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## GEEO ITINERARY

ICELAND NORTHERN LIGHTS 12/26/2022- Winter

### **Day 1: Reykjavík Arrive at any time. We recommend arriving a day early to better explore this world-renowned city.**

Arrive in Reykjavík at any time. Check into our hotel and enjoy the city. We HIGHLY recommend arriving 1-2 days early to explore this world-renowned city fully. Worthwhile visits near Reykjavík include the Blue Lagoon (40 mins from Reykjavík) and the Barganes Settlement Centre (1 hr from Reykjavík). Check the notice boards or ask at reception for the exact time and location of the group meeting, typically held at 6:00 p.m. or 7:00 p.m. After the meeting, you might take the opportunity to head out for a meal in a nearby local restaurant to further get to know your tour leader and traveling companions. Please make every effort to arrive on time for this welcome meeting. If you are delayed and will arrive late, please inform us. Your tour leader will then leave you a message at the front desk informing you of where and when to meet up.

### **Day 2: Reykjavik/Álftröð (B, D) Explore a lava cave in the Bláfjöll Mountains followed by a visit to an Icelandic horse farm before returning to Álftröð. In the evening, head out to search for Northern Lights.**

This morning, we leave Reykjavík and travel to a lava cave in the Bláfjöll Mountains. We will go beneath the earth's surface to discover how Iceland was created. Walk and crawl through the Leiðarendi cave that was carved out by flowing volcanic lava, and marvel at the multi-colored rock formations left in its path. Then we visit a horse farm. The Icelandic horse is a very unique breed. Although small and at times pony-sized, Icelandic horses are long-lived and hardy. Tour this working farm and learn all you need to know about the Icelandic horse, with a focus on its gait and unique character. We will then drive to Álftröð where we will spend the next 2 nights. This evening we head out near the guesthouse in search of Northern Lights. Please note: The Northern Lights are a natural phenomenon, and sightings will be dependent on weather conditions. We cannot guarantee that travelers booked on this tour will experience the Northern Lights. Approximate travel time: 2.5 hrs in private vehicle

### **Day 3: Álftröð (B, D) Head to Þingvellir National Park. Visit sights like the Geysir Hot Spring and Gullfoss waterfall. Opt to visit a natural hot spring. In the evening prepare dinner together at the guesthouse. Afterward, head out for another Northern Lights hunt.**

This morning we visit Þingvellir (or "Thingvellir") National Park, a UNESCO World Heritage site, to see the faults created by North American and Eurasian tectonic plates shifting apart. The Oxara River cuts through the largest rift in the valley, Almannagja, and leads to the Oxarafoss waterfall. Iceland's parliament was also established in the area in 930 AD, and the park was later created to protect the remains of the open-air assembly grounds. One of the most-visited sights in Iceland, the park is an excellent spot for camping, hiking, and SCUBA diving between the tectonic plates. Afterward, we discover one of the most impressive waterfalls in Iceland, Gullfoss, and complete the tourist circuit known as the Golden Circle. This massive waterfall cascades over three "steps" before spilling into a large crevice. Fed by a glacier lake, the water passing through the falls can be a dark grey depending on how much sediment gets pushed through the river. Next we will see a variety of geothermal pools and the erupting hot spring Strokkur. Geysir is one of the oldest geysers recorded in the world but is most often dormant. Strokkur erupts a spray of boiling hot water straight into the air about every ten minutes. In the evening, embrace your inner chef and prepare dinner together at the guesthouse. Afterward, head out for another Northern Lights hunt around the guesthouse. Approximate travel time: 3 hrs in private vehicle

### **Day 4: Álftröð/Reykjavik (B) Travel to Sólheimajökull Glacier and take some time to explore the area. Option for a stunning glacier hike. Drive the scenic**

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## **southern coast and visit the Skógafoss and Seljalandsfoss waterfalls on the way back to Reykjavík. Enjoy a final night in the city.**

This morning, we travel to Sólheimajökull Glacier and learn about the effects of climate change in Iceland. You will have time to take an easy hike in the area or you can pay extra (\$114) to go on a guided glacier hike. Equipped with crampons and an ice axe, hike through the dramatic glacier valley and along the black sand flood plains to the edge of the ice. Enjoy stunning, panoramic views of the surrounding mountains, glaciers and the Eyjafjallajökull volcano. The guide will explain the volcanic history of the area and the effects of global warming. We then drive the scenic southern coast and visit the Seljalandsfoss waterfall. Seljalandsfoss is a 60 m (196 ft) high waterfall located along the popular ring road. Behind the flow of water is a path, allowing visitors to peek behind the curtain of water cascading over the rocks above. Then we visit Skógafoss, one of the largest and most recognizable waterfalls in Iceland. The 60 m (200 ft) high falls forms a constant mist that floats in the air, which, if viewed in the sunlight, can create rainbows. The sound and view of the thundering water cutting through the green hills make the falls a must-see on any trip to Iceland. We then head back to Reykjavík to enjoy a final night in the city. Approximate travel time: 5 hrs by private vehicle

## **Day 5: Reykjavík (B) Depart Reykjavík at any time.**

Our program ends in Reykjavík this morning. We recommend spending at least an extra day exploring Reykjavík before or after this trip. Want more adventure? Book two or more GEEO trips in the same year and receive a discount! GEEO will give you 10% off of the lesser value program(s) (up to 3 programs). If you don't see a program that interests you that pairs with this trip but still would like to extend your time abroad, let us know. We will work with you to find a non-teacher trip from our tour operator's much larger catalog. Even better, if you are an educator, we can still offer you a discounted price on the trip you choose!