



Discover the Ideal Season to Explore Iceland

Description

Iceland: Summer and Winter Comparative Photo Gallery

“THE PROBLEM WITH DRIVING AROUND ICELAND IS THAT YOU’RE BASICALLY CONFRONTED BY A NEW SOUL-ENRICHING, BREATH-TAKING, LIFE-AFFIRMING NATURAL SIGHT EVERY FIVE GODD*** MINUTES. IT’S TOTALLY EXHAUSTING.”

Stephen Markley

Iceland is where fire meets ice, where raw nature puts on a show that compares to few others. It is a place that is full of life but also extremely barren. It is mysterious, powerful, and majestic—a paradise that few have ventured to see. The question then becomes: When is the ideal season to visit Iceland?

Iceland is drawing a lot of visitors, even during volcanic activity, and is becoming a popular destination for travelers. It is the number one industry on the island. Why not? It has everything from a modern cosmopolitan city with a young vibe, a thriving art scene, and incredible cuisine to vast inhabited lands untouched by man. The landscape is unique to any part of the world, and when you think you have seen it all, it blows you away again. How many places can you find one of the most famous luxury spas in the world and, thirty minutes later, hike to an actively erupting volcano, then end your day with a city with thriving nightlife? This is Iceland, a must for everyone’s bucket list.

Did we mention it has the deepest black sand beaches in the world, lagoons filled with icebergs, waterfalls that at every turn, massive glaciers, some of the freshest seafood in the world, Northern Lights, the Midnight Sun, and Puffins!



This is not our first Iceland Rodeo

Iceland has no rodeos, in case you got a bit excited there. We are so drawn to Iceland that we have

been there four times: twice in the winter and twice in the late summer. They were completely different experiences, but all wonderful, which has led us to ponder which is our ideal season to visit Iceland.

Check out our recent Iceland post – [Ultimate Guide to Iceland's Glacier Lagoons](#)

Joelle was the first to go. Her first visit was a brief one. At all times, Icelandair offers a great deal for a free layover on any flight to and from Europe. Many people choose Icelandair's airline to get to Europe as their fares tend to be very reasonable for flights. All their flights have a layover in Reykjavik, Iceland.

That was what happened on Joelle's first visit. Icelandair had the best prices when heading to France solo for a family wedding. When she read about a stopover in Iceland for no additional cost, she grabbed it, not missing any opportunity to see someplace new. It was a short visit, 34 hours, but what a magnificent 34 hours it was! She fell in love with the country and its beauty. A couple of years later, she and her husband were joined by her brother and sister-in-law for a one-week trip in late winter. Snowmobiling on a glacier and exploring an ice cave were highlights of that fantastic trip (see pics in the Open Space Gallery below). The dramatic differences in the settings during the two seasons were remarkable.

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Wanderers Compass travels to Iceland

A few years later, we made a stopover for a few days on the way to a Nordic nation adventure. It was a late winter Iceland trip, and we saw incredible sights and some crazy weather. Ryan wanted to return one day during the summer months.

In the summer of 2021, Ryan learned he had some use-it-or-lose-it vacation time. It was an easy decision about where to go. The trip was a five-day driving adventure, not long enough, but appreciative of the time we did have.



When is the best season to visit Iceland?

We have received a common question from friends, family, and readers: when is the ideal season to go to Iceland? Even more specifically, they asked us what is the best month to go to Iceland. That is the most challenging question to answer, as we could go on about the pros and cons of each. But then we realize we can present facts about the weather, which we will, and other reasons, but why not let you decide based on the photos?

What draws you to a place? What intrigues you the most when you see the photos? We also have a unique perspective, as we will do several side-by-side pictures based on the season. You can then see what calls to you.



What is our favorite season to visit Iceland?

Do we have an ideal season to visit Iceland? We have never had a bad trip to Iceland. We have had some crazy weather and dangerous driving conditions, but that only made it a grander adventure. Joelle, if she had to pick one, it would be winter. The scenery is close to perfection, with the whitest

snow and deepest blues you will ever see. It is pristine, and it is mother nature at its very best. There is peacefulness and power at the same time.

Then there is awe to stand in the snow, with biting freezing wind at your back while watching boiling water come from the ground before you. While it is 32 degrees and snowing, you are in a bathing suit outdoors for hours, unfazed by the cold in water that naturally comes heated up from the earth. Then there are the people. Resilient, tough, talented, kind, and friendly. They are the icing on the cake. This is Iceland, a never-ending wonder.



The Weather

Let us discuss Iceland's weather and the pros and cons of the different seasons when visiting Iceland. Here are some basic facts:

1. Iceland has never had hot weather. Average summer temperatures are 46-58°F. When we visited, we did see it get into the low 60s. Winters don't go much below freezing, as the mild Gulf Stream air moderates the temperature.
Summer 46-58 °F (8-14 °C)
Spring 31-49 °F (-1-9 °C)
Fall 33-53°F (1-12 °C)
Winter 30-39 °F (-1-4 °C)
2. This is a very windy place year-round. It is said it is the 3rd windiest place on earth, and the first two don't have inhabitants. (that is a fact Icelandair likes to share)
3. Iceland has a lot of precipitation; it comes year-round, such as rain in the summer, snow in the winter, and a mix of both in the spring and fall. September is their wettest month of the year.
4. If you don't like the weather, the saying in Iceland goes, "Wait two minutes, and it will change." That was our experience.
5. With wetness likely impacting any time of year you go, your best friend will have waterproof pants, good waterproof boots, and a hooded rain-resistant coat/jacket. Leave the umbrella home; we are talking wind that sometimes knocks doors off cars.
6. There is sunshine and a lot of it. It is the land of the midnight sun. There are 21 hours of sunlight, which translates to short winter days, leaving you more hours to catch the Northern Lights.



Iceland's Seasons

Though the ideal season to visit Iceland is in the summer months, visitors are drawn to Iceland year-round. The seasons and experiences are so vastly different. Winter brings pristine beauty that is not seen in many places on Earth. While surrounded by the whitest snow, you will find hot springs with boiling water from the earth's core. It is when "fire meets ice" is on its most remarkable display. If we discourage a time, it would be December and January, which days are very short. Of course, unless you seek the Northern Lights, there lies the issue. Is there a wrong time or the best season to visit Iceland?

One of the biggest dangers in Iceland is the weather, which can be unpredictable and change fast, especially between regions. The saying goes, wait two minutes, and it will change, and it does. During summer, the weather patterns are reasonably tame, though heavy and sporadic rainfall is not uncommon. In winter, they can be extreme. Heavy snow and rain mean that many roads become impassable. If you do not prepare adequate equipment and clothing, the consequences could be dire.

Summers have begun to trend warmer in recent years, reaching the 60s, which is said to be due to global warming. Evenings can be cold in the summer. Dress in layers, but that is the rule to follow year-round. Winters don't get much below freezing during the day, but the stiff winds make it feel much colder. Iceland has mild temperatures overall, but more storms and wind can play havoc. It makes for a

pretty fantastic adventure.



Planning a trip to Iceland? Check out our Iceland Travel Guide [here](#).

Now, let's embark on our visual journey of Iceland's beautiful seasons.

We will provide the visual tools to help you determine the season that most interests you. Four sections compare winter and summer: Open Spaces, Reykjavik, Siglufjordur, and the Blue Lagoon.

The Wide Open Spaces of Iceland

Most of Iceland's islands have wide-open spaces with few inhabitants. The population of Iceland is 350,000, and 80% of them live in the two cities, Reykjavik to the south and Akureyri to the north. The landscape is rugged and gentle at the same time. There are massive glaciers, rugged mountains, endless fields for grazing, and beaches to wander. It is as dramatic in the summer as it is in the winter.

The seasons in Iceland are always unpredictable. The winter season, though, is the most impressive and also the most challenging. In both visits in the winter, severe storms hit that made driving treacherous and scary at times. That said, what fun it was! We would not trade it in hindsight. We know people who did Ring Road over ten days in the winter with no issues. Our suggestion is to go and don't worry about the weather. However, stay on top of it at all times and plan accordingly.

The four images compare winter to summer; click the arrow to see the difference



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Open Spaces Gallery

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We have tried and tested lots of travel gear and accessories. Check out our page on our [favorite travel gear](#).

Reykjavik

Reykjavik is the capital of Iceland, where 60% of the 394,000 people on the island live. This charming “big” city has incredible food, shopping, lively bars, vibrant nightlife, lovely colorful houses, landmark sites, unique districts, waterfront, excellent museums, and cultural richness. It has it all!

Having stayed in Reykjavik on all four trips, we find it impressive how the weather does not matter in this city. There was a significant snowstorm at one time, but the streets were passable, and people were out and about. In the picture below, you may not even tell which is summer and which is winter if not for the flowers or snow on the ground.

The three images compare winter to summer; click the arrow to see the difference





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All Seasons Reykjavik Gallery

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Siglufjordur

Siglufjordur is a quaint, picturesque fishing village in Iceland's northernmost town. It sits on the spectacular, narrow Hedinsfjordur coastal fjord, less than 30 miles from the Arctic Circle. The striking beauty of this fjord, with its steep, dramatic mountains, seems to cradle this small village. The lovely, bright, colorful homes and businesses that grace the water's edge are postcard-perfect. A charming harbor with a massive fjord in the background is breathtaking.

We have had the privilege to visit here both in the winter and summer. Both are spectacular but so completely different. The comparatives are striking. The winter is the perfect time for the Northern Lights and skiing, with a top destination for heli-skiers. In the summer, hiking, boating, and fishing are popular here. The village of Siglufjordur is a well-kept secret that few get to experience, but those who fall in love with this little piece of Iceland heaven.

The three images compare winter to summer; click the arrow to see the difference

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Siglufjordur Photo Gallery





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Blue Lagoon Resort and Spa

Just a short drive from Reykjavík, the Blue Lagoon is one of the world's most well-known spas that draws people to Iceland solely to soak in its seawater with magic powers. The setting is in the middle of an 800-year-old massive lava field. The water in the lagoon comes from the Svartsengi Geothermal Power Plant in the distance.

A brilliant idea was born due to a request made by one of the power plant employees, which must have sounded crazy at the time. Valur Margeirsson asked permission to swim in the geothermal pool

created by the Svartsengi plant. He had psoriasis and did not want to swim in a public pool. The soothing water healed his skin. When others with the same condition tried it, their skin improved significantly. Today the Blue Lagoon Clinic is an internationally recognized psoriasis treatment facility. Insurance companies worldwide have been known to cover visits to the facility for people with psoriasis.

The majority of guests come for the serenity the Blue Lagoon provides. Imagine soaking in geothermally heated seawater rich in minerals and surrounded by epic landscapes. Relaxing in this environment is good for your skin and brings tranquility to your mind, body, and soul. The iconic white silica mud mask is also free to all lagoon guests, and you will see many white-masked clients wandering with big grins on their faces.

People spend all day in the water

We were skeptical; how could someone spend hours in this water? All we can say is trust us; you can. Joelle has been three times, Ryan once. There is something special here, and time melts away. The Blue Lagoon is enormous, and it can take a while to roam the space in the healing waters.

Over time, the site has expanded to include an exclusive hotel/resort with gourmet restaurants and a spa extraordinaire. That is a bit rich for our blood, but you can experience the Blue Lagoon with a day visit and still leave in awe. We have done this in the summer and winter. Winter is best—there is nothing like spending hours outside in a swimsuit in freezing weather and being utterly comfortable. It is delightful when it is snowing.

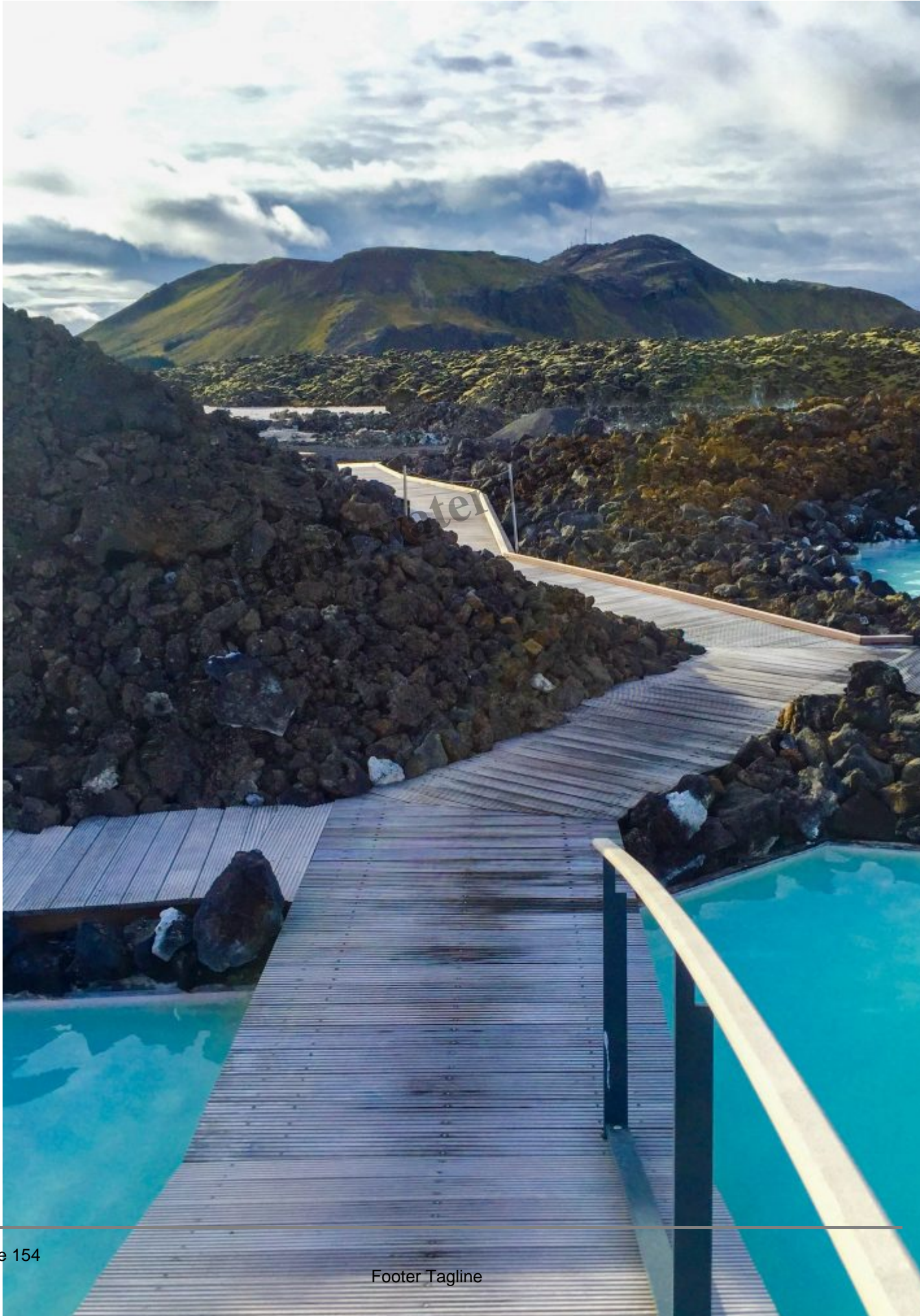
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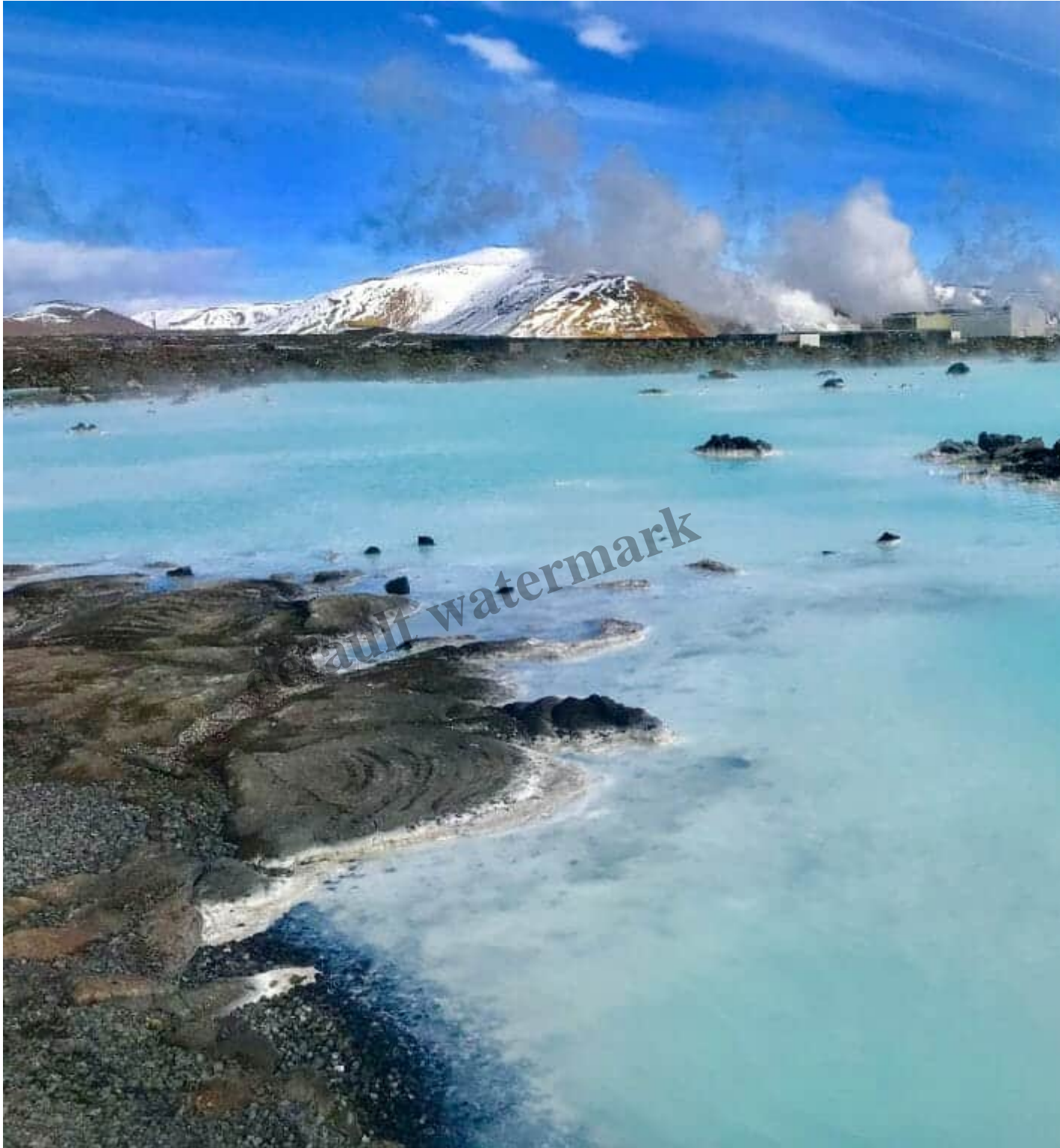


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Reservations are a must at Blue Lagoon! Visit their [official site](#) for more info by clicking [here](#).

A Winter and Summer Video

Because it is all about showing you both the good and crazy side of travel, don't let the winter driving discourage you; it is very much part of Iceland's adventure.

Looking for the ideal season to visit Iceland

Looking for the ideal season to visit Iceland

Where to stay in Iceland

Depending on where you are in Iceland, there could be plentiful choices or only a tiny handful. In the two big cities, you will find many options, and most of the hotels are very nice. Iceland can be pricey, so be prepared to open your wallet a bit more. In the more remote areas, the places are limited and rustic. Do your research. We always stay at the Hilton Nordica in Reykjavik; they do a great job. Downtown Reykavickk has excellent options, and it is nice to be able to get out in the evening for a stroll. The waterfront has many good choices, too.

Added thoughts

We hope this has guided you to the ideal season to visit Iceland. Do you like cold weather, snow, the northern lights, or spring-like weather with green fields and rain? Let us know what season you are most interested in seeing.

If you do go, we would love to hear about your experience. Whatever you pick, remember to get out and enjoy this beautiful world. Stay prepared, and always remember to make the best of whatever comes your way. A bad situation can create a learning experience and a good story, but a bad attitude can make for a miserable time.

Iceland is an extraordinary destination. We can't recommend it enough, no matter the season. We hope this remarkable country makes it onto your bucket list.



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