

Vestmannaeyjabær

Southern Region · Iceland

TRAVEL GUIDE

Tripomatic



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Overview

The Westman Islands, Vestmannaeyjar, are a group of volcanic islands off the south coast. Only Heimaey is inhabited. Its small harbour town lies below steep cliffs and volcanic cones.

In 1973 the Eldfell volcano erupted next to the town and covered many houses in ash and lava. The island is also known for a large puffin colony and for the Þjóðhátíð festival in early August.

When to visit

Puffins are on the island from about May to August. In late summer, children rescue lost young puffins, called pufflings, and release them at the sea. The Þjóðhátíð festival fills the island on the first weekend of August. Ferries and flights run all year but can be cancelled in storms.

MONTH	CONDITIONS	DAY °C avg / max	NIGHT °C avg / min	
January	Poor Poor for wildlife watching	2° / 7° Feels like -3°	-2° / -10°	21 rainy days · Dry air
February	Poor Poor for wildlife watching	2° / 7° Feels like -3°	-2° / -9°	20 rainy days · Dry air
March	Poor Poor for wildlife watching	3° / 7° Feels like -2°	-2° / -8°	20 rainy days · Dry air
April	Poor Poor for wildlife watching	6° / 10° Feels like 1°	1° / -5°	18 rainy days · Dry air
May	Poor Poor for hiking	9° / 12° Feels like 5°	4° / -1°	18 rainy days · Dry air · Calm winds
June	Fair Fair for hiking	12° / 15° Feels like 9°	7° / 3°	18 rainy days · Dry air · Calm winds
July	Fair Fair for hiking	13° / 17°	9° / 6°	19 rainy days · Dry air · Calm winds
August	Fair Fair for hiking	13° / 16°	8° / 5°	18 rainy days · Dry air · Calm winds
September	Poor Poor for hiking	10° / 13° Feels like 7°	6° / 1°	21 rainy days · Dry air
October	Poor Poor for wildlife watching	6° / 10° Feels like 2°	2° / -3°	19 rainy days · Dry air
November	Poor Poor for wildlife watching	3° / 8° Feels like -2°	-1° / -8°	18 rainy days · Dry air
December	Poor Poor for wildlife watching	2° / 8° Feels like -3°	-2° / -10°	20 rainy days · Dry air

Climate data: NASA POWER + Copernicus ERA5-Land and ERA5 · 1996–2025

Top sights

- A Eldfell is the volcano that erupted in 1973. A short path leads to the crater rim, with views over the town and the sea.
- B Elephant Rock is a rock formation on the west of the island, with views of the cliffs.
- C Urðir is a lighthouse on the south of the island.
- Eldheimar is a museum built around a house that was buried by ash in 1973.
- Surtsey is a young volcanic island that is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Landing is not allowed without a permit, so most people see it from a boat or from the air.



Vestmannaeyjabær – Plan Your Trip
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3M+ downloads · **4.6 stars** · **15 years of trip planning**
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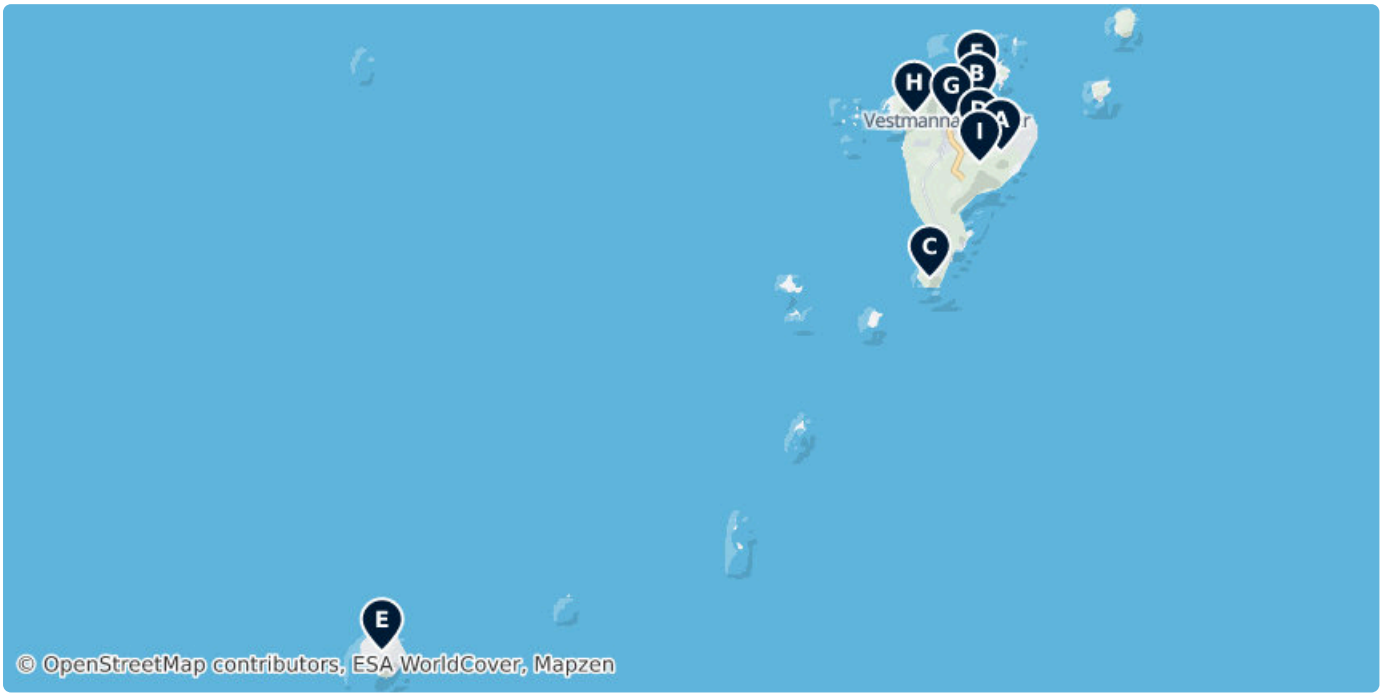
Getting there

- **By ferry**: A car and passenger ferry runs from Landeyjahöfn on the south coast. The crossing takes about 35 minutes. In rough seas it may sail from Þorlákshöfn, which takes about 3 hours.
- **By air**: Short domestic flights from Reykjavík take about 20 minutes.
- **Reaching the ferry**: Landeyjahöfn is about 2 hours from Reykjavík by car. Book ahead in summer.

Vestmannaeyjabær Essentials

Vestmannaeyjabær showcases Iceland's dramatic volcanic history on the island of Heimaey. The Eldheimar museum preserves homes buried during the 1973 Eldfell eruption, while the Eldfell and Helgafell cones offer hiking trails over recent lava fields. Stórhöfði serves as a major puffin nesting site and one of Europe's windiest locations. The archipelago also includes the UNESCO-listed Surtsey, formed in 1963, and a stave church gifted by Norway. Visitors can climb Heimaklettur for harbor views or explore the Sæheimar Aquarium's local marine life and rescued puffins.





A Eldfell

Eldfell is a volcanic cone just over 200 metres high on the Icelandic island of Heimaey.

Iceland (63.43232, -20.24728)



B Heimaey stave church

Heimaey Stave Church is a close replica of Haltdalen stave church situated in the Skansinn area of the harbour of Vestmannaeyjabær on...

Eldfellsvegur, 900 Vestmannaeyjar, Iceland (63.44429, -20.26130)



C Stórhöfði

Stórhöfði is a peninsula and the southernmost point of Heimaey, the largest island in the Vestmannaeyjar archipelago, in Iceland.

Stórhöfðavegur, 900, Iceland (63.39960, -20.28846)

D Eldheimar

Volcano museum centered on a house excavated from the ash of the 1973 eruption. Exhibits detail the sudden evacuation of Heimaey and the geological formation of the island of Surtsey.

Gerðisbraut 10, 900 (63.43499, -20.26009)

Mo–Su 11:00–18:00

eldheimar.is



E Surtur's Island

Surtsey is an uninhabited volcanic island located in the Vestmannaeyjar archipelago off the southern coast of Iceland.

(63.30300, -20.60470)



F Home Rock

The highest peak in the archipelago at 283 meters. The hiking trail includes several steep wooden ladders and provides panoramic views of the town, harbor, and surrounding islands.

Iceland (63.44977, -20.26130)

G Sæheimar Aquarium

Natural history museum and aquarium featuring local fish species, a touch tank, and a collection of taxidermied birds. It is well known for hosting rescued puffins.

12 Heiðarvegur, Vestmannaeyjar 900, Iceland (63.44111, -20.27584)

H Ruinen des Bauernhofes der ersten Siedler auf den Westmännerinseln

Archaeological remains of a 9th-century farmstead believed to belong to Herjólfur Bárðarson, the first settler of the Westman Islands.

Herjólfsdalur, 900 Vestmannaeyjar, Iceland (63.44199, -20.29743)

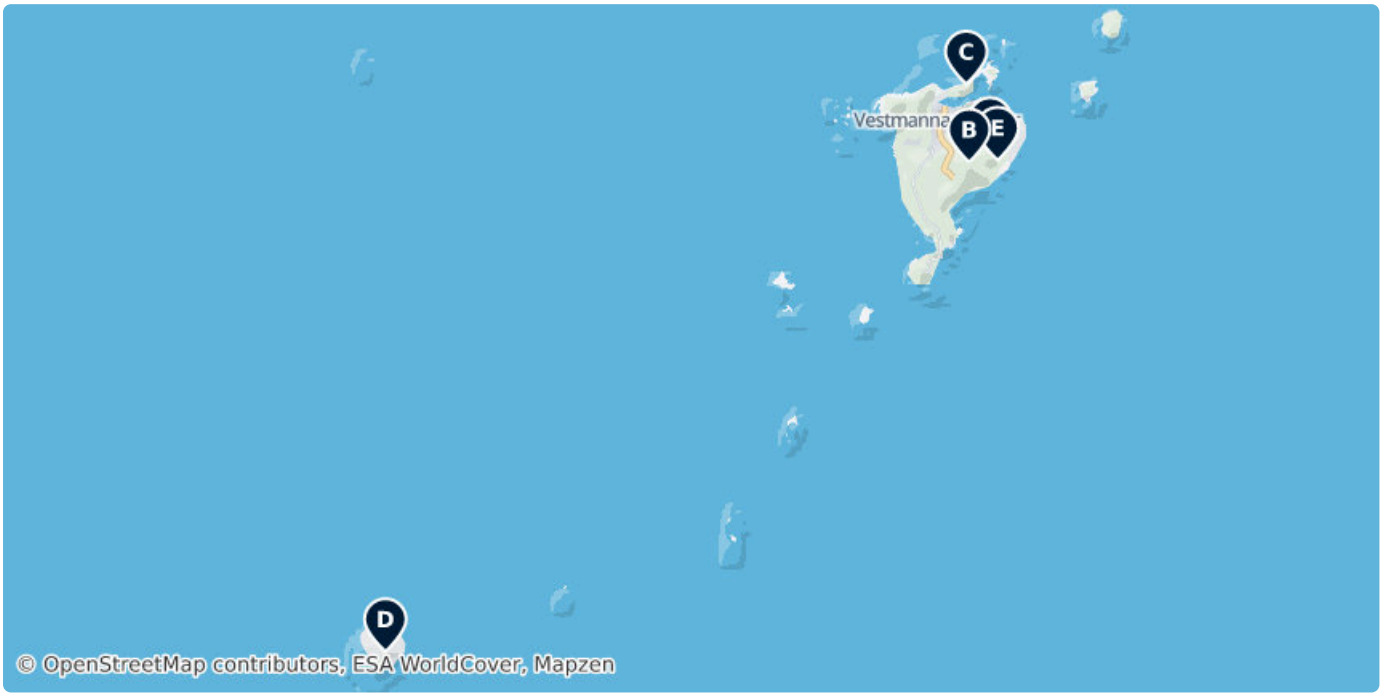
Helgafell

Helgafell is an inactive 227 m volcanic cone located on the island of Heimaey in the Vestmannaeyjar archipelago in Iceland.

Iceland (63.42934, -20.25956)

Volcanic Landscapes of Heimaey

The Westman Islands offer a concentrated look at Iceland’s volcanic activity and coastal erosion. This selection features Eldfell, the cone formed during the 1973 eruption that nearly destroyed Heimaey's harbor, and the older, dormant Helgafell. The list also includes Surtsey, a UNESCO World Heritage site created by undersea eruptions in the 1960s, and Heimaklettur, the archipelago's highest peak composed of palagonite tuff. These sites illustrate the geological transition from ancient sea cliffs to newly formed lava fields and sea caves.





A Eldfell

Eldfell is a volcanic cone just over 200 metres high on the Icelandic island of Heimaey.

Iceland (63.43232, -20.24728)

B Helgafell

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Iceland (63.42934, -20.25956)



C Home Rock

The highest peak in the Westman Islands at 283 meters. This palagonite tuff formation dates back to the Ice Age and is accessible via a series of wooden ladders, providing views over the town of Heimaey and the Icelandic mainland.

Iceland (63.44977, -20.26130)

E Páskahellir

A small sea cave located on the eastern shore of Heimaey. Formed by wave erosion in the lava from the 1973 Eldfell eruption, it features unique rock textures and is accessible via a coastal hiking trail.

(63.42978, -20.24284)

D Surtsey

A volcanic island and UNESCO World Heritage site formed by submarine eruptions between 1963 and 1967. It serves as a natural laboratory for studying ecological colonization, with human access strictly limited to scientific researchers.

(63.30047, -20.60258)

DATA SOURCES

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