



# TRAVEL PROGRAM MEDIA GUIDE

## *Circumnavigation of Iceland*

We hope you find the following list of resources—books, maps, video recordings, audio recordings, and websites—relating to your travel program helpful. The book titles listed should be available at local public or university libraries; most of them may be purchased and/or downloaded for e-readers through local and online bookstores.

### ♦ **GUIDEBOOKS AND MAPS**

Bain, Carolyn and Alexis Averbeck. *Lonely Planet Iceland*. Lonely Planet. 2019.

Lonely Planet’s best-selling guide offers up-to-date, accessible information to best explore Iceland’s riches. The lively text covers Iceland’s most famous geological wonders, in addition to tailored itineraries, insider tips, vibrant photos and maps and perceptive cultural insights. It is available in paperback, e-book, and individual chapters in digital format.

Hilmarrsson, Jóhann Óli. *Icelandic Bird Guide: Appearance, Way of Life, Habitat*.

Bay Foreign Language Books. 2011. Written by a leading authority on bird species of Iceland and featuring over 700 beautiful photographs, this thoughtful, concise and well-planned field study is an excellent identification guide and resource. The book covers in great and fascinating detail the appearance, behavior, diet and habitat of over 160 species of birds, including all Icelandic breeding birds and the most common visitors.

*Insight Guide Iceland*. Insight Guides. 2017.

This freshly updated, visual guide features stunning photographs and features, with an emphasis on providing an inspiring “armchair” read rather than furnishing practical, on-the-ground information. Well-researched cultural and geographical insights spotlight the rich literary heritage of the Saga Age, Viking settlers, the quest for independence and the nation’s myriad avian species.

Leffman, David and James Proctor. *The Rough Guide to Iceland*. Rough Guides. 2019.

This updated edition of Rough Guide’s popular guidebook offers one of the most comprehensive and insightful presentations of Iceland’s volcanically active landscapes and cultural backstory. The guide’s excellent historical overview is accompanied by in-depth practical information and detailed maps.

Soper, Tony and Dan Powell. *Wildlife of the North Atlantic: A Cruising Guide*. Bradt Wildlife Guides. 2008. This compact guide—geared toward anyone venturing by sea across the

North Atlantic from Britain to Iceland or Greenland—covers all the birds, whales and dolphins that are most likely to be spotted. Each of the species is fully described, including large watercolor illustrations.

*Top 10 Iceland*. DK Eyewitness Travel Guides. 2019.

A perfect, pocket-sized travel companion, this guidebook provides a comprehensive overview of Iceland’s most popular attractions. Includes colorful pullout maps, detailed itineraries and thoughtful information on the country’s history and culture.



## ◆ HISTORY AND CULTURE

Brown, Nancy Marie. *The Far Traveler: Voyages of a Viking Woman*. 2008.

Brown's intriguing account of the life of the young Viking woman Gudrid sheds light on early Norse settlements in Iceland, Newfoundland and beyond. It's an archaeological mystery, a history of ancient seamanship and a biography all rolled into one.

Byock, Jesse (ed.). *The Saga of the Volsungs*. Penguin Books. 2000.

This heroic tale by an unknown Icelandic author of the 13<sup>th</sup> century is a prose epic based on stories found in much older Norse Eddic poetry. Full of traditional lore, including runic knowledge, jealousies of princes, betrayals, unrequited love, the vengeance of a Barbarian queen, the greed of Attila the Hun and the mythic deeds of a dragon-slayer, this is the Scandinavian version of the German *Nibelungenlied* used by Wagner for his opera cycle. It is essential reading for anyone wishing to understand Viking society.

Byock, Jesse. *Viking Age Iceland*. Penguin Books. 2001.

In this scholarly study, Byock challenges the conventional view of Norse society in Iceland. He describes the life, economy and culture of Medieval Iceland, including its autonomy from kings and warlords back home. Byock, a professor of Old Norse and translator of many Sagas, has also written *Medieval Iceland: Society, Sagas, and Power*.

Derry, T.K. *A History of Scandinavia: Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Finland and Iceland*. University of Minnesota Press. 2000. This comprehensive volume gives a historical overview of Scandinavia from prehistory to the present day, with chapters on the Viking and Lutheran kingdoms, medieval times, monarchies, the World Wars and modern period through the 1970s (with a short chapter addressing the 1990s). It emphasizes the common cultural, political and social backgrounds of the five Modern states.

Durrenberger, E. Paul and Gisli Palsson. *The Anthropology of Iceland*. University of Iowa Press.

1995. Divided thematically into 13 essays, this scholarly book addresses a wealth of cultural, gender and class-related topics, including archaeological research, ideology and action, the Icelandic Women's Movement, the Sage Age of 930 to 1220 and concepts of mystical power in contemporary Iceland.

Kentta, M.E. et al. *This Is Iceland Today*. Iceland University Press. 2000.

Comprised of a selection of articles and photographs from Iceland's daily newspaper—*Morgunblaðið*—this illuminating volume explores Iceland's culture and history beyond the common stereotypes and provides an interesting primer on the politics and modern society of Iceland. The unique compilation includes 200 photographs and short excerpts from the paper on Vikings, work life, nature, sports, the Arts, festivals and other topics,

Oslund, Karen. *Iceland Imagined: Nature, Culture, and Storytelling in the North Atlantic*.

University of Washington Press. 2013. Oslund's deftly analyzes Iceland's transition from a nation on the outskirts to a key figure in modern Europe, with special attention to Iceland's natural histories and mental geographies.



Pálsson, Hermann and Paul Edwards (eds.). *Orkneyinga Saga, The History of the Earls of Orkney*. Penguin Books. 1981. A fusion of myth and legend, circa A.D. 1200, by an unnamed Icelandic author, this medieval chronicle—with its center of action among the Orkney Islands—is a rich source of knowledge on the northern isles. Describing the conquest of the islands by Norwegian kings during the Viking expansion of the ninth century, it's an account of war and the struggle for supremacy by Sigurd the Powerful, St. Magnus the Martyr and Hrolf, the conqueror of Norway. This modern translation is very readable.

Scudder, Bernard (trans.). *Egil's Saga*. Penguin Books. 2005.

This chronicle of war and rivalry between ruling clans, written in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, blends history and legend and is a vivid portrait of the Viking world. The action is set in 10<sup>th</sup>-century southern Scandinavia, the Baltic, Iceland and the North Sea. Egil—a rune reader, a healer, a drunk, a poet and a farmer—dominated Viking history from his first murder at the age of six because another boy won a ball game. This vivid saga embraces five generations, beginning with Egil's grandfather and ending with his grandson.

Smiley, Jane and Robert Kellogg (introduction). *The Sagas of Icelanders*. Penguin Books. 2000.

Nine sagas and six tales are collected in a single volume, all newly translated for this edition marking the one-thousandth anniversary of Leif Eriksson's voyage to North America. This publication also contains an introduction by Jane Smiley (whose books include the wonderful novel of Norse settlements, *The Greenlanders*). Composed between 1000 and 1500, these rousing tales are told with surprising directness and simplicity. Any modern explorer setting off across the North Atlantic should consider delving into these classics.

## ◆ ART AND ARCHITECTURE

*Confronting Nature: Icelandic art of the 20<sup>th</sup> century*. Corcoran Gallery of Art. 2001.

The Corcoran Gallery of Art's evocative show, *Confronting Nature: Icelandic Art of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century*, organized by the National Gallery of Iceland, is archived [here](#). From pop art to conceptual art and neo-Romanticism, the collection examines the legacy of Iceland's leading landscape painters—Thorláksson, Jónsson, Stefansson and Kjarval—who paved the way for a national art form with landscape as the central theme.

Eliasson, Olafur and Jóhannes S. Kjarval. *Lavaland*. 2007.

This exhibition catalogue contains renditions of Iceland that are, at once, ecstatic and ethereal. The work takes on a nearly lyrical quality; photographs and paintings are transfixed with a deep knowledge of texture, of land and of ice.

*A Guide to Icelandic Architecture*. Association of Icelandic Architects. 2000.

Around 250 works are discussed in the book. The selection aims to present the main themes in Iceland's architectural history and illustrate its diversity and fertility. These include the turf farmhouse whose roots stretch back to the Viking Age, corrugated-iron-clad timber houses in romantic Swiss-chalet style, dignified stone houses and classical buildings, progressive functionalist buildings, variations on 20<sup>th</sup>-century modernist themes and more.

Heisler, Eva, Halldór Björn Runólfsson and Christian Schoen. *Icelandic Art Today*. Hatje Cantz.

2012. *Icelandic Art Today* offers a broad survey of the diverse creative trends unfolding in Iceland. This sourcebook features hundreds of works by over 50 artists.



Magnússon, Þór. *A Showcase of Icelandic National Treasures*. 1987.

A splendid survey of Icelandic arts and artifacts from the settlement to the 19<sup>th</sup> century by Þór Magnússon, Director of the National Museum of Iceland. In English and German.

## ◆ LITERATURE AND TRAVEL MEMOIRS

Fergus, Charles. *Summer at Little Lava: A Season at the Edge of the World*. North Point Press. 1998.

In this account, an American man spends a summer in Iceland after a personal loss, weaving folklore, history and lyrical descriptions of nature.

Krakauer, Jon and David Roberts. *Iceland: Land of the Sagas*. Villard. 1998.

Krakauer (author of adventure chronicles *Into the Wild* and *Into Thin Air*) and *Outside* magazine colleague David Roberts hike and climb around Iceland in this travel narrative, reissued as a paperback and featuring color photographs by Krakauer. The memoir interweaves the natural and cultural history of the island with the authors' own adventures.

Lacy, Terry G. *Ring of Seasons: Iceland, Its Culture and History*. The University of Michigan Press.

2000. A longtime resident of Reykjavík, Lacy weaves tales of family life, anecdote, lore and history into this illuminating personal portrait of Iceland.

Laxness, Halldór. *The Fish Can Sing*. Vintage International. 1957 (reissued in 2008).

A quirky, moving, coming-of-age tale set in Reykjavík at the turn of the last century, this novel features an unforgettable cast of Icelandic characters. The author won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1955, distinguishing him as the only Icelandic Nobel laureate to date and, with his vast canon (over 65 books), Laxness was a primary influencer in Reykjavík's attainment of UNESCO City of Literature status.

Laxness, Halldór. *Independent People: An Epic*. Vintage International. 1946 (reissued in 1997).

A masterwork redolent of rural Icelandic life in the early days of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, this great mock-epic features Bjartur of Summerhouses, a hard-headed, independent-minded sheep farmer whose voice dominates the story. Whatever its ethnographic interest, this tremendous novel is rich in local detail.

Millman, Lawrence and Paul Theroux. *Last Places: A Journey in the North*. Mariner. 2000.

In the wake of the Vikings, the intrepid author explores the landscapes, culture and history of the North Atlantic. His wry—and sometimes hilarious—commentary illuminates modern life in the Faroes, Iceland and Greenland.

Palsson, Hermann and Paul Edwards. *Seven Viking Romances*. Penguin Classics. 1985.

The medieval Icelandic imagination incorporated warriors' raids and local myths, legends and heroic tales adapted over the centuries from Homer to French romance. This book is an entertaining anthology of Viking kings, adventurers and gods.

Solnit, Rebecca. *The Faraway Nearby*. Penguin Books. 2014.

Rebecca Solnit is one of the most profound essayists of our time; she ruminates on memory, art, nature, storytelling and culture with luminous, sharp prose. In this book—which defies genre, falling somewhere between memoir, criticism, history and poetry—she chronicles her mother's Alzheimer's alongside her residency at Iceland's Library of Water. Chapter 9 in particular vividly narrates the origin of Surtsey, an Icelandic island born of volcanic activity in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.



Verne, Jules. *The Journey to the Center of the Earth*. 1864.

Otto Lidenbrock, an impetuous German professor of geology, discovers an encoded manuscript in which a 16<sup>th</sup>-century explorer claims to have found a passageway to the center of the Earth.

Otto impulsively prepares a subterranean expedition, enlisting his young nephew Axel and a stoic Icelandic guide, Hans Bjelke. After descending into Snæfellsjökull, an extinct volcano in Iceland, the men spend several months in an underground world of luminous rocks, antediluvian forests and fantastic sea creatures.

## ◆ FOOD

Gíslason, Gunnar Karl and Jody Eddy. *North: The New Nordic Cuisine of Iceland*. Ten Speed Press. 2014. A wonderful survey of Iceland's unique and enticing gastronomy scene from one of Iceland's most prestigious chefs, Gíslason Karl Gunnar, the co-owner of Reykjavík's much loved, Michelin-starred Restaurant Dill. Part recipe book and part culinary journey through the nation's striking landscapes and rich culture, Gíslason's work contemplates the impact of traditions and the natural setting on the creative process.

Rögnvaldardóttir, Nanna. *Icelandic Food and Cookery*. Hippocrene Books. 2002.

This cookbook explores the evolution of Icelandic cuisine over the last two centuries. From the late 19th century until the 1970s, thick meat stews, roasts, porridges, milk and fruit soups, as well as various cakes and pastries were popular. More modern trends include making use of the wonderful fresh fish and shellfish in Icelandic waters, sweet-tasting Icelandic lamb, game birds, and local wild herbs. The author includes recipes for favorites that have endured through the years and the best of recent dishes that still reflect traditional Icelandic ingredients and cooking methods.

Völundarson, Völundur Snær. *Delicious Iceland*. Salka. 2006.

*Delicious Iceland* celebrates the luscious cuisine and dazzling natural beauty of one of the most memorable places on Earth. Chef Völundur Snær Völundarson shares his innovative recipes and, along with fellow writer Haukur Ágústsson, gives an engaging overview of Iceland's traditional food culture. Through Hreinn Hreinsson's gorgeous photographs, experience these remarkable dishes, as well as the stunning landscape and wildlife of Völundarson's beloved Land of Fire and Ice.

## ◆ DOCUMENTARIES AND FILMS

Listed below are films, documentaries and travel programs featuring Iceland. All should be available on DVD and/or Blu-ray at your local library and/or bookstores, or may be ordered online.

*7 Days Iceland*. 2007.

This production is an in-depth, seven-day sightseeing video tour, capturing Iceland's fascinating world of water, fire and ice, full of breathtaking beauty and overwhelming contrast.

*Globe Trekker: Iceland and Greenland*. 2004.

Narrator Ian Wright explores Iceland and Greenland in depth—taking a dog-sled trip across snowfields, joining some local people for dinner, learning bits of the native language and spending the night in an ice hole.



*Ísland Exodus: The Story of Early Icelandic Emigration to the Americas.* 2007.

An interesting chronicle of Icelandic immigrants to Canada and the U.S., beginning in the late 1800s, this video covers the Icelanders' adaptation to the new climate and North American agriculture, the role of language and church in their developing communities, Icelandic writers in North America and testimonies of Icelandic descendants.

*Iceland's Favourite Places.* 2009.

This unique and user-friendly DVD features short films of over 100 Icelandic locations renowned for their natural beauty and cultural interest. It includes footage of the amazing contrast in Icelandic landscape, from majestic glaciers and active volcanoes to stunning geothermal areas, powerful waterfalls and rugged lava fields.

*Journey to the Center of the Earth.* 1959 and 2008. Directed by Henry Levin and Eric Brevig.

The original, starring James Mason, and modern remake, starring Brendan Fraser, are film versions of Jules Verne's fantastic novel. The 2008 version is filmed at famed Snæfellsjökull, the setting of the novel.

*Nói Albinói.* 2003. Directed by Dagur Kári.

Nói, a 17-year-old dropout, dreams of escaping from his remote fjord in northern Iceland with Iris, a girl who works at a local gas station. In the winter, the fjord is completely cut off from the outside world, encircled by terrifying mountains under a thick layer of snow. Nói's clumsy attempts to escape don't get him anywhere, and things slowly get out of hand.

*Woman at War.* 2019. Directed by Benedikt Erlingsson.

A vigilante at heart, quinquagenarian Halla is a one-woman army fighting the incursion of the global aluminum industry on Iceland's environmental beauty, but unexpected news of a personal nature challenges her saboteur lifestyle. This skillfully executed film is a scintillating blend of comedy and thriller reflects the dilemmas encountered in modern day.

## ◆ MUSIC AND AUDIO RECORDINGS

[www.worldmusic.net](http://www.worldmusic.net)

*The Rough Guide* and the *World Music Network* publish a variety of Icelandic music as well as thoroughly researched guidebooks to international music generally.

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

A site that brings together the disparate strands of Iceland's eclectic music scene.

Björk. *Homogenic.* 1997.

Regarded as one of Björk's more experimental works, her album *Homogenic* was expressly written with Iceland's dramatic, rocky landscape as its conceptual focus. While crafting the album, she told her producer she wanted a sound like "rough volcanoes with soft moss growing all over it." Later, Björk expanded on this, saying, "in Iceland, everything revolves around nature, 24 hours a day. Earthquakes, snowstorms, rain, ice, volcanic eruptions, geysers... Very elementary and uncontrollable. But at the other hand, Iceland is incredibly modern; everything is hi-tech. The number of people owning a computer is as high as nowhere else in the world. That contradiction is also on *Homogenic*. The electronic beats are the rhythm, the heartbeat. The violins create the old-fashioned atmosphere, the coloring."



Sigur Rós, *Rímur*. 2001.

Sigur Rós's atmospheric, ethereal sound is unequivocally rooted in Iceland, particularly the country's people, mystery and, of course, powerful natural scenery. The album's title translates to "epic poem" in the context of Icelandic literature, which is written in the *rímnahaettir* ("rímur meters") rhyming pattern. This EP layers Sigur Rós's music with traditional rímur poetry, recited by Icelandic musician and ship captain Steindór Andersen.

## ◆ WEBSITES

[www.airpano.com](http://www.airpano.com)

Virtual tours and 360-degree photos of destinations all over the world.

[www.cbp.gov/travel](http://www.cbp.gov/travel)

U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) website.

[www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)

United States Department of Health and Human Services Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website. Provides information on immunizations and vaccinations and tips for staying healthy when traveling abroad.

[www.iec.ch/worldplugs](http://www.iec.ch/worldplugs)

Information on international electric current and plug types.

[www.inspiredbyiceland.com](http://www.inspiredbyiceland.com)

The official tourism website for Iceland.

[www.theguardian.com/travel/iceland](http://www.theguardian.com/travel/iceland)

*The Guardian's* Travel Section features an array of themed features on Icelandic travel, including first-person narratives, photo essays, practical travel information, trends, news and tips.

[www.oanda.com/currency/converter](http://www.oanda.com/currency/converter)

Online currency converter tool and information on currency exchange rates. Iceland's currency is the Icelandic króna (ISK).

[www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/3396.htm](http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/3396.htm)

Basic background information for Iceland from U.S. Department of State.

[www.timeanddate.com](http://www.timeanddate.com)

Information on time zones and time conversions.

[www.travel.state.gov](http://www.travel.state.gov)

United States Department of State website; details on how to obtain or renew a passport.

[www.tsa.gov](http://www.tsa.gov)

Transportation Security Administration website. Provides information on air travel security, including permitted/prohibited items for carry-on luggage.

[www.weather.com](http://www.weather.com)

Current weather and extended forecasts around the world.



[www.youtube.com/watch?v=pL5hLTEdeJw](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pL5hLTEdeJw)

Dr. Jackson Crawford, a historical linguist specializing in Old Norse, presents “Basic Pronunciation of Modern Icelandic.” This brief but detail-rich lesson is aimed specifically at native speakers of English and is accompanied by visual aids to serve as an easily digestible and duly useful introduction to the Icelandic alphabet and the phonology of the language.