

# Reykjavík Survival Guide

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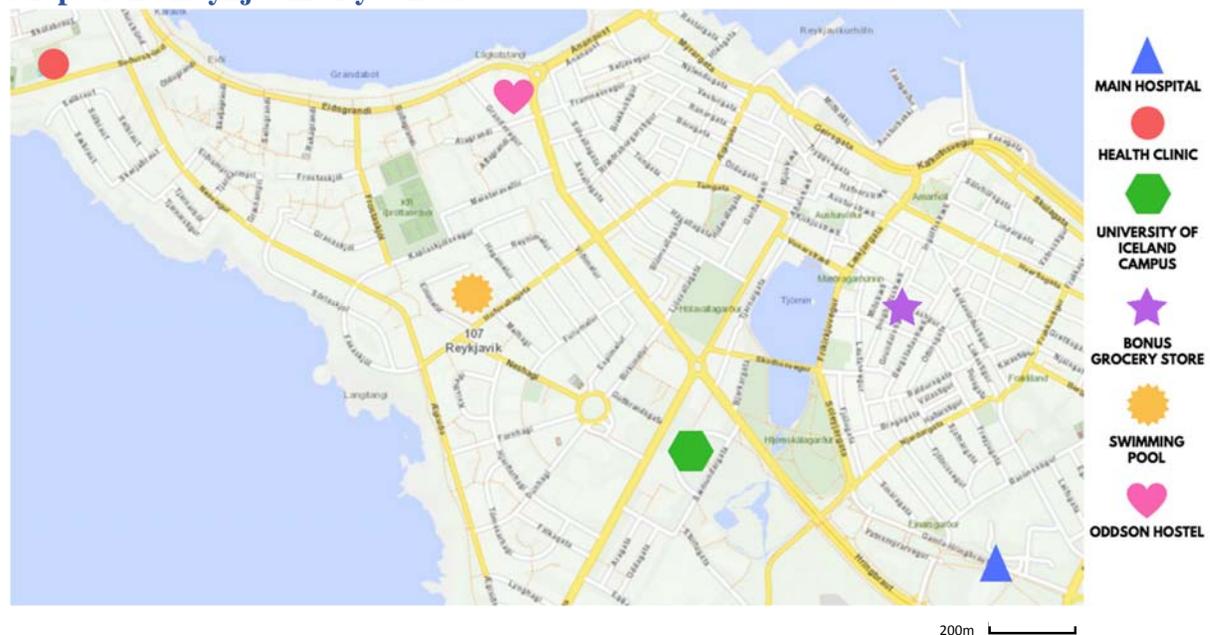
The University of Iceland

Welcome to Reykjavík, the capital of Iceland. The Icelandic population is only about 330,000 people and the capital area contains about two thirds of all the country's population. A fun fact is that when the country gained independence from Denmark in 1944, only 44,000 people were registered as residents in Reykjavík.

## History of Reykjavík

The viking Ingolfur Arnarson was the first person to settle in the country of Iceland in the year 870. He set his sails from Norway and ended up in Reykjavík. Legend has it that Ingolfur named the place Reykjavík (literally “smoky bay”) due to the smoke or steam rising from ground. If you are intrigued by this, the Wikipedia page for Reykjavík offers a great deal more.

## Map of the Reykjavík city center



## Health and safety

The main hospital in Iceland, Landspítalinn, is located only a 2-minute drive away from the University of Iceland campus. However, for minor incidents, you should go to the neighborhood health clinics.

This clinic is open weekdays 08:00-16:00; afternoon watch 16:00-18:00. The phone number for the clinic is (354) 513-6100.

<https://www.heilsugaeslan.is/heilsugaeslustodvar/seltjarnarnes-og-vesturbaer/>

If you are travelling outside Reykjavík, this website and mobile app are great in order to ensure a safe adventure outside the city:

<https://safetravel.is/is/>

## ATMs

There are ATMs located both in the University building called Haskolatorg (next to the bookstore) as well as next street over where the Hotel Radisson Blue Saga is located. You can pay with your card anywhere in Iceland, so there is no need to bring any cash into the country, unless one prefers that payment method. **Just remember your PIN code.** It is not customary to tip in Iceland, but tips are accepted if you choose otherwise. See this link for details: <https://tripsavvy.com/tipping-in-iceland-1626207>

## Water

The water in Iceland is extremely pure. The average Icelander would never consider paying money for regular water in Iceland, so you shouldn't either. Let's reduce plastic waste and save some money by filling your own reusable water bottle with tap water!

## Weather

The average heat in August 2017 was approximately 11°C (52°F) In addition to summer dresses and shorts, plan to pack: closed shoes, a good jacket, a sweater, gloves and a hat—and of course, a bathing suit for the pools! You should expect rain, cold wind and some sunny hours (sometimes all in the same day).

Bear in mind that during the summer months in Iceland, the sun only sets for a few hours every night. So, if you expect to have troubles sleeping when it is bright outside, an eye mask would be a good idea. Unfortunately, one cannot expect to see any northern lights during August.

## Food and restaurants

Icelanders love good food and eat out often. Here are suggestions for some places to grab some food.

Traditional Icelandic cuisine:

- **Bæjarins Bestu** – the hot dog stand that locals go to regularly. It's relatively cheap and quick - <http://www.bbp.is/>

Fine Icelandic themed dining:

- **Prír frakkar** - <http://3frakkar.com/index.php?page=matsedill>
- **Kol** - <https://kolrestaurant.is/matsedill/>
- **Apótekið** - <http://apotekrestaurant.is/?lang=en>
- **Tapas barinn** - <http://www.tapas.is/is/>

Indian food:

- **Austurlandahraðlestin** - <https://www.hradlestin.is/>
- **Austur-Indíafélagið** - <http://www.austurindia.is/>

Asian food:

- **Sushi the train** - <http://www.osushi.is/>
- **Noodle station** - <http://noodlestation.is/>

Brunch places:

- **Bergson Mathús** - <http://www.bergsson.net/>
- **Cocoo's nest** - <https://www.cocoosnest.is/>
- **Snaps bistro bar** - <http://www.snaps.is/>
- **Café París** - <https://www.cafeparis.is/>

Burger places:

- **Hamborgarabúllan** – <http://www.bullan.is/>
- **Hamborgarafabrikkan** - <https://fabrikkan.is/>
- **Dirty Burger and Ribs** - <http://dbr.is/>
- **Hard rock café** - <http://www.hardrock.com/cafes/Reykjavík/>
- **Roadhouse** - <http://roadhouse.is/>

Vegan and vegetarian options:

- **Gló** - <https://www.glo.is/english/>
- **Aalto Bistro** (located at campus area) - <http://www.aalto.is/>

Food in Iceland is generally very expensive. That is why many travelers prefer to shop at the supermarkets instead of buying every meal from a restaurant or a café. The cheapest supermarkets in Iceland are called Bónus and Krónan. The nearest Bónus supermarket is marked on the map provided on page 1. It is a 10-15 minutes to walk there from the University campus.

## Bars and nightlife

The nightlife in Reykjavík is quite renowned and the selection of local beers from Icelandic breweries is very good. Here is an overview of the nightlife: <https://guidetoiceland.is/Reykjavík-guide/nightlife-in-Reykjavík>

The festival Innipukinn is held during the weekend before the conference starts, and the venue should include some concerts and events in downtown Reykjavík during Sunday evening and even on the Monday. Here is some information about last year's festival:

<http://icelandreview.com/news/2017/07/05/artists-announced-innipukinn-music-festival>

Icelanders usually buy duty free alcohol in the airport when entering the country, since the prices there are much less expensive than in the alcohol store. You cannot buy any alcoholic beverages in supermarkets in Iceland; they are only sold in the State Alcohol and Tobacco Company of Iceland, called Vinbudin in the local language. A fun fact; beer wasn't legalized in Iceland until 1989. The website for Vinbudin is here: <https://www.vinbudin.is/english/home.aspx>

## Transport

Once you arrive at the airport in Keflavik, there are a few options available in order to reach Reykjavík. You can take an enormously expensive taxi, you can rent a car at the airport if you plan on having one throughout your stay, you can take public transport or a flybus.

If you wish to take the public transport from the airport, you take bus nr. 55 (see route timetable here: <https://straeto.is/uploads/files/R-55-pdf-1ff487190e.pdf>)

If you wish to take the flybus, there are 3 companies that provide transport to the city center. They are:

Reykjavík Excursions: <https://www.re.is/flybus/>

Greyline: <https://grayline.is/airport-transfer/>

Airport Direct: <https://airportdirect.is/>

In general, the company providing public transport services in Iceland and Reykjavík is called Strætó (see <https://straeto.is/en>). If you need transport to the conference area, the bus stop there is called Háskóli Íslands.

## Activities

During your stay in Reykjavík, a trip to a local swimming pool is highly recommended. Each neighborhood in the capital area has a swimming pool, so if you need to relax after a stressful day, the hot tubs are the places to be. Here are links to the 4 closest swimming pools to the University campus:

Vesturbæjarlaug: <https://sundlaugar.is/sundlaugar/vesturbæjarlaug/>

Seltjarnarneslaug: <https://sundlaugar.is/sundlaugar/seltjarnarneslaug/>

Laugardalslaug: <https://sundlaugar.is/sundlaugar/laugardalslaug/>

Sundhöll Reykjavíkur: <https://sundlaugar.is/sundlaugar/sundholl-Reykjavikur/>

You can also visit the cinema, museums or go for a short hike. Some ideas can be found below:

Paradise cinema: <https://bioparadis.is/>

The National Museum of Iceland (on campus): <http://www.thjodminjasafn.is/english>

A hike up to mountain Esja: <https://visitReykjavik.is/mount-esja>

For children, a visit to the local Reykjavík zoo and amusement park could be fun:  
<http://www.mu.is/en/>

The most popular day tours from Reykjavík are the ones going to the Blue Lagoon or the Golden Circle. For adrenaline seekers, a river rafting trip can be fun.

Some examples of companies going on these tours:

<https://www.re.is/>

<https://www.icelandtravel.is/>

<https://adventures.is/>

<http://travellingiceland.com/>

The tourist information center in Reykjavík is located downtown, about a 10 minute walk from the university campus area.