

Snæfellsnes in 48 Hours: Iceland in Miniature

A Local's Guide to the Peninsula of Magic & Mystery

This 48-hour journey takes you around the Snæfellsnes Peninsula. While many try to rush this in a single day, staying overnight allows you to catch the golden hour at Kirkjufell and explore the hidden coastal paths of the National Park in peace.

Local Rule #1: Start your day by 08:00 AM. This gets you to the south coast of the peninsula before the day-tour buses arrive from the city.

Local Rule #2: Check the wind forecast at Vedur.is. The wind on the northern side of the peninsula can be very strong, especially near the mountains.

Day 1: Seal Beaches & Dramatic Cliffs

Route: Reykjavík – Ytri Tunga – Arnarstapi – Hellnar – Snæfellsjökull National Park

Driving time: Approx. 3 hours.

08:00 | Departure: Leave Reykjavík and head north through the Hvalfjörður tunnel towards Borgarnes.

10:30 | Seal Spotting: Stop at Ytri Tunga. This golden sand beach is one of the best places in Iceland to see seals lounging on the rocks.

12:00 | The Black Church: Visit Búðakirkja, the famous lonely black church surrounded by a lava field. It's an iconic photo spot.

13:30 | Coastal Hike: Head to Arnarstapi. Eat a quick lunch at one of the local fish-and-chip vans. Then, walk the stunning 2.5km cliffside path between Arnarstapi and Hellnar. You'll see incredible rock formations like the Gatklettur arch.

16:00 | Into the Earth: Visit the Vatnshellir Cave (requires a tour). It's an 8,000-year-old lava tube that goes 35 meters underground.

18:00 | Overnight in the National Park area:

Recommended Stay: Fosshótel Hellnar (right by the cliffs) or Hótel Búðir (luxury and history).

Day 2: Volcanic Peaks & The Most Photographed Mountain

Route: Djúpalónssandur – Saxhóll – Kirkjufell – Stykkishólmur – Reykjavík

Driving time: Approx. 3.5 hours.

09:00 | The Lifting Stones: Visit Djúpalónssandur, a black pebble beach with the remains of a shipwreck. Try your strength on the "lifting stones" used by fishermen in the past.

11:00 | The Volcano Crater: Climb the stairs of Saxhóll Crater. It's an easy 10-minute walk up, offering a view of the vast lava fields and the Snæfellsjökull glacier.

13:00 | The Icon: Arrive at Kirkjufell mountain and its waterfall, Kirkjufellsfoss. This is the most photographed mountain in Iceland (and a Game of Thrones filming location). Spend time walking around the falls to find the perfect angle.

15:00 | The Harbor Village: Drive to Stykkishólmur, a charming fishing village with colorful old houses. Walk up to the lighthouse on the island (Súgandisey) for a view across Breiðafjörður bay.

17:00 | The Return: Begin the 2.5-hour drive back to Reykjavík.

19:30 | Dinner in Borgarnes: Stop at The Settlement Center for a final meal before the last stretch to the capital.

Local Secrets for Snæfellsnes

Shark Tasting: If you are brave, stop at Bjarnarhöfn Shark Museum near Stykkishólmur to learn about (and taste) traditional fermented shark.

The Hidden Pool: Visit Lýsuhóll, a unique swimming pool filled with naturally carbonated mineral water (rich in iron and algae). It's great for the skin!

Berserkjahraun: On the way to Stykkishólmur, take the gravel road through the Berserkjahraun lava field. It is one of the most colorful and dramatic lava flows in Iceland, with an amazing local folk tale attached to it.