

INTERNATIONAL PHOTOGRAPHER™

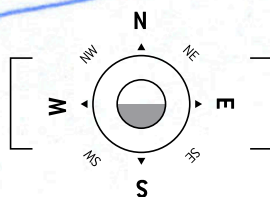
The world through your viewfinder

ICELAND

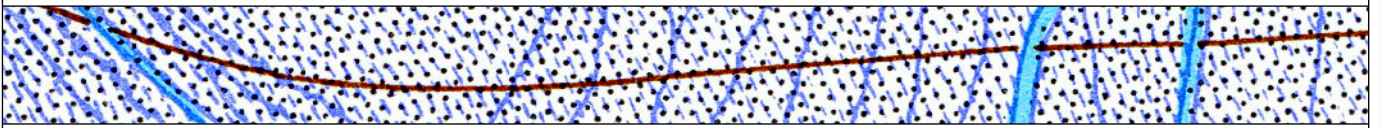
eROADBOOK

English Version

1091



INTRODUCTION



03	.....	FOREWORD
04	.....	BASIC PLANNING POINTERS
05	.....	WHAT VEHICLE SHOULD I HIRE?
06	.....	WHICH WAY ROUND SHOULD I GO?
07	.....	LIGHT AND CLIMATE 1/2
09	.....	PHOTOGRAPHIC SUBJECTS 1/3
12	.....	WHERE ARE THE BEST PLACES TO PHOTOGRAPH (SEA)BIRDS?
13	.....	HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE TO EXPLORE THE KEY SITES?
14	.....	WHEN IS THE BEST TIME OF DAY TO PHOTOGRAPH THEM?
15	.....	UNMISSABLE WATERFALLS 1/3

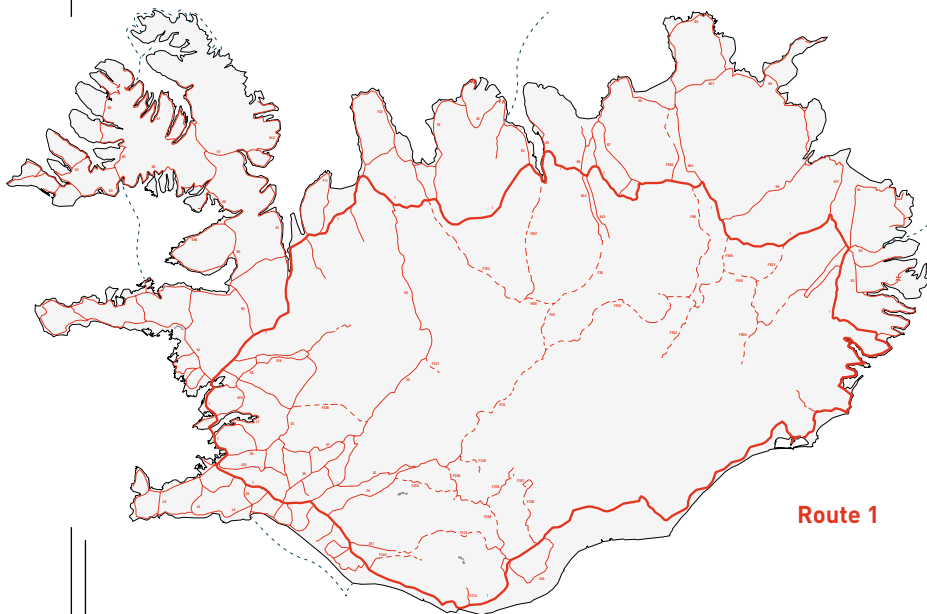
BASIC PLANNING POINTERS

Route 1 (the main highway that circles the island) is **precisely 1,339 km** (832 miles) long, as one reader pointed out to me recently.

We took 24 days to complete our trip, including flights. I agree that this is a fairly long trip, but necessary if you want to see everything that we did.

So why do I say that I covered 5,200 km (3,231 miles)?

But don't despair if you're planning a shorter trip!



> **10 days is enough to get round the country** (which is 1/5 the size of France).

> **15 days will allow you to see the essential.**

Only got one week?

No means to rent a 4x4?

Don't panic!

> **The area around REYKJAVIK is extremely rich in places to see and photograph: the REYKJANES PENINSULA**, with its mysterious lakes and lunar landscapes, unfolds

Quite simply, because we didn't stick to Route 1; far from it!

before you as soon as you land.

Truth be told, I hadn't planned on covering so much ground; indeed, I didn't think I'd have time to see the **WESTFJORDS** on the north-west peninsula.

> **The south coast** is just a two-hour drive from the capital, with hundreds of natural wonders, including **VÍK**, the **DYRHÓLAEY** promontory, and "star" waterfalls such as **SKÓGAFOSS**.

In fact, during my initial planning I'd even thought of bypassing the **EASTERN FJORDS**. What a mistake that would have been! Luckily I changed my mind.

> **If you decide to head north**, you'll find that the **SNÆFELLSNES PENINSULA** (just two hours from the capital) concentrates the best of Iceland; this wild and magical place offers a **glacier, volcanoes, luxuriant fauna and flora**, and the **KIRKJUFELL** (church mountain) – a natural work of art in a mineral landscape.

We ended up sticking to the final plan drawn up just before we left, with the **WESTFJORDS** remaining a possibility.

As you may have seen from reading the online ROADTRIP, we succeeded in seeing what I believe to be the essential (**thanks to an intense schedule**), with full days rich in discoveries.

Iceland will amaze you, whatever your resources, and whatever time you have available, just wait and see! And since it's only three hours from London or Paris (5½ hours from New York), there's not a moment to lose!

WHAT VEHICLE SHOULD I HIRE?

Unless you're familiar with Iceland, then it's quite natural to have lots of questions regarding the best vehicle to rent, since you'll want to make the most of your road trip in the best conditions.

If you've read the online ROADTRIP, then you'll know that I didn't beat about the bush, but rented a **Hummer H2**. This monster now belongs to the past, since it's no longer built, but you'll still find some on the Icelandic roads.

There's no shame in renting a huge 4x4 in Iceland; they were designed for precisely this kind of terrain.

However, I should reassure you by pointing out that (fortunately!) it's not essential to hire a vehicle of this type. Automobile rental prices are very high in Iceland, even more so for 4x4s.

So what should you hire?

Let's start by considering the kinds of road that you're likely to drive on in Iceland:

- **Surfaced road** (such as Route 1 that circles the island): suitable for all kinds of vehicle.

- **Track/dirt road**: accessible by all kinds of vehicle, but since the quality, width, and surfacing of this type of track varies, you may encounter some difficulties, such as potholes, corrugated metal sheeting, and loose chippings.

- **Difficult track** (indicated by the letter **F**): requires a 4x4, owing to several difficulties, including irregular surfacing, steep slopes, and fords (across streams or rivers).

The use of a 4x4 on this kind of track is not just a recommendation, but a legal requirement, enforced by heavy fines!

A certain level of experience is required to drive on F tracks, since they're used very infrequently, and are located in remote areas where there's no phone signal. Consequently, you may find it very expensive to get help, and to extricate both yourself and your vehicle, should you get into trouble.

Is a 4x4 absolutely necessary? No!

It all depends on your program, your aims, and the duration of your trip.

If you're on a tight budget, you can mainly get by without a 4x4, since most of the photographic spots are accessible with a simple 2x4. You can even cross the country via the Highlands, since Track 35 is not an F track.

So if you haven't got a 4x4, but are still keen on seeing LAKAGIGAR (which involves taking the redoubtable F206), how do you do it?

There's a simple solution, which is to take a bus each time you wish to visit an area that's not easily accessible.

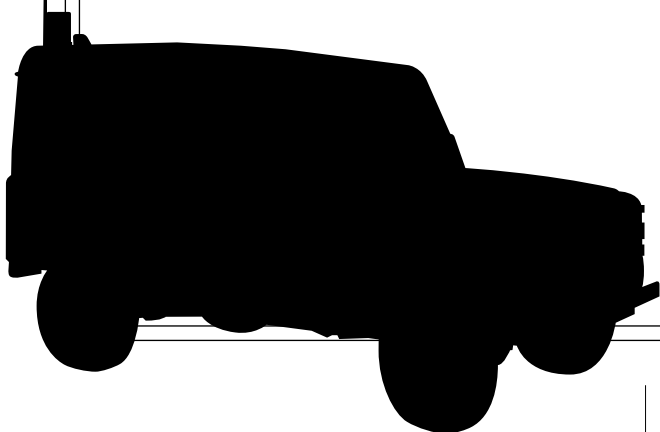
But if you want to be totally independent, and cross the Highlands under your own steam, experiencing the never-fading excitement of fording rivers and streams, then you'll need a 4x4.

I should point out that there are some 4x4s which are available for hire at affordable prices. One is the Suzuki Jimny, which is a very good car, but unsuitable for anything more than a couple traveling light, since it's rather small!

Quite apart from its all-terrain qualities, a 4x4 also has the advantage of a high body.

The Icelandic roads are not kind to motor vehicles, with loose chippings constantly flying up and striking the passenger compartment, something to which lower vehicles are particularly vulnerable.

Indeed, there is even a "gravel protection insurance" you can purchase, to protect yourself against the costs of any such damage.



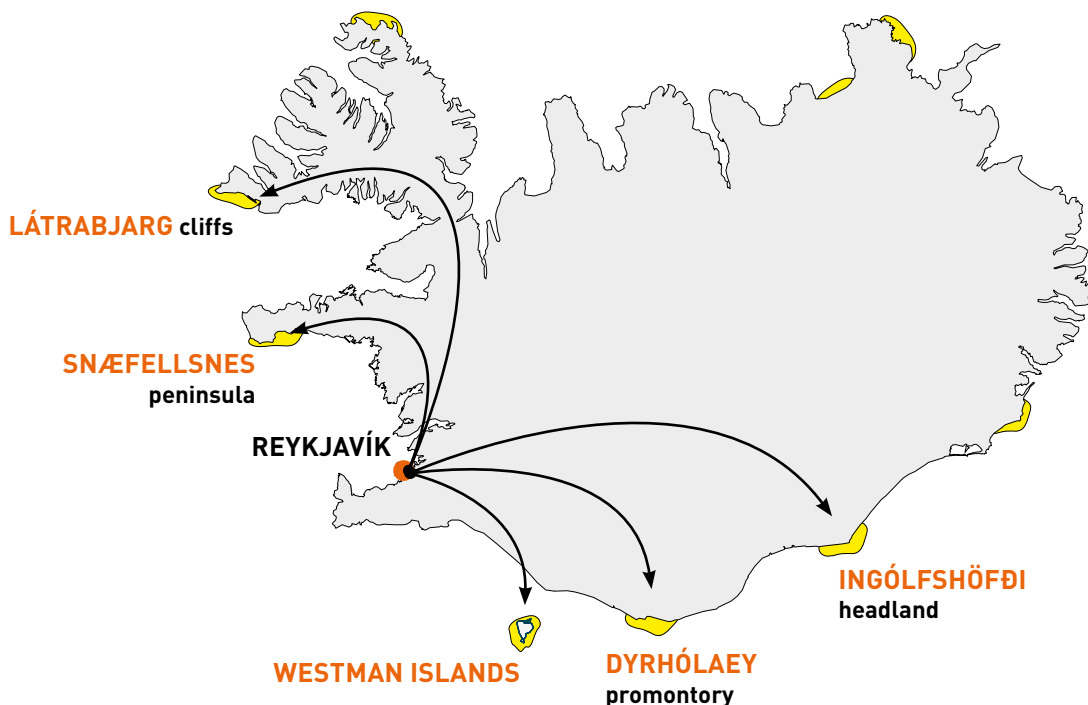
WHERE ARE THE BEST PLACES TO PHOTOGRAPH (SEA)BIRDS?



I am often asked: “where’s best to photograph birds?”

Seabirds may be found almost everywhere on Iceland’s coast, but not all the time – the ideal period is the month of June. They tend to remain near the sea, since this is their source of food, and on the cliffs, where they nest and can hide from predators.

These are the key sites that come to mind:



But not all birds share the same behavior, and some will make every effort to keep as far away from you as possible!

The cliffs are the real places to watch **Puffins**, which are more vulnerable than some other birds, and potential victims of predators such as the **Great Skua**. You can see puffins on the **DYRHÓLAEY** promontory, the **WESTMAN ISLANDS**, and the **LÁTRABJARG** cliffs. **The Arctic Tern**, which is swift and aggressive, may be spotted in less sheltered spots; I saw many of them on the **JÖKULSÁRLÓN** glacial lake.

The menacing **Great Skua** nests on the ground, and so chooses relatively remote and uninhabited areas; you can see a lot of them on the **INGÓLFSHÖFÐI** headland.

HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE TO EXPLORE THE KEY SITES?

THE SOUTH

- **LANDMANNALAUGAR** Estimated exploration time: **1 to 2 days**
- **SKAFTAFELL** Estimated exploration time: **1 day**
- **REYKJANES PENINSULA** Estimated exploration time: **1 day**
- **GOLDEN CIRCLE** Estimated exploration time: **1 day**
- **VÍK & DYRHÓLAEY PROMONTORY** Estimated exploration time: **1 day**
- **WESTMAN ISLANDS** Estimated exploration time: **1 day**
- **LAKAGIGAR** Estimated exploration time: **1 day**, including 5-hour return trip]
- **INGÓLFSHÖFÐI** Estimated exploration time: **½ day**
- **JÖKULSÁRLÓN** Estimated exploration time: **½ day**
- **GLYMUR WATERFALL** Estimated exploration time: **½ day**, including 3-hour hike there and back

THE EAST

- **THE FJORDS** Estimated exploration time: **1½ days**
- **HALLORMSSTAÐUR FOREST** Estimated exploration time: **½ day**
- **HENGIFOSS WATERFALL** Estimated exploration time: **½ day**, including 3-hour hike there and back

THE NORTH

- **MÝVATN LAKE** Estimated exploration time: **2 days**
- **JÖKULSÁRGLJÚFUR** Estimated exploration time: **1 day**
- **GRIMSEY ISLAND** Estimated exploration time: **1 day**
- **HVÍTSERKUR ARCH** Estimated exploration time: **2 hours**
- **VATNSNES PENINSULA** Estimated exploration time: **½ day**
- **GLAUMBÆR FARM** Estimated exploration time: **2 hours**

THE WEST

- **SNÆFELLSNESS PENINSULA** Estimated exploration time: **2 days** > 1 for the south, 1 for the north

THE WESTFJORDS

- **THE FJORDS** Estimated exploration time: **2 to 3 days** including:
- **LATRAGJARG** Estimated exploration time: **½ day**
- **DYNJANDI** Estimated exploration time: **3 hours**
- **SANDAFELL VIEWPOINT** Estimated exploration time: **3 hours**

UNMISSABLE WATERFALLS 3/3

EAST

HENGIFOSS

Meaning/nickname: **Hanging Falls**

Access: **easy, but involves a 1½ hour hike**

Viewpoints: **a little way downstream from it, unless you are prepared to get your feet wet to approach it much closer**

Feature: **the horizontal red strata of the rock make it unique; third highest falls in Iceland, at 118 meters (387 feet)**

LITLANESFOSS

Meaning/nickname: **unknown**

Access: **easy**

Viewpoints: **from the left bank, halfway up**

Feature: **slender, surrounded by basalt columns**

GUFUFOSS

Meaning/nickname: **unknown**

Access: **easy**

Viewpoints: **water level**

Feature: **very beautiful, in a lovely setting**

CENTER

FAGRIFOSS

Meaning/nickname: **Beautiful Falls**

Access: **medium (situated after a ford on the F206)**

Viewpoints: **very beautiful elevated viewpoint over the falls and the canyon**

Feature: **sublime!**

HÁIFOSS & GRANNY

Meaning/nickname: **High Falls and Neighbor**

Access: **easy**

Viewpoints: **numerous elevated viewpoints from the opposite bank**

Feature: **very high (122 meters/400 feet), falling into a gorge**

ÓFÆRUFOS

Meaning/nickname: **Uncrossable Falls**

Access: **difficult, 4x4 required**

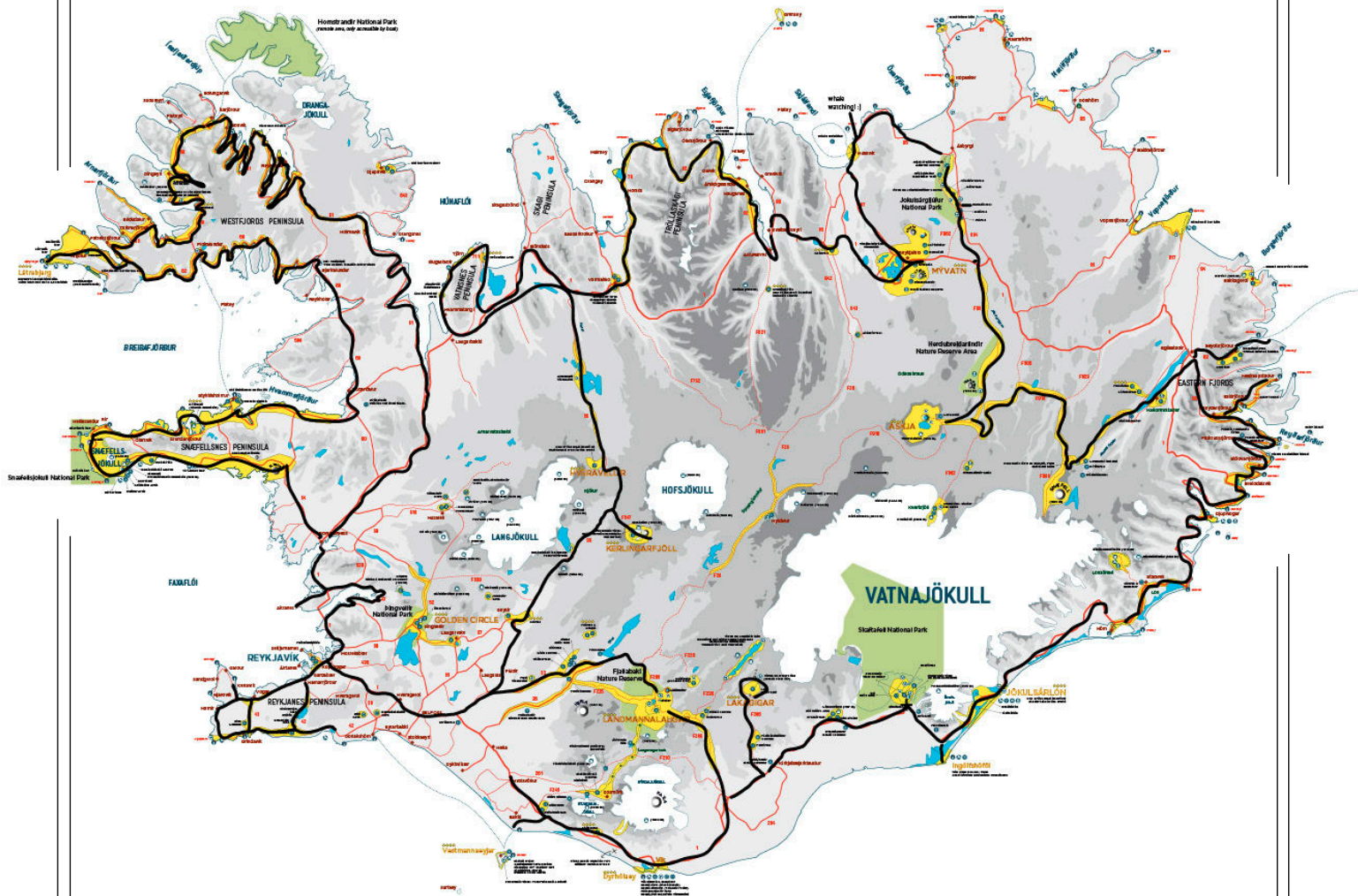
Viewpoints: **water level**

Feature: **very high waterfall, once spanned by a natural bridge that collapsed in the 1980s**

THE ROADTRIP

ICELAND

eROADBOOK



GLOBAL TRIP
5,200 km - 3,231 miles

DAY 1 - Paris > Reykjavik

DAY 2 - Reykjavik > Track F208 north > Landmannalaugar

DAY 3 - Landmannalaugar > Track F208 south > Vík y Myrdal

DAY 4 - Vík y Myrdal > Reynisdrangar > Dyrhólaey promontory > Skógafoss

DAY 5 - Glúfrafoss > Seljalandsfoss > Hvolsvöllur > Sólheimajökull > Vík y Myrdal > Kirkjubæjarklaustur

DAY 6 - Foss á Siðu > Ingólfshöfði > Skaftafell Area > Kirkjubæjarklaustur

DAY 7 - Track F206 > Lakagigar > Fagrifoss > Jökulsárlón

DAY 8 - Jökulsárlón > Breidarlón > Höfn

DAY 9 - East fjords : Djúpvogur > Fáskrúðsfjörður > Neskaupstaður

DAY 10 - Neskaupstaður > Egilsstaðir > Gufufoss > Seyðisfjörður > Hallormsstadur

DAY 11 - Litlanesfoss > Hengifoss > Track F910 > Askja

DAY 12 - Track F88 > Jökulsárgljúfur area > Dettifoss > Selfoss > Hafragilsfoss > Hljóðaklettur - Rauðhólar > Asbyrgi

DAY 13 - Húsavík whale watching > Myvatn > Leirhnjúkur > Námafjall

DAY 14 - Kröflustöð Krafla Power Station > Viti > Grjótagjá > Hverfjall > Dimmuborgir > Höfði nature reserve > Vindbelgjarfjall

DAY 15 - Goðafoss > Akureyri > Tröllaskagi peninsula > Glaumbær > Blönduós

DAY 16 - Vatnsnes peninsula > Hvítserkur arch > Illugastaðir > Ánastaðarstapi > Route 35 north > Hveravellir

DAY 17 - Kerlingarfjöll > Route 35 south > Geysir

DAY 18 - Geysir > Gullfoss > Thingvellir > Eldborg

DAY 19 - Snaefellsnes peninsula (south) > Hellissandur

DAY 20 - Snaefellsnes peninsula (north) > Hellissandur > Kirkjufell > Stykkishólmur > Westfjords > Flókalundur

DAY 21 - Látrabjarg cliffs > Dynjandi > Sandafell > Ísafjörður

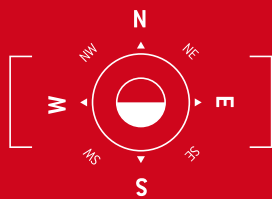
DAY 22 - Ísafjörður > Route 1 > Akranes

DAY 23 - Reykjanes peninsula > Reykjavik

DAY 24 - Reykjavik > Paris

APPENDICES

The South

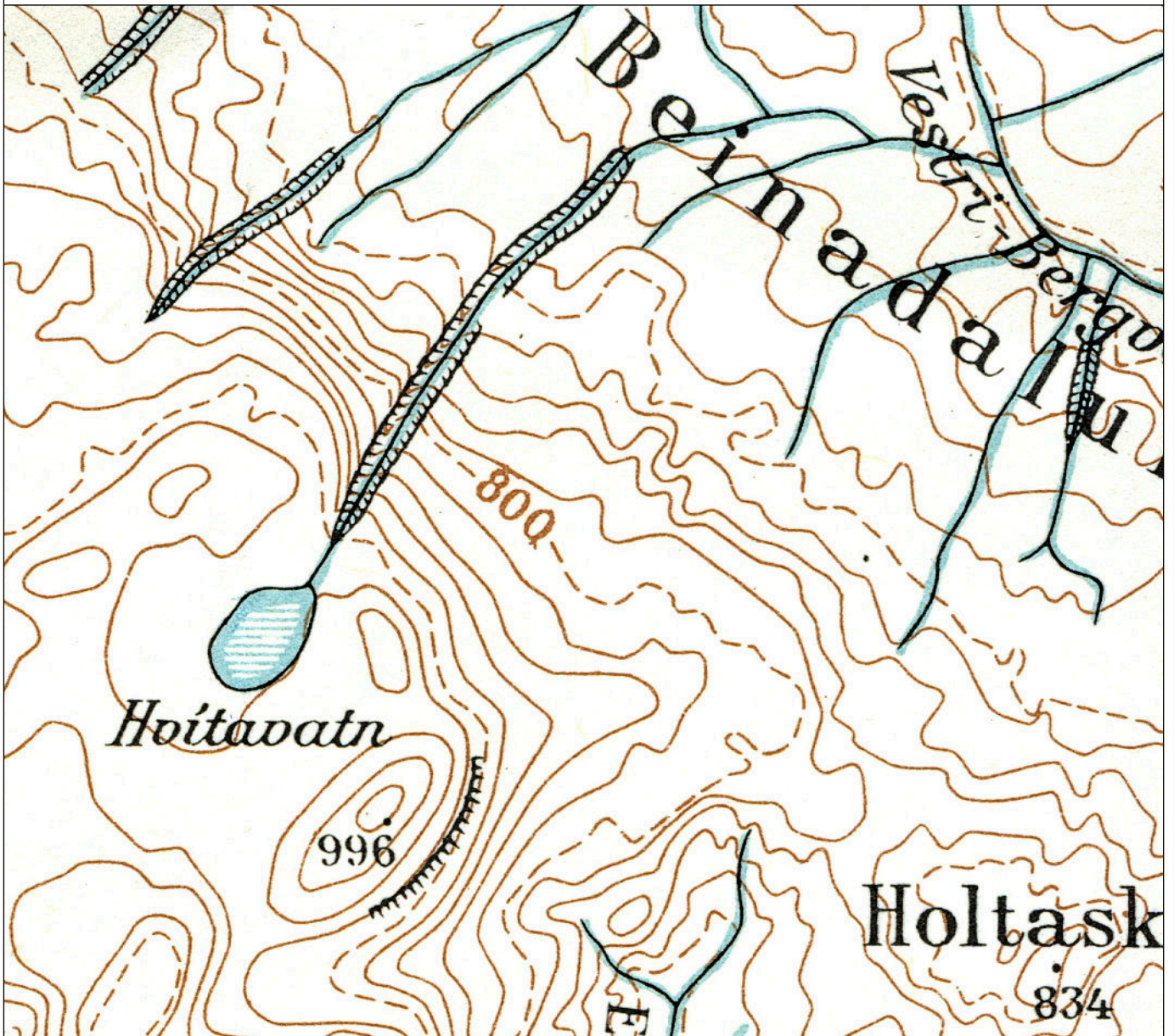


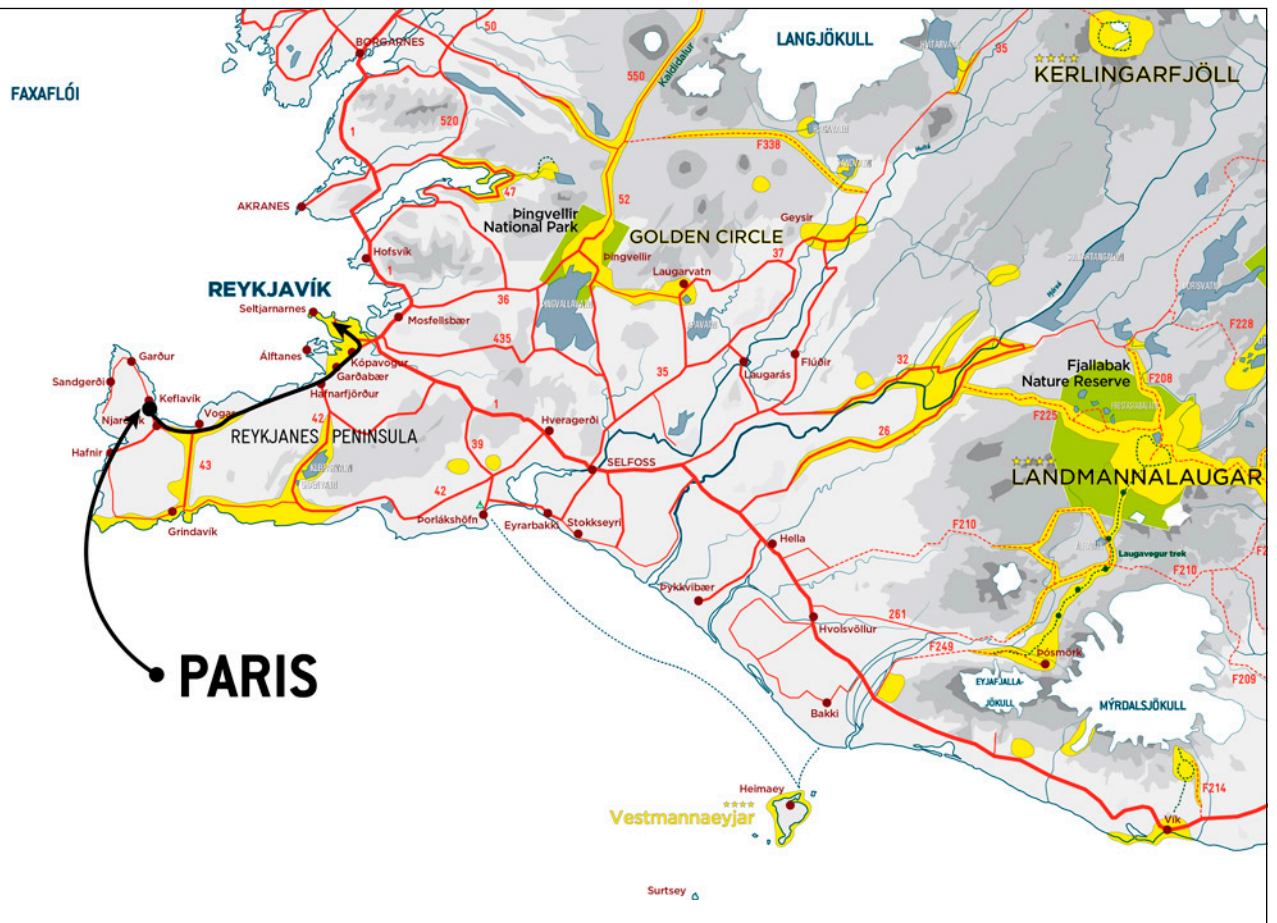
Flight from France

View of the REYKJANES PENINSULA

First exploration of REYKJAVIK
– town, port, and cathedral

DAY 1





MEALS	ACCOMMODATION	TIMINGS
Lunch: on the plane Dinner: Fish Market Address: Adalstraeti 12 Reykjavik, Iceland 101 (town center) http://fiskmarkadurinn.is/ Price for two: 27,630 ISK (€166)	Chez Monique : Adresse: Tjarnargata 10 B - 101, Reykjavik, Iceland (town center) http://chezmonique.is Price for two: 13,000 ISK (€78)	Flight out: ICELAND EXPRESS Departure 1.10 pm Arrival 2.45 pm Price for two: €552
DAY'S STAGE / 2,200 km + 50 km (1,367 miles + 30 miles)		FLYBUS airport shuttle: Price for two: 3,900 ISK (€23) TAXI (from Reykjavik bus station to our guesthouse) Price for two: approx. €6
Most people's first day will resemble ours. It's a good idea to arrive at midday, since you'll have time to drop off your luggage and then go strolling around town until evening. No trip would be complete without sampling some Icelandic specialties, so why not start off with the Seabaron's	fish kebabs, which are as famously tasty as they are good value? If you fancy something rather more gourmet (but much pricier), then Fish Market is highly recommended. A perfect setting for couples wishing to share a romantic evening of Arctic delicacies!	
REMARKS AND OBSERVATIONS		
We arrived at the quietest moment of the year: Iceland's own Labor Day Weekend (first weekend in August), when all the shops are shut and the Icelanders leave Reykjavik in droves to picnic and party out in the countryside. The Monday after the weekend is a public holiday. The rest of the year, weekend evenings in the capital are very lively, with much drinking being done, so don't book a room above a bar!		