

# The Ultimate North: 72 Hours of Arctic Magic

*A Local's Guide to Akureyri, Mývatn, Húsavík & Ásbyrgi*

The North of Iceland is a land of dramatic contrasts—from the lush, horseshoe-shaped canyon of Ásbyrgi to the bubbling mud pools of Mývatn. This 3-day itinerary is designed for those who want to experience the "Diamond Circle" and the capital of the North without the rush.

Local Rule #1: The drive to the North is 5 hours. Leave Reykjavík by 07:30 AM on Day 1 to maximize your sightseeing.

Local Rule #2: Keep an eye on Road.is. The mountain passes in the North can surprise you with wind or snow.

## Day 1: The Road North & The Fjord Capital

Route: Reykjavík – Kolugljúfur – Akureyri

Driving time: Approx. 5.5 hours.

07:30 | Departure: Head north from Reykjavík. The drive through Borgarfjörður and Skagafjörður is breathtaking.

11:00 | The Hidden Gorge: Stop at Kolugljúfur Canyon. It's a spectacular waterfall and canyon just a few minutes off Route 1 that most tourists miss. Perfect for a leg-stretch and photos.

13:30 | Lunch in Blönduós: Grab a quick bite at a local diner or a gas station "Pylsa" (hot dog) to keep moving.

15:30 | Arrival in Akureyri: Explore the town. Walk up the Akureyrarkirkja stairs and visit the Botanical Garden.

17:30 | Local Chill: Soak in the Akureyri Swimming Pool. It's one of the best in Iceland with great slides and hot tubs—this is where the locals hang out.

Where to Stay (Akureyri):

Hótel Kea: Heart of the city.

Sæluhús Akureyri: Studio apartments with stunning fjord views.

## **Day 2: The Diamond Circle & The Horseshoe Canyon**

Route: Akureyri – Goðafoss – Húsavík – Ásbyrgi – Lake Mývatn

Driving time: Approx. 3 hours.

08:30 | Waterfall of the Gods: Stop at Goðafoss, a massive semi-circular waterfall with deep historical roots.

10:30 | The Whale Capital: Arrive in Húsavík. Take a walk by the harbor or visit the GeoSea Geothermal Sea Baths for a soak with a view of the Arctic Circle.

13:00 | The Hidden Giant: Drive to Ásbyrgi Canyon. This massive horseshoe-shaped depression is said to be the footprint of Odin's eight-legged horse, Sleipnir. Walk to the inner pond (Botnstjörn) for total silence and lush greenery.

16:00 | Mývatn Volcanics: Drive south to the Lake Mývatn area. Explore the Hverir mud pools and the Dimmuborgir lava fortresses.

19:00 | Overnight at Mývatn:

Recommended Stay: Vogafjós Farm Resort (Eat dinner next to the cows!) or Mývatn Berjaya Hotel.

## **Day 3: Nature Baths & The Scenic Return**

Route: Mývatn – Akureyri – Reykjavík

Driving time: Approx. 6.5 hours (Long drive back).

09:00 | Morning Soak: Visit the Mývatn Nature Baths (The Blue Lagoon of the North) before the crowds arrive. The silica-rich water is perfect for relaxing before the long drive.

11:30 | Ice Cream Stop: Pass back through Akureyri and stop at Brynja for their world-famous "soft-serve" ice cream. Even in winter, locals eat this!

13:30 | Scenic Skagafjörður: As you head west, enjoy the views of the horse farms in Skagafjörður.

18:00 | Dinner in Borgarnes: Stop at The Settlement Center for a high-quality Icelandic meal before the final hour-long stretch to Reykjavík.

20:00 | Back in the City: Arrive in Reykjavík with a camera full of memories.

## **Local Secrets for the North**

*Tunnel Toll: You will pass through the Vaðlaheiðargöng tunnel near Akureyri. There is no toll booth; you must pay at tunnel.is within 24 hours.*

*Dettifoss Note: If you have an extra hour on Day 2, you can add Dettifoss (Europe's most powerful waterfall) between Ásbyrgi and Mývatn, but check road conditions (Route 864 or 862) first!*

*Beer Spa: If you have time on Day 1, the Bjórböðin Beer Spa in Árskógssandur (30 mins from Akureyri) is a unique experience where you soak in actual beer.*