



### **Festive short breaks in Iceland with a chance to meet the infamous Yule Lads!**

**5 December 2011, London:** Those looking for a more unusual winter getaway over Christmas and New Year should head to Iceland to enjoy the Christmas market, Iceland's mythical Yule Lads, the Northern Lights and the country's magical winter weather. Iceland is just a three hour flight from the UK and flights are available with Icelandair from Heathrow, Manchester and Glasgow and with Iceland Express from Gatwick.

#### **Christmas Creatures**

Families will love the 'Christmas Creatures' from Icelandic folklore, which come down from the mountains from 12 - 23 December each year. The 13 playful Yule Lads are the most well known of the Christmas Creatures with names including Window-Peeper, Spoon-Licker and Door-Sniffer and visitors may be lucky enough to catch a glimpse of them. The Yule Lads give presents to Icelandic children each night for the 13 days before Christmas, or a raw potato if they have been bad.

Visitors who want to see the Yule Lads in their traditional setting in north Iceland will enjoy Saga Travel's '*Yule Lads by Lake Myvatn*' day trip. The trip combines the incredible natural attractions of the north, including Godafoss waterfall, volcanoes, boiling mud pools and sulphurous steam vents with a visit to the Yule Lads in the volcanic caves of Dimmuborgir. More information can be found at: [www.sagatravel.is](http://www.sagatravel.is) The trip departs from Akureyri, which can be reached in a 45 minute flight from Reykjavik with Air Iceland – [www.airiceland.is](http://www.airiceland.is)

To make Christmas in Iceland extra special this year, award-winning filmographer Gunnar Karlsson has created seven 'Christmas Creatures' which will be projected onto buildings in secret locations throughout Reykjavik. Visitors can join the "Hunt for the Christmas Creatures" competition by locating the seven creatures and answering questions about them on a special map for a chance to win a prize. The map and clues can be downloaded at [www.visitreykjavik.is](http://www.visitreykjavik.is)

#### **Christmas festivities**

Must-visit festive venues are the 'Laugardalur Christmas Valley' in Reykjavik with its Christmas lights and decorations, ice skating, music performances, warming hot chocolate and roasted almonds and special events at Reykjavik Zoo. The notorious Yule Cat, one of Iceland's Christmas Creatures, can often be found sneaking around the valley and zoo.

Visitors wanting to buy gifts for families and friends should head to the Hafnarfjordur Christmas Village which is located just south of Reykjavik and is accessible on a short bus ride. The market has mouth watering Christmas banquets, Icelandic gifts, musical performances and the houses are decorated with hundreds of multicoloured lights.

[www.visitreykjavik.is](http://www.visitreykjavik.is)

#### **New Year in Iceland**

New Year's Eve is a huge celebration in Iceland and the only night where private fireworks are legal with the locals putting on a spectacular display. The day starts with Icelanders gathering for big family dinners followed by attending a local bonfire, accompanied by the singing of traditional Icelandic folksongs. At midnight, New Year is welcomed by 'chaos, mayhem and explosions' as everyone sets off their own fireworks into the night sky. The party then continues in pubs and clubs until 6am the following morning. Tourists are welcome to join in the celebrations and several tour operators offer New Years Eve packages.

**Ends**

**Media Information**

For more details, please visit: [www.visiticeland.com](http://www.visiticeland.com)

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