

iceland fact file



iceland embassy in uk

Website: <http://www.iceland.org.uk/>
Address: 2A Hans Street, London, SW1X 0JE
E mail: icemb.london@utn.stjr.is
Telephone: (020) 7259 3999
Facsimile: (020) 7245 9649
Office Hours (GMT): (GMT): Mon–Fri: 09.30–16.00

british embassy in iceland

Address: Laufasvegur 31 101 Reykjavik Postal Address: PO Box 460 121 Reykjavik
E mail: britemb@centrum.is
Telephone: (354) 550 5100
Facsimile: (354) 550 5105
Office Hours (GMT): Mon-Thur: 08.30-16.00 Fri: 08.30-15.30

area	103,000 square kilometres
population	300,000
capital	Reykjavik
language	Icelandic (English is widely spoken)
tipping	Service and VAT is almost always included
bank opening hours	Monday to Friday 09.15 – 16.00
post office hours	Monday to Friday 08.30 – 16.30
office opening hours	Monday to Friday 09.00 – 17.00
shops opening hours	Monday to Friday 09.00 – 18.00 and Saturday 10.00 – 13.00, 14.00, 15.00 or 16.00
time (+/- GMT)	Same as GMT
electricity	220v 50HZ AC. Prongs on electrical equipment may differ so take an adapter.
public holidays	1 st January - New Years Day. March or April - Maundy Thursday / Good Friday / Easter Sunday and Easter Monday. 21 st April - First day of Summer. 1 st May - labour Day. 12 th May - Ascension Day. May – Whitsunday and Whitmonday. 17 th June – Independence Day. First Week in August – Shop and Office Workers' Holiday. 24 th December (afternoon) – Christmas Eve. 25 th December – Christmas Day. 26 th December – Boxing Day. 31 st December (afternoon) – New Years Eve.
telephone	Coin and card operated public phones are at post offices and phone exchanges around the country (rates will vary). Telegrams may be sent from private or public phones by dialling 533-6010. Information/operator call 118. Please check with your mobile phone provider if your network & contract enable you to have coverage in Iceland. Charity Challenge also has an emergency Satellite Phone available on all expeditions at a cost of £3 per minute. Photographers worldwide sing the praises of the magical Arctic light. The crystalline air combined with the long, red rays cast by a low sun create excellent effects on film. Film and photographic equipment and camera repairs are expensive in Iceland so it would be wise to bring a supply from home.
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fax/e-mail	Fax services are available at most post offices around the country.
postal	The Icelandic postal system is both reliable and efficient, and the rates are comparable to those in other Western European countries.

currency	One Kronur = 100 aurar. As of August 2009, £1 was worth 211.6 Kronur. For up to date currency exchange, go to www.xe.com .
currency regulations	No limit on amount brought into Iceland
exchange	All Icelandic banks provide foreign exchange facilities. Outside bank opening hours there is the Money Exchange service, a list of locations and contact numbers can be obtained from the Tourist Information Office.
credit cards	All major Credit Cards are widely accepted in Iceland, although Mastercard and Visa are most common.
travellers cheque	Foreign denomination traveller's cheques, postal cheques and bank notes may be exchanged for Icelandic currency at any bank.
passport/visa	UK Citizens do not require a visa to visit Iceland. You will however need your passport and it must be valid for at least six months from the end of your expedition. You may also be asked for proof of return in the form of your flight ticket.
duty free	Travellers over 20 years old can import duty free one litre of wine (less than 21% alcohol content) plus one of the following: One litre of spirits (less than 50%), six litres of foreign beer or eight litres of Icelandic beer. Those over 16 years of age can bring in 200 cigarettes or 250g of tobacco products.
vaccination and health	Nomad Travel Stores Medical Centre recommend confirming primary courses and boosters are up to date as recommended for life in Britain - see www.fitfortravelnhs.uk for more details. Under the terms of the EEA Regulation, British nationals are covered for emergency treatment whilst visiting Iceland. You should obtain a European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) before leaving the UK. The EHIC is available free of charge through most United Kingdom post offices or through the UK Department of Health via their website at: DoH: Health Advice To Travellers or by telephoning 0800 555 7777 and obtaining their leaflet "Health Advice for Travellers". The E111 form/EHIC is not a substitute for medical and travel insurance, but entitles you to emergency medical treatment on the same terms as Icelandic nationals. You will not be covered for medical repatriation, on-going medical treatment or treatment of a non-urgent nature. To obtain emergency medical assistance in Iceland, dial 112. Also see Health notes.
hospitals/pharmacies	Clean air and water ensure Icelanders enjoy a healthy life. There are health centres around Iceland which are open during normal business hours and at least one Centre that is open around the clock in the capital. Most of these health centres will receive patients at short notice. Also see Health notes.
water	The water is very clean and safe to drink.
climate	Thanks to the Gulf Stream, Iceland enjoys a cool temperate ocean climate: cool in summer and fairly mild in winter. However, the weather is always very changeable, be prepared for the unexpected! The temperature may vary by 10c from day to day.
temperature	The average temperature ranges from -1c in January to 11c in July. In July, if the skies are clear and the sun is shining you could be lucky and get temperatures of up to 23c. In any event, temperatures are unlikely to fall below 5c during the day and freezing at night.
rainfall	The weather in Iceland is <u>very unpredictable</u> and therefore you must be prepared, you may encounter some <u>extremely strong winds and rain</u> , so make sure you have excellent, sturdy waterproofs with you at all times or the year.
geography	With an area of 103,000sq. km, Iceland is the second largest island in Europe. Iceland is an island located in the North Atlantic Ocean. East of Greenland, West of Norway and Northwest of the UK and Ireland
history	At the end of the 14 th century, Denmark took rule over Iceland. Throughout the following two centuries, due to Danish profiteering and subject to an increasing number of natural disasters, Iceland was crippled. In 1874, Denmark's hold on Iceland was broken when Iceland drafted a constitution and was permitted to handle its own domestic matters. Iceland became an independent state within the Kingdom of Denmark in 1918, with Copenhagen retaining responsibility for defence and foreign affairs. However, in 1940, Germany occupied Denmark. Iceland realised that the Kingdom was in no position to continue overseeing its affairs and in 1941, Iceland requested independence, which was later granted on 17 th June 1944.
culture/customs	Shyness towards visitors may be mistaken for coldness, but Icelanders are by nature hospitable and innately curious about foreigners and their ways.