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Lonely Planet Iceland, Greenland & The Faroe Islands (3rd Ed)



Synopsis

Readers are invited to explore the world's last great northern wilderness with the most comprehensive guide to the region--and the only guide to feature the Faroe Islands. The book includes trekking routes through volcano landscapes, spectacular glaciers and thermal springs, and a language section covering Icelandic, Greenlandic, and Faroese. color. 85 maps.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

From Antarctica to Zimbabwe, if you're going there, chances are Lonely Planet has been there first. With a pithy and matter-of-fact writing style, these guides are guaranteed to calm the nerves of first-time world travelers, while still listing off-the-beaten-path finds sure to thrill even the most jaded globetrotters. Lonely Planet has been perfecting its guidebooks for nearly 30 years and as a result, has the experience and know-how similar to an older sibling's "been there" advice. The original backpacker's bible, the LP series has recently widened its reach. While still giving insights for the low-budget traveler, the books now list a wide range of accommodations and itineraries for those with less time than money. Journey north with Lonely Planet and discover wonders for travelers of any budget. LP's Iceland, Greenland & the Faroe Islands contains more than 100 maps; details on food and accommodations; advice on trekking routes and organized tours; notes on Arctic phenomena, flora, and fauna; extensive transportation details; plus useful arts and culture sections. The author's intriguing sidebars range from pieces on "Puffin Release" and "Wild Island Cuisine" to "Plutonium Peril in Pituffik." --Kathryn True

I picked up this Lonely Planet guide before heading off on a recent long weekend in Iceland (courtesy of a particularly favorable Icelandair last minute weekend package deal), and was not too terribly disappointed. The background information on Icelandic history and culture was invaluable reading for one who had previously had little to no contact with said society. As testament to the well-written nature of the guide, it has also made me want to explore the North Atlantic beyond Iceland (Greenland and the Faroe Islands). My one dissatisfaction with this Lonely Planet guide is found in the relatively brief treatment they give to Reykjavik - a bit ironic, seeing as how Reykjavik is the closest thing to a metropolis in Iceland, Greenland, and the Faroe Islands. Better city maps and perhaps more detailed bus/transit information would have been welcomed - as it stands, though, one can figure these things out well on the spot in Iceland (even without a reading knowledge of Icelandic, happily!) Still, this is highly recommended for those travelling to Iceland, especially those travelling to places more off the beaten path than Reykjavik. More practical and comprehensive than the Insight Guide, but without the pretty pictures...and less expensive. PS- Many thanks to both LP and other readers on the warning about the Icelandic specialty "hakarl".

We used this book to plan our trip to both Iceland and Greenland, and found it invaluable. We used it to phone and e-mail for reservations, which were not always possible to make, as LP also tells us, because of no English spoken at some of the tiny places. We trusted LP that little hostels existed in these places, however, and always found room. The maps were great, including hiking trails. The historical details were well-researched. The directions were amazing. It even got us to one historical site in Iceland that had no signs and even the locals had a hard time telling us how to find. Besides being practically helpful, it has lots of anecdotes and local flavour that make it interesting reading. Perhaps what should be emphasized more is how expensive Iceland is. Two small loads of laundry cost us about \$35 Canadian! We could have bought all new underwear for that!

This is the last Lonely Planet guide I bought; this is to say that I will never buy a Lonely Planet again. You would expect your guidebook to be accurate and provide information that you are likely to require on your trip. This book manages to fail miserably on both counts. I bought this guide before travelling to Iceland. Begin from the beginning, and wonders never cease. In common with other Lonely Planet guides, this book is charmingly ten years behind the times where travel costs and flight options are concerned: author Deanna Swaney gives plenty of irrelevant information about costliest scheduled flights. I have got news for you, Deanna: there is this thing called "the Internet".

Nowadays, trip to Iceland with low-cost airlines costs little more than a nice restaurant meal for two. "Your plane ticket will probably be the single most expensive item in your budget," Ms Swaney says. It will sure be, if you follow her incompetent advice. Let us move on. The section on visas suggests Eastern European citizens need a visa to visit Iceland. This is not true. Most of them have enjoyed visa-free travel to Iceland for about a decade now. Now sort out your travel money (if, that is, you have something left in your wallet after buying your ticket Swaney-style). The book writes extensively about such anachronisms as travellers' cheques, eurocheques and postal cheques (when did you last hear of these being used?), but is it not simpler to pay by credit card, since these are accepted absolutely everywhere. Even Deanna noted, in her twisted style, that Icelanders are "plastic mad" - to her, anything more modern than abacus reeks of insanity. And ATMs are everywhere, not "only in banks". If you are one of those crazy people using what is known as "mobile phones", rest assured they work fine in Iceland, but Ms Swaney is yet to learn about their existence. To her, "public phone offices", coins and cards are the things to use. Another handy tip on spending twice as much as you need to. My personal favourite was Car Rental section in "Getting Around". Listen to this: "Even the Sultan of Brunei would think twice before hiring a car in Iceland." I shopped around and a major rental company offered me a car for roughly an average European price. The truth is, Swaney simply hates all those car-renting, credit-card-carrying gold-amexed yuppies whose "encroaching" onslaught she escaped in Alaska. Because of her ideological resistance to individual car travel, as opposed to buses, hitch-hiking, biking and other types of politically correct anti-capitalist mobility, the author chose to provide zero information about parking in Reykjavik. This would be some practical information I could use - without the benefit of speaking Icelandic I wanted to know what parking signs and parking meter instructions mean. Now that I mentioned the language, let me quote this to you: "One thing to remember is that proper names are declined as well as common nouns. This can lead to a great deal of confusion." Yes, Ms Swaney, but could you name one language which declines common nouns and leaves proper names intact? Perhaps if you were a bit more knowledgeable there would be no need to be confused. I could go on and on. Maps are primitive and unhelpful, but no different from elsewhere in the series. Descriptions of places are poorly researched and incomplete (I looked in vain for a mention of Blue Lagoon, a very impressive spa complex near Keflavik). There is, however, some rabid anti-American hysteria about NATO military base (surely Ms Swaney would have no problem if there were Russian troops stationed in Iceland, but now the poor country, "pressurized" into becoming NATO's founding member, has to endure humiliating presence of "yankees"). Is there one thing that is good in this book, you may ask? Oh yes, the section about alcohol. To Ms Swaney, so pressing is the need for alcoholic intoxication,

that she made an exception in her own rules and researched the subject matter in depth. Booze shop opening hours, brands and their alcohol content are meticulously listed, including ABV Pilsner, which, according to Deanna, "packs about as much punch as lemonade and can't be drunk fast enough to have any effect" - and that effect you will need if you are stuck with this book.

I used this book heavily during two trips around Iceland in 2000 and 2002, albeit the third edition. The authors know where the "odd" things are to be found. Thanks to them, I located strange stuff which isn't on the average tourist's agenda: geothermal areas, bubbling sulfurous mud pots, Asian restaurants (in Iceland!), cemeteries. I experienced some lovely, desolate terrain where no one was to be found for miles and miles. But, then again, that's why this is the "Lonely Planet" guide! This guide, like other ones published by Lonely Planet, is clearly oriented toward the type of tourist who backpacks and/or hitch-hikes. Nonetheless, it still has much use for the independent tourist who prefers hotels to huts and cars to cabins. Just pick a place and start exploring. Their detailed maps and descriptions won't lead you astray. A special bonus provided with of Lonely Planet books is the company's "eKno" service, which allows one to call nearly anywhere in the world from anywhere in the world, with tolls automatically debited from a prepaid account. eKno also allows one to listen to one's email messages. Toll-free access numbers are available in most countries. eKno cards come with Lonely Planet books, ready to be activated. I've found this service extremely valuable when calling from Europe to the US.

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