



# Equus Journeys

HORSEBACK TRAVEL & EQUESTRIAN TRADITIONS SINCE 1972

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## Landmannalaugar Fjallabak Trail

### ICELAND

A **riding trail** between volcanoes and glaciers in the heart of Landmannalaugar, one of the most spectacular areas of Iceland. Aboard your special Icelandic horse, join a horseback adventure from **Hekla volcano** to the glaciers of Eyjafallajökull and Myrdalsjökul, exploring lava fields and hot springs.

Trail Riding	 10 days / 8 days riding -	 From £0	
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### ITINERARY

### Highlights

- Lunar landscapes and breathtaking contrasts within the rocks
- The tölt: the special and comfortable extra gait of the Icelandic horse
- Swim in a natural hot spring in the middle of a striking landscape
- Experience the incredible "Land of Fire and Ice" that is Iceland - one of the world's greatest geothermal countries
- Ride with a herd of about 40 free horses and swap mounts regularly to conserve the horses' strength.

### Day 1 — 1: EUROPE - REYKJAVIK - HELLA - No riding


 Guesthouse Austvadsholt

Flight to Reykjavik, arriving no later than 14:30. Flights are not included but can be booked upon request.

Meeting point is at the BSI at 18:00 where you will meet the rest of the group. Transfer to Hella by minibus.

On arrival in Hella you will be met by your hosts and transferred to the horse farm for dinner and to overnight.


### Day 2 — 2: AUSTVADSHOLT-RJUPNAVELLIR - 6 hours riding

 Rjupnavellir

After being allocated your horse, tack up and set off across the fertile plains of Landsveit with the Ranga river on one side and a lava field on the other. Pass through Landrettir - a historical sheepfold constructed from blocks of lava. Overnight in a newly built lodge at Rjupnavellir which is close to the river.

## Day 3 — 3: RJUPNAVELLIR - LANDMANNAHELLIR - 6-7 hours riding


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 Landmannahellir cabin

Start riding in the direction of the Burfell mountains towards the distant Mt Valafell. The trail is an easy one across a desert of ash and then the lava field of Solvakraun near Hekla volcano (which last erupted in 2000). Arrive into Landmannahellir - a peaceful, green site where farmers stay whilst gathering their sheep from the mountains. You stay for two nights in this mountain cabin.

## Day 4 — 4: LANDMANNAHELLIR - LANDMANNALAUGAR - LANDMANNAHELLIR - 4 hours riding

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 Landmannahellir cabin

Today's ride takes you through the Domadal valley to the shores of Lake Frostastadarvatn and finally onto Landmannalaugar. Landmannalaugar attracts lots of travellers due to its spectacular, colourful rhyolite mountains amongst a grandiose setting of old craters. The afternoon is free for you to explore the area of foot and there is time to bathe in the natural hot springs.

Your horses remain here overnight whilst you are transferred back to your mountain cabin for the night.

## Day 5 — 5: LANDMANNALAUGAR - SKAFTARTUNGU - HOLASKJOL - 7 hours riding

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 Holaskjöl

Return to your horses at Landmannalaugar and continue your ride eastwards into the region of Skaftartungu. Take the old Fjallabak trail through the highlands, up and down hills and crossing streams until reaching Eldgja - the "throat of fire", known as one of the largest geological faults in the world.

Overnight in a mountain cabin at Holaskjöl.

## Day 6 — 6: HOLASKJOL - MYRDALSJOKULL - HVANNGIL - 8 hours riding

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 Hvanngil cabin

A long day on horseback today. Leave Holaskjöl behind and head due south to Alftavatn (Swan Lake). Continue over Maelifellssandur - a black sand of volcanic ash near the glacier Myrgalsjökull. The day ends in Hvanngil valley where your mountain hut awaits you.


## Day 7 — 7: HVANNGIL - EINHYRNINGUR - BOLSTAD - 4-5 hours riding

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A fabulous ride in the mountains and down Markarfljot gorge to the base of Tindafjallajökull glacier. Arrive at Mt Einhyrningur (unicorn) which is surrounded by three glaciers, including Eyjafjallajökull glacier which traverses the volcano of the same name which erupted in the spring of 2010. At the end of the day you reach a vast meadow and overnight in a shepherd's hut at Bolstad

## Day 8 — 8: BOLSTAD - SMARATUN - 6 hours riding

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 Smaratun guesthouse

Follow the trail down to the historical Fljotshlid area alongside the large Markarfljot river, with the glaciers of Eyjafjallajökull and Myrdalsjökull still in the background. The vast valley of Fljotshlid with its grassy slopes and waterfalls announces your return to more populated areas with plenty of good grazing for the horses. Overnight in a guesthouse in Smaratun

## Day 9 — 9: VATNSDAL - HELLA - REYKJAVIK - 6-7 hours riding

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Your final day of riding. From Smaratun you ride over to the Vatnsdal valley before crossing the Ranga river back onto Austvadholt land. The Icelandic National Service for Soil Protection has been established here for almost 100 years - the region marks the boundary between the habitable and non-habitable areas (as too close to the volcanoes). Today the area which had once been covered with volcanic residue, has recovered much of its woodland cover.

The horses are released into their home meadows. Transfer back to Reykjavik, arrival around 19:00. You can fly home tonight if your flight is late in the evening, otherwise you will have to spend a night in a hotel.

Hotel is booked on your own arrangements but please contact us if you need assistance.

## Day 10 — 10: HELLA - REYKJAVIK - EUROPE

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Flight back home.

## DATES & PRICES

We are currently updating our dates and prices they will be online soon. If you want details of this holiday, please do not hesitate to contact us.

## Price details

No departure for this destination. Please contact our travel advisers for more information.

- Flights to your destination (international/domestic) are not included, but can be booked on request - please contact us for rates.

- Rates are per person, based on sharing communal rooms. There is no single supplement as you should be prepared to share.

- Groups are comprised of a minimum of 6 to 16 international riders, plus guides.

- Transfers from Hella to Reykjavik return are included in 2021 and 2022. Please note the meeting point is in Reykjavik (BSI station) and you will need to organise your own transfer from the airport to downtown Reykjavik: <https://www.re.is/tour/flybus/>

- Hotel nights in Reykjavik are not included. We can book a hotel night on request if you require it.

- Rider weight limit: 95 kg / 210 lbs / 14.9 st

Please Note

The itinerary may be modified at anytime for security reasons, meteorological or events beyond our control such as blocked roads, rivers in flood, drought, strikes and local holidays. Equus Journeys, our local partners and their local guides will always strive to find the best solution and will alter the itinerary as needed.

The names of the hotels and accommodation are given for information only and depending on availability, they may be modified without notice and replaced by another of a similar standard.

## Price includes

### SUPPORT TEAM

1 English speaking horse guide

2-4 assistants in charge of the free herd.

### LOGISTIC

2-3 horses per rider equipped with saddle and bridle

1 support vehicle

### INLAND TRANSPORT

Transfer between Reykjavik city centre and Hella

### ACCOMMODATION

Collective room in a mountain hut (bring a sleeping bag)

Double room in Guesthouses day 1 and 7

### MEALS

Full board from first diner D1 to last breakfast on D9

## Price doesn't include

### MEALS

Beverage and personal extra

### ACCOMMODATION

Accommodation after the ride: see price details for more information

### TRANSPORTS

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Airports return transfers between the airport and the bus station in Reykjavik on "BSI" by bus or taxi.

## EXTRA

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Tips to local team

## INSURANCE

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Cancellation and travel insurances are not included. Please note that insurance is mandatory. We recommend to take out an insurance policy as soon as your travel is booked in case of cancellation.

Visas and personal purchase

## Optional

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### ACCOMMODATION

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Extra night in a guesthouse in Reykjavik before or after the horse trip

## EQUESTRIAN INFO

## Horses

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Icelandic horses have an extra gait compared to most other breeds - the tölt - a fast and comfortable "running walk". They are small, comfortable and sociable horses. You will get the chance to ride two or three different horses during the holiday and the spare horses run loose as a herd.

## Guide & local team

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This is a small, family run expedition and you are guided by your host, Anita. She has a degree in natural sciences and is responsible for all of the horses.

## Minimum riding ability

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### MINIMUM RIDING ABILITY

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You need to be a competent rider, comfortable riding across varied terrain at all paces. There are periods of steep descents and you must be secure in the saddle. You need to be fit enough to maintain the tölt for long periods and capable of controlling your horse whilst riding with a herd of free-running loose horses.

### PACE

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The most common pace is the tölt - a fast and comfortable pace unique to the Icelandic horse. Across more difficult terrain you will walk or trot - some of the horses will also amble. The tölt is a fast pace - you can expect long periods of tölt, but canters are not frequent.

### TACKING ABILITY AND PARTICIPATION

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Everyone is expected to participate in caring for the horses (tacking, feeding etc) and also sometimes in preparing meals for the group.

### TRIP CONDITIONS AND REQUESTED EXPERIENCE

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Good physical condition is required for the long days on horseback (sometimes up to 7 hours). The terrain is rugged with rocky sections interspersed with soft grass - there are some small vertical drops. You have to be prepared for inclement weather - the climate is usually temperate (12-16c during the day) but the weather can change abruptly with violent winds and rain. Summer also offers the midnight sun and it is light almost around the clock, with dusk merging into the dawn.

Previous experience of riding a trail over several days is recommended but is not required. Riders who do not ride regularly should ensure they are fit and back in the saddle before departure as this is very demanding. There are river crossings at various points so you should be confident in water.

### EQUESTRIAN EQUIPMENT

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Hard hats are mandatory. We recommend our riders to wear a helmet to the correct standard and you should bring your own to ensure a proper fit.

Comfortable Iceland/English tack.

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### COMFORT

You stay at the horse farm at the start/end of the ride, in a purpose-built cottage with dormitory rooms and shared bathrooms. On the trail you stay in mountain huts which are well kept and also offer dormitory rooms and a shared toilet - on some nights showers are possible too. You will need to bring your own sleeping bag.

Please understand that accommodation in the highlands is always basic, with little privacy, small rooms and limited showers.

### MEALS

Lunches are simple picnics; dinners are generous and hearty.  
You prepare your own picnic lunch at breakfast time.

### CLIMATE

Contrary to popular belief, the general climate in Iceland is temperate and cool with extreme cold temperatures only recorded in winter. In summer the average temperatures are 10-12c but can be as low as 5c and as high as 25c. You should be prepared for both sun and rain and dress in layers.

### TIPS

Tips are welcome but not expected. You should tip what you feel is appropriate and you are comfortable with.

### PACKING LIST

Important!!

There are some important packing considerations for a riding holiday in Iceland. The Icelandic horses have had no contact with other equine species and are not vaccinated. They do not have any resistance to diseases which are common elsewhere in the world and so it is important to take precautions to prevent the spread of infections.

- You should NOT take the following products into Iceland: saddles, bridles, halters, saddle pads, whips, brushes or any leather products which have been in contact with a horse.

- Your riding clothes must be thoroughly cleaned at least 5 days before departure (riding breeches, jumpers, coats, gloves) and should be washed in temperatures of at least 40c.

- Items which cannot be washed at 40c, such as riding hats or leather boots must be thoroughly disinfected at least five days before departure:

1. Wash in detergent.
2. Dry thoroughly
3. Spray with a 1% solution of Virkon detergent (10g per litre of water)

For more details please visit the Icelandic veterinary authority website: [www.mast.is/english/frontpage/import-export/import/ridingequipment](http://www.mast.is/english/frontpage/import-export/import/ridingequipment)

#### Head

- A riding helmet is compulsory and we recommend that you take your own to ensure a correct fit.
- A flyhat to wear over your helmet may be a good idea in the summer months, when flies can be an issue
- Sunhat for when not riding
- Sunglasses - with a cord attached so they don't fly off when riding
- Buff or bandana for protecting your neck and face from the sun, wind or rain
- Warm hat for cold evenings/days

#### Upper body

- Thermals in case of cold weather
- Long sleeved shirts provide protection from the sun or extra warmth
- Down jacket or gilet for cold evenings
- T-shirts
- Lightweight fleece or jumper
- Warm polar fleece or equivalent (plus a spare in case one gets wet)
- Waterproof jacket - rain can be difficult to predict and it's better to be prepared. In the mountains the weather can change quickly

#### Legs

- Lightweight, comfortable riding trousers or jodhpurs - we recommend riding in them at home before taking them on holiday to ensure they don't rub.
- Take two pairs

- Waterproof over trousers
- Casual clothes for the evenings (jeans or walking trousers)
- Thermal trousers

#### Hands and Feet

- Comfortable riding boots. We recommend short boots with half chaps but you may wish to take long chaps. We don't recommend taking your favourite long leather boots in case they get damaged
- Lightweight shoes or trainers for the evenings
- Sandals/flipflops
- Several pairs of warm socks
- Gloves - your hands are particularly exposed to the sun, wind or rain whilst riding

#### Nightwear

- Sleeping bag with a comfort rating of at least minus 5
- A sleeping bag liner (silk/cotton/fleece) adds extra comfort and warmth
- A small camping pillow
- Slippers (you will have to remove your shoes inside the accommodation)
- An eye mask can help with the 24hr daylight

#### Our Recommendations

- Backpacks cannot be worn whilst riding. We recommend a small bum bag or a coat with pockets so that you can carry small items with you during the day (camera, sunscreen, lipbalm etc)
- We recommend travelling in your riding boots and carrying your hat and some riding clothes in your hand luggage - then if your luggage goes astray you are still able to ride!

#### Other useful items

- Swimsuit - for hot tubs
- Camera and high capacity memory card. Spare battery
- Bum bag for carrying your camera and small items whilst riding
- Headtorch or small torch for moving around at night - bring spare batteries and bulbs
- Water bottle (2 litres or 2 x 1 litre)
- Wet Wipes or equivalent (for when washing facilities aren't available)
- Ear plugs (for light sleepers)
- Bin bags to put any wet clothes in for your journey home.

#### In your luggage

- Any liquids, such as shampoo, moisturiser, deodorant unless they are less than 100ml and all bottles can fit in a small, clear, plastic ziplock bag.
- Swiss army knife or equivalent

#### In your hand luggage

- Any valuables, such as your camera, ipod, ipad etc.
- Your riding hat

#### Medical kit

- Sunscreen and lip balm - should be high factor
- Insect repellent
- Any medication you regularly take
- Blister plasters in case of any rubs
- Antiseptic cream, plasters, aspirin, anti-histamine, insect-bite salve etc...
- Spare prescription glasses/contact lenses
- Eye drops
- Imodium or similar anti-diarrhoea medication
- Re-hydration sachets
- Antiseptic wipes
- Handwash gel

## SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

1. **Travel light.** It's a little known fact, but the lighter you pack, the better for the environment as heavy bags will produce higher emissions (when flying a plane or driving a car!).

2. **Reduce plastic waste.** Take your favorite reusable bottle with you. Avoid single-use bags, cups, or straws.
3. **Preserve nature.** Always take your rubbish with you during the ride and recycle them. Leave all the flowers or plants as you found them, and never get too close when observing wildlife. Make sure to use eco-friendly products such as body wash or laundry detergent (if camping) to protect both your skin and the environment.
4. **Choose your experiences carefully.** Respect animal life by not participating in any activities that abuse wild animals (shows, elephant rides, etc.).
5. **Support local populations.** Buy local handicrafts, be respectful of customs, and learn about the culture of local communities.
6. **Share!** Raise awareness among your family and friends about sustainable tourism.

For more information please [see this page](#) .