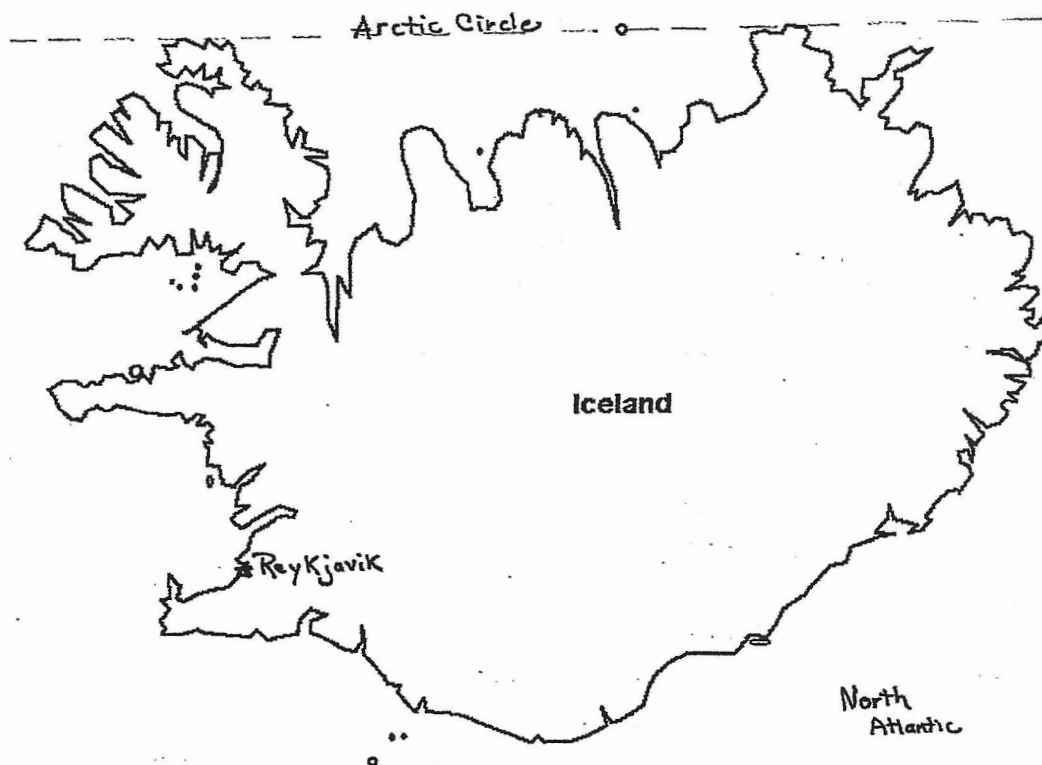


ICELAND: LAND OF FIRE AND ICE

That kisses the Arctic Circle



Written by

Anne Engen and Sally Wyffels

2017

Leader/teacher copy

Iceland: Land of Fire and Ice, That Kisses the Arctic Circle

Items to enhance teaching this lesson:

A world map that shows Iceland

A map of Iceland

Find photo of a Puffin

Google turf houses for photos

Write 'Reykjavik' in large print on flip chart, or large piece of paper and post it

Ask friends if they know someone who has traveled to Iceland. Ask travelers to share souvenirs, postcards, photos or stories with your group.

Make a crown to wear when mentioning King of Norway, King of Denmark

Check out Sykr at Whole Foods

Introduction:

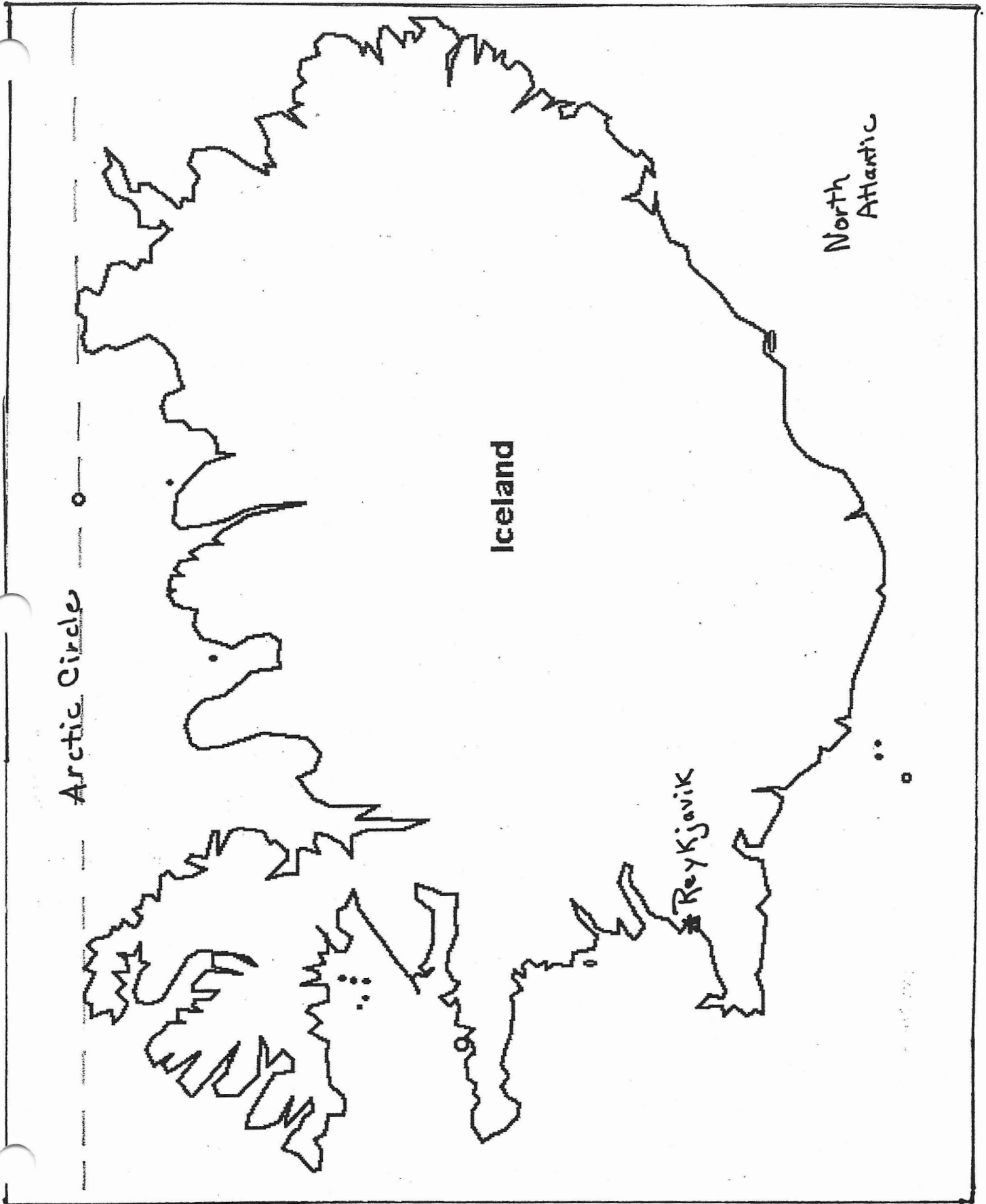
Iceland is a land of geysers, glaciers, volcanoes, and rough hewn coastlines. A landscape full of legends and where the Northern Lights shine. An island country with poor soil, few forests and isolated from the rest of the world.

They've been ruled by the King of Norway, the King of Denmark, lost 1/3 of their population to the Black Plague, later lost another 1/3 to Bubonic Plague, then more to a small pox outbreak. YET, this little country is known for having some of the happiest people in the world, plus some of the healthiest. What makes this country so amazing?

Teachers, Show world map, pointing out tiny Iceland and how it does kiss the Arctic Circle. Show map of Iceland and highlight capital Reykjavik. Point to your large print Reykjavik the capital of Iceland. Have audience repeat the name Reykjavik. Note Iceland's rugged coastline.

Teachers, hand out the Iceland Trivia Quiz to your audience. Allow 3 or 4 minutes for them to answer the questions. Then read each question and listen to answers before sharing the answer and explanation. Enjoy a hearty laugh over some of the interesting beliefs.

As you work through the quiz share any pictures and photos of Iceland you have.



Iceland Trivia Quiz

1. Iceland is about the same size as the state of Oregon. True or False

2. Why are Icelanders' heritage 60% _____ and 40% _____ and _____?
(Naughty, naughty guys rowing their boats westward)

3. Iceland has _____ active and inactive volcanoes, but only _____ active ones.

4. Iceland has no real highways except to the _____.

5. _____ is related to most Icelanders through Dutch and Norwegian Royalty. (Surprise! He lives in Washington DC.)

6. From late June to early July Iceland has "midnight sun" which means _____

7. In August the average temperature is _____.
In January the highest average is 36 degrees, lowest average is 18 degrees.

8. Who are the "huldu folk" and why did people build them small wooden houses? Even built small churches to convert them to Christianity.

9. Iceland has been occupied by British troops and U.S. troops. True or False

10. The capital, Reykjavik, has a Phallogical Museum. True or False

Iceland Trivia Quiz - *Answers*

Teachers, ideas for you are in *bold italics*. Repeat question and ask for guesses. Share answer and information. Use any pictures you have.

1. Answer is False. Iceland can fit inside Oregon with room to spare. Oregon is 2 1/2 times larger than Iceland. Its about size of Kentucky. (*Show map of world and point to tiny Iceland next to its large neighbor Greenland. Show map of Iceland, point out capital Reykjavik. Have audience repeat the name.*)
2. Icelandic people are 60% or more Nordic, Norse, Viking and 40% Scottish and Irish. Vikings rowing small boats in good weather could reach Iceland in a week, harsh weather would take longer. They could detour to stop in Scotland or Ireland to take hostages to be wives or slaves. (*Point out on world map how close Norway, Scotland and Ireland are to Iceland.*) Settlers brought their language - Old Norse - from Norway, which has evolved into modern Icelandic.
3. Iceland has 130 active and inactive volcanoes, but the county is in the middle of or on top of two tectonic plates and has 30 active volcanic systems running through the island.
4. Iceland has no real highways except to the Keflavik Airport.
5. Donald Trump is related to most Icelanders through his Dutch and Norwegian Royalty.
6. From late June to early July Iceland has 'midnight sun' which means 24 hours of sunlight. In December they endure 22 hours of darkness and 2 hours of twilight.
7. In August the average temperature is 50 to 55 degrees. In January the highest average is 36 degrees, lowest average is 18 degrees. Iceland has a maritime temperate climate - snow, sleet, hail, rain and often high winds.
8. Who are the 'huldu folk' and why did people build them small wooden houses? Even built small churches to convert them to Christianity. Huldu Folk means hidden people, and are elves and trolls, part of Icelandic legends. Large fallen rocks in fields said to be frozen trolls. The smell present in Iceland isn't from sulfur at all - its the smell of the trolls dirty bath water. Of coarse this is said with a sly smile and a wink.
9. Answer is True. Iceland has been occupied by both British troops and U.S. troops. Iceland has no military of its own, but played a big part in WWII.
10. The answer is True. The capital, Reykjavik has many interesting museums among them is the Icelandic Phallological Museum. There you will find a collection of over 200 penises from almost all of the land and sea mammals in Iceland. Including sixteen types of whales, seven types of seals and walruses, a polar bear and one homo sapiens.

The Occupation of Iceland During World War II and Beyond

Small quiet Iceland was an independent sovereign nation ruled by the King of Denmark. It had no military, but the capital was the biggest city and had 70 police officers. But who had their sites set on Iceland? And why? Great Britain and the United States knew the ships and convoys crossing the north Atlantic needed protection from German submarines. Also a large airfield should be built on the island. *Life in Iceland is about to change.*

September 1939: Germany invades Poland. German sub sinks passenger ship near Ireland.

April 1940: German soldiers march into neutral Denmark, government is overthrown.

Britain offers Iceland help, but will need houses and buildings. Iceland says NO. Iceland declares independence from Denmark, asks United States for recognition.

May 6, 1940: Winston Churchill insists the British military land in Iceland anyway.

May 10, 1940: Four British warships anchor in the harbor of Iceland's capital. Soldiers disabled radio communications. German citizens arrested to delay news leaks. Iceland's Prime Minister tells people not to interfere with the troops, treat them as guests.

Icelandic government says its neutrality has been "flagrantly violated". British promise compensation and will not interfere in Icelandic business and to leave at war's end.

Same day, Germany invades France, Belgium, Luxembourg and the Netherlands.

June 1940: Norway surrenders to Germany.

July 7, 1941: British troops leave Iceland as they are now needed to defend Great Britain.

Iceland invites United States to protect their country. There are now more soldiers in Iceland than all the adult Icelandic men.

Iceland asks for American financial assistance for road, bridge and public maintenance. People are put to work helping the soldiers build airstrips, bigger ports and a hospital.

October 1941 - October 1942: Troops working with Icelanders battle heavy seas, high winds, and constant rain to unload tons of cargo and vehicles in months of darkness.

June 17, 1944: Iceland becomes a republic. **1945:** US troops leave. **1949:** Iceland joins NATO

During occupation 332 Icelandic women marry soldiers, one of them Sjöfn (Shep) Fridsteindóttir.

1951: United States accepts NATO agreement to be responsible for the defense of Iceland.

2006: U.S. troops leave Iceland, threat shifted away from North Atlantic.

Now: U.S. reopening its former Icelandic military base Keflavik. Its midway between U.S. and Europe for patrolling waters off Great Britain, Ireland, Iceland and Greenland.

Icelandic National Costume

Icelandic costume is collectively known in Iceland as *Pjoobuningurinn*, has enjoyed popularity since the 19th century during the fight for independence. Since 2001 the national costume is regulated by the National Costume Authority. It preserves the correct techniques of making them and instructs people how to wear each costume.

Women's Costume

The **peysufot** are black woolen clothes commonly worn by women. It usually consisted of a twill skirt and a jacket of fine knitted woolen yarn with a black tail cap. It is believed that this costume was invented when women, desiring simpler working clothes, started to use male articles of clothing. This includes both the tail-cap and the **peysa** which originally was a jacket with a single row of buttons. The **Upphlutur**, the bodice, can be colored in bright colors such as red, blue or often black all in woolen fabric.

Men's Costume

The most considered traditional costume consists of woolen breeches or trousers, a usually double buttoned vest and a double buttoned jacket called **Treyia**. On the head is a tail cap. The costume is usually black, navy blue, or dark green, although the vest, which is usually brighter such as red. In some regions the use of white wool instead of the darker colors.

Children's Costume

For the child, their costume do not differ from the adult's version (except in size). The girls are given shorter skirts than the adult version.

Shoes

Today modern shoes may be worn with the National Costumes. Traditionally, shoes were made of either fish or sheep-skin with woolen inlets and worn with the costumes.

Icelandic Traditions and Folklore

Icelanders have several unique holidays and celebrate the more common ones in special ways. Many of the festivities are related to ancient Norse traditions, while others tie into the Christian calendar. There are numerous festivals that take place throughout the year. We'll highlight just a few traditions and folklore.

Christmas time to the Twelfth Night

During their Christmas celebration Icelanders decorate the interior and exterior of their homes extensively with lights of many colors, in an effort to brighten up the dark winter days and nights.

Traditionally, Icelanders observe a Christmas fast and end the fasting on Dec 23, **St. Þorlákur's Day**. The Icelanders will eat putrefied shark to symbolize the ending of their fast. Shops are opened very late for the many who leave their Christmas buying frenzy until the last minute. For many, this signifies the beginning of Christmas.

Christmas is celebrated on December 24th promptly at 6 pm in the evening. Traditional dishes include, smoked lamb and smoked pork and pickled red cabbage. Presents are opened after Christmas dinner, which is a fairly formal affair.

Instead of Santa Claus, Iceland has the **13 Yule Lads**. These **13 Lads** visit the fortunate Icelandic children over the 13 days of the Icelandic Christmas Season. The children place a shoe in their bedroom window every evening. During the night one Yuletide lad visits, leaving sweets and small gifts or rotting potatoes, depending on how that particular child has behaved on the preceding day. Each **Yule Lad** has a specific characteristic and will leave a gift to fit his characteristic.

Old Icelandic folklore states that every Icelander must receive a new piece of clothing for Christmas or they will find themselves in mortal danger. An enormous black cat prowls the Iceland on Christmas Eve. It eats anyone who doesn't follow the simple rule of receiving a new garment. This obnoxious feline is known as **The Christmas Cat**.

New Year's Eve is celebrated with the gathering of family and friends at home and visits to the local bonfire. Most Icelanders buy their own fireworks and set them off at midnight to welcome in the New Year.

January 6th is celebrated as the last day of **Christmas, the Twelfth Night**. The occasion is marked by various fireworks displays and bonfires throughout the countryside.

Icelandic Republic Day

Iceland's National Day of Independence is June 17. It commemorates the creation of Iceland as a republic in 1944. The day is also the birthday of the country's independence hero, Jon Sigurdsson.

Jonsmessa

Midsummer Night, the longest day of daylight of the year, is endowed with great mystical powers. According to Icelandic folklore cows gain the power of speech for the night, and seals can take a human form. Surely a treacherous magical time. Wonder what the cows talk about?!?!

Elves and Trolls

Polls taken over the years have shown that the majority of Icelanders believe in elves. These elves usually live in rocky areas, have magical powers, and cause trouble if someone tries to disturb their home. In some cases, bulldozers have been reported to malfunction when trying to work on a supposed elf site. This belief is so important that some people are actually called in to arbitrate with elves in the hopes of getting them to leave.

One final troll, **Gryla** is the ogress who lives in the Icelandic mountains. She is a dreadful character, described as part troll and part animal and mother of 13 precocious boys (**the Yule Lads**). She lives in the mountains with her third husband, her thirteen children and a black cat. Every Christmas, Gryla and her sons come down from the mountains: Gryla is in search of naughty children to boil in her caldron and the boys are in search of mischief. She can only capture children who misbehave but those who repent must be released.

Despite how strange the belief might be, it persists among the many Icelanders and doesn't seem likely to go away anytime soon.

Icelandic Food - Interesting? Tasty? Or, You're Kidding Aren't You?

If you lived on a small island far out to sea, you would end up eating almost everything.

So What's on Iceland's Menu.

Very fresh cod - remains one of Iceland's biggest exports and favorite food.

Very dried fish - Think fish jerky. Put butter on top to soften it, chew each bite thoroughly.

Salted Fish - Completely covered in salt to preserve it. First wipe away salt then soak fish for hours or even 2 or 3 days before eating.

Minke Whale - Has never been considered endangered. Eaten raw or cooked. The meat is red, looks similar to beef steak, but leaner and softer and not fishy tasting.

Fish Stomach - Its stuffed with fish liver and boiled with rye.

Gellur (cod tongues) - Not tongues at all, its the fleshy muscle behind and under the cod's tongue. Tasty cooked au gratin, just boiling them not so much.

Puffin - A black and white sea bird with brightly colored bill. Either boiled in milk sauce or smoked. It's a delicacy found in many Icelandic restaurants.

Hot Springs Rye Bread - Dark, slightly sweet dough put in special wooden casks in the ground near a hot spring. You pick up your baked bread the next day.

Hangikjot (hon-key-kurt) - Lamb roast, hung and twice smoked but not roasted, thinly sliced and served with potatoes, white gravy and green peas.

Sheep's Head - A favorite smoked and cooked main dish, the whole head is eaten except the brain. Eyes, cheeks and tongue are tasty, its the presentation that throws you off. Most markets and drive-thru sell it.

Blood Pudding - Sheep's innards stuffed with blood and fat, sewn together then boiled. Served with Sheep's Head and many times sweet rice pudding. Humm-mm.

Sour Ram's Testicles - A recipe that's rarely made now.

Skyr - A popular traditional Icelandic food. Its a low fat dairy product, rich and creamy resembling yogurt, but it's different. Now found at Whole Foods.

Taxation in Iceland

Taxes in Iceland are levied by the Federal Government and the local communities. Iceland, similar to Scandinavian Countries, it is a Nordic social democracy, but the government welfare spending is less than in most other European countries.

The country has an Income Tax which the Icelanders pay through their employers. Up to 8% of the Icelander's gross income may be deducted for pension insurance, like our social security. Their Income tax rate ranges from 37% over to 46%, it is a progressive tax as is the our income taxes.

Local communities' rate is 14 1/2% and is collected by municipal authorities. In the US we have voluntary compliance, where we file our own taxes. US income tax rate ranges from 10% to 39 1/2% depending on filing status and income level. Oregon income tax rate ranges from 5% to 9.9% again depending on filing status and income level.

Iceland's corporate tax rate is 20%, one of the lowest in the world. In the US it can be as high as 38.9%, but businesses can claim deductions.

Iceland does have a **value-added tax**, similar to a **national sales tax**. The standard rate of value-added tax is 24%. Certain products that are produced locally have a reduced rate of 11%. Both the US government and State of Oregon **do not have a value-added tax** nor sales tax.

Healthcare in Iceland

Iceland has universal healthcare. Their system is paid for by taxes and services fees. It is administered by the Ministry of Welfare. There is very little private health insurance and no private hospitals. This public service is heavily funded through taxation to support the general public, in order for the population to have **equal access** to the healthcare system.

Health care providers fall into legally defined categories of clinics, institutions, university hospitals, and teaching hospitals. Long-term care can be accessed through institutions or at homes. This care includes personal assistance and domestic care, including nursing homes and even child care. Interesting note: hospital professionals and doctors are **salaried employees** and are paid through hospital budgets.

Iceland has a relatively small population. It has 6 regional hospitals and 16 clinics and care homes). The main hospital is located in Reykjavik.

The Golden Circle Tour: Attractions to see in Iceland

Iceland is world famous for its diverse and unique geothermal landscape. It captures you from all directions.

After arriving in *Keflavik*, the airport near *Reykjavik*, you don't have to look too far to see plumes of smoke rising from the ground, natural hot springs, waterfalls, bubbling mud pots and erupting geysers, in fact you can see all on this **Golden Circle Tour**. We will enjoy eleven attractions.

This tour usually requires about 4 hours of driving and after you add the time which will be needed to enjoy each attraction, you need to put aside a full day. But I will keep your tour down to no more than ten minutes using pictures of each famous site.

Stop number one: *Thingvellir National Park*

The National Park is situated on the tectonic plate boundaries of the Mid-Atlantic Ridge. You see the rifting of the earth's crust through many faults and fissures in the ground's surface.

Thingvellir National Park is also a UNESCO World Heritage Site. It was in 930AD the founding home of *Althingi*, the parliament of Iceland. Many historical buildings are found in the park.

Stop number two: *Geyser Area; Great Geyser Hot Springs*

"Geyser" from the Icelandic verb *geysa*, "to gush", the verb itself is from Old Norse.

Upon arriving at the *Geyser* area, the smell of Sulphur in the air is what hits you at first! Phew! And multiple of bubbling hot pools are in every direction and a low running stream at your feet. Suddenly in the distance, a huge jet of water appears, several feet high spraying upwards. Welcome to the geysers – the sheer power of nature exposed in all its glory. The geyser erupts every 4 to 8 minutes.

Number three and four stop: *Gullfoss* and *Glymur* – waterfalls

Walking down towards the *Gullfoss waterfall*, you first hear it before you see it, and then you watch in wonder as the water vapor floats upward along the canyons edge. At first sight, all that can be made out is the ferocious waters that

seemingly disappear into the abyss below. A huge cavern of water, 61ft wide, crashes and churns down into the river below.

The ***Glymur waterfall*** is the highest waterfall in Iceland. What makes it so very unique is the trail that goes behind the falls. The trail is a well-developed loop trail.

Both waterfalls are majestic and powerful. Prepare to get wet!

Next stop number five: *Lake Myvatn and Raufarholshellir*

Myvatn is a volcanic lake. On the east shore are natural baths that are naturally heated by the nearby lagoon with its mineral rich waters known for their health-giving properties. The area is surrounded with boiling mud pots. There are geothermal caves to see and tour. The ***Raufarholshellir***, a lava tube cave, has lighting for the adventurist tourist to explore.

Stops numbers six and seven: *Latrabjarg Cliffs and Hvitserkur*

The ***Latrabjarg Cliffs*** is the westernmost point in Iceland. It is home to millions of birds including puffins, razorbills, and gannets. It is the largest bird cliff in Europe. Take your binoculars to get a close up look at the many, many birds.

According to legend, ***Hvitserkur*** is a petrified troll who wanted to tear down the bells at Pineyraklauster convent, but was caught by daylight and turned to stone. The less fun version of the story is that ***Hvitserkur*** is a volcanic plug from a volcano which was eroded by the ocean. The troll being turned to stone is more in tune to the folklore of Iceland...a more fascinating story.

Last stop is the Capital city of Iceland: *Reykjavik*

We will visit four notable landmarks in our quick overview of the city. ***Reykjavik*** sits on the shore of the Smoky Bay and surrounded by towering mountain cliffs. We see no smoke rising from the households because of the geothermal heating used in the homes and commercial buildings of the city.

Reykjavik's immense white-concrete church, ***Hallgrimskirkja*** (big church on the hill), star of thousands of postcards, dominates the skyline, and is visible from miles around. Get a fantastic view of the city by taking an elevator to the top

viewing area within the tower. The Lutheran Church was built in 1945 and is 240 ft. high.

One of the most unusual buildings to see in our tour is the **Harpa Concert Hall and Conference Center**. It opened in 2011. The design was influenced by Iceland's dramatic nature. It is a gleaming sculpture reflecting both sky and sea. There are four concert halls within the building and has seating for 1800.

In stark contrast to the **Harpa Center** is **The Parliament House, Althingishusio**. It is a classical 19th century structure built in 1881. It is one of the oldest stone buildings in Iceland. Today it houses a museum and parliament debating hall.

Last on our tour and possibly the most famous site is **The Blue Lagoon**. The lagoon is a geothermal spa and is one of the most visited attractions in Iceland. The spa is located in a lava field not far from the city. It is a man-made lagoon which is fed by the water output of the nearby geothermal power plant and it is renewed every two days. People typically spend 1-3.5 hours in the healing waters. Currently the price to visit the lagoon spa with round trip transport from **Reykjavik** and admission starts at \$133.85 and up. No wonder people stay up to 3.5 hours!

Highlights of Some Museums in Reykjavik

As you enter the **Whales of Iceland** exhibit you feel quite small, for up above you, hanging from the ceiling are 23 life-size models of whales, including a humpback whale, a blue whale and an orca.

The Settlement Exhibition is the perfect place to step into the Viking age. In downtown Reykjavik a 2001 excavation revealed a 10th century Viking hall, and the oldest evidence of an Icelandic settlement including a house and artifacts dating to before 871. An interactive display gives you a glimpse into the everyday life of Viking settlers.

- Admission Prices - 17 and younger are free
- 67 years and older are free
- Disabled are free
- Adults are 1,600 ISK which is Krona (\$15.04 U.S. dollars)
- Students are 900 ISK

The Icelandic Punk Museum Officially opened by punk rocker Johnny Rotten in 2016 to exhibit photos and objects related to the period of music in 1980. Punk Museum is located in an abandoned public toilet facility.

There are several museums that showcase the country's seafaring heritage. How important the fishing industry was to Icelandic history, survival and how they won the Cod Wars. **Maritime Museum** and **The Culture House**.

The Saga Museum is where history comes alive. The museum uses life-like replicas of Icelandic figures to recreate moments in everyday life and turbulent times in history. Replicas were created based on descriptions found in the Viking Sagas (passed down stories).

The Arbaer Open Air Museum is located outside Reykjavik. So here's the *question* - If you lived on a small island far out to sea, an island with poor soil, few forests, and long cold winters what would you use to build a house?

Answer - You would cut large bricks of grassy sod to build turf houses, barns and churches. This open air museum has 20 vintage turf homes and buildings spread around a large green area.

To build a turf house first mark the small floor and remove the grassy turf. Scrape floor smooth. Drag flat chunks of rock to your site and build a 3 or 4 foot wide base on just 3 sides of your house .

You may need to make a sled of hide with leather straps to pull rocks or turf to your site. Using saws, blades and flat shovels cut grassy turf into large blocks, stack with sticks between layers so turf can air dry.

On top of rocks, stack turf bricks flat or on edge in a herring bone design to form three sides of your house. Walls 3 or 4 feet thick. Stack to edge of roof line. Smooth inside walls.

Hunt for drift wood or birch trees to use as framing inside turf house and roof. Lay turf on roof. If possible, best to build wooden front for house with windows and a door.

Half of the population still lived in turf homes in 1910. By 1960 there were 234 inhabited turf homes in Iceland, most were deserted in the next decade.

The Cod Wars, 1958 – 1975

Who would have guessed that something as harmless as favorite fishing spots could incite wars between two nations? In a way, that's exactly what happened between Iceland and the United Kingdom during the three **Cod Wars** – meaning Fish Wars

In the 1950s and 1970s, the neighboring nations engaged in naval conflicts over fishing waters and territorial claims. Iceland had extended its fishing water borders from 50 nautical miles to 200 nm and the UK believed them to be international waters.

The problem? Iceland is very dependent on **Cod** as its main export and the income from the fishing industry. Icelandic Government increased the distance from its mainland to include the rich fishing waters also used by The United Kingdom. Fishing trawlers from both countries mixed in the fishing areas.

The British government reacted to the change of Iceland boundaries by ordering warships to protect their fishing nets. This is what happened over the next three decades.

British warships fired upon Icelandic fishing boats and patrols.

Icelandic patrols fired on British vessels.

Trawlers, tugboats and frigates were rammed.

Fishing nets were cut.

Each side lost one man.

The 200 nautical miles is now the sea-zone prescribed to nations by the United Nations Convention on the **Law of the Sea**.

The World's Most Precious Genes?

If you lived on a small island far out to sea you'd probably end up marrying your neighbor.

Iceland's population of 332,000 is 90% pure Icelandic. Their genealogy database goes back 1,100 years. Most Icelanders can trace their lineage to a single Viking settler.

It's that unique gene pool that brought neurologist and geneticist Kari Stefansson home after 20 years abroad to found a company called deCODE with the ambitious goal of mapping the genome of the entire country.

A genome is your entire set of DNA, the chemical compound that contains genetic instructions that tells our bodies how to function. More than 150,000 Icelanders have donated their blood samples to this project but not all Icelanders wish to participate in this double blind project. When researchers find a gene mutation or variant, it is easier to trace.

DeCODE discovered a variant a few years ago that confers protection against Alzheimer's disease. It's a rare gene variance found in about 1% of the Icelandic population, and if you carry that variant, you are almost completely protected against Alzheimer's disease. The next step is to replicate what the genetic variant does in the body, in the form of medicine to protect the health of others. Trials are underway on drugs based on that Alzheimer's variant, as well as a new cardiovascular drug by Amgen of California who purchased the company deCODE in 2012.

Interviews with People Either Born in Iceland or Recently Visited There

In 1957 Sjöfn (pronounced Shep) Fridsteindóttir was a 17 year old Icelandic girl with white blond hair. Sjöfn fell in love and married a U.S. soldier stationed in Iceland. After their first son was born she and her husband moved to Pennsylvania where she was baffled by American food. She hadn't learn to cook Icelandic food either, so her husband's big family took her under their wings. Her mother grieved and sent traditional Hangikjot (Hon-key-kurt) to Sjöfn every Christmas for a taste of home. But 911 changed regulations & smoked lamb roast could not be shipped.

In the 1970's Sjöfn's sons remember visiting relatives in Iceland. The smell of sulfur in bath water, everyone drinking strong coffee, thermal hot water piped into every home as a source of heat, and TV was new, only 2 channels showing reruns from America evenings 7:00 to 11:00. Telephone calls between Iceland and America were very expensive.

In 1976 volcanic lava was moving down toward a small Icelandic fishing port. The village men took their fishing boats off shore and started shooting ice cold sea water at the fiery hot lava cooling it enough to save their village's port. Imagine the hissing steam rising off the lava. How brave were the fishermen.

Interview with Joel Sasser, Sjöfn's first son

Icelandic smoked salmon is soft, pink, delicious and abundant in the restaurants. Not like the chewy dried smoked salmon we see in the northwest. Cherie and her husband were in Iceland the end of May and were surprised there were no pots of blooming flowers. Just hardy dandelions.

In July Susan and her husband took a cruise that circled Iceland and stopped so passengers could climb volcanoes and fjord's hillsides. It was windy, the temperature in the 40's. Plenty of flowers were blooming then in the 24 hours of sunshine. Susan loves to knit and purchased skeins of lovely Icelandic yarn at prices similar to the U.S. She admired the hand knit patterned Icelandic sweaters with bold Scandinavian designs. But she gasped at the price of a knit cap - \$45 to \$50, a hand knit sweater - \$250. She just bought more yarn.

Conclusion:

Iceland - an island gem surrounded by icy cold water and bathed by the Northern Lights. Hearty creative people who've endured volcanoes, plagues, lack of traditional building materials, and occupations by foreign governments. They've harnessed bubbling hot springs to heat their homes. They enjoy low crime rates and unarmed police. Most sweet of all, they share this land with elves, trolls and talking cows.

Sources used

www.iceland.is/the-big-picture/people-society/history

guidetoiceland.is/reykjavik-guide/top-9-museums-in-reykjavik

<http://whalesoficeland.is>

www.bbc.com/news/magazine-27903831

www.cnn.com/2017/03/16/health/iceland-genes-genealogy-alzheimers-exp/

Building a Viking-age Icelandic turf house

www.youtube.com/watch?v=c18z3lculam

How to build an Icelandic turf house

[www.treehugger.com design green architecture](http://www.treehugger.com/design/green-architecture)

Photos of turf houses

<https://pinterest.com/pin/346636502542626407>

Mondlukaka – Icelandic Almond Cake**Ingredients:**

- 1 cup butter
- 1 cup sugar
- 4 eggs (separated)
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 1 cup almonds (blanched and finely ground)
- 1 cup flour (sifted)
- ½ teaspoon baking powder
- ½ cup strawberry jam (raspberry or Marionberry preserves)
- 1 cup heavy cream (whipped and sweetened to taste)

Directions:

1. Preheat oven at 350 degrees F
2. Cream butter and gradually add sugar. Beat in egg yolks (1 at a time), beating well after each addition. Stir in vanilla and almonds.
3. Sift together the flour & baking powder and gradually add to batter. Beat egg white till stiff (but not dry), fold into batter.
4. Bake in three 8-inch buttered and floured layer pans for about 30 minutes or till golden brown. Cool at least 5 minutes before removing from pans.
5. Spread jam between cooled layers and cover top and sides with swirls of whipped cream. Serve immediately.

Icelandic Cocoa Soup (Is sometimes served as a main course)**Ingredients:**

3 tablespoons cocoa powder

3 tablespoons sugar

½ teaspoon cinnamon

2 cups water

3 cups milk

1 tablespoon cornstarch

Salt, to taste

Directions:

1. Mix the cocoa powder, sugar and cinnamon in a saucepan.
2. Add the water gradually and stir until smooth.
3. Bring to boil and simmer for 5 minutes.
4. Add the milk, reheat to boiling point and simmer for 2 -3 minutes.
5. Mix the cornstarch with a little cold water, stir into soup and remove from heat.
6. Salt to taste and serve.