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HARDIN-SIMMONS  
UNIVERSITY

ALUMNI & FRIENDS TRAVEL

# Iceland and the Northern Lights



**EXCLUSIVE GUEST SPEAKER**

**Elin Björk Jónasdóttir**

# Chasing The Light

A remote Nordic island brimming with legendary volcanoes, glacier-cut fjords, rainbow-laden waterfalls and geysers may sound like the makings of Viking folklore, yet in Iceland's "Land of Fire and Ice," these fantastical, otherworldly scenes are as real as the blue-green auras that dance across the Arctic sky. Experience the natural beauty of this sparsely populated part of the world during an amazing, nine-day, eight-night journey specially timed for the optimal viewing of the *aurora borealis*, otherwise known as the Northern Lights.

From cosmopolitan Reykjavík to the harbor town of Siglufjörður and beyond, discover life in this egalitarian nation known for its small population, high standard of living and penchant for books, humor and fresh air. Explore the UNESCO World Heritage site of Þingvellir — where the North American and Eurasian tectonic plates meet, and where the nation's first open-air assembly was established in 930, lasting until 1798. As your itinerary unfolds, learn about Viking settlers, the herring industry and geothermal energy practices — all while enjoying guided evening excursions where we'll look to the heavens for a light show like no other.

Front cover: *Northern Lights stream in behind Hallgrímskirkja, a monolithic Lutheran church in Reykjavík*

This page: *Northern lights over Goðafoss waterfall on Skjalfandaflljót river, Iceland*



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Dear HSU Alumni and Friends,

Experience the soul-stirring natural beauty of Iceland, learn about its storied history and see its countless wonders — including the magical shape-shifting aura of the elusive Northern Lights. This nine-day, eight-night land adventure features accommodations in the elegant **Hôtel Borg** in the cosmopolitan capital of Reykjavik and the Icelandic-style **Hôtel Kea** — located in the heart of Akureyri, the gateway to north Iceland.

Discover Iceland's most popular city on a tour of Reykjavik that includes visits to the Perlan, the National Museum and other iconic landmarks as you immerse yourself in the "Land of Fire and Ice." Feel the thrilling rush of the "Big Three" in the Golden Circle, including the Gullfoss waterfall, the Strokkur geyser and the cracks and gorges of the Atlantic Ocean Ridge. Play hide and seek around the dark towering lava formations of Dimmuborgir and explore the beauty and birdlife of Lake Mývatn. Step back in time in Siglufjörður, where towering mountains serve as a backdrop for the fascinating Herring Era Museum, just miles from the Arctic Circle.

Throughout your Iceland exploration, enjoy a series of guided evening excursions in search of the *aurora borealis*. Look to the skies outside of Reykjavik and in the dark countryside that surrounds Akureyri, just below the Arctic, for one of the greatest light shows on Earth.

We expect this unique tour to sell out quickly, so book now while space and the early booking savings are still available.

Cordially,

Britt (Yates) Jones '84  
Trip Host & Director, HSU Traveling Range Riders  
Hardin-Simmons University

All members of HSU's community — alumni, families, and friends — are welcome to explore the world with HSU's Traveling Range Riders. For more information on Traveling Range Riders opportunities, visit our web site at [www.hsutx.edu/travel](http://www.hsutx.edu/travel), or contact us at 325-670-1377 or [travel@hsutx.edu](mailto:travel@hsutx.edu).

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## GUEST SPEAKER

### **Elin Björk Jónasdóttir**

Icelandic native Elin Björk Jónasdóttir, head of the Icelandic Meteorological Office's (IMO) natural hazard monitoring and weather forecasting department, has considerable experience in land, aviation and marine forecasting. She has worked numerous severe weather events in Iceland for the past 15 years as a weather forecaster and coordinator, including volcanic eruptions, and has forecasted volcanic ash and gas distribution.

Jónasdóttir oversees training and recruiting new forecasters and natural hazard specialists. She also is involved in case studies, analysis, developing new tools for forecasting purposes and communicating weather-related hazards to civil protection authorities and the general public. In addition, she launched an impact-based weather warning system in 2017, when she became the IMO's head of weather services. She has been in her current role since 2023.

Elin earned a bachelor's degree in meteorology from the University of Oklahoma and a master's degree from the University of Oslo.

# World of Natural Wonders



*The Northern Lights illuminate "dark castle" lava formations at Dimmuborgir*

Feast your eyes on the sky in search of the naturally occurring aurora borealis, more commonly known as the Northern Lights. This luminous spectacle is caused when streams of plasma escape the sun's surface and disrupt Earth's magnetic field, resulting in a multi-colored, shimmering night sky above the planet's polar regions. Seek this phenomenon of Mother Nature along with other geological wonders of Iceland, home to 4,500 square miles of glaciers, 30 active volcanic systems, 800 hot springs and more than 10,000 waterfalls.



## INCLUDED FEATURES

- ◆ Transfers and luggage handling abroad if you purchased air through Gohagan & Company and your arrival(s)/departure(s) coincide with the scheduled group transfer(s).
- ◆ Experienced, English-speaking local guides for included excursions.
- ◆ Gratuities to local guides and drivers on included excursions and transfers.
- ◆ Complimentary bottled water in your guestroom.
- ◆ Experienced Gohagan & Company Travel Directors at your service.
- ◆ Complimentary use of an audio headset during guided excursions.
- ◆ Automatic \$250,000 flight insurance policy for each participant ticketed on flights by Gohagan & Company.
- ◆ Meals included as noted in the itinerary (B,L,R,D).



GOHAGAN & COMPANY



## 2025 | 9-DAY/8-NIGHT ITINERARY

### Depart Home City

#### Day 1 | November 8

Depart your home city.

### Reykjavík, Iceland

#### Day 2 | November 9

Arrive in Iceland's capital of Reykjavík and enjoy breakfast en route to the world-famous Blue Lagoon, surrounded by the spectacular views of the lava fields. Pack a swimsuit and water shoes in your carry-on if you'd like to take a restorative dip in these mineral-rich waters as your journey begins.

Depart the Blue Lagoon and head to the city center for a visit to Hallgrímskirkja, a monolithic Lutheran church that serves as an ode to modernism and Iceland's unique landscape. Enjoy lunch on your own before checking into the **Hótel Borg**, a newly renovated boutique hotel located just steps from the National Cathedral and the Icelandic Parliament. (B,R)

### Reykjavík

#### Day 3 | November 10

Explore this Nordic nation's most popular city, beginning with a visit to hilltop Perlan (also known as The Pearl) — a museum with a rotating glass dome and 360° views.

After lunch, walk back through time at the National Museum of Iceland where you can trace the nation's history from the Settlement Age, then stroll the old neighborhood where you'll find time-worn lanes adorned with colorful historic houses and charming shops.

Tonight, enjoy your first guided excursion in search of the Northern Lights. (B)

### Reykjavík/Golden Circle

#### Day 4 | November 11

Embark on Iceland's iconic Golden Circle tour and discover the nation's "Big Three," beginning with the scenic lava plains at Þingvellir National Park, a UNESCO World Heritage site

just 30 minutes outside of the city. Continue on to the spectacular "golden waterfall" at Gullfoss Falls.

From there, head to the geothermal region for lunch at **Hotel Geysir**, a meticulously designed property owned by an esteemed family with deep roots in the region. Catch the Strokkur geyser in action as it sprays a fountain of water and steam high into the air. On the road back to Reykjavík, see how Icelanders make the most of geothermal forces during a short visit to Hellisheidi Power Plant. (B,L)

### Reykjavík/Akureyri

#### Day 5 | November 12

Enjoy a scenic drive to Akureyri, the "capital of the north." Stop for lunch at the **Hotel Blönduós** before continuing on to Skagafjörður, where you will learn more about Icelandic horses and their extraordinary history on a visit

Brimketill natural water pool in Reykjanes Peninsula





to the Varmilaekur Horse Farm. Check into the **Hótel Kea** and visit the Forest Lagoon, located in the Vaðlaskógur forest. Savor a soak in one of the spa's geothermal pools. After dinner on your own this evening, embark on another quest for the Northern Lights. (B,L)

### Akureyri/Dimmuborgir/ Mývatn/Namaskarð/ Goðafoss

#### Day 6 | November 13

Visit Goðafoss, the “waterfall of the gods,” where the wooden idols of Norse mythology were cast into the rushing waters as Icelanders voted to adopt Christianity. Enjoy lunch at the **Fosshotel Mývatn Hotel** and savor the breathtaking scenery of Lake Mývatn and the tiny craters of Skutustadir. See Namaskarð's gurgling sulfur cauldrons and the “dark castle” lava formation of Dimmuborgir. As night falls, prepare for a final outing in search of the *aurora borealis*. (B,L)

### Akureyri/Siglufjörður Day 7 | November 14

Embark on an excursion to Siglufjörður, located 28 miles from the Arctic Circle. This picturesque area, tucked between rugged mountains at the tip of the Tröllaskagi peninsula, is the herring fishing capital of the North Atlantic.

Step into Siglufjörður's past as a tiny fishing hub at the Herring Era Museum, featuring a restored salt house and factory. After lunch at the **Siglo Hotel**, you will travel to Hauganes, a small fishing village on the western coast of Eyjafjörður bay. This idyllic region is known for its stunning coastal scenery, whale watching and warm geothermal waters.

You will have the opportunity to take a relaxing soak in the thermal baths before returning to Akureyri. Savor dinner with the group at a local restaurant this evening. (B,L,D)

### Akureyri/Hraunfossar/ Reykjavík

#### Day 8 | November 15

Journey back to Reykjavík, stopping along the way to see the Hraunfossar “lava waterfalls” in Borgarfjörður — distinctively turquoise blue waters that flow over the Hallmundarhraun lava field.

Savor a hardy lunch at the family-run Hraunsnef farmhouse restaurant, which offers an authentic Icelandic farm-to-table experience as part of your excursion.

Upon arrival in Reykjavík, check in to the **Hótel Borg** with the afternoon at leisure to relax or explore the city at your own pace. Tonight, enjoy a Farewell Reception and Dinner at a local restaurant. (B,L,R,D)

### Reykjavík/Return to Home City

#### Day 9 | November 16

Transfer to the airport for your flight back to your home city. (B)

Siglufjörður, the northernmost town of mainland Iceland





## Hótel Borg

A sophisticated landmark in the heart of Reykjavík, **Hótel Borg** has been welcoming heads of state and travelers for nearly a century. Overlooking the gardens and cafes of Iceland's main square, the hotel is surrounded by such illustrious landmarks as the Parliament House and the National Cathedral. Revel in the understated elegance of Art Deco interiors, including custom furnishings, large bathtubs and heated marble floors. The lower level has a dedicated spa, while restaurants, cafes and shops are just steps away.



## Hótel Kea

Set in the heart of Iceland's second city, overlooking a stunning fjord, **Hótel Kea** exudes a classic ambiance in the center of Akureyri, the gateway to Iceland's north. Enjoy the hotel's welcoming service and refined interiors. Climb the grand steps to the Church of Akureyri next door or stroll to nearby shops, museums and gardens from this boutique property's prime location.







**2025 DEPARTURE DATE**

**November 8 to 16**

(Tour Begins: November 9)

Standard Rate

**Early Booking \$1,000 Savings\***

\$5,195

**\$4,195**

**\*Early Booking Savings of \$1,000 are available when you book by 2/18/25 and pay in full at time of booking. If you pay only your deposit by early booking date, you still save \$500 per person.**

All rates are in U.S. dollars, per person, based on double occupancy. Singles are available upon request for an additional \$1,560 and are subject to availability.

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*The Northern Lights in Iceland*

