

Northwestern Iceland

Iceland

TRAVEL GUIDE

Tripomatic



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Overview

Northwestern Iceland is a quiet region of green valleys, sea stacks and farmland. It lies between the Westfjords and Akureyri. The Ring Road crosses it.

The region is known for Icelandic horses and old turf farms. It suits a slow stop on a drive between Reykjavík and Akureyri.

When to visit

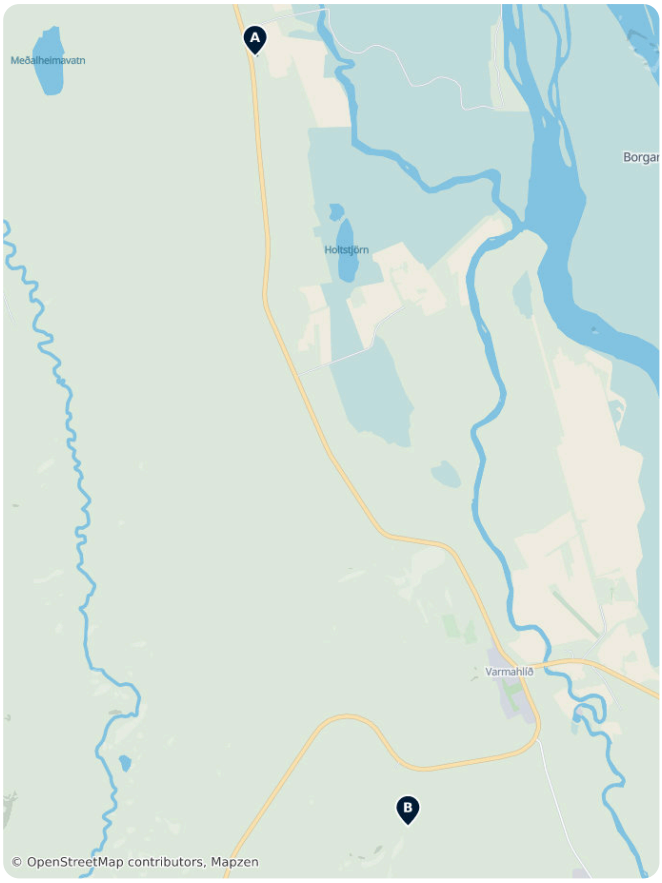
Summer is the main season, with long days and good roads. Seals and seabirds are easiest to see in summer. Winter is cold and snowy, and some roads can close. Check Road conditions (Vegagerðin).

MONTH	CONDITIONS	DAY °C avg / max	NIGHT °C avg / min	
January	Poor Poor for sightseeing	-1° / 5° Feels like -8°	-6° / -14°	20 rainy days · Dry air
February	Poor Poor for sightseeing	-1° / 5° Feels like -8°	-7° / -14°	19 rainy days · Dry air
March	Poor Poor for sightseeing	0° / 5° Feels like -6°	-6° / -13°	20 rainy days · Dry air
April	Poor Poor for sightseeing	2° / 7° Feels like -3°	-3° / -10°	17 rainy days · Dry air
May	Poor Poor for sightseeing	6° / 11° Feels like 1°	1° / -5°	17 rainy days · Dry air
June	Fair Fair for hiking	10° / 15° Feels like 7°	5° / 0°	15 rainy days · Dry air
July	Fair Fair for hiking	13° / 18°	7° / 4°	17 rainy days · Dry air
August	Fair Fair for hiking	12° / 17° Feels like 9°	6° / 3°	18 rainy days · Dry air
September	Poor Poor for hiking	8° / 14° Feels like 4°	4° / -2°	20 rainy days · Dry air
October	Poor Poor for sightseeing	3° / 9° Feels like -2°	-1° / -8°	20 rainy days · Dry air
November	Poor Poor for sightseeing	0° / 6° Feels like -6°	-4° / -12°	20 rainy days · Dry air
December	Poor Poor for sightseeing	-1° / 5° Feels like -8°	-6° / -14°	20 rainy days · Dry air

Climate data: NASA POWER (MERRA-2); NASA POWER + Copernicus ERA5-Land and ERA5 · 1996–2025

Top sights

- A Glaumbær is a preserved turf farm with a small museum in Skagafjörður.
- B Víðimýrarkirkja is a small turf church from the 19th century.
- Hvítserkur is a sea stack on the Vatnsnes peninsula. Seals rest on the coast nearby.
- Borgarvirki is a natural basalt fort with a view over the valley.
- Skagafjörður is known for horse breeding and riding.
- Kolufossar is a series of waterfalls in a canyon in the Víðidalsá river.



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Getting there

- **By car**: The Ring Road crosses the region. From Reykjavík it is about 3 to 4 hours by road. Akureyri is about 2 hours further east.
- **By bus**: Buses between Reykjavík and Akureyri stop in towns along the road. See Strætó.
- **Nearby**: Hrútafjörður is the fjord on the western edge of the region.

Country facts

Quick practical facts for Iceland at a glance:

CURRENCY

ISK kr

EMERGENCY

112

ELECTRICITY



Type C / Type F
230 V · 50 Hz

LANGUAGES

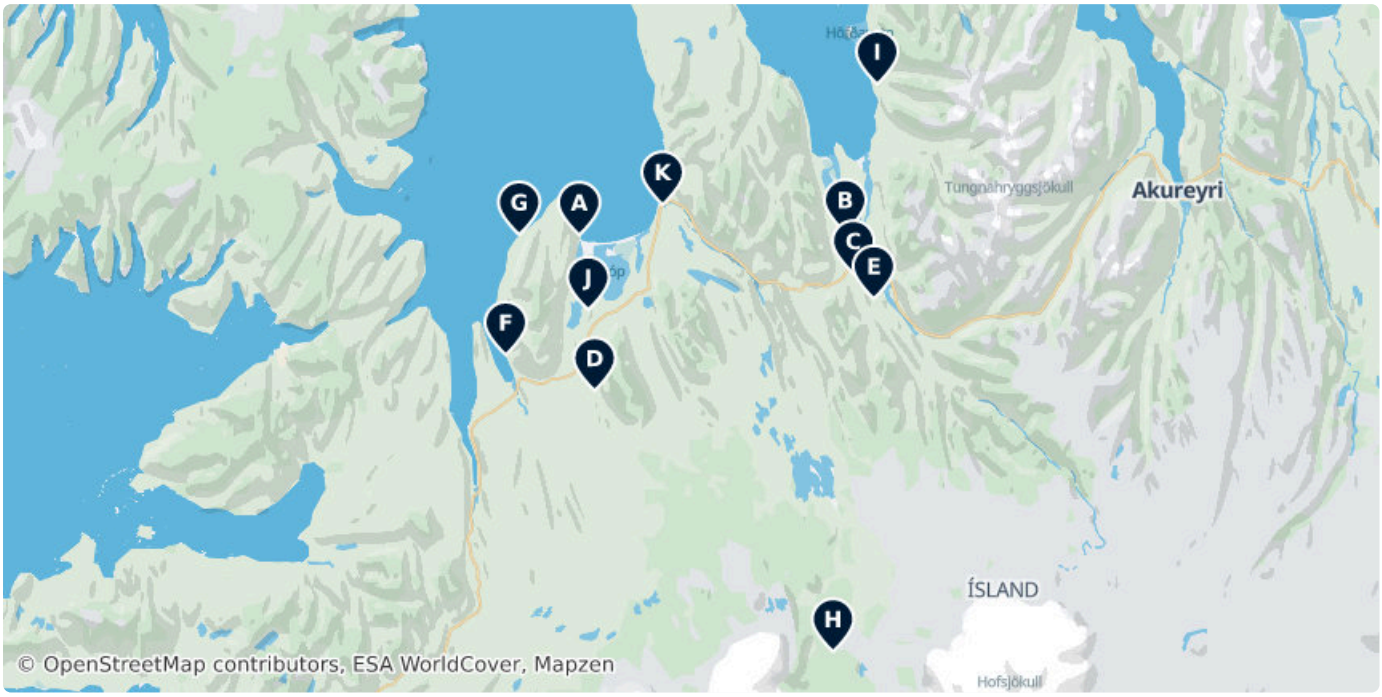
Icelandic

TAP WATER

Safe to drink

Northwestern Region Essentials

The Northwestern Region of Iceland features a landscape defined by volcanic history and coastal wildlife. This selection highlights the Hvítserkur basalt stack and the seal-watching colonies of the Vatnsnes Peninsula. Significant historical sites include the 17th-century Grafarkirkja and Vidimyri turf churches, alongside the Borgarvirki basalt fortress. Natural features range from the Kolufossar waterfalls to the Hveravellir geothermal area located in the highlands between the Langjökull and Hofsjökull glaciers.





A Hvitserkur

A 15-meter-high basalt sea stack on the Vatnsnes Peninsula. Its distinct shape, resembling a drinking dragon, is the result of erosion. The rock serves as a nesting ground for northern fulmars and gulls.

Iceland (65.60641, -20.63524)



B Glaumbær Museum

This preserved farmhouse from the mid 18th century now serves as an exhibition place - focusing on rural life in Iceland.

Glaumbær, Sauðárkróksbraut, 560 Sauðárkrókur, Island (65.61081, -19.50494)

glaumbaer.is/is/information, +354 453 6173



C Vidimyri Turf Church

A beautiful staple of old Icelandic architecture. Services are still held here, but you can always just take a look around the church.

Víðiholt, 560 Skagafjörður, Iceland (65.53880, -19.47038)

Mo–Su 09:00–18:00

northiceland.is/en/other/place/vidimyrarkirkja-church



D Kolufossar

A series of waterfalls located within the steep Kolugljúfur canyon. According to local folklore, the gorge was named after the giantess Kola, who is said to have lived and carved the canyon.

Litlu-Hlíðarvegur, 531, Iceland (65.33193, -20.56959)



E Reykjafoss

A multi-tiered waterfall on the Svartá river. It is located in the Skagafjörður valley, near the Fosslaug natural hot spring.

Iceland (65.49456, -19.38319)



F Seal Center

Come here to see great exhibitions on seals and other Icelandic animals. It also serves as a Tourist Info Center.

Brekkugata 2, Hvammstangi 530, Iceland (65.39535, -20.94777)

Mo–Su 09:00–18:00

selasetur.is, +354 451 2345



G Illugastaðir

Popular seal-watching destination. There is a series of hiking paths that will lead you straight to the shore.

Iceland (65.60685, -20.89009)



H Hveravellir Geothermal Area

A high-temperature geothermal field situated in the central highlands between the Langjökull and Hofsjökull glaciers. It features smoking fumaroles, multicolored boiling mud pools, and a natural hot spring for bathing.

Iceland (64.86533, -19.55652)



I Grafarkirkja

Iceland's oldest turf church, rebuilt in the late 17th century by Gísli Þorláksson. It is distinguished by its intricate interior wood carvings and traditional sod roof.

(Unnamed Road), 566, Iceland (65.86961, -19.36838)



J Borgarvirki

A natural basalt volcanic plug modified into a defensive fortress during the Viking Age. It features 10th-century stone walls and offers panoramic views of the Húnaflói bay area.

Iceland (65.47478, -20.59718)



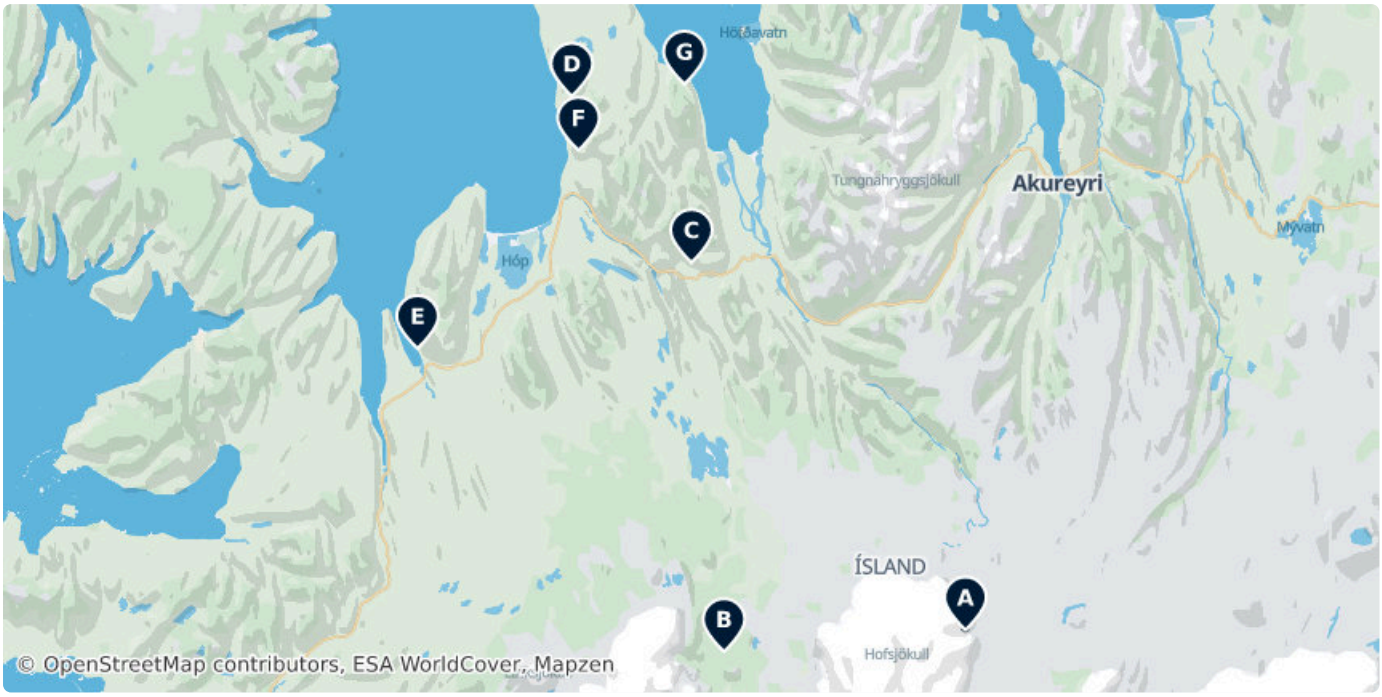
Blönduóskirkja

A modern church completed in 1993, designed by architect Maggi Jónsson. Its concrete architecture is inspired by the surrounding volcanic landscape and the shape of a crater.

Hólabraut, 540 Blönduós, Iceland (65.65975, -20.28029)

Mountains and Peaks

This selection explores the geological diversity of Northwestern Iceland, spanning from the coastal peaks of the Skagi peninsula to the glaciated interior of the Highlands. It features prominent volcanic formations like the rhyolite peaks of Sandfell and the basalt heights of Spákonufellsborg. The list also includes the remote Klakksjökull glacier near Langjökull and mountains along the historic Kjalvegur route, highlighting the region's rugged terrain and glacial history.



A Klakksjökull

Glacier in the central Highlands situated to the east of the Langjökull ice cap.

(64.85642, -18.50084)

B Strýtur

Volcanic formations in the Highland region near the Kjalvegur route.

Iceland (64.81552, -19.57219)

C Kálfárfell

Highland peak located near the historic Kjalvegur mountain pass.

Iceland (65.53983, -19.71633)

D Spákonufellsborg

Volcanic rock formation overlooking Skagaströnd, associated with local folklore regarding the prophetess Þórdís.

Iceland (65.84318, -20.24678)

E Höfði

Coastal peak located near Húnafjörður in the northwestern region.

(65.38123, -20.93163)

F Núpar

Mountain ridge on the Skagi peninsula.

Iceland (65.74488, -20.21765)

Sandfell

Rhyolite peak situated on the Skagi peninsula near the northern coastline.

Iceland (65.86493, -19.74755)

Historic Churches & Chapels

North Iceland’s ecclesiastical heritage ranges from 17th-century turf structures to mid-century modernism. This collection features the red sandstone cathedral at Hólar, the oldest stone church in the country, and the uniquely shaped Blönduóskirkja, designed to mirror volcanic landscapes. Historic sites like Þingeyrarkirkja mark the location of Iceland's first monastery, while preserved turf churches at Víðimýri and Gröf showcase traditional building techniques using peat and timber.





A Vidimyri Turf Church

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northiceland.is/en/other/place/vidimyrarkirkja-church



B Grafarkirkja

Iceland's oldest turf church, dating back to the late 17th century. It is known for its intricate interior wood carvings and traditional peat-wall construction.

(Unnamed Road), 566, Iceland (65.86961, -19.36838)



C Þingeyrarklausturskirkja

A stone church completed in 1877 on the site of Iceland's first monastery. The interior contains a 15th-century alabaster altarpiece and a pulpit from 1696.

Þingeyrar, Húnabyggð, Iceland (65.55447, -20.40431)



D Blönduóskirkja

A striking modernist structure completed in 1993. The architecture is inspired by the shape of a volcanic crater and the surrounding mountains.

Hólabraut, 540 Blönduós, Iceland (65.65975, -20.28029)

E Hólakirkja

Built in 1763 from local red sandstone, this is the oldest stone church in Iceland. It served as the cathedral for the northern bishopric of Hólar.

(65.73335, -19.11378)

F Glaumbæjarkirkja

Located next to the historic turf farm museum, this wooden church was consecrated in 1926, replacing an earlier structure.

(65.61129, -19.50468)

G Sauðárkrókskirkja

A timber church built in 1892. The interior features an altarpiece painted by the Danish artist Anker Lund.

(65.74975, -19.65062)

saudarkrokskirkja.is

H Hofsósskirkja

A stone church consecrated in 1960, notable for its minimalist design and scenic location overlooking the fjord.

(65.89587, -19.40734)

I Blönduóskirkja eldri

A traditional black-painted wooden church built in 1894. It served as the primary place of worship before the construction of the town's modern church.

4 Brimslóð, Blönduós 540, Iceland (65.65929, -20.30229)

J Knappstaðarkirkja

A small wooden church dating to 1834. It is one of the oldest timber churches in Iceland and is noted for its simple, traditional craftsmanship.

(65.97567, -18.97539)

DATA SOURCES

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