

ICELAND IN SUMMER

a tour for quilters



A rare opportunity to join a fun group of quilters to visit Iceland, a unique country where the word "pristine" has not lost its meaning. From the colorful City of Reykjavik to impressive waterfalls, boiling hot springs, glaciers and volcanic landscapes, - friendly Iceland offers some incredible sights.

"GULLFOSS" (Golden Falls)

July 16-24, 2016

REYKJAVIK

- MT. ESJA IN THE BACKGROUND



Under leadership of
renowned Quilt Designer:

Guðrun Erla Gísladóttir



NATO LTD dba US QUILT TOURS

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in cooperation with: INSPIRE QUILTING - Plant City, Florida

Iceland in Summer - A Tour for Quilters

Tour Highlights

This tour is designed and organized by Icelandic travel professionals who reside in the United States. The group is led by a quilt expert, also born and bred in Iceland. Aside from being able to guarantee the true Icelandic flavor, every effort is being made to feature the best and most genuine Icelandic experience, both in the capital City of Reykjavik, as well as in the countryside.

Travel with Guðrun Erla Gísladóttir, a true quilter expert and professional, from the United States and back.

Enjoy traditional Icelandic food specialties at Kaffi Loki, Fjöruhusið, Ömmukaffi and other restaurants. You might actually come to love Icelandic coffee, pancakes, Icelandic lamb and the fresh Icelandic fish.

Be in awe of the spectacular Icelandic nature; steaming hot springs, spouting geysers, thundering waterfalls, majestic glaciers and endless lava fields - the 'land of fire and ice'.

Spend a day with Dr. Haraldur Sigurðsson, one of the world's best volcano experts, who explains in layman terms, what the rough and tumble Icelandic nature is all about.

Meet Icelandic quilters, visit quilt stores and the Icelandic Textile Museum in Blönduós.

Admire colorful Reykjavik ('Smoky Bay'), the cleanest of all cities, where air is pure, the hot water is scolding and salmon is caught within city limits.

Learn about Icelandic history; the Vikings, the Sagas; the people who discovered America (forget about Columbus) and who founded the world's oldest parliament.

Meet up close and personal, - the beautiful wild and woolly Icelandic sheep, and the Icelandic horses, a unique breed that used to carry Vikings to work and battle, - as well as to the parliament.

Expand your quilting horizon when you learn from Guðrun Erla at her workshops, and from Icelandic quilters, who draw their craft from Icelandic nature and history.

Enjoy shopping in Reykjavik, in particular for the hand-knitted sweaters and the latest fashion in woolen garments.

Learn to appreciate the proud and self-sufficient Icelanders, a well educated, peaceful nation of 330,000, - big enough to operate several international airlines, feature their own theater, opera and symphony orchestra and be reckoned with on the world stage.

And, finally - should you be the adventurous type, - learn how to read the Icelandic telephone directory, how to sing "Hliðin min Friða," and eat some 7-year old rotten shark, downed with ice cold "Black Death" - without a question, you will be accepted anywhere.



Iceland in Summer - A Tour for Quilters

DAY 1 - SAT.:
JULY 16

UNITED STATES - REYKJAVIK, ICELAND

Tour members travel from various parts of the US to New York's Kennedy Airport. Meet tour leader Guðrun Erla Gísladóttir in the departure hall of Terminal 7 about 5pm. Guðrun will



be holding a colorful sign: **QUILTS** The group should be ready to check in for the **Icelandair** flight by 5:30. It is a non-stop flight that departs for Reykjavik at 8:40. The flying time is 5 hours 14 minutes. Icelandair flies modern 757-300 aircraft. Soft drinks, tea and coffee are complimentary as well as the use of the personal in-flight entertainment system. Meals and alcoholic beverages are served at a charge.

Your Tour Guide - Guðrun Erla Gísladóttir

Guðrun Erla the well known designer and owner of *GE DESIGNS* is born and raised in Iceland. She started quilting at a young age and has been addicted to the trade ever since. After owning and operating quilt stores in her home country, a career move brought the family to Minnesota in 2003. Since then Guðrun has been designing full time, publishing patterns and books from her home office in Chanhassen, MN, where the family has been located since the move to the US. Guðrun frequently travels to major quilt shows and visits quilt and fabric stores to teach her popular quilt designs and patterns. Guðrun will offer workshops on this tour both in Reykjavik and Akureyri.



Your Tour Operator - Ingolfur "Ingo" Blondal

Ingo is an Icelander as well. He is educated in Iceland and Germany and later owned and operated a travel company in Reykjavik. He moved abroad and offered his expertise in travel to international corporations in West Africa, Turkey, Germany and the United States. Ingo founded NATO LTD in 1986, a company that mainly caters to visitors from Europe to the United States. Tours for quilters were offered in 2012 onwards, an activity that has grown ever since. Quilters from around the world, from as far as Australia arrive in the US to join the quilt tours that are offered under the name of *US QUILT TOURS*.



Iceland in Summer - A Tour for Quilters

DAY 2 - SUN.:

REYKJAVIK - BORGARNES

JULY

17

Arrival at **Keflavik** Airport in the early morning. Pass quickly through customs and immigration; collect your bags and board the tour bus waiting by the curb outside the terminal. Keflavik is located 32 miles south of **Reykjavik**, Iceland's capital city. The drive is quick and easy. It will take you through typical Icelandic lava fields that stretch to the horizon as far as the eye can see; your first introduction to this land of "fire and ice."

Soon there is life up ahead as you approach Hafnar-fjörður, a port town with about 30,000 people, the third largest in Iceland, after Reykjavik, the capital (210,000) and Kopavogur (34,000). Continue for another 20 minutes and arrive in Reykjavik.

Typical

Icelandic **lava** **field**

| TIME | PROGRAM |
|-------|---|
| 09:00 | <p>Arrive in Reykjavik and head directly for Hallgrímskirkja, the tallest and largest church in Iceland and the most prominent landmark of the city. From here you have a great view of Reykjavik, the ocean and the surrounding mountains. The church is of distinctive Icelandic design, dedicated to the most renowned, sacred poet of Iceland, Hallgrímur Petersson. A statue of Leif (Leifur) Eiríksson is aligned directly in front of the church. It was a gift from the US to commemorate the 1,000th anniversary of the foundation of the Icelandic parliament and a tacit acknowledgement that Leifur beat Christopher Columbus to North America by almost 500 years.</p> <p>Walk across the way to Kaffi Loki, a popular restaurant that specializes in Icelandic food specialties. Enjoy and be energized by the tasty Icelandic breakfast.</p> |
| 10.00 | <p>On the City Tour of Reykjavik you will visit Perlan, a restaurant that sits on top of the water tanks that feed the entire city with hot water; you will drive by the University of Iceland and proceed to the downtown area. You will see the Parliament Building, the National Theater and the main seat of government. The harbor area, where older buildings have been retrofitted as boutiques and restaurants, is particularly attractive. Drive on through residential areas and you will come to admire this clean and modern city.</p> |
| 11:00 | <p>Leave Reykjavik along the main route to the west and north. It is a short but spectacular drive, passing along the sea shore and taking you through a 3.6 mile long tunnel under Hvalfjörður (Whale Fjord) before you arrive in Borgarnes, a small town of 2000 people.</p> |
| 13:30 | <p>Check in at Hotel Borgarnes, a newly renovated 3-star hotel with 75 modern rooms. The rest of the day is without a program to rest after a long and tiring journey. A one night stay.</p> |
| 14:30 | |

Iceland in Summer - A Tour for Quilters

DAY 3 - MON.:
JULY 18

BORGARNES - STYKKISHOLMUR
166 MILES

| TIME | PROGRAM |
|-------|--|
| 07:00 | Rise and shine - enjoy breakfast at your hotel. |
| 08:00 | <p>Take off on an exclusive geology tour around the Snæfellsnes Peninsula led by noted volcano-logist Dr. Haraldur Sigurðsson. Dr. Sigurðsson's easy going manner and his geology tour will serve well as an introduction to Iceland and its awesome nature. The day is filled with spectacular locations and local stories told with a touch of humor. It is sightseeing and education at its finest. Here, an abbreviated itinerary:</p> <p>< The glacier Fjörhusið ></p> <p>First drive from Borgarnes along the south side of the peninsula, with a stop at Ölkelda to taste the unique mineral waters of the area. Continue to Öxl, with a stop that offers a great view of Snæfellsjökull (glacier) and of Buðahraun lava field. On to Hellnar, for a lunch stop at Fjörhusið Restaurant (famous fish stew!) and unique scenery. Continue clockwise around the base of Snæfellsjökull volcano, with a stop at Djupalón and a short walk down to the beach. This follows a visit to Skarðsvík on the north side of the peninsula.</p> <p>Next stop in Kolgrafarfjörður, with magnificent views before moving on to Stykkisholmur, the main (1000 people) town in the area. Visit the Volcano Museum, founded by Dr. Sigurðsson and learn more about the history and geology of Iceland and the world. You will find the excursion to be a once in a lifetime experience and it will indeed enhance your appreciation of Iceland and provide a basis for a better understanding of the various spectacular nature phenomena that you will encounter on the rest of the tour. Check in at Hotel Stykkisholmur.</p> <p>< Colorful Stykkisholmur</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Your Tour Guide Haraldur Sigurðsson</p> <p>Dr. Haraldur Sigurðsson was born in Iceland and was until retirement Professor at the University of Rhone Island. He is best known for his work of reconstructing the major volcanic eruptions of the past, among them the famous eruption of the Vesuvius in Italy (AD 79) and the consequent destructions of the Roman cities of Pompeii and Herculaneum. He also discovered the lost town of Tambora in Indonesia, which was buried by the colossal 1815 explosive eruption of the Tambora volcano. We are honored to offer the services of one of the best in the field, who at the same time knows to explain Iceland's biggest attractions in entertaining layman terms.</p> |
| | <p>* For dinner, and more so after dinner, we will meet with quilters from the surrounding area. Enjoy a show & tell in a separate room with Guðrun's local quilter friends and contacts.</p> |

Iceland in Summer - A Tour for Quilters

DAY 4 - TUE.: STYKKISHOLMUR - BLÖNDUOS - AKUREYRI

JULY 19

254 MILES

| TIME | PROGRAM |
|-------|--|
| 07:00 | Enjoy breakfast at the hotel. |
| 08:00 | <p>Return to Borgarnes; then follow the "Ring Road", that leads to north Iceland, and on around the entire island. Driving through the ever changing Icelandic landscape, you will pass soft, grassy fields, small birch and pine forests, tundra-like vegetation on heaths, mossy lava fields, magnificent mountains and a few towns which each have their charm. You will find wide open spaces with a few scattered small urban settlements. Considering that almost two thirds of the 330,000 strong Icelandic population lives in the capital region, there aren't many people left to live in other parts of the country.</p> <p>The road from Borgarnes leads to Grabrokarhraun lava fields, where the small hamlet of Bilfröst and a business university are located. The landscape here is colorful, and travelers stop to observe Mount Baula, which is shaped like a cone and is unusually light in color. Cross Holtavörðuheiði heath, where sheep roam freely and often graze near the road. After more heaths, lava fields and one lane bridges follow one of Iceland's longest fjords, Hrútafjörður. Arrive in Blönduos (850 people), located by the mouth of the glacial river Blanda.</p> |
| 11:00 | <p>Also here our trusted leader, Gudrun Erla, has a following. Local quilters will meet the bus and lead the group for a visit of the Textile Museum, a real gem. The modern museum celebrates the artistry of women's handcraft and displays a unique collection of beautiful Icelandic costumes, local handicrafts, intricate embroideries and exhibits from contemporary Icelandic textile designers. Lunch suggested at Ömmukaffi (Grandma's) before we drive on.</p> |
| 13:00 | <p>After Blönduos, pass through the hamlet of Hunaver en route to the county of Skagafjörður, known for its choirs and horses, - actually the only county in Iceland where horses outnumber people. You will find the small but sturdy Icelandic horses particularly fascinating. Pass through the village of Varmahlíð and drive along Norðura River, one of the major salmon fishing rivers in the area. Next cross Öxnadalshéiði heath, and finally arrive in Akureyri (17,000), the capital of north Iceland and the largest settlement outside the capital region.</p> |
| 15:00 | <p>Once in Akureyri, our Guðrun Erla will indeed be in her element. Proceed to Quiltbuðin, a quilt store that Guðrun founded, but later sold. Proceed on a short tour of this charming town and then check in at Sveinbjarnargerði Country Hotel, located just outside town, with a beautiful view of Eyjafjörður.</p> |
| 16:00 | <p>After dinner Guðrun Erla will put on a workshop for the group at the hotel, focusing on a project made mainly with handwork. The project is inspired by the Icelandic nature and heritage and is a perfect one to grab along to stitch on during our travels. The group will be joined by local quilters in the area who will take part in the workshop. They can be expected to bring some of their work to show and share.</p> |

Iceland in Summer - A Tour for Quilters

DAY 5 - WED.:
JULY 20

LAKE MYVATN
A DAY TOUR

| TIME | PROGRAM |
|----------------|--|
| 07:00 08:00 | <p>Enjoy breakfast at your hotel.</p> <p>We are off on a spectacular journey full of contrasting experiences, - birdlife, flora, geothermal activity; geology and history. All is well explained by a knowledgeable local tour guide.</p> <p>First stop at Goðafoss, a breathtakingly majestic waterfall; significant in Icelandic history. According to the Sagas, chieftain Thorgeir of Ljosavatn cast his pagan idols into the falls when Iceland converted to Christianity in the year 1000, - hence the name Goðafoss or "Falls of the Gods."</p> <p>Proceed to the Lake Myvatn area, by many considered the most beautiful in Iceland. Lake Myvatn is a unique pearl of nature, - the 4th largest lake in Iceland, covering around 14 sq.mi. at 908 ft above sea level. Lake Myvatn has more than 50 small islands and islets, mostly formed volcanically when molten lava flowed into the lake.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>A Paradise for Bird Watchers</i></p> <p>Lake Myvatn is famous for its birdlife. It is home of more species of ducks than any other place on earth. The densest habitat of <Harlequin Duck in the world is at the upper reaches of Laxa ("Salmon River"), which flows from Lake Myvatn. The Barrow's Goldeneye Duck is found in no other place in Europe and there are Red-Breasted Merganser, Wigeon, Gadwall, Mallard, European Teal, Long-Tailed Duck and Eiders.</p> <p>At Skutustaðir we will explore the regular shaped pseudo craters formed in a volcanic eruption some 2300 years ago. After a lunch break in the area proceed to Dimmuborgir, > for a walk through a labyrinth of lava formations, - dramatic structures reminding travelers of ancient collapsed citadels.</p> <p>Visit the hot springs of < Namaskarð, where the pigments and minerals found in the ground remind us of a painters palette. The bubbling ground water is heated by an underground magma intrusion and sulphur deposits brought to the surface causing a strong smell of sulphur.</p> <p>Return to Akureyri.</p> |
| 17:30 | |

Iceland in Summer - A Tour for Quilters

DAY 6 - THU.:

AKUREYRI - REYKJAVIK

JULY

21_____

| TIME | PROGRAM | NOTES |
|-------|---|--|
| 07:30 | Enjoy breakfast at your hotel - check out from your room. | You should try the Icelandic " <i>skyr</i> " (yogurt) - it is absolutely yummy! |
| 08:30 | Depart from Akureyri for Reykjavik. If you look at a map you will see that today's journey takes you half way around the island. However, by American standards the distance is hardly awe inspiring: 242 miles on a good road. | Akureyri has some of the best weather in Iceland, with summer temps often ranging in the high 60s - remarkable for a town sitting only 60 miles from the Arctic Circle. |
| 13:00 | Arrive in Reykjavik. A light lunch is suggested. | |
| 14:00 | Check in at Fosshotel **** a new hotel, equipped with all the latest bells and whistles, - your home for 3 nights. | Reykjavik prides itself on 160 hotels, guests houses Yours is the latest cry! |
| | The remainder of the day is at leisure without a program. | |

Fosshotel Reykjavik

Opened in June 2015 the Fosshotel, with 320 rooms on 16 floors is located in the city center, within a walking distance from Laugarvegur the main shopping street. The views are towards the city, the ocean, with pretty Mount Esja in the background. The breakfast is included with your room. You'll find the breakfast buffet extensive, delicious and plentiful.

At Fosshotel you can unwind at the "Beer Garden," which serves Icelandic draught beer and at Restaurant "Haust" (Autumn) you can enjoy dining on the best of Icelandic specialties, - Fresh Seafood, Free Range Icelandic Lamb, Icelandic Langous-tine, etc., etc. - all delicious.

Befitting a new and modern hotel, Fosshotel offers 1st class meeting rooms and conference facilities, - all located on the 2nd floor. With venue capacity that accommodates up to 400 people at a time, Fosshotel is the ideal place to serve local and international meetings and events. The hotel, accordingly, is where the quilting workshops of our group will take place on Saturday July 23rd, followed by a Quilt and Fashion Show.

< Breakfast room

Iceland in Summer - A Tour for Quilters

DAY 7 - FRI.:
JULY 22

THE GOLDEN CIRCLE **A DAY TOUR**

The 8-hour "Golden Circle" tour covers three major attractions, all an absolute must for any visitor to Iceland. First visit **Pingvellir**, a meeting point of the continental plates and site of the ancient Icelandic parliament; second is a spouting hot spring (**Geysir**); and finally a roaring waterfall (**Gullfoss**). Like this you will explore a cross-section of Iceland's history and natural wonders in a relaxed manner on a one-day loop, in the company of a professional, local tour guide, who will explain it all in detail. The highlights:

Pingvellir National Park - The Birthplace of a Nation

Situated on the northern shore of Lake Þingvallavatn, Þingvellir is the national shrine of Iceland. It is, for one, the key location in Icelandic history as the oldest existing parliament in the world, first assembled there in 930AD. Þingvellir has for this reason been designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Besides being a location of historical significance, Þingvellir is also protected as a national park due to its unique geology and natural features. Almannagjá is a canyon formed between two tectonic plates, a visual representation of continental drift.



Hot Springs - Geysir & Strokkur

On your tour you will see any number of bubbling, spouting and boiling hot springs in eerie moon-like landscapes. Visit **Geysir**, the first geyser ever mentioned in text; the one for which all geysirs are named. Though it rarely erupts, nearby **Strokkur** keeps the show going, erupting every 4-8 minutes.



Finally, you will arrive at majestic waterfall that spans a huge on those who come to marvel at its

< Strokkur



Gullfoss

Gullfoss, a roaring, river and sprays mist beauty.

Iceland in Summer - A Tour for Quilters

DAY 8 - SAT.:
JULY 23

REYKJAVIK
QUILTING - WORKSHOPS - FASHION SHOW

| TIME | PROGRAM |
|-------|--|
| 08:00 | Enjoy breakfast at the hotel. |
| 08:45 | Depart for a visit to two Reykjavik quilt stores, - Virka and Storkurinn . In case you should need fabric for your workshop these stores do feature a wide selection at a good price. |
| 12:00 | Break for lunch. |
| | QUILTING WORKSHOP at FOSSHOTEL |
| 13:00 | Start of Quilting Workshop . The hotel features excellent facilities for this purpose. Guðrun Erla Gísladóttir will teach the class, which will include both the American group as well as Icelandic quilters, who will all mingle and learn together, as Guðrun gives her instructions in both languages, - English and Icelandic. Sewing machines will be provided and shared. |
| 16:00 | End of workshops. |
| 17:00 | QUILT SHOW at FOSSHOTEL |
| | Show presented in cooperation with Butasaumafelagið in Reykjavik - featuring: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gudrun's newest and some never before seen quilts. • Quilts made by Icelandic Quilters - members of Butasaumafelagið • Quilts brought to the US by tour members • Quilts made en route by tour members |
| 19:00 | • Virka and Storkurinn |
| 20:00 | Farewell Dinner at Fosshotel - Tour members - Butasaumafelagið - Anyone else interested. |
| | FASHION SHOW - ICELANDIC WOOL |
| 20:30 | Featured by Alafoss and other Icelandic companies who produce woolen products. |
| | AUCTION |
| | Auction of quilted products as well as Icelandic woolen products - proceeds to go to charity - Barnaspítali Hringssins (Ring Childrens' Hospital) |
| | <p>Guðrun Erla is a quilt designer, who owns and operates her own business under the name GE Quilt Designs. You will find her web site listed as: gequiltdesigns.com with information about variable, attractive quilting patterns suited for almost anybody.</p> <p>Her publications include <i>"Quilt as you go Patterns"</i> - <i>"Pieced & Applique Patterns"</i> - <i>"Strip Patterns"</i> and many more.</p> |

Iceland in Summer - A Tour for Quilters

DAY 9 - SUN.:
JULY 24

LAST DAY IN ICELAND
RETURN TO THE UNITED STATES

This is your last day in Iceland, meant to be free of programs and regimentation. Here are some guidelines and suggestions how best to plan the day:

- Have a leisurely breakfast at the hotel.
- Walk to Laugarvegur, the main shopping street and do your shopping for the folks back home. Check-out time at the hotel is 12:00 noon, so you may decide to check out early and store your bags at the hotel, before you go shopping.
- The transfer bus to Keflavik Airport will leave from the hotel at 2:00p.
- Your departing Icelandair flight leaves at 5:00p and arrives at JFK at 7:00p. END of TOUR.

The Blue Lagoon

We wouldn't be doing our job if we didn't mention the world famous "**Blue Lagoon**," by some touted as "One of the 25 Wonders of the World." It is indeed a major attraction, which some of you may wish to incorporate on your tour. The way this can be achieved is by leaving the hotel early (11:00a) this day, after having checked out from the hotel, visit the lagoon for the minimum 2 hours bathing, and then proceed directly to the airport. The Blue Lagoon is located about 15 minutes from Keflavik Airport.

The Blue Lagoon is a gorgeous geothermal spa that is one of the most-visited places in Iceland. At an average temperature of around 100°F, the lagoon's nutrient-rich waters are reported to fix all sorts of skin ailments, from psoriasis to eczema. People travel thousands of miles to bathe in these nutrient-rich waters. Others come to simply relax. Besides swimming, you can have a drink at the in-water bar, pamper yourself with a massage or skin treatment, or relax at one of the exclusive lounges.

This feature is not included in your tour. It is optional and comes at a charge of \$100 per person, which includes admission to The Blue Lagoon and the extra transfer transportation.



Your Accommodations

Your hotels on this tour are 3-star properties, except for the new Fosshotel in Reykjavik, which is a 4-star hotel. Most of our clients on tours for quilters are women who share a room. They will have rooms with two separate beds. We do expect several married couples to join this tour. They will have the choice of either twin-bedded rooms or rooms with one queen-size bed. You should fill in your tour application accordingly.

Iceland in Summer - A Tour for Quilters

Prices & Conditions

PRICE OF TOUR: \$3,486.00 - p. person, sharing a twin or double room.

\$ 785.00 - single room supplement.

INCLUDED FEATURES:

- Air fare roundtrip from New York (JFK) to Iceland by Icelandair.
- Seven nights accommodation at the hotels indicated or similar.
- Breakfast each morning.
- One dinner (farewell dinner - day 8) with quilt show, fashion show and auction.
- Service of tour leader - Guðrun Erla Gísladóttir.
- Services of local tour guides: Reykjavik, Snæfellsnes, Lake Myvatn and Golden Circle.
- Admissions to: Volcano Museum, Stykkisholmur and Textile Museum, Blönduos.
- Quilt workshops in Akureyri and Reykjavik.
- Modern tour bus.
- All transfers and touring as listed in the itinerary.
- All taxes and fees on included services.
- Prayers for good weather in Iceland.

NOT INCLUDED IN PRICE:

- Air fare to New York (JFK) from your home town and back.
- Meals other than listed above.
- Alcoholic beverages.
- Baggage fees charged by the airline or at the hotels.

Booking Procedure

You can book your seat on the tour with NATO LTD, INSPIRE QUILTING or with Gudrun Erla (gudrun@gequiltedesigns.com) 952-361-9772. We will need your name (as in your passport), home address, e-mail address and a deposit of \$500.00. NATO LTD will send you an invoice with further information about the final payment, which will be due by June 16, 2016. You can pay by check, bank wire transfer or via PayPal.

Tipping in Iceland

It is not customary to tip in Iceland. Tips are not expected at the hotels, in restaurants, taxi cabs. ...