



The Ultimate
**PACKING
CHECKLIST**
FOR
ICELAND

by Jewells Chambers

All Things Iceland

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Yay, you're planning a trip to Iceland! I'm excited for you and your upcoming adventure.

I remember my first trip here and all the questions I had, especially about what to pack! I created this checklist to help adventurers just like you to feel confident that you have the essentials (and some optional extras) with you when you arrive.

It covers the summer and winter seasons, so feel free to use the checklists that fit with the season you plan to visit in.

Because Icelandic weather can vary from day to day, it is best to pack layers that you can use depending on your activities.

Along with what to pack for adventures, I also include some options for you if you decide to spend the day in the city or head out for a night of partying.

Happy travels,
Jewells

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Winter



Typically, winter in Iceland starts in November and ends in April. However, you can experience winter-like conditions during the months before or after this time period.

While there can be frequent snow and wind storms during the long, dark nights of winter, the temperatures are not blistering cold. You can expect temperatures around 0° Celsius (32° Fahrenheit) in Reykjavik. As you travel north, the average temperature during this time of year drops a few degrees.

This is the optimal time of year to visit Iceland if you want to see the magical northern lights.

While it is not guaranteed that you will see them during your visit, winter is your best chance. The long hours of darkness during this season are one of the reasons you can possibly view them.

Iceland's winter wonderland will enchant you with its beauty, but to optimize your time here, you need to come prepared with the right essentials.





WINTER PACKING CHECKLIST

Essentials - Clothing & Shoes

- Base layer** - moisture control - This is essentially long underwear and can be made from polyester, Merino wool, nylon and silk. Top and bottoms are good to have during winter here.
- Mid-layer** - insulation - tops made of fleece, wool (like an Icelandic lopapeysa sweater), down or synthetic material. Jackets and vests with these fibers work well over your base layer.
- Outer layer** - protection - a windproof winter coat with a hood that has a water repellent layer. It is best to have pants made for winter conditions that are also wind resistant and water repellent and made from synthetic material.
- Winter boots** with a sole that has good grip (Vibram soles work well) and are water resistant. Winter hiking boots with ankle support are necessary if you plan to go on glacier hikes or when walking on very uneven terrain.
- Pants (casual use)** - jeans or slacks to wear around the city/out to dinner
- Microspikes** - it can be very icy on some Reykjavík sidewalks and on paths in the countryside.
- Windproof gloves** - warm and insulated - preferably a pair with touchscreen tips that allow you to operate your phone or gadgets without having to take your gloves off.
- Windproof and insulated hat**
- Scarf**
- Underwear**



WINTER PACKING CHECKLIST

Essentials - Clothing & Shoes

- Warm socks** - ones made from wool or an insulating synthetic fiber
- Swimwear** - Iceland is known for its swimming pools and hot springs
- Pajamas**

Essentials - Toiletries

- Face and body moisturizer** - it is quite dry here, so these will come in handy.
- Body wash/soap** - if you have a certain one you prefer
- Deodorant**
- Floss**
- Toothpaste**
- Toothbrush**
- Cosmetics** - such as makeup and nail polish
- Any necessary medication**
- Hygiene products** - pads/tampons/diva cup, shaving equipment (Only bring electric tools if they have Europlugs and match the voltage in Iceland.)
- Hair care products** - most accommodations have shampoo and conditioner but definitely bring your own if you prefer a specific product.
- Contacts or glasses** - if either of them is necessary for you to see



WINTER PACKING CHECKLIST

Essentials - Bags

- Luggage** - to pack all of your stuff for this awesome adventure
- Day pack** - a medium sized bag to hold your phone, snacks, water bottle, and any other accessories. One that has a water resistant layer is recommended.

Essentials - Electronics

- Camera**- If you only bring your smartphone and it has a high quality camera, that works just fine. The landscapes are gorgeous here, and you definitely want to capture some photos and videos.
- Travel outlet adapter** - if your rechargeable electronics do not have Europlugs.
- Chargers and cords**

Essentials - Other

- Reusable water bottle** - one that can hold hot or cold liquids is great for this season. The water in the taps all over the country is delicious and is some of the cleanest water on earth.
- Sunglasses** - when the sun is out it can be intense
- Lip balm**
- Passport**
- Credit/Debit cards**



WINTER PACKING CHECKLIST

Non-Essentials

Worth considering if you have room

- Laptop or tablet
- Travel journal
- Headphones
- Ear plugs
- Hand/toe warmers
- Travel First Aid kit
- External powerpack
- Sunscreen
- Cards or games
- Travel/Guide books
- Jewelry
- Skis/snowboard
- Towel - only if your accommodations doesn't provide one
- Sandals or shower shoes
- Waterproof bag to hold wet items like your swimwear and/or towel, if you don't want to use a plastic bag
- Handkerchief or tissues to blow your nose
- Photography gear
- Spare batteries for equipment

A scenic landscape featuring a river, yellow flowers, a waterfall, and mountains under a dramatic sky. The scene is captured during the golden hour, with warm sunlight illuminating the mountains and the waterfall. The foreground is dominated by a dense field of bright yellow flowers, likely buttercups, growing along the riverbank. The river flows through the center of the frame, reflecting the light from the sky. In the background, a large waterfall cascades down a rocky cliffside, surrounded by lush green vegetation. The mountains in the distance are partially covered in snow, adding to the scenic beauty. The sky is filled with soft, colorful clouds, transitioning from a pale blue to a warm orange and red near the horizon.

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Summer

In contrast to winter, the summer season means long, bright days and warmer weather. You can experience the midnight sun (24-hour brightness) in June, July and part of August. Even if you don't visit during those months, the country enjoys considerably longer days from early April to early September.

The average temperature in southern Iceland during the summer ranges from 10-13° Celsius (50-55° Fahrenheit). Some days the temperature might even go up to 25° Celsius (77° Fahrenheit) but that is considered a very warm day in Iceland

To be safe, it is better to plan for the average temperature or a little lower, and be pleasantly surprised if better weather occurs.

Intense wind and rain storms can happen during summer, so a water-proof outer layer is a must on your checklist.

This time of the year is my favorite because the bright days allow for you to go on so many adventures out in nature.





SUMMER PACKING CHECKLIST

Essentials - Clothing & Shoes

- Base layer** - moisture control (top only) - This is essentially long underwear and can be made from polyester, Merino wool, nylon and silk. Just tops are fine for summer but feel free to bring one bottom base layer if you are prone to feeling cold or plan to be in the highlands.
- Mid-layer** - insulation (top & bottom) - The top can be made of light weight fleece, wool (like an Icelandic lopapeysa sweater), down vest or synthetic vest or jacket. The best material for bottoms are synthetic hiking pants that are wind and water resistant.
- Outer layer** - protection - a windproof jacket with a hood that has a water repellent layer. Waterproof pants that are easy to put on and take off are must if you plan to spend extensive amounts of time in Icelandic nature.
- Hiking boots** with a sole that has good grip for wet surfaces (Vibram soles work well) and are water resistant. Hiking boots with ankle support are necessary for going on glacier hikes or when walking on very uneven terrain.
- Pants (casual use)** - jeans or slacks to wear around the city or after a day of adventures
- Wind & water resistant gloves** (lightweight) - preferably a pair with touchscreen tips that allow you to operate your phone or gadgets without having to take your gloves off. Most of the time you might not need them, but if it rains a lot and is windy, your hands can become quite cold.
- Windproof and insulated hat**
- Underwear**
- Socks** for hiking and casual use



SUMMER PACKING CHECKLIST

Essentials - Clothing & Shoes

- Swimwear** - Iceland is known for its swimming pools and hot springs
- Sneakers or comfortable shoes** to change into after wearing hiking boots or to go out in the city or towns

Essentials - Toiletries

- Face and body moisturizer** - it is quite dry here, so these will come in handy
- Body wash/soap** - if you have a certain one you prefer
- Deodorant**
- Floss**
- Toothpaste**
- Toothbrush**
- Cosmetics** - such as makeup and nail polish
- Any necessary medication**
- Hygiene products** - pads/tampons/diva cup, shaving equipment (Only bring electric tools if they have Europlugs and match the voltage in Iceland.)
- Hair care products** - most accommodations have shampoo and conditioner but definitely bring your own if you prefer a specific product.
- Contacts or glasses** - if either of them is necessary for you to see



SUMMER PACKING CHECKLIST

Essentials - Bags

- Luggage** - to pack all of your stuff for this awesome adventure
- Day pack** - a medium sized bag to hold your phone, snacks, water bottle, and any other accessories. One that has a water resistant layer is recommended.

Essentials - Electronics

- Camera** - If you only bring your smartphone and it has a high quality camera, that works just fine. The landscapes are gorgeous here, and you definitely want to capture some photos and videos.
- Travel outlet adapter** - if your rechargeable electronics do not have Europlugs
- Chargers and cords**

Essentials - Other

- Sleep mask** - Because it is bright outside all day during the summer months, many people find it hard to sleep. Some accommodations have black out curtains, but they are often not enough to block out all of the light. A face mask will solve that problem for you.
- Sunscreen** - The sun is very strong here and you can tan or burn quickly.
- Sunglasses** - When the sun is out it can be intense.
- Reusable water bottle** - The water in the taps all over the country is delicious and is some of the cleanest water on earth.
- Lip Balm with SPF**
- Passport**
- Credit and/or debit cards**



SUMMER PACKING CHECKLIST

Non-Essentials

Worth considering if you have room

- Buff** - which can be used as a scarf, hat or to pull your hair back
- Fly net that goes over your head** - If you plan to go to the Mývatn area during the summer, there can be a lot of little annoying flies (midges) that will try to fly in your ears, eyes and any open crevice. A fly net can protect you from them.
- Neoprene socks or shoes** - if you are going hiking and plan to cross rivers in Iceland, these socks will keep your feet warm. One of the best buys if you have to cross a river.
- Walking sticks** - for hiking or on terrain that is very uneven or challenging
- Hiking backpack** - While the day pack is fine, a backpack designed for hiking provides more comfort.
- Travel journal**
- Headphones**
- Jewelry**
- Towel** - only if your accommodations doesn't provide one
- Sandals or shower shoes**
- Waterproof bag** to hold wet items like your swimwear and/or towel, if you don't want to use a plastic bag
- Handkerchief or tissues** to blow your nose
- Photography gear**
- Spare batteries for equipment**
- Cards or games**
- External powerpack**
- Laptop or tablet**
- Travel First aid kit**
- Ear plugs**



It is not necessary for you to have different clothes than what is listed on the essentials checklist to visit a museum, go to dinner at a nice restaurant or enjoy a night of partying.

However, it might interest you to know that people that live in Iceland often dress up when they go out, regardless of the time of the year.

You will probably see people wearing clothes that don't match the season or shoes that are not suitable for the current weather.

If you pack casual to dressy casual clothing for these occasions, you will fit right in.

Some examples of those styles include a nice pair of jeans or dress pants, nice shoes, dresses, and button down shirts.

There is no pressure to dress this way, so do what feels right to you.



IMPORTANT TO REMEMBER

THE DANGER OF WEARING COTTON

Avoid wearing clothes made of cotton, like jeans or flannel shirts, when you plan to go on adventures like hiking, glacier walks or any activity that causes you to sweat while being outdoors for long periods of time. Cotton holds onto moisture. When that happens it becomes heavy and will make you feel cold. It is totally fine to wear cotton if you just plan to walk around town.

TAKE ON AN ICELANDIC WAY OF THINKING

One of the most important things to always carry with you in Iceland is the understanding that due to unpredictable weather, your plans may be altered or cancelled. It's no fun when it happens, but it is just part of the reality of being in this country. You'll enjoy your time here a lot more if you go with the flow and adopt the Icelandic saying "Þetta reddast" (phonetically is Th-eht-ah red-dasht). This translates to "It will all work out okay".



GET THE MOST OUT OF YOUR ADVENTURE

During the next few days you will receive an email from me that will provide you with my top tips for traveling in Iceland. Keep a look out for it, so you can get the most out of your adventure. If at anytime you have questions, you are always welcome to reach out to me via social media or email me at jewells@fromforeigntofamiliar.com.

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