

# The South & Westman Islands: 48 Hours of Island Magic

*A Local's Guide to Volcanic Wonders and Coastal Secrets*

This itinerary is designed for travelers who want to trade the crowds of the Golden Circle for the rugged charm of the Westman Islands and the iconic waterfalls of the South.

**Local Rule #1:** Book your ferry to the Westman Islands (Herjólfur) in advance! It is the lifeline of this trip.

**Local Rule #2:** Start your day at 07:30 AM. To make the most of the islands and the coast, you need an early start to catch the morning ferry.

## Day 1: The Volcanic Isles

Route: Reykjavík – Landeyjahöfn (Ferry) – Westman Islands – Vík

Driving time: Approx. 2.5 hours + 35 min ferry ride.

07:30 | Departure: Drive from Reykjavík to Landeyjahöfn ferry terminal.

09:30 | The Ferry Crossing: Take the Herjólfur ferry. Standing on the deck as you approach the towering cliffs of Heimaey is an unforgettable experience.

11:00 | Eldheimar Museum: Visit the "Pompeii of the North." This museum is built around a house excavated from the 1973 volcanic eruption. It is incredibly moving and visceral.

13:00 | Lunch with a View: Eat at Gott or Slippurinn (seasonal). They use fresh fish caught right in the harbor and local herbs from the cliffs.

14:30 | Puffin Spotting & Volcano Hike: Drive or walk to Stórhöfði, the windiest place in Europe, to see the puffin colonies (May–August). Then, hike up Eldfell volcano for a 360-degree view of the archipelago.

17:30 | Return to Mainland: Catch the late afternoon ferry back to Landeyjahöfn and drive east to Vík.

Where to Stay (Local Favorites):

Hótel Vík í Mýrdal: Sleek, modern, and right in the heart of the village.

Vík Apartments: Perfect if you want to cook your own breakfast and feel at home.

Puffin Hotel: A cozy, budget-friendly option.

## **Day 2: Coastal Classics & Hidden Echoes**

Route: Vík – Reynisfjara – Skógafoss – Seljalandsfoss – Reykjavík

Driving time: Approx. 2.5 hours total.

08:30 | The Black Beach: Start at Reynisfjara. Walk along the basalt columns before the tour buses arrive from Reykjavík. Safety: Stay far back from the "sneaker waves."

10:30 | The Yoda Cave: Drive 5 minutes east of Vík to Hjørleifshöfði. The massive cave opening shaped like Yoda is a quiet, mystical spot that most tourists skip.

12:30 | Skool Beans Coffee: Stop at the famous yellow school bus in Vík for the best coffee and chocolate in the south before heading west.

14:00 | Waterfall Way: Stop at Skógafoss. If you have energy, hike the first 15 minutes of the trail above the falls to see the smaller, "hidden" waterfalls along the river.

16:00 | The Secret Neighbor: Visit Seljalandsfoss, then walk 5 minutes north to find Gljúfrabúi. It is hidden inside a cliff—you will get wet, but it is worth it!

18:30 | Arrival in Reykjavík: Return to the city for a well-deserved dinner.

## **Local Secrets for This Route**

*The Ferry: If the seas are rough, the ferry might sail to Þorlákshöfn instead of Landeyjahöfn. Always check Herjolfur.is on the morning of your trip.*

*The Sprangan: In the Westman Islands, look for the local "Sprangan" rope. You might see locals swinging gracefully from the cliffs—don't try it yourself unless you're very brave!*

*Beluga Sanctuary: Don't miss the Sea Life Trust Beluga Whale Sanctuary in the Westman Islands harbor to see the rescued whales.*

*Swimming: The swimming pool in the Westman Islands is one of the best in Iceland for kids (and adults), featuring great slides and salt-water tubs.*