

POSTCARDS FROM ICELAND

WHAT'S NEW IN 2010

Surf's up – New Reykjavik Surf Camps with Arctic Adventures

Already known in pro-surfing circles for its uncrowned, world-class waves, Iceland is putting itself on the surfing map in 2010 with the launch of new surf camps with local adventure tour operator, Arctic Adventures.

Based in Iceland's quirky capital, the new **Reykjavik Surf Camp** offers the die-hard surfer the chance to discover the world-class waves around the dramatic coastline of the Reykjanes peninsula, combined with Reykjavik's legendary nightlife for après-surf fun.

The Reykjavik Surf Camp costs €750 per person and includes six nights at the Reykjavik Backpackers hostel in a 4-6 bedded dorm with breakfast, all transfers to the surf spots, daily packed lunch, experienced surf guide and surfing equipment (6mm wetsuit, gloves, boots). Not included in the price are flights, airport transfers and surfboard rental (available on request).

The Reykjavik Surf Camps will take place from 23 August, 30 August, 6 September and 13 September 2010.

www.arcticsurfers.is

Wild Photography Holidays unveils new Iceland itineraries for 2010

Four new Icelandic itineraries have been launched by specialist small-group travel company Wild Photography Holidays discovering the country's more inaccessible landscapes.

The first departure of the season, the **Southern Contrasts - Glaciers, Volcanoes & Waterfalls tour**, departs on 22 May. Highlights include a walk on the Mýrdalsjökull glacier, plus visits to the warm, mineral-rich waters of the Blue Lagoon; the stunning rift valley of Þingvellir National Park; the powerful waterfall at Gullfoss; and the regular-as-clockwork eruptions of the Strokkur geyser. The nine-day trip costs £1,885 per person.

Departing 26 June, the 11- day **Flowers and Landscapes of the East** tour costs £1,885 per person and takes in the untamed splendour of Lake Mývatn and surrounding area. As the winter snows recede, the landscape bursts into life - providing an exceptional opportunity to photograph the flowers against a backdrop of snowy mountains, magnificent waterfalls and sleepy fishing villages in 24 hours of daylight.

The **Trails of the Deserted Fjords** tour, departing 8 July, takes in the magnificent geothermal Lake Mývatn and the wild scenery of the remote east coast. The 14-day trip costs £2,515 per person and includes two nights in a mountain hut giving access to some of the area's more remote landscapes.

The 14-day **Highland Exposure** tour departs on 1 August and ventures deep into Iceland's vast and uninhabited mountain interior. The scenery here is like nowhere else on Earth, affording unique opportunities to photograph vast lava flows, empty deserts, powerful waterfalls, volcanic landforms and Europe's largest ice cap - the massive Vatnajökull glacier. The holiday costs £2,400 per person.

All holiday prices include accommodation for the duration, most meals, transfers, the services of a guide and photographic tutor, and entrance to the Blue Lagoon or Lake Myvatn Nature Baths. International flights are not included in any of the above holidays.

For more information visit Wild Photography Holidays' website www.wildphotographyholidays.com or call 00 354 5888 939.

New 4x4 Adventures launched by Arctic Trucks

Want to experience Iceland with the same company who were behind *Top Gear's* memorable expedition to the North Pole?

Arctic Trucks has now made it possible to experience some of Iceland's most remote areas in the same cars used for the programme's gruelling, adventurous race towards the North Pole.

You may not be drinking Gin & Tonic along the way, but you will get to experience rugged nature at its very best in a country physically cut off from every continent by several thousand miles...

Sitting behind the wheel of a powerful 4x4, you can enjoy one of Arctic Trucks' quirky day tours, such as *The Unusual Golden Circle*, *Black Beach & White Ice*, *Black Cave & Blue Lagoon*, *Thorsmörk – to the Throne Room of the Viking God*, and *Hekla 360°*; while if you want to push the limits further into the rugged highlands you can opt for one of the longer tours, ranging from two to five days.

Prices vary depending on the size of the group and can start from €235 per person for day tours and €655 per person for longer tours.

www.arctictrucks-experience.com

New Glacier Ski Tour from Borea Adventures

Icelandic operator Borea Adventures has added a new Glacier Ski Tour for true winter adventurers to its growing portfolio of expeditions based in the Westfjords in north-west Iceland.

With departures in May 2010, the six-day trip explores the uninhabited Hornstrandir Nature Reserve, one of the most remote areas of Iceland.

The tour begins crossing the Drangajökull Glacier and discovering its magnificent ice craters formed by geothermal heat, before skiing down to the lonely but beautiful Reykjafjörður Fjord where there are no roads or electricity.

Three nights will be spent camping on the glacier and two nights in a mountain hut located next to a geothermal swimming pool before returning to civilisation.

The tour costs Euro 1250 per person and includes all food and drink, tent, polkas (sledges) and cooking equipment, accommodation in a basic mountain hut, transportation to the Nature Reserve and the services of an experienced Mountain guide. International flights and transportation to the departure point in Isafjordur is not included.

For more information visit www.boreaadventures.com

Solo's Holidays launches Iceland tour packages for the first time

Marvel at some of Europe's most dramatic scenery and hear tales of elves and trolls on a fascinating new group holiday for single travellers with specialist operator Solo's Holidays.

Offered for the first time by singles tour operator Solo's, the 'Invigorating Iceland' break combines time in the vibrant capital of Reykjavik, with its striking architecture and buzzing nightlife, with some of the country's must-see sites: the UNESCO-protected remains of the world's first parliament in Thingvellir National Park; the dramatic Gullfoss waterfall; and the 'original' Geysir, after which all the world's spouting hot spring geysers are named.

The opportunity to discover more about the magical Northern Lights and a visit to a beautifully-preserved 19th-century fishing village and a traditional Icelandic farm complete an insight into a unique and fascinating land.

The four-night Invigorating Iceland break for over-25s departs 18 March from Gatwick and costs £969 per person.

www.soloholidays.co.uk

Ramblers introduces new trips to lesser-known Iceland

Walking holiday specialist Ramblers Worldwide Holidays has introduced three new itineraries to its 2010 portfolio, enabling travellers to discover lesser-known areas of Iceland.

Walk and trek in the unspoilt wilderness of the isolated Borgarfjörur region on the 'Eastern Iceland Explorer' itinerary. Pass unique rhyolite mountains that change colour in different weather, visit the geothermal Nature Baths in the active volcanic area of Lake Mývatn, hike across black sand beaches before heading into the highlands, spending the night in a traditional Icelandic mountain hut. The 'Eastern Iceland Explorer' itinerary departs on 17 June, 1 July, 15 July and 5 August and costs £1,955 per person.

Experience the raw beauty of nature at the top of the world with 'Iceland to 65°N': Explore the lava landscape of Nordurardalur's wide valley floor, flanked by the three-million year-old volcanic cone of Baula; discover the historic coastal town of Akureyri, opening to the ocean just 25 miles south of the Arctic Circle; cross the Interior Highlands, passing vast expanses of snow-topped wilderness before

descending to the magnificent Gullfoss; and finish your trip at Hveragerdi, Iceland's very own 'flower town'. 'Iceland to 65°N' departs on 2 July, 30 July and 6 August and costs £1,595 per person.

For walkers looking for jaw-dropping scenery, Ramblers also offers a cruise to the hard-to-reach lands of the north: Leave Reykjavik behind to experience Isafjordur, at the southern end of one of Iceland's most dramatic fjords; call into Heimaey and its breathtaking cliffs; hike from Olafsfjordur along the coast to the head of a glacial valley (a photographers' favourite); and then sail south to Norway, for a number of picturesque walks in the cities of Ålesund, Bergen and Farsund. The cruise departs on 5 September 2010 and costs £1,355 per person.

www.ramblersholidays.co.uk

New home opened for Icelandic Sea Monsters

Tales of monsters in Iceland go back as far as its history – and the country's first Sea Monster Museum opened earlier this year in the village of Bíldudalur in Arnarfjörður, in the southern part of the Westfjords peninsula.

The Arnarfjörður area is reputed to be the home of most of the Icelandic Sea Monsters and the museum introduces for the first time some of the thousands of sea monster stories told in Iceland through the centuries.

The four most common monsters are shown in the museum in various ways, and visitors can also see and hear interviews with local fishermen, who tell of their personal encounters with strange unknown creatures at sea. In addition, a map of Arnarfjordur illustrates where the stories have taken place, while a computer monitor allows visitors to read and learn the various stories.

Apart from the Icelandic Sea Monster Museum, the Westfjords are home to two other quirky museums, dedicated to witchcraft and pirates. The region is one of Iceland's best-preserved secrets due to its natural wonders, dramatic landscape and rich culture.

For more information on Iceland go to www.visiticeland.com

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