaped rock formation, and then on to Dettifoss, Europe's most powerful waterfall. We continue our journey to the east and cross the vast northern highland

before our visit to a reconstructed farm called Saenautasel. The old farm is one of Iceland's best examples of its old Nordic heritage. The farm is one of the most remote in Iceland and highlights the

harsh lives of these hardy people. Further to the east is a lush, green valley named Fljotsdalsherad, center of Iceland's forestry industry. The high and colorful mountains that divide Fljotsdalsherad from the East Fjords are 18 million years old and reveal the oldest rocks in Iceland. During the last ice age they were carved by huge glaciers. We stop at the town of Egilsstaðir, the biggest town of eastern Iceland.

Overnight in Egilsstaðir.

DAY 10 EAST FJORDS, HÖFN AREA

A relaxing day as we head for the south coast, passing through charming fishing villages of the East Fjords. We stop in the small town of Fáskrúðsfjörður, famous for its French heritage and in Stöðvarfjörður we visit the interesting Petra's Stone Collection. In Álftarfjörður we may see thousands of whopper swans in their season. In the afternoon we have the magnificent Vatnajökull glacier as a backdrop today as we explore the wonders of the southeast. We drive up Hoffeldsdalur valley to one of the outlet glaciers from Vatnajökull before we head for the village of Höfn, the largest village on the southeast coast. The village is in a beautiful setting along side an estuary, with a magnificent view to the Vatnajökull ice cap. We have a relaxing afternoon to explore the town.

Overnight in the Höfn area.

DAY 11 JÖKULSÁRLÓN GLACIER LAGOON, SKAFTAFELL NATIONAL PARK, VÍK AREA

Our day starts with a scenic drive along the Vatnajökull glacier, which is the third largest icecap in the world and the largest one in Europe. We head to the Jökulsárlón Glacier Lagoon, a spectacular area where icebergs breaking off from the glacier float on the lagoon. Here, you will find the world's

shortest glacial river that travels only 1,000 yards from the lagoon to the ocean. We will enjoy an amphibian boat tour on the lagoon. Our next stop is at Skaftafell National Park, a breathtaking area right under Vatnajökull glacier and known for its unique natural features and numerous hiking opportunities. Many wild flower species thrive in the shelter of the birch forest found on the lower slopes of the mountains, and if weather permits, you may get a view of the highest mountain in Iceland, Hvannadalshnjukur. We continue our journey across Skeiðarársandur with its vast stretches of black sand formed by mighty glacial river to the charming village of Kirkjubæjarklaustur. Then onwards across the enormous Eldhraun lava field and the black desert sands of Mýrdalssandur before we arrive in the small village of Vík where we find our accommodation for the night. Enroute, we stop at the beautiful Fjaðrárgljúfur Canyon.

Overnight in Vík.

DAY 12 SOUTH COAST WITH LAVA SHOW, BLUE LAGOON, REYKJAVÍK

This morning we begin with a refreshing walk at the Reynisfjara black sand beach where you have a great view of the Reynisdrangar pillars that rise from the sea just off the shore. We then enjoy a unique Lava Show in Vík – the only place in the world where you can safely experience

hot molten lava in close proximity! The founders of the Lava Show, Júlíus and Ragnhildur (husband and wife and parents of three), wanted to create a safe environment where people can experience real flowing lava after witnessing up close and personal the 2010 volcanic

eruption in Fimmvörðuháls (Eyjafjallajökull). The

show recreates a volcano eruption by pouring molten lava (1100°C / 2000°F) into a showroom and over ice and is a unique opportunity to get close to red hot lava, see it flowing, hear it sizzling, and feel the intense heat that radiates from it.

Our continued exploration of the south coast includes a stop at Skógar where we visit the interesting Skógasafn Folk Museum and see the 200 feet Skogafoss waterfall. We also stop at Seljalandsfoss, a waterfall you can actually walk behind.

In the afternoon we will reach the famous Blue Lagoon where we enjoy a healing and relaxing bath in the mineral-rich pool of geothermal heated water, nestled in a lava field. Afterwards we will enjoy a farewell dinner at the Lava restaurant, before we drive to our hotel in Reykjavík.

Overnight in Reykjavík..

DAY 13 DEPART REYKJAVÍK

The morning is free to spend at own leisure. Transfer to Keflavík International Airport for your flight homeward.

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

1. HOW BIG ARE THE GROUPS?

Each group is limited to 16 participants. Small groups are an important ingredient in adventure travel. They allow for more interaction and more personalized service throughout the itinerary.

2. WHAT IS INCLUDED IN THE TOUR PRICE?

All accommodations throughout; all meals, starting with breakfast on day 1 and finishing with breakfast on departure day (i.e. the last day of the ElderTreks tour); bottled drinking water throughout the trip; all internal transportation; airport transfers on day 1 and departure day (i.e. the last day of the ElderTreks tour); all day trips and entrance fees as outlined in the itinerary; tips for hotels (portage), national guide, bus driver, restaurants and spot guides; services of a trip leader.

3. WHAT IS NOT INCLUDED IN THE TOUR PRICE?

International flights, tips to ElderTreks tour leader, alcoholic drinks, visas, and travel insurance.

4. ARE THESE “EDUCATIONAL” TOURS?

Yes, in the broadest sense of the word, “educational”. We visit museums, National Parks and Reserves and have talks and discussions on many aspects of history, culture and nature. But this is only a portion of the educational experience. We believe that it is equally educational to meet local people on a non-commercial basis, visit their homes and even try to learn a few words in the native language. Sometimes the most “educational” moments are spent strolling through remote fishing villages.

5. HOW DO WE TRAVEL DURING THE TOUR?

All local transportation is included in the land price of the trip. We travel by van or small bus, and by boat.

6. WHAT ARE OUR ACCOMMODATIONS LIKE?

We always stay in good accommodations — all hotels have private bathrooms. 1 night at a charming guesthouse where 2 rooms may share a bathroom depending on the group size.

7. WHAT ABOUT THE WEATHER?

Well, it's not the tropics, but the summertime weather in Iceland is quite mild. Daytime temperatures average about 60 - 70°F (15 - 21°C), with cooler night time temperatures. Of

course the days are long, and while we are in Iceland the sun will barely set at all. Rain occurs sporadically throughout the year.

8. WHEN IS PAYMENT DUE?

A non-refundable deposit of \$500 USD (plus insurance if you require it) is due at time of booking and will reserve your place on the tour. Payment of the full land price is due 120 days before departure. Cancellation charges are applicable and are outlined in the “Terms & Conditions” section of our brochure.

9. IS MEDICAL INSURANCE REQUIRED?

Insurance coverage is not included in the cost of your trip. Please note that medical insurance is not required for this adventure but is recommended. ElderTreks offers comprehensive travel insurance and we are happy to provide you with a quote if you call our office. If you are purchasing insurance elsewhere, please ensure you provide the details to ElderTreks as soon as possible.

**Please note those travelers with pre-existing medical conditions must take out travel insurance at the time of deposit*

10. WHAT SHOULD I TAKE ON THE TOUR?

There is a detailed “What to Take” list in our Trip Kit, which we will send to you after you have booked the trip.

11. WHAT MEALS ARE INCLUDED?

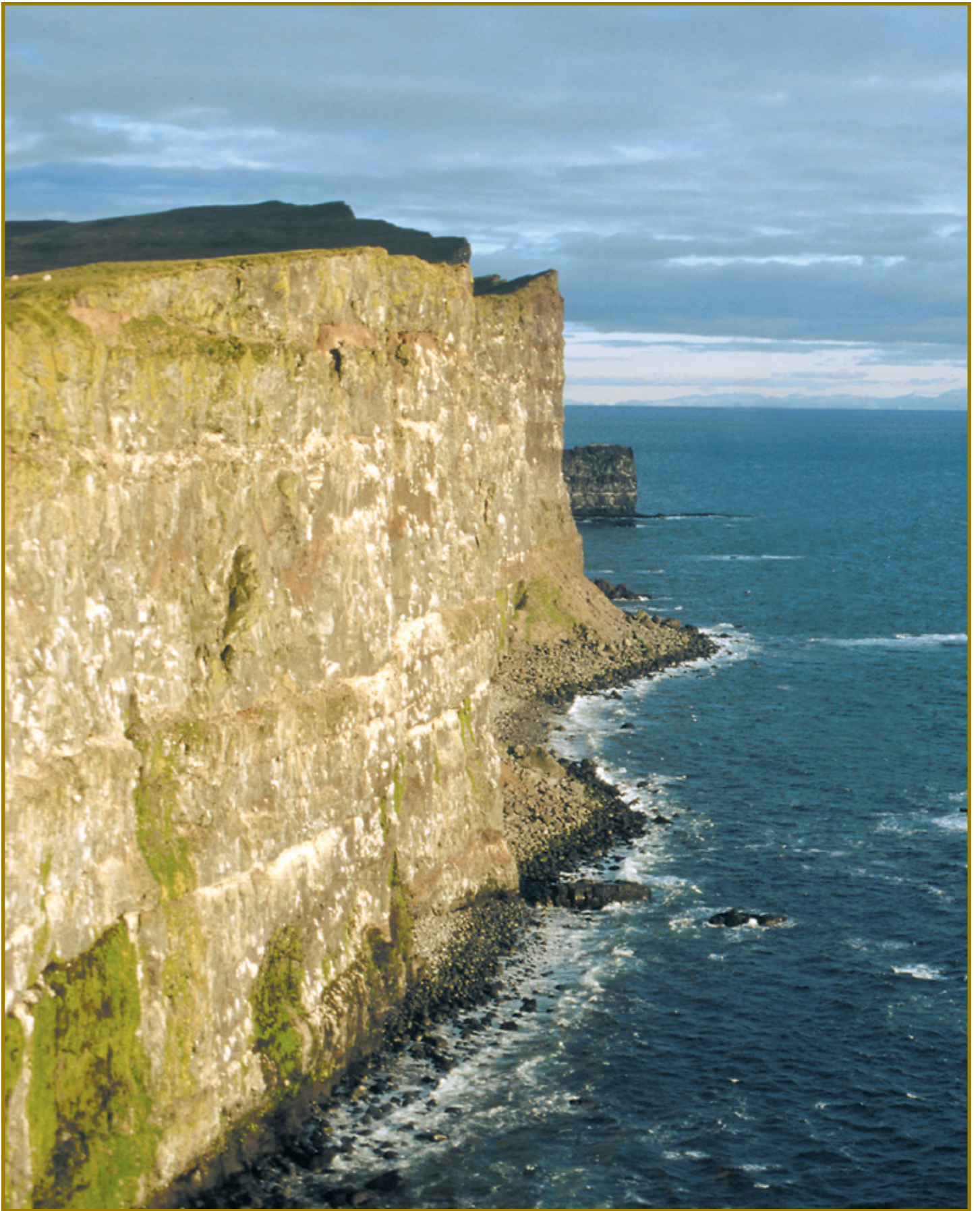
All meals during the itinerary are included, starting with breakfast on day 1, and finishing with breakfast on departure day. We eat a variety of local foods prepared in a wide range of settings. In many cases, we simply order a number of dishes and share, allowing you to sample new foods and decide what you enjoy best.

12. CAN YOU ARRANGE MY FLIGHTS?

We would be happy to take care of your air arrangements. ElderTreks offers personalized flight itineraries — not group flights. Stop over enroute, come in a few days early, or extend your stay. Call us for a customized itinerary.

13. WHAT IF I WOULD LIKE MORE INFORMATION?

If you have any further questions about the trip, please do not hesitate to contact our office for additional information. A Trip Kit containing further details on the destination will be sent to you once you have booked the trip.





See puffin and other sea-bird colonies.



Strokkur Geyser.

