

Wild Iceland

Land of Fire & Ice & Nature's Paradise!

June 13-22, 2016



Outdoors enthusiasts grab your binoculars and cameras, and come explore Iceland! Discover Iceland in all of its great beauty.

Iceland has captured the imagination of people all over the world since Jules Verne wrote "Journey to the Center of the Earth" in 1871. Iceland has a proud heritage—it is the world's oldest democracy. Its wildlife and natural wonders are truly magical!

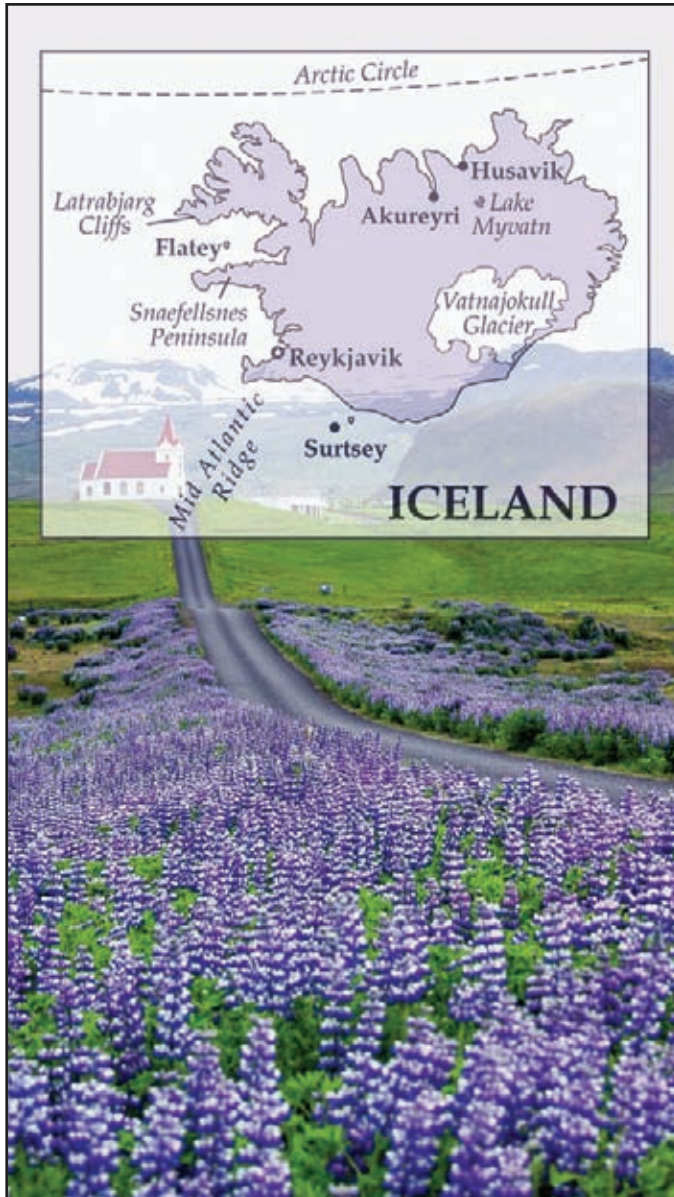
Come join an excellent Icelandic naturalist Oskar Halldorsson, and see for yourself! This trip is a tremendous introduction to the heritage of Iceland, from geology to history and wildlife!



LEADERSHIP

Leading this expedition will be **Oskar Halldorsson**. Oskar is a journalist and has been a guide throughout Iceland for many years, including the recent Betchart Expeditions Iceland Aurora Borealis and Total Solar Eclipse Expedition in March 2015. He calls Akureyri on the North Coast home.

Oskar has a BA in Geography from the University of Iceland, and has been working for more than 20 years as a journalist and reporter on Icelandic newspapers, Icelandic State Radio, and Channel 2 in Iceland. He looks forward to sharing the delights of Wild Iceland with you.



ITINERARY

Days 1/2 New York to Reykjavik

Today we will depart from JFK International Airport (or other IcelandAir gateways) for Reykjavik. Arrive on the morning of Day 2. Meet your Iceland naturalist/guide and transfer to *Hotel (2 nights)*. This morning enjoy a Reykjavik city tour before stepping back in time at the Settlement Museum. You are free to continue to explore Reykjavik on your own this afternoon. Welcome dinner. B,D

Day 3 Gullfoss Falls & Thingvellir Plain

Today we will visit Thingvellir (the "plains of parliament"), where Iceland's democracy began in 930 AD. See the dependable Strokkur geysir erupting and also the incredible Gullfoss Falls, Iceland's star attraction. We'll also walk atop an astonishing geologic feature, the Mid-Atlantic Ridge, which separates Europe & North America! B

Day 4 Reykjavik, Snæfellsnes Peninsula & Stykkisholmur

Depart for the Snæfellsnes Peninsula this morning. Words cannot express the mystery, wonder and almost

surreal energy of this spectacular site! The major landmark is the Snæfellsjökull Glacier which is renowned for its mystical powers and has captured the imagination of people all over the world, ever since Jules Verne wrote "The Journey to the Centre of the Earth" in 1871. The area features extraordinary moorlands, meadows, marshlands, rivers, streams, and small ponds along with beautiful rock and lava formations.

The Snæfellsnes Peninsula is without a doubt one of the best places in Iceland for nature and wildlife watching during summer. Today we can expect to see a great variety of birds, seals and possibly a few cetacean species. Birds we can expect to see include the Harlequin Duck, Atlantic Puffin, Thick-billed Murre, Black Guillemot, White-tailed Eagle, Arctic Tern and many more. In recent years both Grey Seals and Harbor Seals have been seen in the area and the cetaceans seen from land include Orcas and Minke Whales. After traveling around the Peninsula we will make our way to the north shore. *Stykkisholmur Hotel*. B



Day 5 Iceland National Day, Breidafjordur Bay & Flatey Island

Today is Icelandic Independence Day. Icelanders love to celebrate this national holiday with parades, speeches and dancing. We will start today with a visit to the Eldfjallasafn Volcano Museum in Stykkisholmur. View a unique exhibition of international art old and new, showing volcanic eruptions as well as objects, artifacts, volcanic rocks from the unique collection of professor Haraldur Sigurdsson who has carried out research on volcanoes worldwide for forty years.

Next we will enjoy a nature and bird watching boat tour. The wildlife in the area holds millions of seabirds with species such as Atlantic Puffin, Black Guillemot, Northern Fulmar and Shag being abundant. The area is also the main breeding area for the White-tailed Eagle. Sample fresh scallops and sea urchin roe when a small net is cast overboard and shellfish delicacies are brought on board.

This afternoon our ferry will be waiting to take us to Breidafjordur Bay. This bay is located between the Westfjords in the North and Snaefellsnes Peninsula in the south and has both landscape and seascape of a different kind. It consists of small fjords and bays and is literally dotted with around 3,000 islands, islets, and skerries.

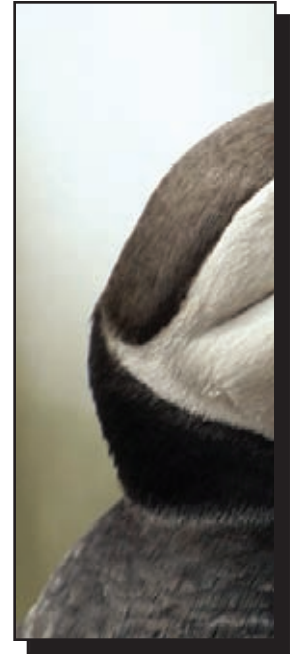
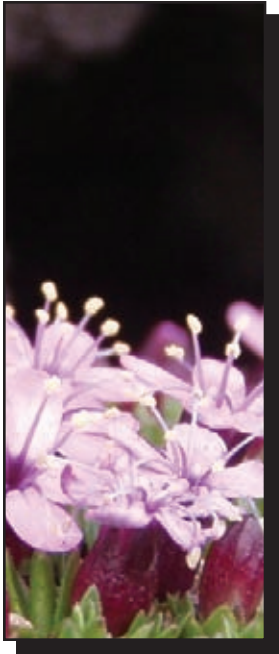


After making a tour among the islands we will land on Flatey Island where we stay for the night. Flatey Island is a small inhabited island almost in the middle of the bay, and once the most important centre of culture and education of the country. The hamlet, which developed on the island is mostly intact and the remaining houses have been renovated and are occupied by their owners and then families during summer. The birdlife on the island is very used to living closely with people, so there may be extremely tame individuals. The eiderdown farmers can pick up some of the female Eiders, collect part of their down and put them comfortably back on their nests.

This evening watch for Puffins diving for sand eels... Black Guillemot returning to their nests with Butterfish in their beak... Northern Fulmar gliding right by you... Black-legged Kittiwakes telling their stories in the cliffs... Rednecked Phalarope spinning on the water and looking for the rare Red Phalarope. Night at charming *Hotel Flatey (shared facilities)*. B,D

Day 6 Flatey Island, Latrabjarg Bird Cliff & Westfjords

This morning we will continue by ferry to the other side of Breidafjordur Bay. From here we make our way through the remote Westfjords towards the magnificent Latrabjarg Bird Cliff. This cliff is one of the most spectacular seabird rookeries in Iceland (and Europe!). It is the largest seabird colony in Europe and extends over a 14 km long cliff. You will be astonished by the numbers, sounds and smell of seabirds along the cliff. The Puffins are so tame here that you can almost pick them up with your bare hands! While Snow Buntings feed on the cliff tops, thousands of Thick-billed Murre, Common Murre, Razorbills and Black-legged Kittiwakes through the cliffs. We will visit the Egill Olafsson Museum at Hnjótur with a unique collection from the Westfjords which offers insight into daily life and people's struggle for existence and the resourcefulness it took to survive under harsh conditions in centuries past. *Hotel near Vatnsfjordur*. B



Day 7 The Westfjords & Hvammstangi

Today we will make our way along the rugged southern coastline of the Westfjords peninsula through spectacular fjords and past thundering waterfalls to the Daeli Holiday Farm in northern Iceland. Much of the day will be spent driving through dramatic scenery en route, passing numerous waterfalls and impressive fjords. This afternoon you are free to relax or visit Steinbogi Waterfall and Kolugljúfur Canion. Steinbogi or “Stone Arc” (direct translation) is a waterfall with a natural stone bridge. The hike offers a variety of birdlife, views of nearby horse farms and a beautiful view. The canyon, which is situated south of Dæli (in the bottom of the valley), is a memorable place to visit and will leave no one disappointed. *Daeli Holiday Farm near Hvammstangi.* B,D

Day 8 The North, Myvatn & Summer Solstice

Today we head to Lake Myvatn. On the way we will look for families of Pink-footed Geese along a glacial river. We will stop for lunch and stroll through the Akureyri Botanic Garden. The garden is one of the northernmost botanical gardens in the world. A wide variety of both Icelandic and foreign flora is to be found here.

For a nature enthusiast to describe the Lake Myvatn area with words is virtually impossible. The whole area is a natural wonder of its own in a world that has



nothing else like it. Even people with no interest in nature and wildlife are impressed by the variety and magnitude of both the birdlife as well as the different natural phenomenon that surround you in the area. The lake itself is approximately 37 sq km, making it Iceland’s fourth largest lake.

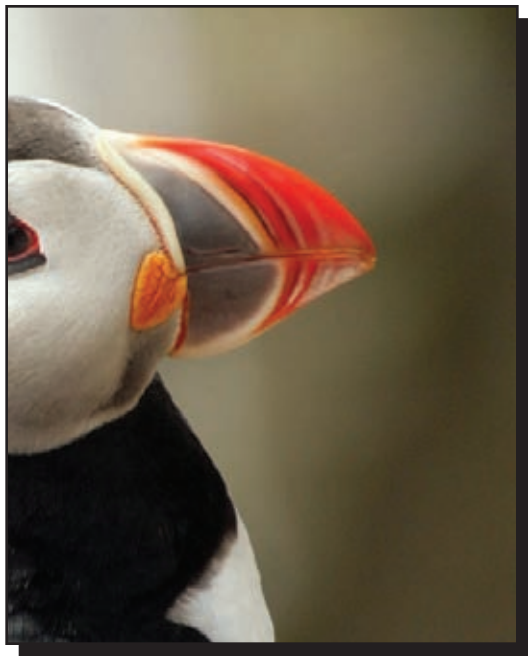
This area has been described as a meeting place of two worlds where you are able to find flora and fauna from both the temperate and the Arctic zones. It is also a highly active volcanic area situated on the west edge of the meeting point of the Eurasian and North American plates. By the end of the day you have been traveling by and visiting a range of pseudo-craters, volcanoes of different sizes, hot springs, and new lava fields with lava pillars.

You are likely to have seen a variety of bird species, including the Common Loon (Great Northern Diver), Horned Grebe, Barrow’s Goldeneye, Harlequin Duck, Greater Scaup, Red-necked Phalarope, Redwing, Common Snipe and Redshank. You will also have an excellent chance to see the Gyr Falcon today. The Lake Myvatn area is the only place in Europe where the Barrow’s Goldeneye breeds and Iceland is also the only country in Europe where Harlequin Duck and Great Northern Diver breed. *Hotel Gigur Myvatn.* B

Day 9 Lake Myvatn & Husavik

This morning we will continue to explore the geological wonders of Myvatn including a relaxing soak in the Myvatn Nature Baths before making our way to Husavik.

Visit the Husavik Whale Museum in the early afternoon before a whale watching trip on Skjalfandi floi Bay. This bay is arguably the best area in Iceland to watch whales. Astonishing numbers of cetacean species have been recorded in the bay (up to 12 species in total). During the trip we might see Minke Whales (which are the most common species in the bay), White-beaked Dolphins, Humpback Whales, and Porpoises. Species such as Orcas (Killer whales) and the largest animal believed to have ever breathed on earth—the magnificent Blue Whale—have



also been seen regularly in the area in recent years.
Hotel Husavik. B,D

Day 10 Husavik, Akureyri, Reykjavik to USA

Today we make our way to Akureyri where we take a short flight to the Keflavik Airport for our return flights to the USA. B



RESPONSIBILITY

Betchart Expeditions Inc., the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), Sigma Xi, The Scientific Research Society, and the American Chemical Society (ACS) act only as agents for the passenger with respect to transportation and hotels, and exercise every care possible. However, we can assume no liability for injury, damage, delay, loss, accident or irregularity in connection with the services of any airplane, ship, motorcoach, or any other conveyance used in carrying out the arrangements of the tour. We cannot accept any responsibility for losses or additional expenses due to delay or changes in air or other services, sickness, weather, strike, war, quarantine, terrorism, acts of God, or other causes beyond our control. All such losses or expenses will have to be borne by the passenger, as tour rates provide for arrangements only for the time stated. We reserve the right to substitute another leader of similar expertise or reserve the right to cancel any tour prior to departure, in which case the entire payment will be refunded with no further obligation on our part. The right is also reserved to decline to accept or retain any person as a member of the tour. No refund will be made for the unused portion of any tour unless arrangements are made in sufficient time to avoid penalties. The price of the program is based on current tariffs and rates, and is subject to change. Any tariff, exchange rate, or fuel increases will be passed on to participants. Baggage is carried at the owner's risk entirely. It is understood that the air ticket when issued shall constitute the sole contract between the passenger and the airline concerned. The airlines concerned are not to be held responsible for any act, omission, or event during the time passengers are not on board their plane or conveyance.

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 Map by April Milne.

CST# 2036304-40

RESERVATIONS

#1435

Yes! I/we want to join the **Wild Iceland Expedition, June 13-22, 2016**, offered by **AAAS Travels, Sigma Xi & ACS Expeditions**. Please reserve _____ space(s). As a deposit, I/we enclose a check for \$ _____ (\$500 per person) payable to Betchart Expeditions Inc. Trust Account.

Name(s) _____ Age _____

_____ Age _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone: Home (_____) _____

Work (_____) _____

Email Address _____

Membership: AAAS Sigma Xi ACS Planetary Society

Accommodations Preference:

Twin Single Twin Share: with a friend or

Nonsmoker Smoker assign a roommate

Signature _____ Date _____

Signature _____ Date _____

**Please Mail To: Wild Iceland 2016
 Betchart Expeditions Inc.
 17050 Montebello Road
 Cupertino, CA 95014-5345**



AAAS Travels ACS & Sigma Xi Expeditions

BETCHART EXPEDITIONS Inc.
17050 Montebello Road, Cupertino, CA 95014-5435



FIRST CLASS

*Discover the Land of Fire
& Ice & Nature's Paradise...
WILD ICELAND!
June 13-22, 2016*

COSTS & CONDITIONS

Trip Fee: \$3,995 per person twin share (plus air \$695 + tax from JFK or Boston or \$795 from Seattle to Iceland, RT plus \$195 in-tour flight Akureyri/Reykjavik).

Expedition Fee Includes: Land transport; group airport transfers; accommodations twin share; all breakfasts and 4 dinners; entrance fees; tips to local guides and drivers; baggage handling; leadership, administration.

Expedition Fee Does Not Include: Air fare (quoted separately); independent transfers; lunches and 4 dinners; gratuity to expedition leader; personal items such as laundry, phone calls, alcoholic beverages, snacks; personal insurance, or foreign airport departure taxes.

What to Expect: This expedition is for travelers who would like to explore Iceland, led by an Icelandic naturalist. This is a rich cultural and natural history experience with great opportunities for wildlife and scenic photography in the spectacular landscapes of volcanic Iceland. The group will travel from 2 to 6 hours by bus or van most days. There will be short bird and whale watching boat trips. Walks will be at a leisurely pace suitable for discovery and photography (good quality hiking boots are recommended). It will be early summer with midday temperatures in the 50's to 60's with a few sprinkles every other day (June is the driest month of the year). The expedition will be a tremendous experience for travelers with an appetite for adventure who would enjoy exploring Iceland! We'll have a grand adventure of discovery. (No smoking in vehicles, during lectures, or meals please.)

Air Fare & Airline Ticketing: Please phone **Taunya at Betchart Expeditions, (800) 252-4910** for information about the group flights. The group flight departs from JFK or other IcelandAir gateways on IcelandAir. All group members

take the in-tour flight Akureyri to Keflavik airport June 22. AIR FARES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE.

Accommodations: Are in a comfortable first class hotel in Reykjavik, charming Hotel Flatey, and in country style lodges and hotels in remote areas twin share with a private bath (except on Flatey Island where facilities are shared). Limited single accommodations are available for a supplement of \$895.

Reservations, Deposits, & Payments: Please mail a deposit of \$500 per person with the completed reservation form to:

**Wild Iceland 2016, Betchart Expeditions Inc.
17050 Montebello Road, Cupertino, CA 95014-5435**

The balance is due 60 days before departure.

Questions: Please call **Betchart Expeditions Inc.**

Telephone: **(800) 252 4910**

or **(408) 252 4910**

Fax: (408) 252 1444

Email: Taunya@betchartexpeditions.com

Cancellations & Refunds: The initial deposit is refundable up to 60 days before departure less a handling fee of \$100 per person. There is no refund after the 60-day period unless your place is resold, then only the \$100 per person handling fee is withheld. There are no refunds for unused meals or other expedition features.

