

West Iceland & Snæfellsnes: 72 Hours of Magic

A Local's Guide to Lava Falls, Glaciers, and Coastal Secrets

This 3-day journey is designed for those who want to see the "hidden" West. We combine the powerful geothermal energy of Borgarfjörður with the iconic landscapes of the Snæfellsnes Peninsula.

Local Rule #1: Start by 08:30 AM. This allows you to reach the waterfalls in the West before the midday tour groups.

Local Rule #2: Stay curious. Some of the best stops on this route are the small farm shops and local museums along the way.

Day 1: The Silver Springs & Lava Falls

Route: Reykjavík – Deildartunguhver – Hraunfossar – Borgarnes

Driving time: Approx. 2.5 hours.

08:30 | Departure: Head north from Reykjavík through the Hvalfjörður tunnel.

10:30 | Europe's Most Powerful Spring: Visit Deildartunguhver. This hot spring provides heating for the entire region. Right next to it is Krauma, a luxury geothermal spa where the water is cooled by glacial meltwater.

12:30 | The Lava Waterfalls: Visit Hraunfossar and Barnafoss. These falls emerge directly from under a solid lava field into a bright blue river. It is arguably the most beautiful waterfall system in the West.

15:00 | Reykholt History: Visit Reykholt, the home of Snorri Sturluson, Iceland's most famous medieval writer. See Snorralaug, one of the oldest geothermal pools in the country.

17:00 | Sunset in Borgarnes: Settle into your hotel in the charming town of Borgarnes.

Recommended Stay: Hotel Hamar (Golf & Views) or The Settlement Center Guesthouse.

Day 2: Into the Peninsula of Wonders

Route: Borgarnes – Ytri Tunga – Arnarstapi – Djúpalónssandur – Hellissandur

Driving time: Approx. 2.5 hours.

09:00 | Seal Spotting: Drive to Ytri Tunga. Keep your eyes on the rocks at the shoreline to spot the local seal colonies lounging in the sun.

11:00 | The Black Church: Stop at Búðakirkja for that iconic photo of the lonely black church against the mountains.

13:00 | Coastal Cliff Walk: At Arnarstapi, enjoy a 45-minute walk along the dramatic basalt cliffs to Hellnar. Grab a soup or coffee at Fjöruhúsið, a tiny café perched on the edge of the ocean.

15:30 | The Pebbled Beach: Visit Djúpalónssandur. Walk through the lava formations to the black pebble beach and see the remains of the historic shipwreck scattered on the sand.

18:00 | Overnight on the Peninsula:

Recommended Stay: Fosshótel Hellnar or Hótel Hellissandur.

Day 3: The Most Photographed Mountain & The Fjord Village

Route: Saxhóll – Kirkjufell – Stykkishólmur – Reykjavík

Driving time: Approx. 3.5 hours.

09:30 | The Volcano Crater: Climb the iron stairs up Saxhóll Crater for a panoramic view of the Snæfellsjökull glacier and the surrounding lava fields.

11:30 | The Icon of the West: Arrive at Kirkjufell mountain and Kirkjufellsfoss waterfall. This is the ultimate photo stop. Take your time walking around the lake for the best reflections.

14:00 | The Harbor Town: Visit Stykkishólmur. Walk up to the lighthouse on the island of Súgandisey for a view across the thousands of islands in Breiðafjörður.

16:00 | The Berserker Lava: Drive through the colorful Berserkjahraun lava field on your way back towards the main road.

19:00 | Arrival in Reykjavík: Return to the capital, having completed the full loop of the West.

Local Secrets for the West

Shark Tasting: If you are feeling brave, visit the Bjarnarhöfn Shark Museum near Stykkishólmur to learn how fermented shark is made (and try a piece!).

The Mineral Pool: Visit Lýsuhóll on the south side of the peninsula. It's a swimming pool filled with naturally carbonated mineral water—there's nothing else like it in Iceland.

Ice Cream Culture: Stop at Erpsstaðir Dairy Farm near Búðardalur if you have time for the best local ice cream and cheese in the West.