



Equus Journeys

HORSEBACK TRAVEL & EQUESTRIAN TRADITIONS SINCE 1972

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Landmannalaugar & Hekla Trail

ICELAND

Explore the **horseback trails in Landmannalaugar, Iceland**, an area offering up spectacular landscapes and dramatic views. **Ride Icelandic horses** and experience their unique tölt gait. Discover countryside that volcanic activity has left scarred with deep red craters, intriguing eruption faults and fields of ash. Ride trails that will lead you alongside deep blue lakes and verdant moss-covered lava flows. See the famous **Hekla volcano from horseback, ride challenging ascents** and swim in the natural geothermal springs on the Landmannalaugar plateau.

Trail Riding	 8 days/ 6 days riding -	 From £0	
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ITINERARY

Highlights

- Experience the incredible "Land of Fire and Ice" - one of the world's greatest geothermal countries
- Swim in natural hot springs in the middle of a dramatic volcanic landscape
- Experience the unique and comfortable tölt gait of the Icelandic horse
- Ride through fields of ash, mountains and moss covered lava flows
- Stay in rustic and traditional accommodation
- Explore the countryside with an experienced and knowledgeable guide
- Ride close to the famous volcano Hekla (last erupted in 2000)

Day 1 — 1: EUROPE - REYKJAVIK - HELLA

 Guesthouse Austvadsholt

Fly into Reykjavik, your flight needs to arrive no later than 2.30pm. Flights are not included but can be booked upon request.

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

In Hella, you will be met by your hosts and taken to the horse farm for your first hearty Icelandic dinner; you will spend the night on the horse farm in a cottage with a grass roof typical to Iceland.


Day 2 — 2: AUSTVADSHOLT-RJUPNAV - 6 hours riding

 Rjupnavellir

At around midday, you will be introduced to the horses and you will set off on your first trek through the lush green meadows and black lava fields along the banks of the Ranga River passing the historical lava sheep-fold, Landrettir.

You will stop for your picnic lunch where the farmland meets the highlands at Landréttir, a sheep-fold built out of blocks of volcanic rock. In the afternoon, you will be joined by the free running herd and the thundering of their hooves will follow you as you ride towards your cabin for the night at Rjúpnaveilir on the banks of the Rangá River.

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

 Landmannahellir cabin


This morning ride from Rjúpnaveilir into the wilds of Iceland in the direction of Búrfell mountain. On easy trails, you will cross a desert of ash and the Solvakraun lava field, a site close to the famous volcano Hekla (last erupted in 2000). You will ride for around 6 hours before reaching the green and peaceful area of Landmannahellir, this is where farmers stay while gathering their sheep in from the mountains. You will stay in a cabin on the Landmannahellir plateau for the next 3 nights.

Day 4 — 4: LANDMANNAHELLIR - LANDMANNALAUGAR - LANDMANNAHELLIR - 3 - 4 hours riding

Today, you will ride through the magnificent Domadalur Valley, without the free-running herd. You will pass Frostastadarvatn Lake on your way to the popular area of Landmannalaugar. This area of Iceland known for its craters, geothermal springs, hardened lava streams and spectacularly colorful rhyolite mountains attracts people from all over the world.

In the afternoon, you will be able to explore this surprising region on foot and bathe in the natural hot springs. You will leave the horses on the plateau for the evening while you are driven back to Landmannahellir for the night - approx. 40 minute drive.

Day 5 — 5: LANDMANNAHELLIR - LANDMANNALAUGAR - LANDMANNAHELLIR - 5 riding

 Landmannahellir cabin

After breakfast, you will be driven back to where you left the horses, at Landmannalaugar. Once back in the saddle, you will take a different route back to Landmannahellir. Following a wild track, previously known only to farmers, you will pass the impressive inactive craters at Ljotipollur and Hnausapollur and ride the shores of the long picturesque lakes of Eskihlidarvatn and Lodmundarvatn.

An fantastic ride through unusual volcanic landscape at times uneven and unriden which the horses handle perfectly. There will be several sections where you will dismount and lead your horse on foot.

Day 6 — 6: LANDMANNAHELLIR - VALAGJA - AFANGAGIL - 5-6 hours riding

The day's ride will take you across the grassy high plateaus, through the lava fields of Lambaflit, and after a brief stop at the eruptive Valagjá fault, you will descend to Áfangagil Valley at the foot of Mount Valafell. Some passages will be done on foot.

It is here, at the foot of Mount Valafell, that every autumn the Icelandic shepherds have the annual sheep round-up where they collect their flocks from their summer grazing in the mountains and valleys.

You will spend the night in a shepherd's cabin.

Day 7 — 7: AFANGAGIL - AUSTVADSHOLT - 6-7 hours riding

An early start and a long day in the saddle for your return ride to the farm at Austvadholt, a ride of around 45km.

Time for your final ride through the incredible Icelandic landscape, crossing ash filled deserts and the impressive uninhabitable regions of Hekla. After passing through the Landsveit farmlands and fording the Ranga River, you will reach the meadows where the horses will be left to have a well earned rest.

Transfer back to the city. You will arrive around 19:00 and should spend the night at your hotel (not included), as it is unlikely you will find a flight departing late enough that night. End of our services - Hotel night and dinner to your own account.

Day 8 — 8: FLIGHT HOME

Self-transfer to the airport and flight back home. These services are not included, please contact us if you request assistance.

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 are not included, but can be booked on request - please contact us for rates.

- Rates are per person, based on riders sharing communal rooms. There are no single rooms and you must be prepared to share.

- Transfers from Hella to Reykjavik return are included in 2021 and 2022

- Bus transfers to/from Reykjavik and the airport and hotel nights in Reykjavik are not included. See <https://www.re.is/tour/flybus/> for more info on how to get from the airport to the city centre.

- There is a weight limit for this trip of 15st/ 209lbs/95kg

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 since Reykjavik

1 Icelandic expedition leader

2-4 assistants in charge of the free-running herd

LOGISTICS

2-3 horses per rider equipped with saddle and bridle

1 vehicle and driver

1 cook

INLAND TRANSPORT

Minibus

Transfer from Reykjavik city centre to Hella

ACCOMMODATION

Mountain huts in a dormitory or farm

MEALS

Full board from dinner on day 1 to breakfast on the final day of the ride (7)

EXTRA EQUIPMENT

First aid kit

Price doesn't include

MEALS

Beverages and personal extras

Dinner not included on day 7 - expect to spend around £28-36

Breakfast and lunch on days 1 and 8 are not included in the price. These meals are dependent on your flight times and may be had on the plane

TRANSPORT

Return airport transfers - airport to BSI bus station. See above

International flights

EXTRAS

Tips to the local team

INSURANCE

Cancellation and travel insurance are not included in the above listed price. Please note that insurance is mandatory. We recommend taking out an insurance policy as soon as your trip is booked to cover you in case of cancellation

Optional

ACCOMMODATION

Extra nights in Reykjavík: please contact us for the price

EQUESTRIAN INFO

Horses

Ride Icelandic horses with their unique pace, the tölt, which is a smooth 4-beat gait that allows for a comfortable fast-paced ride. With the ambling gait, a pace between the walk and trot, you may experience up to 5 paces in one day. Icelandic horses are small, forward-going, energetic and comfortable to ride. Each rider will ride between 2-3 horses during the holiday.

Guide & local team

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

MINIMUM RIDING ABILITY

You should be a good rider, capable of riding over varied terrain at all paces. You should be open to learning a new style of riding - the tölt (fast paced and normally comfortable) and fit enough to maintain this pace for long periods.

PACE

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. The tölt is a fast pace - you can expect long periods of tölt, but canters are not frequent.

TACKING ABILITY AND PARTICIPATION

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

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 for almost the full 24 hours.

Having previous experience of riding a trail of several days would be an advantage but it is not compulsory. Guests who do not ride regularly are requested to get fit prior to the ride. It is of particular importance to ensure you are comfortable and balanced when riding at speed across rough terrain and open spaces.

EQUESTRIAN EQUIPMENT

Comfortable Icelandic/English tack.

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.

TRAVEL INFO

COMFORT

You will spend your first and last night at the horse farm, in a purpose-built cottage with dormitory rooms and shared bathrooms. On the trail, you will 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 note that hot water is sometimes at an additional cost.

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 - usually fish or lamb.

You prepare your own picnic lunch at breakfast time.

Vegetarian meals are available if requested when booking

Alcoholic beverages are not included in the tour price and are hard to get in the highlands. They can be bought at a reasonable price in the Duty-Free Store at Keflavik Airport upon arrival.

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 temperature is between 10-12°C but can be as low as 5°C and as high as 25°C. Snowfall is rare, but the weather is highly changeable due to the meeting of the polar winds from Greenland and a warmer front of tropical origin. You should therefore prepare for both sun and rain by dressing in layers. In September the nights can become colder with temperatures falling below 0°C.

TIPS

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

PACKING LIST

Important!!

Choosing to ride in Iceland is an incredible experience; however there are some important packing considerations for a riding holiday in this country. 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 MUST NOT take the following items 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 40°C.

- Items which cannot be washed at 40°C, 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 VirkonS detergent (10g per litre of water)

For more details please visit the Icelandic veterinary authority website: <http://www.mast.is/english/frontpage/import-export/import/ridingequipment-information> here

Head

- A riding helmet is compulsory and we recommend that you take your own to ensure a correct fit. Helmet makers (GPA, HKM, LAS Helmets, Lamicell, Troxel, Equithème) now offer horse-riding helmets that are ventilated, strong, light and comfortable.
- 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

- 2 pairs of lightweight, comfortable riding trousers or jodhpurs - we recommend riding in them at home before taking them on holiday to ensure they don't rub
- Waterproof over trousers
- Casual clothes for the evenings (jeans or walking trousers)
- Thermal trousers for cold days or for sleeping in
- A swimming costume may be useful for impromptu dips in the lake and washing in the river
- Non-irritant cotton or synthetic underwear

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 bags and possibly a sleeping bag liner (silk/cotton/fleece) adds extra comfort
- A small camping pillow
- Slippers (you will have to remove your shoes inside the accommodation)
- An eye mask can help with the 24 hour 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, lip balm etc)
- A soothing cream may be useful to treat areas irritated by long hours in the saddle

Other useful items

- Water bottle (1.5 litres or 2 equivalent)
- Headtorch or small torch for moving around at night - bring spare batteries and bulbs
- Toiletries
- Protein or cereal bars for the longer stretches of riding
- Toilet paper and a lighter to burn it after use
- Swiss army knife or equivalent (in checking-in luggage!!)
- Small plastic bags for your rubbish
- Ear plugs (may be useful)
- Camera and high capacity memory card. Spare battery

Personal medical kit

Make sure any allergies (to medication or otherwise) and clearly stated in your medical kit

- Any medication you regularly take
- Painkillers
- Imodium or similar anti-diarrhea medication
- Vitamin C tablets
- Sunscreen and lip balm - should be high factor
- Insect repellent
- Eye drops
- Hydrating/ soothing cream
- Plasters
- Blister plasters in case of any rubs
- Antiseptic cream, plasters, aspirin, anti-histamine, insect-bite salve etc..
- 10cm wide bandage
- Spare prescription glasses/contact lenses
- Re-hydration sachets
- Antiseptic wipes
- Handwash gel

General information

- Any liquids, such as shampoo, moisturiser, deodorant over 100 ml and all bottles can be decanted into small, clear, plastic Ziplock bags. We recommend biodegradable washing products where possible.
- We recommend taking a copy of your passport and insurance documents with you in case you lose your originals
- In your hand luggage carry any valuables, such as your camera, ipod, ipad etc.
- Travelling in your riding boots and carrying your hat and some riding clothes is highly recommended - then if your luggage goes astray you are still able to ride!

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](#) .