

Iceland in the Cozy Heart of Winter

Led by Cat & Pecos, with knitting and cooking classes, and more...
January 21-February 1, 2019



This will be our fourth winter trip to Iceland, inspired by our Icelandic friend Valdi, who, thank goodness, never gave up trying to convince us that winter is the ideal season to visit. We and our travelers of the past three years agree with him wholeheartedly. As he told us, it's much less crowded and not all that cold—and indeed, during the same dates for the past three years, temperatures have varied from 23 to 46 degrees Fahrenheit. He also assured us there would be enough daylight. The sky begins to lighten at about 9:30 in the morning and darkens around 5. By the end of our ten-day adventure we'll actually have about an extra hour of daytime, because at the end of January daylight increases by almost 6 minutes per day. The slow metamorphosis between darkness and light, twice a day, is mesmerizing. We love Iceland in winter!

Our travelers are lively, curious, independent folks who love to explore on their own—this is not a lockstep tour, and we make sure you have plenty of time to wander as you wish. Our careful organization is meant to stay in the background so you can breathe and feel the essence of Iceland's land, culture, and people. Our local personal relationships allow us to choose the best daily options for the group based on weather, new discoveries, and other factors—so although we have a list of day trips and activities we hope to do, chances are some will be omitted and others added. If we sound like a good match for you, we'd love to welcome you!

We stay in the Sunna Guesthouse, a comfortable hotel that everyone has loved, so you can unpack and make yourself at home until departure day. Reykjavik feels like a friendly village which keeps luring you to discover what's around the next corner. The tiny white lights wrapped around branches, hand-knit lace curtains, and lovingly-curated window scenes make evening strolls as enchanting as daytime. You can visit a world-class concert hall, stroll through the marina, shop for clothing, yarn, and gifts, visit museums, luxuriate in hot pots (hot tubs) and swim in warm pools, savor wonderful cuisine and coffee, and browse bookstores. Hand-knitting is everywhere—almost as if the country were designed by knitters.

What's it like to travel with us?

Marilyn, one of our 2017 travelers, wrote: "A huge thank you for a delightful trip to Iceland. You struck a wonderful balance between sightseeing, visiting unique places relating to fiber, meeting interesting people and having space to explore. Having led adult students on adventures outside the US, I am very appreciative of all the care you put into planning the trip and of your flexibility in exploring opportunities such as Friðheimar." (We will be taking you to Friðheimar too!)

Our Itinerary

Arrival is January 21st, departure on February 1.

We don't schedule anything for the arrival day, since everyone flies in at different times, but we can recommend some tempting possibilities. You could immerse yourself in the soothing hot pots and swimming pools at Sundhöllin, a five minute walk from our hotel. Or, a short block from our hotel the *Hallgrímskirkja* church soars into the sky. It's our favorite place to relax and knit and often there is a musician or choral group rehearsing.



Hallgrímskirkja from our hotel.



Inside Hallgrímskirkja

We've found that eating meals at standard times the adjustment to the time change, and there are many good restaurants nearby. If you need coffee, Reykjavik Roasters, a few blocks away, is so sublime that just putting your head in the door will brighten your heart, and a few doors farther is Braud, a bakery that rewins our hearts every year. Fortunately, the town is so charming and safe and friendly that you are likely to do a lot of walking, so you can indulge in all the culinary delights. And if at any time you feel a little lost, just look into the sky for the soaring steeple of Hallgrimskirkja, and you'll recognize the way home.



A rainy window into Braud, our favorite bakery



A view of Reykjavik from the tower of Hallgrimskirkja



Strolling at night is celestial...



A sweater and a fish soup cafe...



From the third floor of our hotel, a charming and ever-changing scene. The ocean is visible perhaps a mile and a half away.

Most days we will have activities planned

(see descriptions in the pages that follow), but we always make sure you have time to explore and make your own choices. A distinctive Icelandic aesthetic illuminates this very European city of friendly people, nearly all of whom speak English in addition to Icelandic. Elegant shops, the Handknitting Association of Iceland, galleries, historical buildings, museums, a famous cemetery, a lake with ducks and swans who swim up to you, bookstores, restaurants, public pools and hot pots, and the enchanting sound of Icelandic conversations will make you wish you could wander forever. Many of our travelers choose to attend a world-class performance at Harpa (<https://en.harpa.is>), the spectacular concert hall on Reykjavik's waterfront. Some of our travelers (and Cat) visit the nearby thrift stores daily to check out the latest pre-loved hand-knit Icelandic sweaters, mittens, blankets, and children's garments. This is a land where every schoolchild learns to knit, and wool and hand-knitting are universally appreciated.



A typical neighborhood food shop...



The children's sweater rack in the thrift store!

Group activities and day trips

Visits to local knitting shops

Handprjon, a large knitting shop owned by our friend Drífa Alfreðsdóttir is in nearby Hafnarfjörður, and features yarns sourced from nearby lands that you may never see anywhere else, like a skein dyed with indigo over marigold, produced by just one elderly lady in Scotland who collects dye plants amongst hedgerows. We'll also visit Litla Þrjona Budin (The Little Yarn Shop), a light-filled space with unusual yarns and exquisite designs. And we won't miss the chance to get to the Alafoss yarn store & boutique.



Swans and ducks await you...



Gathering with a local knitting group at Handprjon.

One day we will join our friend, professional chef Matti Þorarinsson, for a private Icelandic cooking class at Salt Eldhús (salteldhus.is), culminating in a shared celebratory dinner. Matti will regale us with stories about Icelandic cuisine and can answer your questions about restaurant menu items you are curious to try. This is an a la carte option that costs an additional \$300 per person. (This sounds like a lot, but it is a magical afternoon. And since food & drink in Iceland is quite pricey, this is only about twice as much as such a fine dining experience would cost in a restaurant of similar stature.)



Arctic char and fennel at our cooking class



Skyr panna cotta with bilberries and toasted oats

We'll take you to the Blue Lagoon for two hours of outdoor floating and swimming in the other-worldly steaming blue waters, and hope that if this is your first experience in the bliss of Iceland's geothermal abundance, that you will also take advantage of the public pools near our hotel. And afterwards, we'll head to the condo of our good friend & travel guide Hildi for a traditional saumaklúbbur, a traditional Icelandic "sewing circle" (knitting as well) with good food & drink.

The longest day will be our private Golden Circle tour. You'll be able to walk between the North American and Eurasian plates in the Continental Divide in *Thingvellir* National Park, and take in the grandeur of the enormous Gullfoss Waterfall. The English word geyser comes from the Icelandic *Geysir*, where you will be able to walk among geysers small and bubbling and others that erupt sky-high, like the one shown to the right. Throughout the day you can keep watch for geothermal steam rising from openings in the distant landscape. We'll stop for lunch and a tour at the astonishing *Friðheimar*, where you will have the bewildering experience of stepping from a winter wonderland into a vast tropical greenhouse heated with geothermal resources, where Norwegian bumblebees pollinate the tomatoes while snow falls on the Icelandic horses just outside.



The Geysir erupts about every ten minutes.



Icelandic horses are rugged, beautiful, and have a unique gait. They also like being fed handfuls of snow.



Four varieties of tomatoes, as well as cucumbers, peppers, and herbs grow at *Friðheimar*, while just outside freshly fallen snow dusts hay bales, horses, and bare tree branches. You'll love the fresh tomato soup, cucumber salsa, and freshly baked breads. They even have tomato ice cream!

We'll journey north several hours to Borgarnes

to visit The Settlement Museum (entrance fee for the museum is a la carte, about \$25 per person), their wonderful & inviting gift shop, and enjoy a wide-ranging vegetarian buffet lunch (included) and then go on to visit our friend Gudrun Bjarnadottir, proprietress of Hespa (which means skein in Icelandic). Gudrun teaches botany at the Agricultural University of Iceland in nearby Hvanneyri. She has been able to combine her knowledge and passion for plants and yarn and color to create colors so transporting that Cat displays her Hespa collection as art. Gudrun will give us a dyeing demonstration and tell us about the dye plants she gathers, many of which cannot be found outside of Iceland. Well before you arrive in her magical space, you will have seen artful boxes of her yarn in the best shops in Reykjavik; we urge you to wait to buy directly from the master! Time-permitting we will also visit the Haafell Icelandic Goat (and sheep) Center.

We'll also explore, weather-permitting, some of the South Coast by visiting the Thingborg Wool Collective, the Uppspuni Mini (wool) Mill, the Seljalandsfoss waterfall, Reynisfjara black sand beach & have a late lunch at the Gamla Fjosid farm restaurant (a la carte).



Gudrun talking about her Hespa yarns and designs.



Gudrun showing us one of many local Icelandic plants that she collects and uses as a dye.



Litla Prjona Budin has exquisite displays.



Children's hand-knits at Alafoss

Cost

The trip fee of \$4,395 covers:

- 11 nights of a shared room or apartment at Sunna Guest House
- Cat's knitting instruction
- Welcome gift of yarn and other treats
- Entry fees, transportation, and tips for group activities
- Some snacks and treats for our private bus rides
- Blue Lagoon transportation & entrance fee
- All breakfasts at the Sunna Guesthouse
- Our welcome dinner
- Our Icelandic Sewing Circle with smorgasbord and drinks
- Goodbye late-lunch/early-dinner
- Tomato soup and fresh-baked bread buffet lunch at Friðheimar
- A Northern Lights excursion, ONLY if weather allows an attempt to see Aurora Borealis



The trip fee does not cover:

- Salt Eldhus cooking class & dinner, optional (\$300/person)
- Raufarholshellir Lava Tunnel visit, optional (\$150/person)
- Settlement Museum entrance fee (\$25+/person)
- Travel between your home and Reykjavik
(Our Traveler's Tips PDF will explain how to make the easy trip between Keflavik Airport and Sunna Guesthouse).
- Most lunches and dinners
- Any incurred medical expenses
- Personal shopping



Who we are and what we care about

Author, teacher, and knit designer Cat Bordhi and community engager Jim “Pecos” Petkiewicz share a prescient instinct and devotion for bringing out the best in others. For four years we have been facilitating cross-cultural and transformative experiences for intimate groups in the Pacific Northwest, California, Mexico, Peru, Iceland, and Ireland. As leaders, we choreograph our days by responding to the freshest temptations and resources that arise around us.

The alliances that Pecos, his wife Mags, and colleagues began seeding in 1985 in Latin America are a powerful river that flows into our work and play. Many years of exploration, reflection and gestation have gifted us with the evolution of Community Links International, a nonprofit that responds directly to the complex realities of marginalized humans, communities and environments in many parts of the Americas. We recognize that service without the attempt at developing profound relationship produces debilitating charity, while service with deep relationship can lead to lasting and productive solidarity. We invite you to join us in growing these deep relationships.

Registration for Winter in the Cozy Heart of Iceland with Cat and Pecos, January 21-February 1, 2019

♥ Please tape a copy of your passport photo/information page to the back of this page.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

Home phone: _____

Cell phone: _____

Emergency contact: _____

Each participant must be in good health, able to walk at a normal pace and keep up with the group, as well as be able to carry their own luggage. If there is any medical information or physical limitation that we need to know about as group leaders, please attach a page describing what we need to know. Please sign below to confirm that your physical condition is adequate.

♥ Please sign here: _____

We are limiting this program to 20 participants. However, do not purchase flights until we notify you that we have met our minimum number of participants.

Optional special events

_____ Sign me up for the Salt Eldhus cooking class and dinner—add \$300.

_____ Sign me up for the Raufarholshellir Lava Tunnel visit—add \$150.

Print and fill out this page and the waiver on page 10, and mail them to the address below with a \$500 check *made out to Community Links International.*

Jim Petkiewicz
916 Wren Drive
San Jose, CA 95125-2952

Your \$500 deposit holds your space. This deposit is nonrefundable unless we have to cancel the trip because we have not met our minimum number of participants, *or if you find a replacement for yourself.* The balance of \$3,895 is due on October 16, 2018. If you need to cancel after that date, we regret that we will be unable to give you a refund because we will have already committed to all arrangements.

♥ Please sign here: _____

“Iceland in the Cozy Heart of Winter” with Cat and Pecos, Jan 21-Feb 1, 2019

WAIVER: In consideration of being permitted to participate in any way in the Iceland in the Heart of Winter program of Community Links International (a registered USA 501(c)(3), TIN #51-0560531), with the collaborative participation of Cat Bordhi, herein after called “The Activity”, I, for myself, my heirs, personal representative or assigns, do hereby release, waive, discharge, and covenant not to sue the Directors, employees, consultants or agents, including Cat Bordhi, Jim Petkiewicz, and Community Links International for liability for any and all claims including the negligence of the Directors, employees, consultants or agents resulting in personal injury, accidents, or illnesses (including death) and property loss arising from, but not limited to, participation in The Activity.

Assumption of risks: Participation in The Activity carries with it certain inherent risks that cannot be eliminated regardless of the care taken to avoid injuries. The specific risks vary from one activity to another, but the risks range from 1) minor injuries such as scratches, bruises, sprains, and gastrointestinal issues 2) major injuries such as eye injury or loss of sight, joint or back issues, heart attacks, vehicular accidents, and concussions 3) catastrophic injuries including paralysis and death.

I have read the previous paragraphs and I know, understand, and appreciate these and other risks that are inherent in The Activity. I hereby assert that my participation is voluntary and that I knowingly assume all such risks.

Indemnification and Hold Harmless: I also agree to indemnify and hold the Directors, employees, consultants and agents, including Cat Bordhi, Jim Petkiewicz, and Community Links International, harmless from any and all claims, actions, suits, procedures, costs, expenses, damages and liabilities, including attorney’s fees brought as a result of my involvement in The Activity and to reimburse them for any such expenses incurred.

Severability: The undersigned further expressly agrees that the foregoing waiver and assumption of risks agreement is intended to be as broad and inclusive as is permitted by the law of the state of California, legal residence of Community Links International, and that if any portion thereof is held invalid, it is agreed that the balance shall, notwithstanding, continue in full legal force and effect.

Acknowledgment of Understanding: I have read this waiver of liability, assumption of risk, and indemnity agreement, fully understand its terms, and understand that I am giving up substantial rights, including my right to sue. I acknowledge that I am signing the agreement freely and voluntarily, and intend by my signature to be a complete and unconditional release of all liability to the greatest extent allowed by law.

signature

print name

date