Packing List for a summer trip to Iceland

The right equipment can be a requirement for getting the best out of a trip that is mainly outdoor. The following list is our recommendation for a packing list for a summer trip to Iceland whether you are embarking on a round trip or on several day hikes.

If you are in doubt with any details, you are more than welcome to contact Greenland Travel. We are also happy to hear about any suggestions for items to add to the list.

About clothing in general in Iceland

Clothing in Iceland is both practical and informal, so you do not have to pack the “fine garments” in your suitcase on a trip to Iceland. Today’s great choice of outdoor clothes will let you find something which is practical, smart and comfortable, and which can be worn both in the mountains as well as in town. The right equipment is of great importance to a trip to Iceland, since you can experience both intense warmth from the sun and cold in the shadow near glaciers.

In general, if you are living in a moderate climate, you would be used to changing weather conditions and thus have a collection of adequate clothing – however it is still important to pack the right type of clothing for your trip. Certain items are hereby good to have in place:

- Good footwear
- Comfortable clothing to different weather conditions
- Draughtproof and water-resistant outdoor wear
- Hat and gloves for cold nights
- One woollen layer closest to the body is always great to pack in the bag.

It is an advantage to choose bright, eye-catching colours for the mountains, but of course it is also nice to ‘appear normal’ on a city tour. We suggest you to begin by using what you already got.
The Layer Principle

The layer principle is in true effect in Iceland. The layer principle simply means that one dresses with several layers of clothing. The innermost layer helps to keep the warmth inside, but at the same time keeps away the moisture from the body. The middle layer isolates against the cold. The outermost layer protects against rain, wind and moisture.

The innermost layer
The purpose of the innermost layer is to keep the body dry. For this reason is it good to have a layer of perspiring material closest to the body. Especially on longer day tours it is worth to not have a thick woollen shirt closest to the body. If you are wearing a small backpack it can get very damp on your back – and consequently cold once you stand or sit still.

Middle layer
The middle layer can be a shirt, fleece or a vest. One of these middle layers may be draughtproof or at least protect against the wind.

The outermost layer
The outermost layer should protect the body against rain and wind while letting the moisture out of the body. The outermost layer does not need to be thick – actually it is an advantage if it is simply wind- and waterproof.

The innermost layer
Closefitting trousers and shirts
You might know this type of wear from the annual ski holidays – warmers and long-sleeved shirts. The clothes should be able to let moisture pass out while keeping the cold out. The warmers are usually worn during evening sailing trips which can get quite cold – the same applies to shirts. The shirt can though be worn during the day time on a hike or a trip.

The choice of material is a matter of taste. Synthetics are great of letting the moisture out, but quickly develop odour. Wool warms even when it is moist and oftentimes does not smell. Nowadays, you can get woollen shirts which are both comfortable and smart – often you cannot even recognize that it is a ‘practical’ type of clothing.

Outer layer

Windbreaker
It should be draughtproof and big enough to leave room for a sweater or similar underneath. It is an advantage if the jacket covers the whole upper body and can be opened at the neck as well as at the sleeves. In this way you can regulate the temperature. Modern, breathable material makes it possible to combine the functions of a draught- and waterproof jacket in one. Be aware that some material is water-repellent, but not 100% waterproof. Certain sales assistants are not completely aware of the difference.

Water- and draughtproof trousers
It is always good to bring a thin pair of water- and draughtproof trousers which you can wear during rain or on a cold whale safari. Some hiking pants are fabricated in such a way that they are draughtproof and close to waterproof. These can be worn on a summer trip to Iceland which does not entail several days in the mountains.

Hat, gloves and scarf
Remember these, even if you would usually not wear them. Depending on the weather it is said that 10 to 40 % of the body temperature is lost through the head and neck region, when uncovered. The weather in Iceland has a very changeable character, so a collection of hat, gloves and a scarf can be useful even in the summer time. Especially in connection to sailing trips which can be quite cold.
**Middle layer**

**Sweater or fleece-shirt**
A thick woollen sweater is great, but even better are two thin ones which allow for easy regulation of the isolating layer. Moreover, a modern fleece or fibre material can be an excellent choice since it is light in weight and dries quickly.

**Vest**
A vest can be a great piece of clothing when adopting the layer principle. A west has the great trait of warming up the vital parts of the body while excess heat can easily depart from the body. You can find incredible fibre vests these days which fit under a jacket and fold neatly into your bag to take along.

**Shirt or blouse**
Wool, cotton or synthetic materials. It should absorb the moisture without getting cold. Synthetic material dries quickly and is light-weight. Wool on the contrary warms even when it gets damp. These days you can find many shirts for hiking which are practical, comfortable and smart.

**Trousers**
Loose-fitted thick trousers are the best. Jeans do not provide sufficient mobility on a hiking trip and are neither warm nor draughtproof. You can find many hiking pants which are made of material that combine several features.

**Shorts**
It can get very warm during the summertime in Iceland. Most people prefer to wear long trousers due to cold wind and mosquitos, but it can be quite refreshing to air out the legs. One option is to pull up the legs of the pants. Another option are zip-off pants which allow you to remove the legs of the trousers – in this way you are only seconds away from a pair of shorts.

**Miscellaneous**

**Food wear**
Modern hiking boots are available in all shapes and certainly in one which suits you. It is important to have boots which are waterproof, with a shaft reaching up high above the ankle in order to provide support and keep branches and mosquitos away. It is important to get large enough boots: there should be room for at least one pair of thick socks. Remember to walk in your boots before departing for the trip. It is also smart to have a pair of light shoes for a tour to the city, indoors or to cross a stream. Never walk barefooted.

If you are going on a trip which does not include a lot of hiking in the mountains you can settle for good foot wear with a solid sole. We suggest shoes which are water-proof in case you are going to swampy regions. A pair of running shoes may be comfortable, but will get soggy in wet terrain.

**Earplugs**
If you are a light sleeper it may be of advantage to pack some earplugs to block out the snoring of other participants from your dreams.

**Camping Mat**
On a cabin trip you would usually not need a sleeping mat, but it can be nice to have a smaller mat to sit on.

**Backpack**
Most of our tours do not require you to carry your own bag, so there are no strong requirements for a backpack or suitcase.

For the easier hiking trips a good daysack of about 30 Litre is required. It is an advantage to have a daysack which includes a hip belt and breast strap.
Sunscreen
You should use sunscreen with a good protection factor. Since you will be mostly outdoors you will get tanned anyways.

About Security in the Mountain Regions

Never go alone
Everybody who is on a trip in the mountains will want to be alone every now and then, which is of course completely understandable. However, it is important to stay close to the camp, the group etc. You should give notice to at least one person from the group before you leave and do not change your plans on the way. Even in a group the same rule applies: Give notice.

Being in the mountains is generally not more dangerous than doing many other leisure activities. However, accidents can have severe consequences when you are alone. Within a few hours it is possible for you to move into an area which will make it very difficult for others to find you – for example if you cannot move by yourself for some reason. In a group it is usually possible to get help.

In case you "get lost"
If you get lost from your group even though you have been careful, stay where you are. The others will soon miss you. If you are in a ditch or similar, then move on top of a hill or higher ground which will make it easier for others to see you. If you have anything of bright colours with you, hold it in a visible way.

Fatigue
No matter which shape you are in, everybody can get tired. This can be as a result of time differences, sleep deficiency, unfamiliar grounds, climate and alike. This is okay, as long as you make others from the group aware of your condition. Do not try to be ‘brave’ and not be a pain for others – this is misplaced consideration for others. If you are tired, you are not as strong on your feet and your awareness is limited which leads to a higher risk for small accidents that can ruin your whole trip.

The 9 mountain rules
1. Never embark on long tours without prior training
2. Give notice when you are leaving and expecting to return
3. Show respect for the weather and weather reports
4. Listen to experienced hikers
5. Be prepared for bad weather and accidents – even on short tours
6. Remember a map and compass – and learn how to use them
7. Never go alone
8. Turn around in time – there is no shame in it
9. Save your energy and seek shelter in time
Things to remember

Clothing
Windbreaker
Sweater (wool or fleece)
Sweater (thin)
Shirt/Blouse
Trousers
Underwear
Warmers (long underwear)
Socks (thin)
Socks (warm)
Hat/Cap
Gloves
Scarf

Rainwear
Jacket (if your windbreaker is not waterproof)
Trousers

Clothes to change
Shirt/Blouse
Underwear
Socks

Foot wear with a solid sole
Boots (should be worn in)
Light foot wear/Sneakers

Backpack
Daysack

Toiletries
Soap, (shampoo)
Toothbrush/Toothpaste,
Brush/comb
Towel
Sunscreen with high factor
Lip balm
Mosquito repellent
Ear Plugs

Personal Items
Personal medicine
Contact lenses/glasses
Earplugs

Miscellaneous
Sun glasses (very important)
Water bottle, coffee mug

 Optionally...
Notebook and pencil
Camera
Binoculars
Literature, guide books

Money, tickets, picture id

If you have any questions you are more than welcome to contact Greenland Travel.