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## GEEO ITINERARY

Iceland + Snæfellsnes Peninsula 12/23/2024

### **Day 1: Reykjavík Arrive in Reykjavík at any time. Meet your group for a welcome meeting around 6:00 or 7:00 p.m.**

Arrive in Reykjavík at any time. We recommend arriving a day or two early to fully explore the city. This will also give you time to adjust to the time difference, overcome any jetlag, and avoid any disruption to your trip due to flight delays or cancellations. We can book extra hotel nights for you in Reykjavík before and/or after the trip. Worthwhile visits in and around Reykjavík include the Perlan Museum, Snorkeling in Silfra, and a lagoon, such as Sky Lagoon or Blue Lagoon. Please note that check-in at the hotel is usually around 2:00-3:00 p.m. There are no planned activities until an intro meeting around 6:00 or 7:00 p.m., usually in the hotel lobby. Check for a sign or ask at the reception desk about the exact time and location of the group meeting. Please make every effort to arrive in time for this 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 tomorrow. After the meeting, you might choose to get dinner at a nearby restaurant with your traveling companions and your tour leader to further get to know one another.

### **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

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**Day 4: Álfröð/Reykjavík (B) Travel to Sólheimajökull Glacier and take some time to explore the area. Option for a stunning glacier hike. Drive the scenic 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 Opt to snorkel at the Thingvellir Silfra where the tectonic plates meet or spend free time in Reykjavík before an evening guided tour of city with your tour leader. Then visit the beautiful Sky Lagoon for a warm soak.**

This morning, enjoy free time to explore Reykjavík on your own, or opt to float between the North American and Eurasian tectonic plates at Silfra Fissure in the heart of Þingvellir National Park. With clear, narrow blue water channels, Silfra Fissure is one of Iceland's most incredible spots for snorkeling and is regularly rated as one of the world's top ten dive sites. In the evening, take a tour of Reykjavík and learn more about its history, architecture, people, and culture from your tour leader. Then enjoy a uniquely Icelandic experience with a warm geothermal bath at Sky Lagoon, overlooking the water near the capital city.

**Day 6: Snæfellsnes Peninsula (B) Today, explore Snæfellsnes Peninsula, made famous by Jules Verne's *Journey to the Center of the Earth*. The region features many of Iceland's unique landscapes. Stop in small fishing towns and discover beautiful vistas along the way.**

Winter or summer, the Snæfellsnes Peninsula is one of the most scenic destinations in Iceland. This magical and spellbinding land has moss-covered lava fields, picturesque mountains, gorgeous black sand beaches, roaring ocean waves, charming little villages, and great vistas from seaside cliffs. Today will be a long day, but well worth it. You will visit places such as Kirkjufell ("Church Mountain") on the north shore, Ólafsvík and Arnarstapi villages, the Geröuberg basalt columns, and Djúpalónssandur pebble beach.

**Day 7: Reykjavík (B) Depart Reykjavík at any time.**

There are no planned activities today, so you may depart Reykjavík at any time. If you wish to extend your stay in Reykjavík, consider booking post-tour accommodation with us. Please note that check-out time from the hotel is usually mid-morning, but luggage storage services are available at the reception desk. Want more adventure? Book two or more GEEO programs in the same school year and receive a discount! GEEO will give you 10% off of the lesser value program(s) (up to 3 programs per year). If you would like to extend your time abroad but don't see another GEEO program that interests you, let us know. We can work with you to find a trip from our tour operator's much larger catalog. Their tours are open to the general public and not designed specifically for educators, but we can still offer you and your travel companions a discounted educator price on any additional tours that you book.