

The South in 48 Hours: The Golden Circle & Coastline

A Local's Guide to Seeing More and Rushing Less

Welcome to Iceland! This 48-hour itinerary is designed to take you from the bustling streets of Reykjavík through the historic Golden Circle and along the dramatic South Coast all the way to Vík.

Local Rule #1: Start your days by 08:00 AM. You will reach the most iconic sights before the large tour buses, giving you a much more peaceful experience.

Local Rule #2: Spend at least one night outside of Reykjavík. The countryside silence and the chance for Northern Lights (winter) or Midnight Sun (summer) are worth it.

Day 1: The Golden Circle & Secret Soaks

Route: Reykjavík – Þingvellir – Geysir – Gullfoss – Secret Lagoon – South Coast

Driving time: Approx. 3 hours total.

08:00 | Departure: Head east from Reykjavík towards Þingvellir National Park. Walk between the tectonic plates before the crowds arrive.

10:30 | Geysir & Gullfoss: Witness the erupting Strokkur and the mighty "Golden Falls," Gullfoss.

13:00 | Lunch with a View: Stop at Friðheimar Tomato Farm. You must book in advance to eat inside the greenhouse—their tomato soup and homemade bread are legendary.

15:00 | A Local Soak: Instead of the Blue Lagoon, head to the Secret Lagoon (Gamla Laugin) in Flúðir. It's the oldest natural pool in Iceland and much more relaxed.

18:00 | Head South: Drive towards your overnight stay near Hella or Skógar.

Where to Stay (Recommended):

Hótel Skálakot: A beautiful manor on a horse farm.

The Garage: Cozy apartments near the waterfalls.

Skálatjörn Guesthouse: For a true farm-stay feel.

Day 2: Waterfalls, Canyons & Black Sands

Route: Seljalandsfoss – Skógafoss – Vík – Reynisfjara – Reykjavík

Driving time: Approx. 3.5 hours total (return to RVK).

08:30 | The Morning Mist: Start at Seljalandsfoss (the one you walk behind) and its hidden neighbor Gljúfrabúi.

10:30 | Skógafoss & The Stairs: Visit the mighty Skógafoss. Walk the 500+ stairs to the top for a stunning view of the coastline you are about to explore.

12:30 | Lunch in Vík: Head to the village of Vík í Mýrdal. Try Smiðjan Brugghús for amazing burgers and local craft beer, or Skool Beans, a coffee shop in a yellow school bus.

14:30 | Black Sand & Basalt: Visit Reynisfjara beach. Admire the basalt columns and the sea stacks. Caution: Never turn your back on the ocean here!

16:00 | The Yoda Cave: Drive just 5 minutes east of Vík to Hjørleifshöfði. The "Yoda Cave" is a quiet, mystical spot most tourists miss.

17:30 | The Return: Start the drive back to Reykjavík. If you have energy, stop at Hveragerði for a quick walk in the geothermal park or a local dinner at Ölverk Pizza.

Pro Tips for Your 48-Hour Journey

Fuel Up: Always keep your tank above half full. Gas stations can be sparse in certain areas.

The Weather: Check Vedur.is every morning. Iceland's weather changes every 5 minutes.

Be a Conscious Traveler: Stay on marked paths to protect our fragile moss. It takes decades to grow back if stepped on.