

Autumn Iceland

Birds and the elements, with binoculars and a camera



What's this tour about?

Because we at **Birding In Spain** are always thinking about how to offer something a little different we're planning another **great tour to Iceland** in the **autumn**. This is a time of year when the weather can be pleasant or wintry, the time when the summer bonanza is giving way to the early clutches of winter, when the breeding birds have all but departed and the wintering birds have started trickling in. When the **snow-capped mountains** can shine resplendently on a fine autumn's day. When we can feel closer to the naked elements which make Iceland such a special place.

This tour is ideal for **individuals, couples or small groups of friends** who can share a really memorable experience based on different degrees of interest in birds, natural landscapes and amateur nature photography. Of course we will be out to see birds, but we won't let this interest overpower the innumerable opportunities we will have for photography of the landscape, and some of the birds and mammals themselves.



Iceland Tour prices*

Touret 1: 2,700 euros - 7 days / 6 nights

Touret 2: 1,200 euros - 4 days / 3nights

Complete Tour = Tourets 1 and 2 = **3,675 euros**

*Please note that these are indicative prices for 2020 and are subject to variation in subsequent years

What's included*

Touret 1: 3 nights' accommodation in shared en-suite room in mid-range hotel or guesthouse at Akureyri, 3 nights in Snaefellness Peninsula, all meals, all transfers from Akureyri to Reykjavik hotel or airport in private group vehicle, domestic flight Akureyri - Reykjavik, one session whale-watching near Akureyri, professional guiding services of Birding In Spain, parking fees and fuel costs.

Touret 2: 3 nights' accommodation in shared en-suite room in mid-range hotel or guesthouse near Hvollsvöllur, all meals (buffet breakfast, light "sandwich and drink" lunch, 2-course evening meal), all transfers from Reykjavik hotel to Reykjavik hotel or airport in private group vehicle, professional guiding services of Birding In Spain, parking fees and fuel costs.

* Please note that en-suite rooms may not always be available.

Meals

- Breakfast buffet, light picnic lunch, 2-course evening meal.

What's not included

- Drinks, items of a personal nature, travel insurance, international flights, money transfer fees.

Single room supplement available on request

- Touret 1: 625 euros
- Touret 2: 300 euros
- Complete tour: **895 euros**



Dates 2020

Touret 1: 17th September - 23rd September 2020

Touret 2: 24th September - 27th September 2020

Touret 1 (2): 27th September – 3rd October 2020

Payment

A deposit payment of 25 % of the total is required to confirm your booking. The remainder must be received no later than 30 days before the trip starts.

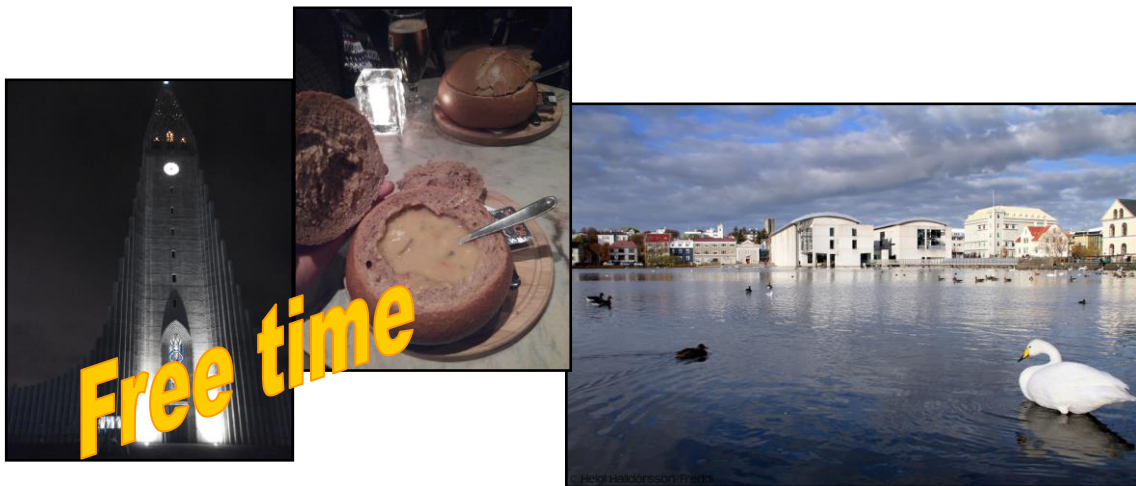
All international money transfer fees are to be paid by the client in full, unless otherwise stated.

Our cancellation policy

If you have to cancel your trip for whatever reason 30 days or more before the start of the tour we will return 50% of the deposit less the costs associated with transferring the money back to you. If the tour is cancelled within 30 days of the starting date we will keep the entire deposit and return any other payment you may have made to us less expenses for money transfer and any additional non-refundable expenses incurred by Birding In Spain on your behalf.

Our Itinerary

Day Z: Plan for arrival at **Reykjavik international airport** the day before the tour begins (or earlier), get assisted transfer to your hotel in Reykjavik, and enjoy **some free time**. We foresee that travelers will make their own arrangements for this evening's accommodation and meals (not included in tour price). We will be happy to help you with arranging the transfer from the airport to the hotel when we have all your travel details.



Reykjavik cathedral; soup in bread; downtown Reykjavik

Day 1: Touret 1 begins with pick-up at Reykjavik hotels and then off we go! Our first stop will probably be at the lighthouse of **Akranes**, where we can come to grips with many of the birds we will be seeing in the next days – **Glaucous and Iceland Gulls**, seaduck including Eiders galore, waders and more. As we continue towards our evening's accommodation we make strategic stops to look for birds such as **White-tailed Eagle**, Common Shelduck, Goldcrest, Stonechat (uncommon birds here in Iceland!), take a coffee break, enjoy some **mouth-opening scenery** and to feel free and easy. Late afternoon arrival and check-in at our hotel in **Stykkisholmur**, which should leave us time for a stroll around the sheltered harbour and a chance for a bit more birding.



Day 2: The **Snaefellness Peninsula** has its very own brand of beauty and attraction, and so with most of the day at hand we will make a circuit to sample some of the more outstanding locations. Of course we will always have birds in mind, but we will also have time to enjoy everything else, including **grey and common seals** and the unique volcanic scenery. At the western extreme of the peninsula, under the gaze of the Snaefellness glacier, there are basalt cliffs alive with seabirds, and here we are likely to see our first **Harlequin Duck**, and with luck **Snow Bunting** and **Arctic Fox**.

Day 3: Further exploration of the remarkable Snaefellness peninsula is on the books today, with its picture-postcard **Kirkjufell mountain** and hundreds of islets in a surreal sheltered bay. Rock Ptarmigan roam the grassy slopes, Redwing and Redpolls are abundant, Merlins flash past in pursuit of feathered prey. Then of course there's always something to look at on the sea. There will be very few dull moments. Night in Snaefellness peninsula.



Day 4 Leaving our lovely first base we're heading east, and most of the day will be spent en-route to Akureyri, punctuated with stops to enjoy the birds and scenery. At the Vantsnes peninsula we can enjoy more seals and seabirds, also at Blonduós and several other points along the way. Then we arrive at **Akureyri**, the capital of the north, set in glacial valleys.

Day 5: Hold on tight! There she blows! **Whale-watching** in this part of the world can be a gripping experience! We'll be sailing with a well-established and reputable company who will take us out into the fjord to look for whales, especially **Humpback Whales**. In addition to the promise of their high success rate they will also invite us to do a spot of fishing, which will also serve to attract a curious gull or two, Iceland, Glaucous or Kittiwake among them.

For the remainder of the day we will probably head towards Húsavík via a spectacular waterfall, **Godafoss**, high on the list of the most picturesque of all waterfalls in Iceland. Then we follow exploring ponds, lakes and wetlands just off the road, as well as coastal cliffs and the shoreline. The birds we could see in this area are many, including Northern Fulmar, Black-legged Kittiwake, Great Northern Diver, Slavonian Grebe, Common Scoter, Long-tailed Duck, and with a little luck Gyrfalcon, Rock Ptarmigan, and Snow Bunting. Night in Akureyri.



Day 6: Today we dedicate the whole day to the mythical **Myvatn Lake**. Sitting squarely on the Mid-Atlantic Ridge is speckled with about 50 islands and islets, Myvatn is probably the single most-famed birding location in Iceland. Craters, pseudocraters, lava formations, hot springs, boiling mud pools and volcanoes are all testimony to Myvatn's volcanic origins. Here the number and variety of wetland birds must be seen to be believed, and of special interest will be the local populations of **Harlequin Duck** and **Barrow's Goldeneye**, two species which occur in Europe only in Iceland. Additionally, almost every other species of duck which occurs regularly in Iceland can be seen at some point around the lake. Furthermore, **Gyrfalcons** are often seen hunting near the lake's edge. Night Akureyri.

Day 7: This is our **last day** in the north of Iceland, and we have the morning to enjoy before catching our afternoon **flight back to Reykjavik**, where the tour will end with the transfer to the international airport or your Reykjavik hotel.

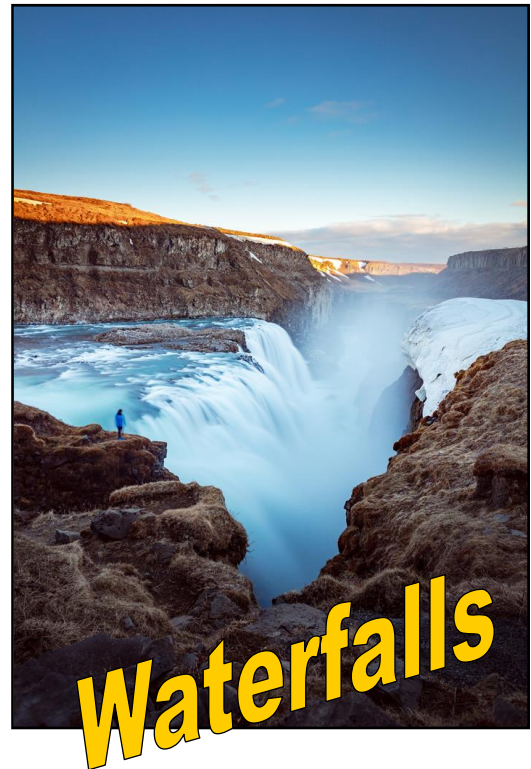
Day 8: Tour begins (Touret 2). Morning pick-up from your **hotel in Reykjavik**. We will enjoy some initial photographic opportunities around Reykjavik (Redwing, Whooper Swan, Tufted Duck, Greater Scaup) before following the coast to Gardur, making stops en-route for waders, ducks and gulls.

The rocky areas near the lighthouse are ideal for close-up encounters with waders such as Purple Sandpiper, Sanderling, Oystercatcher, Dunlin, Ruddy Turnstone and Common Redshank, while the shore attracts many gulls, including Herring Gull, Greater Black-backed Gull, Glaucous Gull and Iceland Gull. Offshore are many duck such as Common Eider, Common Scoter, Long-tailed Duck, sea auks and many Northern Gannets flying one way and another.

Here too we have a chance of seeing a marauding Gyrfalcon or Merlin, as well as a good selection of geese (4 species is not uncommon).

We continue from here past fishing villages, other-worldly lava formations, the bridge spanning two continents, steam vents and more, and check for birds at many suitable locations before reaching our accommodation in the vicinity of Hvollsvöllur.

Day 9: Another day of **stunning scenery** awaits as we head for the **Golden Circle**. At **Geysir** the water bubbles up from below and spurts upwards in a huge column of water and spray every few minutes or so. Catching just the right moment and frame is a captivating challenge for most photographers. Then we move on to admire one of the most spectacular waterfalls in Iceland (and there are so many!) – **Gullfoss**. Northern Ravens warily eye the human visitors to this deafening cascade of water and mist, and if the sun is out then a rainbow is rarely far away. After this we head back down towards Selfoss to check out the wetland areas along the coastline between the great glacial rivers of Ölfusá and Thórsá, the largest lava shoreline in Iceland. This area is one of the best areas for wetland birds in southern Iceland, and regularly holds a good selection of geese and ducks, Red Throated Diver and more.



Day 10: Today's route is **really spectacular in terms of scenery**, and there are sure to be some good birds too. We come across two quite superb waterfalls shortly after leaving our accommodation - Seljalandsfoss and Skógafoss – quite different from each other but both well worthy of our

attention. Then, as we continue towards Vik we make short detours from the main road to visit the Dyrhólaey and Reynishverfi headlands, with cliffs, natural arches and the pounding waves breaking over black lava sand beaches, like that of Reynisfjara.



Iceland's southernmost town of Vik is the ideal place to spend a little time before retracing our path back towards Hvollsvöllur. Before we finish the day however we should have time to make a detour or two to seek out birds such as the Merlin, Short-eared Owl, geese, and seaduck and divers. And maybe you'd like to try to photograph flocks of geese or swans in flight against a superb mountain backdrop in the late afternoon light.

Day 11: We return to Reykjavik in the morning to conclude Touret 2. **Then some of us continue with the scheduled Touret 1,** starting the wonderful tour all over again!



Quick-look itinerary

Day Z: Arrival Reykjavik.

Day 1: Pick-up and birding around Reykjavik, Akranes, birding en-route to Stykkisholmur.

Day 2: Exploring the coastline of the Snaefellness Peninsula.

Day 3: Exploring the coastline of the Snaefellness Peninsula.

Day 4: Drive to Akureyri

Day 5: Whale-watching from Hauganes. Exploring Eyjafjordur, and Grenivik. Evening Akureyri.

Day 6: Exploring around Myvatn Lake. Evening Akureyri.

Day 7: Return Reykjavik. Touret 1 ends.

Day 8: Touret 2 begins. From Reykjavik to Gardur and coast to Hvollsvöllur.

Day 9: Touret 2. Visit to Golden Circle and Selfoss coastal area. Evening Hvollsvöllur.

Day 10: Drive to Vik and back. Waterfalls, headlands, beaches and wetlands. Evening Hvollsvöllur.

Day 11: Return to Reykjavik (End Touret 1, beginning Touret 2). Domestic flight to Akureyri. Godafoss waterfall, Húsavik and evening Akureyri.

Days 11- 17: Touret 1 runs again.

A selection of birds we can hope to see (and photograph?)

Red-throated Diver	Rock Ptarmigan
Great Northern Diver (Common Loon)	Eurasian Oystercatcher
Slavonian Grebe	Golden Plover
Northern Fulmar	Purple Sandpiper
Northern Gannet	Dunlin
European Shag	Common Redshank
Whooper Swan	Common Snipe
White-fronted Goose	Great Skua
Pink-footed Goose	Common Gull
Brent Goose	Herring Gull
Greater Scaup	Glaucous Gull
Tufted Duck	Iceland Gull
Common Eider	Great Black-backed Gull
Common Scoter	Lesser Black-backed Gull
Long-tailed Duck	Black-legged Kittiwake
Harlequin Duck	Black Guillemot
Barrow's Goldeneye	Brünnich's Guillemot
Goosander	Razorbill
Red-breasted Merganser	Short-eared Owl
White-tailed Eagle	Redwing
Merlin	Common Redpoll
Gyr Falcon	Snow Bunting

Mammals Landscape

Arctic Fox	Northern lights
Common Seal	Volcanoes
Grey Seal	Glaciers
Harbour Porpoise	Waterfalls
Humpback Whale	Sea stacks and arches
Iceland Horses	Craters and pseudocraters
Friendly people	Black sand beaches
Old geezers	Geysers