

...about

ICELAND...



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VERALDARVINIR

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- Area: 103.000 km²
- Population: 316,252 (give or take a few)
- Capital: Reykjavík (ca. 118.000 inhabitants)
- Language: Icelandic
- Highest mountain: Hvannadalshnjúkur (2.110 m)
- Cultivated area: 1.000 km²
- Glaciers: 12.000 km²
- Lava: 11.000 km²
- Currency: Icelandic Króna (Kr.)
1 EURO = 153,8 kr. (Nov. 08)
1 USD = 119,7 kr. (Nov.08)
- Main export: Fish products 67%
Aluminium 14%
- Religion: Protestant 96%
Catholics 0, 7%
Others 2.6%
- President: Hr. Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson, who has a formal status, not a political one
- Head of Government: Prime Minister Geir Haarde
- Form of Government: Republic
- Parliament: Alþingi, 63 members (21 women)
- National Anthem: Lofsöngur (Ó Guðs vors lands)



Resting on the edge of the Arctic Circle and sitting atop one of the world's most volcanically active hotspots, the country is what you could call raw. It is a country of active volcanoes and the average activity is one eruption every 5 years. Volcanic eruptions regularly devastated huge parts of the country. It's something that Icelanders have learned to live with: in June 1998, when Reykjavík was rocked by a major earthquake, the ballet dancers at the National Opera performed right through it without missing a step.

So don't be shocked when you arrive and feel like you've just landed on the moon because you will not see tall trees and the 40 minutes drive to Reykjavík from the international airport is mostly through a grey lava field (remember this is the country where Armstrong practiced before going to the moon in 1969). Of course not all of the country is grey, but a big part of it. The centre of the country is inhabitable and unmarked by humanity: a beautiful wilderness of ice fields, infertile lava and ash deserts, windswept upland plateau and the vastness of Vatnajökull, Europe's largest glacier- a beautiful place for traveling.

Icelanders do not live in igloos, but in houses that are heated by ovens full of geothermal water and there is plenty of electricity. Actually we have so much electricity that in the future we hope to be able to export it to Europe by marine cables. However an Icelandic town, let alone a city, is still a rarity. The country remains the most sparsely populated in Europe, with a population of just 316.252 (Apr. 2008 est.) – over half of whom live down in the southwestern corner around the surprisingly cosmopolitan capital, Reykjavík. Akureyri, up on the north coast, is the only other decent-sized population centre (17 000 inhabitants) outside the Greater Reykjavík area.

a) Nature



Polar bears don't exist here and neither do penguins. The Wildlife here mainly consists of small animals such as birds, mice and foxes. Animals held on farms are sheep, cows, chickens and horses. There are few insects, none in winter, which are all harmless. So-called mý (flies) can be found around some lakes, they may be irritating, but not dangerous.

Iceland's first settlers found a land whose coastal fringe, compared with today, was relatively well wooded; there were virtually no land mammals, but birdlife and fish stocks were abundant and the volcanic soil was reasonably fertile. Over a thousand years of farming has brought great changes: big trees are a rare sight, fish stocks have plummeted, and introduced mammals have contributed to erosion and other problems, but a growing regard for Iceland's natural heritage is beginning to redress the imbalance, and the country's natural history remains very much alive.

b) Climate

Don't let the name of our country frighten you, Iceland is not as cold as it sounds, of course it is not warm compared to Ghana, but neither is it cold compared to Siberia during winter. The average temperature during summer is around +10°. Of course it is not possible to lie on the beach in +10° but on a sunny day the temperature gets little bit higher than that and we put on our t-shirts and go to the ice cream store to enjoy the delicious Icelandic ice cream.

The weather in Iceland changes very rapidly. In one day you can wake up on a calm and sunny morning and experience wind, rain, snow and sun again before the day is over. This may explain why the weather is one of the Icelanders most favorite topics of conversation and why they like to say that Iceland doesn't get real weather, but only samples of it. There is one thing that we can usually count on, it is very often windy and the wind can sometimes be cold. Just remember to always take a jacket or a coat with a hood along when you go out. And, as Icelanders also like to say; if you don't like the weather, just wait 10 minutes.



One thing that you have to keep in mind is that Iceland is far away from the equator, which means that the days are much longer during summer than during winter. Considering the long winter we have, you may think that in a whole year darkness must overshadow daylight. Fact is however, that Iceland has an average of 14.9 hours of daylight per year. This is more than most places in the world and about two hours more than Miami in the Sunny State of Florida! Therefore, Iceland gains more daylight in the summer than it loses during winter.



On June 21st (Sumarsólstöður) the day is the longest, so long that that it hardly darkens at night. December 21st (vetrarsólstöður) is the shortest day, with only 4-5 hours of daylight. Some people can have problems sleeping during summer because it is always



so bright, but that is a thing you get used to very fast, and you will notice that you need less sleep. On March 20th (Vorjafndægur) and September 22nd (Haustjafndægur) the days are as long as the nights.



The Icelanders are very proud of their history, it is relatively well known compared to other European countries, both because it is a short one and also because our ancestors wrote it down at the time it happened.

It's unfortunate, then, that one of the country's earliest visitors, the Viking Flóki Vilgerðarson, saw fit to choose Iceland as a name for the country. Though perhaps he can be forgiven in part: having sailed here with hopes of starting a new life in this then uninhabited island, a long hard winter in around 870 AD killed off all his cattle. Hoping to spy out a more promising site for his farm he climbed a high mountain in the northwest of the country, only to be faced with a fjord full of drift ice. Bitterly disappointed, he named the place Ísland (literally "ice land") and promptly sailed home for the positively balmy climes of Norway.

A few years later, however, Iceland was successfully settled and, despite the subsequent enthusiastic felling of trees for fuel and timber, visitors to the country today will see it in pretty much the same state as it was over a thousand years ago, with the coastal fringe, for example, dotted with sheep farms, a few score fishing villages and tiny hamlets – often no more than a collection of homesteads nestling around a wooden church.

a) Icelandic history in a nutshell

874-930 is a period called the ***Age of Settlement***. Norwegian Vikings are generally considered to be the first settlers of Iceland, although it is known that Irish monks lived here before their arrival, and it is also probable that other Scandinavians made their homes in Iceland before the "first settlers" arrived.

930 Alþingi (The Parliament) was established. It is the first known Parliament to be established in the world. At that time it acted as legislature and judiciary: execution of its judgements, however, was in the hands of individuals or families.



930-1030 the Saga Age. The name is derived from the fact that many of the Icelandic Sagas are set during this period; it was a period of great evaluation in our history, the evaluation of a new born republic. Many things happened in such a little time, most of the events were written down at that time or a little later and the books are today called the Icelandic Sagas.

985-986 Greenland was discovered by **Eric the Red** and settlers moved from Iceland to Greenland. Eric the Red named the country Greenland in order to make it more attractive for settling.

In the year **1000 Leifur**, the son of Eric the Red, discovered North America, naming part of it Wineland. Settlers from Greenland made several attempts to establish settlements there, but failed, in part due to the hostility of the natives.

The Icelanders believed in the Pagan Gods until the year 1000 when Christianity was made the legal religion in Iceland. Nevertheless, the law permitted the worship of other gods, as long as it was done privately.

Milestones in Icelandic History this century:

- 1911** The University of Iceland was founded.
- 1915** Women were given the right to vote.
- 1918** Iceland granted full sovereignty in domestic affairs.
- 1940** Population: 121.474
- 1940** Iceland was occupied by British troops.
- 1941** US forces took over the defence of Iceland.
- 1944** Iceland declared a Republic at Þingvellir.
The first president was elected.



- 1955** Halldór Kiljan Laxness is awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature.
- 1963** A submarine eruption creates Surtsey island.
- 1980** Vigdís Finnbogadóttir elected resident, the first woman ever to be democratically elected president of a republic.
- 1986** Reagan - Gorbachev Summit held in Reykjavík.



Who are these people, the Icelanders?



Historically, the Icelanders have a mix of Nordic and Celtic blood, a heritage often held responsible for their characteristically laconic approach to life – taps in hotels often drip, buses don't depart to the stroke of the driver's watch, and everybody, including the President and the Prime Minister, is known by their first name. The battle for survival against the elements over the centuries has also made them a highly self-reliant nation, whose dependence on the sea and fishing for their economy is virtually total – hence their refusal to allow foreign trawlers to fish off Iceland during the diplomatically tense 1970s, sparking off three "Cod Wars", principally with Britain. However, their isolated location in the North Atlantic also means that their island is frequently forgotten about – Icelanders will tell you that they've given up counting how many times they've been left off maps of Europe – something that deeply offends their strong sense of national pride. For all their self-confidence though, they can seem an initially reserved people – until Friday and Saturday nights roll around, when the bjór (beer) starts to flow, and turns even the most monosyllabic fisherman into a lucid talk show host, right down to reciting from memory entire chunks of medieval sagas about the early settlers.

Some of the characteristics that set the Icelanders apart from the rest of Europe and in particular from their Scandinavian cousins are said to be the restlessness and mobility of the population, the rugged individualism and the enterprising frontier mentality of the Icelanders, the spirit of adventure and exploration urging more than half of the entire population to travel abroad every year despite the physical obstacles and the exorbitant expenses involved. Another important factor is undoubtedly the racial mixture of the original settlers. Even though their language and culture is purely Nordic, the Icelanders are only in part descended from the redoubtable Vikings and are predominantly of Celtic stock. This may well explain the remarkable fact that Icelanders, alone of all the Nordic nations, produced great and enduring literature in the Middle Ages.



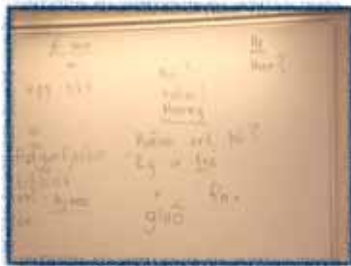
Icelanders are noted for their lack of principles for the very simple reason that the concept "principle" does not exist in their language. This curious fact probably tells something about their pragmatic and utilitarian relationship to reality and their down-to-earth instinct for survival. By and large the Icelanders, despite their cultural achievements, are children of nature, not much bothered by the complex and refined attributes of more sophisticated and orderly societies. They approach every issue emotionally rather than rationally. Their way of thinking is poetic



rather than philosophical. Their way of feeling is epic, not tragic. The Icelanders are immature in the way youth is immature.

The Icelanders live on their large island like one heterogeneous and rather quarrelsome family. They love heated arguments and verbal fencing, frequently just for the fun of it. They like to think of themselves as rational, whereas in actual fact they are highly emotional.

Obviously there are many contradictions in the Icelandic character like that of any other nation. Icelanders, for all their savage past, are by nature rather gentle people, affectionate to children and kind to animals. They abhor any kind of overt cruelty. Although Icelanders live on an island far away from the rest of the world, they are insular only in the geographical sense and perhaps in the sense that they are generally conservative in outlook and have a poor sense of punctuality. Few nations are so well versed in international affairs, despite the fact that they have very long working hours and out of necessity must be highly active in many fields outside their work in order to make their tiny society function the way larger ones do.



Icelanders are as proud of their language as they are of their country and even set up Committees to protect it and avoid the absorbing of foreign words. When a new concept or invention is imported into Iceland, the responsible Committee 'produces' a new, Icelandic word. Often the sagas serve as a source from where words which are no longer in common use are taken, remodelled and pressed into service. 'Satellite' for example, presented a problem, but *gervitungl* was manufactured from the words for 'artificial' and 'moon'. Another example is the word *sími* for telephone (literally "long thread"), and hence *bréfasími* ("letter telephone") for "fax machine", also *eggjakaka* ("egg cake") for "omelette"; and even *fara á puttanu* ("to travel on the thumb"), for "to hitchhike". These new word creations are readily accepted and used by everyone.

Icelandic has also maintained many old names for European cities that were in use at the time of the Settlement, such as *Dyflinni* (Dublin), *Jórvík* (York, in Britain, hence *Nya Jórvík* for New York) and *Lundúnir* (London).



Icelandic is a Germanic language, related to Norwegian, Danish and Swedish. Today's Icelandic is essentially the same language the Vikings spoke over 1300 years ago (therefore Icelanders can still read the old Sagas written some 700 years ago). As a result, it is an oddly archaic language, heavy with declensions, genders and cases, not to mention Norse peculiarities. Whereas the other principal members of the North Germanic group of languages, Danish, Norwegian and Swedish lost much of their grammar over time, Icelandic has proudly maintained features that make even the most polyglottal language



student cough and splutter. Nevertheless, Icelanders are pleased of foreigners who are learning or speak Icelandic, and you often get much closer to the natives of this island if you at least try to speak... So, here you have some basics of the Icelandic language and practical phrases to break the ice!!!

The alphabet

Aa Áá Bb Cc Dd Đð Ee Éé Ff Gg Hh Ii Íí Jj Kk Ll Mm Nn Oo Óó Pp Qq Rr Ss Tt Uu Úú Vv Xx Yy Ýý Zz Þþ Ææ Öö

Notice that the Icelandic alphabet has more vowels than you are used to and also some additional letters, you might not be familiar with:

- Ð/ð = as soft th in English (With), never placed in the beginning of a word
- É/é = as in English yeah
- Í/í = "i" like in "in"/"i" like in hen
- Ó/ó = like in goal
- Ú/ú = like in you
- Þ/þ = as strong th in English (Through/thanks)
- Æ/æ = as in English Irish
- Ö/ö =

Cc, Qq, Zz and Xx are rarely used or not at all.

- Ég = I
- Þú = You
- Hún = She
- Hann = He
- Það = It
- Við = We
- Þið = you (pl)
- þeir (m) = they
- þær (f) = they
- þau (n) = they

Góðan daginn	Good morning
Gott kvöld	Good evening



Góða nótt	Good night
Hvað heitir þú?	What is your name?
Ég heiti __	My name is __
Ég er frá __	I come from __
Þýskalandi	Germany
Hollandi	The Netherlands
Sviss	Switzerland
Belgíu	Belgium
Nígeríu	Nigeria
Spáni	Spain
Kóreu	Korea
Bandaríkjunum	United States
Brasilíu	Brazil
Ítalíu	Italy
Ungverjalandi	Hungary
Póllandi	Poland
Frakklandi	France
Finlandi	Finland
Takk (fyrir)	Thank you
Takk fyrir matinn	Thank you for the food
Þetta er mjög gott	This is very good
Afsakið	Excuse me
Allt í lagi	O. K.
Ég tala (ekki) íslensku	I (don't) speak Icelandic
Hvar er ___?	Where is ___?
Hvað er þetta?	What is this?
Hvað kostar þetta?	How much does this cost?
Bless	Good-bye.
Já	Yes
Nei	No

Anyone learning Icelandic will also have to grapple with a mind blowing use of grammatical cases for the most straightforward of activities: "to open a door", for instance, requires the accusative case (opna dyrnar) whilst "to close a door" takes the dative case (loka dyrunum). Not only that, but "door" is plural in Icelandic, as is the word for Christmas, jólin, hence jólin eru í desember, literally "Christmasses are in December" (as opposed to the English "Christmas is in December"). Thankfully, there are no dialects anywhere in the country.





a) Names

Icelanders have a given name, plus the name of (usually) their father with an attached "-son" for boys and "-dóttir" for girls. So, Jón's son Gunnar is called Gunnar Jónsson, and his daughter Njóra is called Njóra Jónsdóttir. Because of this lack of family names, telephone directories are arranged by given names – using the above example, you'd find Gunnar Jónsson under "G", and Njóra Jónsdóttir under "N" in the phone book.

b) How do I begin a conversation with an Icelander



That's easy! You begin by asking, for example: "What is the best way to get to the town of Dalvík?" This is a great beginning because Icelanders love to enlighten others and demonstrate their knowledge. The next question might be: "Is it nice in Dalvík?" The Icelander will most definitely answer: "No, I don't think so, go to Húsavík instead. I have a cousin there named Þórður Eðvald, and he's the key man in the City council and..." He'll continue along these lines because Icelanders love to talk about important family members, and the good connections they have.

Next, you could ask: "How do you pronounce the name Þórður Eðvald?" A whole 20 minutes could go into teaching you how to pronounce the name Þórður Eðvald, including the time it takes to explain how he and Þórður are related.

c) What should I say?

The Icelander will want to know everything about you, that's right, everything: when you were born, the names of your parents, your education, how many siblings you have, work history, etc. Then you get all kinds of questions such as: "Is your sister married?" or "Does your father own the company he works at?"

Then the Icelander will ask if you don't think Iceland is beautiful. This you must answer by a "yes" and then praise the country for about 10 minutes or so. Next, the Icelander will try to trick you a little by asking: "But it is cold in Iceland, isn't it?" This is a trap you must not fall into. You answer: "No, the weather here is wonderful, I love wind and rain".



The Icelander will hardly believe his ears, and will ask with an ironic grin: "It is expensive living in Iceland." You immediately answer: "Expensive here? Nah, it's much more expensive in Tokyo and Oslo. Actually it's not so very expensive in Iceland, no, not at all."

Now, you have won. The Icelander is both happy and pleased to meet a foreigner who is more Icelandic than he is himself. Yes, it's easy getting to know Icelanders.



a) Sense of humor

A man was driving in the wilds of Iceland when his car suddenly stopped. He was not much of a mechanic, but in desperation he lifted up the bonnet and peered at the engine. He was shaking his head in exasperation when a voice beside him said, "It's your carburetor." Turning, he found himself face to face with a horse. He fled in fright, running over the brow of a nearby hill. Below he saw a farm



and hurtled down to it. He banged on the door and the farmer let him in. He poured out the story to the farmer who sat impassively. When we had finished the farmer said, "What color was the horse?" The man, stunned by the question, replied "Brown". "Ah," said the farmer, "take no notice of him. That one knows nothing about cars."

This is an example for one of the many unusual Icelandic jokes. It has long been said that the Icelanders have no sense of humor at all. The grim-faced expression that is the norm (born of facing into the winter wind) rarely cracks into a smile. But Icelanders do have their own humor. It is derived from odd people and odd situations, with a special fondness for the surreal. As might be expected from a people with a long tradition of literacy, it also relies heavily on word play and spontaneity. In that sense it is akin to British humor, with puns and spoonerisms featuring strongly. A fine example of this is the description of two farms in the south of the country. For reasons lost in time one is called Grave. The other is called On the Edge of the Grave.

Much of the humor is kindly. Icelanders do have two groups of unfortunates however whom they make the butt of acerbic humor. They tell jokes about the over-healthy Norwegians and their passion for sport. But mostly they joke about the inhabitants of Hafnarfjörður (the so called Hafnies), a town a few miles from Reykjavík. The tone of the humor is such that the Hafnies tell the jokes too and have even turned them to their advantage. A Friends of Hafnarfjörður Society has been formed to promote the tall



stories and so gain commercial advantage, and the best Hafnie jokes are now told by Hafnies themselves.

“The Icelandic expression for when the pavements are slippery is that they are covered in ‘flying ice’. If the weather forecast predicts flying ice, Hafnies sit outside in the cold all night, their eyes glued to the heavens for fear of missing the strange spectacle. “

“When Hafnies walk by pharmacies they try to do so as quietly as possible so as not to wake the sleeping pills.”

b) The hold of the huldufólk



Although it is not obvious to every visitor to the island, Iceland is inhabited by a whole host of folk besides the Icelanders. There are elves, which are about the size of ordinary people but mostly stay hidden from view. They live in hills. There are trolls. Unlike Norwegian trolls, the Icelandic troll is not small and ugly and does not live under a bridge in mortal fear of billy goats. Icelandic trolls are 10 to 12 feet tall and live in mountains. And there are dwarfs. Icelandic dwarfs are as tiny as might be expected and live in rocks. Collectively this army is known in Icelandic as *huldufólk* – hidden people, and their dwellings are easy to spot: they are exceptionally beautiful rocks, mountains and hills.

The visitor who thinks that all is nonsense underestimates the hold the tales of hidden people have on the Icelandic mind. The landscape is so awesome that human beings cannot help but feel insignificant in relation to it. This was exacerbated by the early settlers living a life of solitude, well separated from their neighbors. (The farms had to be large as the soil was poor.) Brought up on tales of the Viking past, of a world peopled with curious gods and superheroes, it is understandable that the Icelanders saw the land as the home of supernatural beings. Belief runs so deep it is difficult to separate myth and reality. The main road from Reykjavík to Selfoss bears left for no apparent reason a few miles beyond Hveragerði, near a church on the right. It does this in order to avoid an elf hill. Even now, town streets are aligned to avoid elf hills and dwarf rocks. Past experience has taught the people that it is useless to attempt to build over a *huldufólk* site. Bulldozers will fail, hammers will break, and nothing can be done to destroy the site, so you might just as well go round it.

Today’s youngsters are still told stories of the hidden people and enjoy the tradition because it adds something to their view of nature.

At a public lecture about the *huldufólk*, when the speaker asked how many of the audience believed in elves, about 80% of those present raised their hands. Of them 50%

had spoken to an elf and 25% had seen one. One man admitted to having made love to an elf (*álfur* in Icelandic) but it turned out he was hard of hearing and had thought the speaker had been talking about a calf (*kálfur*).

c) Swimming and hot pots



More of a social activity than anything else, swimming is extremely popular with everyone year-round, and it seems mandatory for businessmen to have a dip on their way to work. Just about every town and village has a swimming pool, usually heated by the nearest hot spring to around 27°C, almost always with attached outdoor spa baths or hot pots. These are a great Icelandic institution and are an incredible experience in winter, when you can sit up to your

neck in scalding water while the snow falls thickly around you. Out in the wilds, hot pots are replaced by natural hot springs – a great way to relax trail-weary muscles. Note that at all official swimming pools you are required to shower with soap before getting in the water.

d) Hiking

Hiking gets you closer to the scenery than anything else in Iceland, and exploring the countryside on foot is how many locals and visitors alike spend much of their time off. In reserves and the couple of National Parks you'll find a few marked trails, and where they exist you should always stick to them in order to minimize erosion. Elsewhere you'll need to be competent at using a map and compass to navigate safely over the lava, sand, rivers and



ice you'll find along the way. If you're unsure of your abilities, there are two hiking clubs to get in touch with: Ferðafélag Íslands (The Touring Club of Iceland, Mörkin 6, IS-108 Reykjavík; tel 568 2533, fax 568 2535, www.fi.is); and Útivist (Hallaveigarstigur 1, IS-101 Reykjavík; tel 561 4330, fax 561 4606, www.utivist.is). Both run guided treks of a couple of days duration to a week or longer, and maintain various mountain huts in reserves and the Interior where you can book a bunk. Local tourist information offices can also put you in touch with guides.

Whether you're planning to spend a weekend making short hikes from camp in a national park, or two weeks hiking across the Interior, come properly equipped for the likely conditions. Weather changes very fast in Iceland, and while there are plenty of



sunny summer days, these will be spaced by rain, storms and the real possibility of snow on high ground or in the Interior, and you can get caught out easily even on brief excursions. Always carry warm, weatherproof clothing, food, and water (there are plenty of places in Iceland where porous soil makes finding surface water unlikely), as well as a torch, lighter, penknife, first aid kit, a foil insulation blanket and a whistle or mirror for attracting attention. The country is also carpeted in sharp rocks and rough ground, so good quality, tough hiking boots are essential – though a pair of neoprene surf boots with thick soles are useful to ford rivers.

For the country as a whole, the best months for hiking are from June through to August, when the weather is relatively warm, wildflowers are in bloom, and the wildlife is out and about – though even then the Interior and higher ground elsewhere can get snowbound at short notice. Outside the prime time, weather is very problematic and you probably won't even be able to reach the area you want to explore, let alone hike around it.



a) Prices (in Icelandic Krónur ISK)

Shoes	8-15.000
Winter coat	9-15.000
Sleeping bag	7.000
Hygiene:	
Soap	80
Shampoo	350
Tooth paste	250
Transport:	
Bus ticket in Reykjavík	280
Monthly bus card for Reykjavík	5.500
3-months bus card for Reykjavík	12.500
Bus ticket R-vík to Selfoss	1200
Bus ticket R-vík to Akureyri	7.000
Food:	
Milk (1 l)	105
Bread (750 g)	200
Cheese (200 g)	350
Apples (1 kg)	300
Meat (500 g)	550



Fish (500 g)	650
Wine (0,75 l)	800-1200
Beer (½ l)	180 (in liquor store)
Coffee (1 kg)	500
Restaurants:	
Hamburger	500-800
Pizza (16")	1800
Cup of coffee	250-350
Wine (1 glass)	700-800
Beer	550-800
Other:	
Cinema	900
Roll of colour film	700
Developing	800-1500
Newspaper	220
Postage:	
<i>Europe</i>	
20g, 50g, 100g (priority, A-Postage)	90, 165, 215
<i>Outside Europe</i>	
20g, 50g, 100g (priority, A-Postage)	120, 215, 335

November 2008:

1 US\$ = approx. 120 Icelandic Krónur (Nov. 08)

1 EURO = approx. 150 Icelandic Krónur (Nov. 08)

b) Currency converter

www.xe.com/ucc

c) Business hours

Most of the people work a five day week. Approximately from 9 am to 5 pm, tourist offices often extend these through the weekends, at least in popular spots. Shops are generally open Monday to Friday 9am-6pm and Saturday 10am to mid-afternoon, though you might find that many close for the weekend through the summer. In cities and larger towns, supermarkets are open daily from 10am until late afternoon; in



smaller communities, however, weekend hours are shorter, and some places don't open at all on Sundays.

Out in the country, fuel stations provide some essential services for travelers, and larger ones tend to open daily from around 9am to 11pm. Following are the general working or business hours:

	<i>Weekdays</i>	<i>Weekends</i>
Banks	9am to 4 pm	Closed
Post Offices	9am to 4.30 pm	Closed
Businesses	9am to 5 pm	Closed
Stores/Shops	9/10am to 6 pm	Partly open

d) Interesting web pages

Worldwide Friends:	www.wf.is
Youth Cultural House Reykjavík:	www.hitthusid.is
Cultural Center Reykjavík:	www.ahus.is
The Reykjavík City buses:	www.bus.is
The Bus Terminal (overland buses):	www.bsi.is
Inland flights:	www.flugfelag.is ,
The Icelandic phone book:	www.simaskra.is
Searching on the Icelandic web:	www.leit.is
Weather:	www.vedurstofan.is
Organised hiking trips from Reykjavik:	www.utivist.is
Learning icelandic:	www.icelandic.hi.is

Information on Iceland: www.icelandinformation.is www.icelandreview.com www.islandsvefurinn.is www.travelnet.is www.icenews.is www.visitorsguide.is www.icetourist.is www.iceland.org	Regions: www.samband.is www.nice.is www.south.is www.east.is www.northern.is www.vesturland.is www.akademia.is/vestfirdir www.nat.is	Towns and places: www.visitreykjavik.is www.reykjavik.is www.reykjavik.com www.akureyri.is www.isafjordur.is www.arborg.is tourist.reykjavik.is www.grapevine.is
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Sources: Rough guides; Lonely Planet; Xenophobe´s guide to the Icelanders, 2003 (“Sense of Humor”, “The hold of the Huldufolk”); Netid- Visitor´s Guide; www.iceland.is.

