

Iceland in the Cozy Heart of Winter

Led by Cat and Jim, with knitting, hot pots, reindeer and more...

January 19-February 3, 2020



This will be our fifth winter trip to Iceland, thanks to our Icelandic friend Valdi, who never gave up trying to convince us that winter is the ideal season to visit. We and our travelers of the past four years agree with him wholeheartedly. Winter in Iceland is much less crowded and not all that cold—during our all trips, temperatures have mostly hovered around freezing. The sky begins to lighten at about 9:30 in the morning and darkens around 5:30. By the end of our 15-day adventure we'll actually have an extra hour of daylight, because at the end of January sunlight increases by almost 6 minutes per day. The slow metamorphosis between darkness and light, twice a day, is mesmerizing. We love Iceland in winter!

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We stay in the Sunna Guest House (sunna.is) in Reykjavik, a comfortable, family-owned hotel, so you can unpack and make yourself at home. 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, the cool evening air, and lovely restaurants & cafes 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. And this year, for the first time, we will spend three nights in knitting-retreat mode at the Hotel Hofn (hotelhofn.is/en) in East Iceland!

What's it like to travel with us?

“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.”—Marilyn, 2017

“I just wanted to thank you again for putting together such a wonderful trip to Iceland. There was a good mix of yarn crawls, seeing the countryside and time to explore on our own. There were so many things I loved about the country and I so admired the people we were introduced to on the trip.” Paula, 2019

“We've been back from our wonderful Iceland trip for two weeks and I still think about it every day. Thanks to Cat and Jim for organizing such an interesting and exciting (!) tour.”—Kathleen, 2019



Hallgrímskirkja is next to our hotel.



Inside Hallgrímskirkja

Our Itinerary

Arrival is January 19st, departure February 3.

We don't schedule anything for 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 Hallgrimskirkja church soars into the sky. It's our favorite place to relax and knit and often there is a musician or choral group rehearsing.



Our hotel, the Sunna Guesthouse, is on the left at the mouth of the curve of the road. Cat took the photo from the top of Hallgrimskirkja—we are that close!



Strolling at night is celestial...



Braud, our favorite bakery

We've found that eating meals at normal times eases the adjustment to the time change, and there are many good restaurants nearby. If you need coffee, Reykjavik Roasters is an easy stroll—just putting your head in their door will brighten your spirit. Also nearby is Braud, a bakery that rewins our hearts every year. Fortunately, the town is so charming, 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 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

(descriptions follow), but we always make sure you have time to explore and make your own choices. A distinctive Icelandic aesthetic illuminates this very Nordic city of friendly people, nearly all of whom speak English in addition to Icelandic. Elegant shops, the Handknitting Association of Iceland (a 5-minute walk from our hotel), 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.

Some of our travelers choose to attend a world-class performance at Harpa (harpa.is), the spectacular concert hall on Reykjavik's waterfront, a 10-15 minute walk from our hotel. And we all tend to visit the nearby thrift stores quite often 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



Swans and ducks await you...

Monday morning, January 20, after a leisurely breakfast in our hotel we'll gather to meet one another and begin knitting! Cat will send each traveler her Aurora Borealis House Shoes recipe, based on an Icelandic slipper she discovered in a Reykjavik thrift store several years ago, and she will teach all the necessary techniques. And then we'll stroll 2 blocks to enjoy a welcome lunch together at a local eatery, Snaps (snaps.is). The afternoon is free for your own explorations (or a nap!).

Tuesday, January 21 after breakfast, those of us who wish will gather at Hallgrimskirkja to knit together in this sacred, light-filled, comfortable space, where our group is often mistaken for an Icelandic knitting group by tourists who ask to take

our picture! In the afternoon we offer the add-on option of a visit to the Blue Lagoon (bluelagoon.com) with private transport and Premium entrance, so you can spend two hours floating and swimming in the other-worldly steaming blue waters. If this is your first experience of the bliss of Iceland's geothermal abundance, we hope that you will take advantage of the public pools near our hotel. After Blue Lagoon, we will visit a local artist—usually at her lovely home—and share a happy hour together, and then you are free for dinner on your own.

Wednesday, January 22, yarn shops! After breakfast we'll travel to three unique local shops. Handprjon (handprjon.is), owned by our friend Drífa Alfreðsdóttir, is in 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. After this we'll take you to a large supermarket (where they also sell yarn, because this is a country of knitters and wool is one of the main food groups...) so you can explore this aspect of Icelandic culture. We'll also visit Litla Prjónabúðin (litlaprjonabudin.is), a small light-filled space with unusual yarns and exquisite designs. And we won't miss the chance to visit the Alafoss (alafoss.is) yarn store & boutique in Mosfellsbær.



Litla Prjónabúðin displays their button collection in such an endearing way.



Arctic char and fennel at our cooking class



Skyr panna cotta with bilberries and toasted oats



Chef Sirry will be one of your teachers if you choose to add on the cooking class. She is also an exceptional knitter with a wonderful design sense. She combined a number of traditional motifs in this sweater in nontraditional ways...

Thursday, January 23, offers a full day of sensual pleasures,

starting mid-morning with an optional add-on culinary experience that has become one of the favorite events for our travelers. This private Icelandic cooking class at Salt Eldhús (salteldhus.is) culminates in a shared celebratory feast, and includes appetizers, beer, wines, and other refreshments. Salt Eldhús was rated the #1 Icelandic Culinary Experience of 2019. Chefs Sirry & her partner/husband, Siggí, 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 \$325 per person, and includes private transport to/from Sunna. (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 a fine dining experience would cost in a restaurant of similar stature.) The class concludes at about 2:00, and then you are free until late afternoon, when we leave for a visit to the Secret Lagoon (secretlagoon.is), the oldest geothermal pool in all of Iceland, in the small village of Fludir, followed by the Kaffihús Grund Buffet Dinner (www.gistingfludir.is). We hope to see the Northern Lights during this excursion, as this is an ideal location. No guarantees—Mother Nature is in charge. This will be our included group effort to see the Aurora Borealis. If they don't appear, or you want to see them again, you can sign up at Sunna Reception for a Northern Lights tour another evening. Or, we might get lucky during our 3 nights in East Iceland!

Friday, January 24 is our private Golden Circle tour, and will be a long, full day with departure at 8:30 am. You'll be able to walk between the North American and Eurasian plates in the Continental Divide in Thingvellir National Park (<https://www.thingvellir.is>), and take in the grandeur of the enormous Gullfoss Waterfall (<http://gullfoss.is>). 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. Throughout the day you can keep watch for geothermal steam rising from openings in the distant landscape. We'll stop for a short tour and a tomato soup/homebaked bread buffet lunch at the astonishing Friðheimar (<https://fridheimar.is>), 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. On the way home we'll make a quick stop at the Efstidalur Farm (<https://efstidalur.is>) for some tasty organic ice cream!

By Saturday, January 25, you'll be ready for a free day, so feel free to sleep in, and enjoy following your own whims and interests.



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 Friedheimar, 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!



Near the surface, the lava tunnel has “skylights.”



And then we venture deeper into the mysteries...



Your guide will explain the source of the colors (imagine a lava tunnel-inspired handpainted yarn!).

On Sunday, January 26, we offer an optional, add-on day trip with two experiences that showcase Iceland’s extraordinary natural blessings, and will give you stories to tell your envious family and friends forevermore. The first is a lava tube tunnel tour (thelavatunnel.is), an experience unlike anything you’ve ever had before (even long-time spelunkers are astonished). If you prefer to skip the lava tube, you are welcome to sit and knit in our warm bus for an hour while others descend into the earth. The second option is a private VIP tour of the Hellisheiði Geothermal Power Plant, known as the Greenest Power Plant in the world (geothermalexhibition.com). Have a look at both websites and begin to dream! If you choose to include the Lava Tunnel, the day costs \$195/person. Skipping the Lava Tunnel entrance, the tour costs \$125/person.



The black sand beach, Reynisfjara. Hildi will tell us an ancient tale about how those fingers of stone came to be in the sea.



Last year, Hildi told us she'd show us a little waterfall. "Little" is a relative term in Iceland.



Icelandic horses are much loved and show up in knitwear designs like this one on display at Uppspinni.



After our tour of the Uppspinni mill, we'll be invited upstairs to their enchanting shop.

Monday, January 27 we'll travel along the South Coast, and you are likely to add to your yarn collection, and if you love rocks, slip a few silken-smooth lava stones into your pocket. We'll stop at the rustic Thingborg Wool Collective (thingborg.net), at several majestic waterfalls, have lunch (included) at Gamla Fjosid Restaurant (gamlafjosid.is/?lang=en), explore the Reynisfjara black sand beach (guidetoiceland.is/travel-iceland/drive/reynisfjara), and end at the family-run Uppspuni Mini Mill (uppspuni.is/en) for a tour and shopping.

Tuesday, January 28, is our West Iceland tour.

We'll journey north about one hour to Borgarnes to the Settlement Museum (landnam.is/eng). The \$25 museum entrance fee is a la carte. You'll love their inviting gift shop, and we'll enjoy a wide-ranging buffet lunch (included) and then visit our friend Gudrun Bjarnadottir, proprietress of Hespera Iceland Colors (icelandcolors.com)—*hespa* is Icelandic for skein—see, you're already learning the language! Gudrun teaches botany at the Agricultural University of Iceland in nearby Hvanneyri. She combines her knowledge and passion for plants and yarn to create colors so transporting that Cat displays her Hespera collection as art. Gudrun will give us a dyeing demonstration and tell us about her dye plants, 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! We will also visit the Haafell Icelandic Goat Farm (west.is/en/west/service/the-icelandic-goat-center-haafell) for a lecture, tour, and shopping (sorry, you can't bring a cute young goat home, but you can pet them).



The young goats are curious, friendly, and adorable.



Gudrun explaining to us how she creates all of her beautiful natural dye colors.



Gudrun's Icelandic dog usually greets us.



The Reykjavik marina is a wonderful place to wander. There are shops, a museum, even a chocolate factory!

Wednesday, January 29 is a free day until early evening, when we will gather at the home of our dear friend and travel guide Hildigunnur for a Saumaklúbbur, a traditional Icelandic “sewing circle” (there is always knitting too) to enjoy Icelandic food and drink together with our favorite projects. You might want to go to bed early tonight, because tomorrow morning we leave for three nights in East Iceland!

Thursday, January 30 we shall drive to Hornafjodur in East Iceland, the region of reindeer, the largest glacier in the country, and the possibility of Northern Lights right where we will be staying—the Hotel Hofn (hotelhofn.is), and much more. If the Northern Lights are visible in the wee hours, the hotel staff will phone you, if you request it. East Iceland is new for our 2020 trip, so we don't have photos to share yet. Plan to bring several knitting projects as we will have lots of cozy knitting circle retreat time during our three nights here.

On Saturday, February 1, we'll gather for a goodbye lunch in Hofn and the next morning, Monday February 2, we'll drive home to our Sunna Guesthouse in Reykjavik.

Monday, February 3 is departure day, and we feel sad just writing those words. By now our suitcases are stuffed with wool and Icelandic treasures, our hearts are filled with a sense of being a wondrous traveling family, and you may already be planning how to return to Iceland, bringing along dear family and friends. We understand! And are so so grateful that you have chosen to come with us.





What the trip fee of \$6,100 covers:

- 12 nights of a shared room or apartment at Sunna Guest House in Reykjavik
- 3 nights of a shared room at the Hotel Hofn in East Iceland
- All breakfasts at both hotels
- Our welcome lunch at Snaps in Reykjavik
- The Settlement Museum buffet lunch
- Our private Saumaklubbur happy hour & knitting circle
- Fridheimar fresh tomato soup & homebaked bread buffet lunch
- Lunch at Gamla Fjosid Restaurant
- Our goodbye lunch
- Welcome gift of yarn and Cat's Aurora Borealis House Shoes recipe
- Cat's knitting instruction throughout the trip
- Secret Lagoon/Kaffihus dinner buffet/Northern Lights excursion
- Private transportation for all group activities
- Local guide throughout the whole trip (Hildigunnur)
- And some surprise treats sprinkled throughout our adventure
- All fees, excepting add-ons listed below

What the trip fee does not cover:

- Salt Eldhus cooking class & dinner (\$325/person)
- Raufarholshellir Lava Tunnel (\$70)
- Private VIP tour of Geothermal Plant(\$125)
- Blue Lagoon excursion (\$125/person)
- Settlement Museum entrance fee (\$25/person)
- Travel between your home and our hotel in Reykjavik
- Most lunches and dinners
- Any incurred medical expenses

Who we are and what we care about

Author, teacher, and knit designer Cat Bordhi and community engager Jim Petkiewicz share a prescient instinct and devotion for bringing out the best in others.

For nearly a decade we have been facilitating cross-cultural and transformative

experiences for intimate groups in the Pacific Northwest, California, Mexico, Peru, Iceland, Scotland, and Ireland—always lands with vibrant and long-rooted textile traditions. As leaders, we choreograph our days by responding to the freshest temptations and resources that arise around us.

The alliances that Jim, 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.



Questions?

If about logistics or registration, email Jim: peckos@me.com

Or if about our knitting focus, email cat@catbordhi.com

Registration for Winter in the Cozy Heart of Iceland with Cat and Pecos, January 19-February 3, 2020

Each participant must be in good health, able to walk at a normal pace and keep up with the group, and be able to carry their own luggage. *Reread this statement and if it is true to your abilities, sign below to confirm that your physical condition is appropriate for this adventure:*

♥ **Please sign here:** _____

If there is any medical information we need to know about as group leaders, please attach a clear description.

♥ **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: _____

We are limiting this program to 16 participants. Do not purchase flights until we notify you that we have met our minimum number of participants.

Cost: _____ \$6100, double occupancy, or _____ \$7000 single (very limited number of singles).

For double occupancy, who is your committed companion? _____

Optional special events

_____ Sign me up for the Blue Lagoon excursion—add \$125.

_____ Sign me up for the Salt Eldhus cooking class and dinner—add \$325.

_____ Sign me up for the Raufarholshellir Lava Tunnel visit—add \$70.

_____ Sign me up for the private VIP tour at Geothermal Plant—add \$125.

Print and fill out this page and waiver on next page, and mail them to the address below with a \$500 nonrefundable 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. The balance is due on October 19, 2019. 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 19-Feb 3, 2020

WAIVER: 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