

# Myvatn

Northeastern Region · Iceland

TRAVEL GUIDE

Tripomatic




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## Overview

Mývatn is a shallow lake in north Iceland, surrounded by lava fields, craters and steaming geothermal areas. The name means Midge Lake. In summer, the midges give the lake a rich birdlife, especially ducks.

The area suits one or two days. It has easy, short walks, a hot-spring spa and several volcanic sights close together.

## When to visit

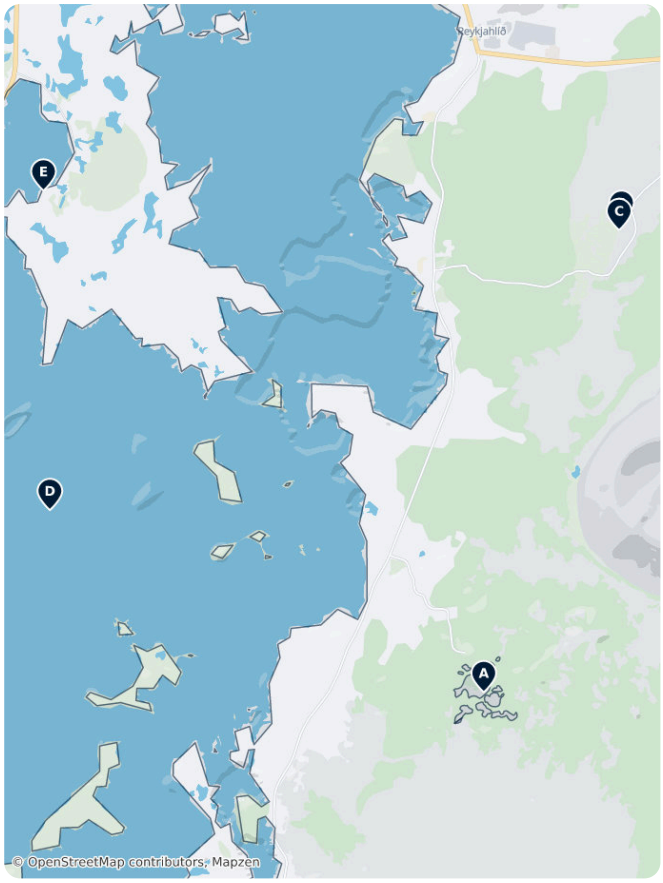
Summer is best for hiking and birdwatching. Midges are most active in early summer, so bring a head net. In winter, the lake is frozen, roads can be icy, and clear nights give good northern lights viewing.

| MONTH | CONDITIONS | DAY °C avg / max | NIGHT °C avg / min | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| January | Poor<br>Poor for hiking | -3° / 3°<br>Feels like -10° | -8° / -15° | 17 rainy days · Dry air |
| February | Poor<br>Poor for hiking | -3° / 4°<br>Feels like -10° | -8° / -16° | 16 rainy days · Dry air |
| March | Poor<br>Poor for hiking | -2° / 3°<br>Feels like -9° | -8° / -15° | 17 rainy days · Dry air |
| April | Poor<br>Poor for hiking | 0° / 5°<br>Feels like -6° | -5° / -13° | 15 rainy days · Dry air |
| May | Poor<br>Poor for hiking | 4° / 9°<br>Feels like -1° | -1° / -7° | 15 rainy days · Dry air |
| June | Poor<br>Poor for wildlife watching | 8° / 12°<br>Feels like 4° | 3° / -1° | 14 rainy days · Dry air |
| July | Fair<br>Fair for hiking | 10° / 14°<br>Feels like 6° | 5° / 2° | 17 rainy days · Dry air |
| August | Fair<br>Fair for hiking | 9° / 13°<br>Feels like 5° | 4° / 1° | 16 rainy days · Dry air |
| September | Poor<br>Poor for hiking | 6° / 10°<br>Feels like 1° | 2° / -4° | 17 rainy days · Dry air |
| October | Poor<br>Poor for hiking | 1° / 6°<br>Feels like -4° | -3° / -10° | 20 rainy days · Dry air |
| November | Poor<br>Poor for hiking | -1° / 4°<br>Feels like -8° | -6° / -14° | 18 rainy days · Dry air |
| December | Poor<br>Poor for hiking | -3° / 4°<br>Feels like -10° | -8° / -16° | 17 rainy days · Dry air |

Climate data: NASA POWER (MERRA-2) · 1996–2025

## Top sights

- A Dimmuborgir is a field of tall, twisted lava pillars with marked paths of different lengths.
- B Grjótagjá is a small lava cave with a hot spring inside. Bathing is not allowed. C Kvennagjá is a similar cave nearby.
- D Mývatn has a ring road with viewpoints and bird hides. E Sigurgeirs Bird Museum is a small museum of local birds.
- Hverfjall is a large, nearly round crater with a path to the rim. Námaskarð is a geothermal field with steam vents and bubbling mud.

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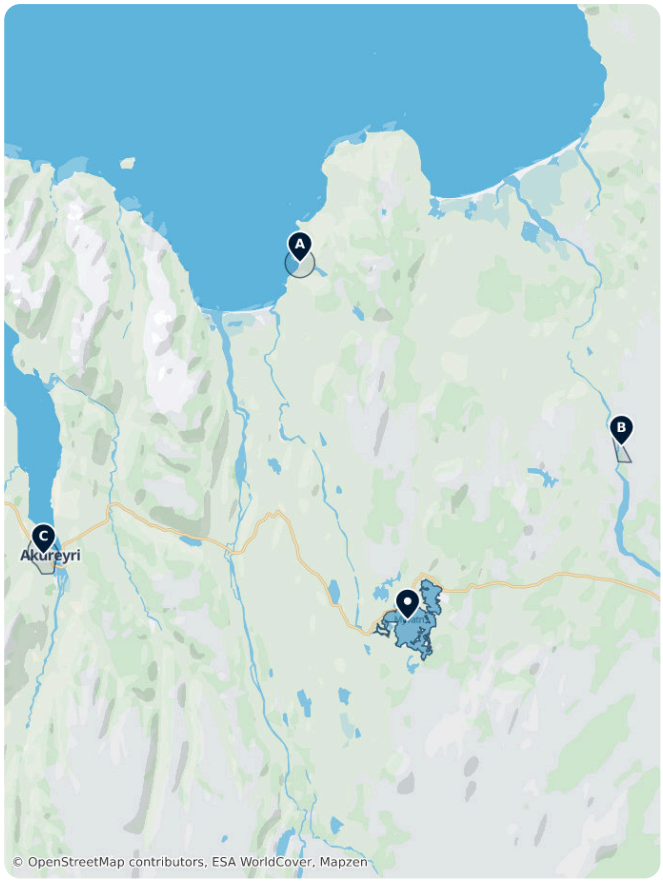
## Day trips

- Goðafoss is a wide waterfall on the Ring Road, about 45 minutes west.
- A Húsavík is about 1 hour north and is known for whale watching.
- B Dettifoss, Selfoss og Hafragilsfoss is about 1 hour east, and its main waterfall is one of the most powerful in Europe.
- C Akureyri is about 1 hour 15 minutes west.




## Where to explore

- To the west: Akureyri.
- To the north: Húsavík.
- To the east: Dettifoss, Selfoss og Hafragilsfoss.

## Getting there

- **By air**: International flights land at Keflavík (KEF). The nearest airport with domestic flights is Akureyri, about 1 hour 15 minutes by car.
- **By car**: The lake lies just off the Ring Road. From Akureyri it is about 100 km.
- **By bus**: Buses run in summer from Akureyri. Service is limited in winter.

## Getting around

- A car is the easiest way to move between sights.
- The ring road around the lake is about 36 km. You can drive or cycle it.
- Several short paths start at car parks, and most take under an hour.

## Driving

- The ring road around the lake is paved. Winter driving can be icy and windy. Check road conditions.
- The Ring Road east of the lake crosses open highlands that can close in storms.

# Food & drink

Try rye bread baked in the hot ground, a local speciality. Cafés near the lake serve fresh fish and lamb soup. The geothermal baths near Mývatn have a café and are a popular place to relax.

## What to eat & drink

### BREAKFAST

**Skyr**
A thick, protein-rich cultured dairy product, technically a soft cheese, eaten plain or with fruit at any meal.

### LUNCH

**Lamb Soup · Kjötsúpa**
A hearty lamb and root vegetable soup, a common home-cooked and café menu staple.

### DINNER

**Smoked Lamb · Hangikjöt**
Lamb smoked over birch or dung, traditionally served at Christmas and often cold in sandwiches.

**Fish Stew · Plokkfiskur**
A creamy mashed mix of fish, potato, onion, and béchamel, classic Icelandic home cooking.

### SNACKS & STREET FOOD

**Rye Bread · Rúgbrauð**
Dark, dense, slightly sweet rye bread traditionally baked slowly using geothermal heat.

**Dried Fish · Harðfiskur**
Wind-dried fish, usually haddock or cod, eaten as a chewy snack often with butter.

**Icelandic Hot Dog · Pylsur**
A lamb-and-pork hot dog served with raw and fried onion, ketchup, sweet mustard, and remoulade.

### DRINKS

**Brennivín**
An unsweetened caraway-flavored schnapps, nicknamed 'Black Death,' traditionally drunk with fermented shark.

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## Safety & health

- Stay on marked paths near steam vents and mud pools. The ground can be very hot.
- Midges are harmless but annoying. A head net helps.
- Check SafeTravel before heading to the highlands.

## Country facts

CURRENCY
**ISK kr**

EMERGENCY
**112**

ELECTRICITY

Type C / Type F
230 V · 50 Hz

LANGUAGES
Icelandic

TAP WATER
**Safe to drink**

# Mývatn's Essential Wonders

Located in North Iceland, the Mývatn region is a volcanic landscape defined by a large eutrophic lake and intense geothermal activity. The area features the Dimmuborgir lava fields, known for complex rock formations, and the Grjótagjá fissure cave, a historic bathing site. Notable sites include the Sigurgeirs Bird Museum, which houses a vast collection of Icelandic waterfowl, and the Vindbelgjarfjall volcanic peak. These locations showcase unique geological features like pseudocraters, lava pillars, and tectonic fissures formed by the Mid-Atlantic Ridge.






## A Grjótagjá Cave

Grjótagjá is a small lava cave near lake Mývatn in Iceland. It has a thermal spring inside.

(Unnamed Road), 660, Iceland (65.62632, -16.88293)

Mo–Su Open 24/7



## B Dimmuborgir

Dimmuborgir is a large area of unusually shaped lava fields east of Mývatn in Iceland.

Iceland (65.58862, -16.90962)



## C Mývatn

This eutrophic lake (meaning of high biological productivity) takes its name from a large number of midges that occupy this area during...

Iceland (65.60322, -16.99376)

visitmyvatn.is/en, +354 464 4390



## D Grjótagjá

Grjótagjá is a small lava cave near lake Mývatn in Iceland. It has a thermal spring inside.

Grjótagjárvegur, 660 Þingeyjarsveit, Iceland (65.62566, -16.88339)

## E Sigurgeirs Bird Museum

Situated near Lake Myvatn, which is home to a huge number of aquatic birds, this museum showcases the largest private bird collection in...

(Unnamed Road), 660, Iceland (65.62882, -16.99500)

fuglasafn.is, +354 464 4477



## F Vindbelgjarfjall

Volcanic mountain rising 529 meters on the northwestern shore of Lake Mývatn. A hiking trail leads to the summit, offering panoramic views of the lake's pseudocraters and surrounding wetlands.

Iceland (65.62405, -17.06907)

## G Stóragjá

Deep volcanic fissure and cave located near Reykjahlíð. It contains a geothermal spring historically used for bathing, accessible via a ladder descent into the crevice.

Mývatnssveitarvegur, 660, Iceland (65.63825, -16.91006)

## H Kirkja

Large natural lava arch located within the Dimmuborgir formations. The structure's symmetrical shape resembles a Gothic church doorway.

(65.58571, -16.90247)

Mo–Su Open 24/7

## I Stóragjá

Geothermal pool situated within a tectonic fissure. The water temperature is subject to change based on local volcanic activity.

(65.63824, -16.91000)



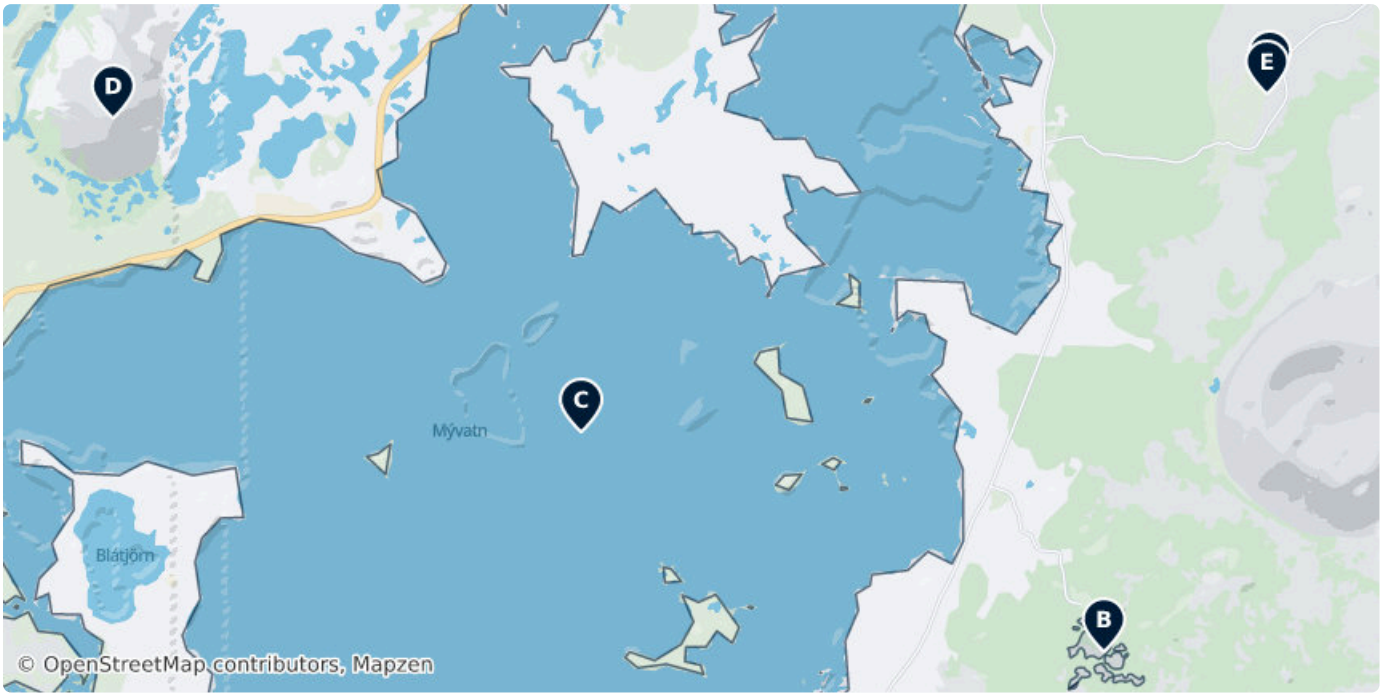
## J Klasar

Lava pillars and rock formations situated at the Höfði peninsula. These stacks rise from the water along the southeastern shore of Lake Mývatn.

Iceland (65.57824, -16.95848)

# Mývatn Nature Attractions

Lake Mývatn is a volcanic region in northern Iceland known for its diverse geological features. This list includes the Grjótagjá lava cave, which houses a thermal spring and served as a filming location for Game of Thrones. Nearby, the Dimmuborgir lava fields feature towering rock formations created by ancient volcanic activity. The area is also home to Vindbelgjarfjall, a mountain offering views over the lake's bird-rich wetlands and unique pseudocraters formed by steam explosions.



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Iceland (65.62405, -17.06907)



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## DATA SOURCES

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