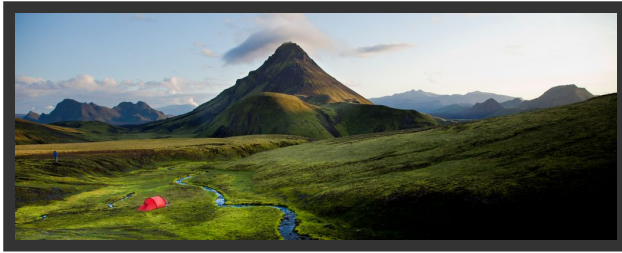


# Laugavegur Hiking Trail - The Ultimate Guide

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# About the Laugavegur Hiking Trail

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The Laugavegur Hiking Trail is Iceland's most famous hiking trail and truly one of the [world's most beautiful treks](#). The trail connects the Landmannalaugar and Þórsmörk Nature Reserves and offers a variety of different landscapes along the way. Every day has different views with beautiful scenery of pristine nature with volcanic mountains, lava fields, glaciers, natural hot springs, black arctic deserts and lush forested valleys.

The Laugavegur Hiking Trail has been described as one of the best treks in the world by publications such as the National Geographic and the Lonely Planet, as well as by individual hikers and adventure writers.



The Laugavegur Hiking Trail is located in the southern highlands of Iceland, north of the infamous Eyjafjallajökull Volcano. Most people traverse the 55 kilometre long Laugavegur Hiking Trail in 3 – 5 days, trekking from north to south. Starting in Landmannalaugar and ending the trek in Þórsmörk. The 24 – 30 kilometer long Fimmvörðuháls & Eyjafjallajökull hiking trail can be added to the trek, connecting the Laugavegur Trail with Skógar, on the south coast of Iceland.

Huts and camping sites along the Laugavegur trail are usually open from the end of June until the end of August, depending on snow and trail conditions. The Volcano Huts in Þórsmörk open earlier in the spring and stay open longer into the fall due to the location and favourable weather conditions.

Daily scheduled busses drive between Reykjavík and the starting and end points of the trail in Landmannalaugar and Þórsmörk. The bus stop in Þórsmörk is here at the Volcano Huts in Husadalur Valley in Þórsmörk.



The Volcano Huts offer [affordable packages](#) for hikers wanting to trek the Laugavegur Trail, including bus tickets, accommodation and others services.

## NEWLY OPENED RESTAURANT ON THE LAUGAVEGUR TRAIL

Volcano Huts have now opened up a new restaurant by the [Álftavatn](#) camp on the Laugavegur Hiking Trail. The restaurant is the second camp on the trail about 24 kilometres from Landmannalaugar, 12 kilometres from the Hrafninnusker hut.

The [Álftavatn](#) Restaurant is open daily during the hiking season from 7am to 11pm and serves breakfast, lunch, dinner, snacks and drinks at the bar.



# Laugavegur Hiking Trail - Detailed Information

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Daily scheduled busses drive between Reykjavík and the starting and end points of the trail; to Landmannalaugar and Þórsmörk. Highland bus tickets to the start of the trail and back to Reykjavik from the end of the trail in Þórsmörk or Skógar are included in the standard [Laugavegur trail offer](#).

Busses leave every day during the season for Landmannalaugar and Þórsmörk from the BSI Bus Terminal in Reykjavík at 8:00 and 16:00. We recommend everyone to take the first bus to get out on the trail as soon as possible.

Busses leave Þórsmörk every day during the season with multiple departures every day. Click here to view the [bus schedule and book tickets](#).

Busses can be boarded at Skógar if you intend to hike over the Fimmvörðuháls pass.

## Food, water and services

Hikers will have to carry their food along the way.

A restaurant is now open by the [Álftavatn](#) camp on the Laugavegur Hiking Trail. The restaurant is located in the second camp on the trail about 24 kilometres from Landmannalaugar, 12 kilometres from the Hrafninnusker hut.

The [Álftavatn](#) Restaurant is open daily from 7 am - 11 pm and serves breakfast, lunch, dinner, snacks and drinks at the bar.

The next restaurant is at the Volcano Huts in Þórsmörk at the end of the trail. It is open between 7:00 and 23:00 and offers breakfast, lunch, dinners, lunch packs, coffee & tea, snacks, soft drinks and alcoholic drinks at the bar.

A small shop is also located at the Volcano Huts in Þórsmörk which sells candy, pasta, rice, dry foods, homemade bread, sanitary products and other necessities.

Cold running water is available at all stops and any water in rivers, streams, pools and snowmelt is good for drinking. Even though the water carries a little bit of silt or soil it is safe to drink and does not need to be filtered.



## When to go

Huts and camping sites along the Laugavegur trail are usually open from the end of June until late September, depending on snow and trail conditions.

The Volcano Huts in Þórsmörk are open all year long.

In the springtime, some parts of the Laugavegur Hiking Trail can be covered in snow while other parts might be wet and muddy, as the ground starts to thaw. Markings and waypoints might be under snow or may have washed away in floods during the spring melt.

During the summer you are most likely to have good weather conditions and you will experience 24 hours of daylight. During the period between the second weekend of July and the second weekend of August you will have most traffic on the trail.

In good conditions the fall is a very nice time to do the Laugavegur trek with fewer people on the trail. Dusk starts to creep in around midnight in the second half of July and by September the nights are pitch black and no lights in sight in the highlands so you might want to bring some lights with you. The climate starts to get cold by the end of August and you may experience frosty conditions.

## Weather and terrain

The Laugavegur Hiking Trail has a variety of different landscapes along the way. Every day has different views with beautiful scenery of pristine nature with volcanic mountains, lava fields, glaciers, natural hot springs, black arctic deserts and lush forested valleys.

The trail is suitable for most hikers but the terrain can be demanding in some areas with steep hills, unbridged rivers and snowy conditions. During high season many people start the trek every day and help is usually not far away on the trail. During other seasons there might be days before someone wanders past your area.

Camping sites offer little shelter and in some areas there is little or no hold for tent pegs to secure your tent.

The trail starts/ends at 600 meters above sea level in Landmannalaugar and reaches up to 1.100 meters on the first/last day. The trail ends/starts in Þórsmörk, at about 200 meters above sea level.

Weather in the Icelandic highlands can be very unpredictable. Very strong winds with heavy rain, hail, fog and even snow can occur with little warning. Always check the weather forecast and make sure that you stay warm and that your equipment and clothes stay dry in your pack.

[Icelandic Met Office](#)

[Safetravel.is](#)



## Clothing and gear

Your clothing and equipment can make or break your trek along the Laugavegur Hiking Trail. Do it correctly and you will ensure your safety and maximize your comfort, but get it wrong you make the trek much harder and may even endanger yourself and others.

Dressing in layers means you can peel off or put on more layers to control your temperature.

**Inner layer:** Wear wool or other insulating materials next to your body – underwear and bras included. This keeps you warm and removes moisture away from your body.

**Second layer:** Fleece or other lightweight materials.

**Outer layer:** Wind and waterproof with some breathing or ventilation – Gore-Tex or similar.

Bring one set of clothes to walk in and another dry set to change into at night. It is not always possible to dry clothes in the huts.

Do not wear cotton clothing such as jeans, cotton T-shirts, cotton socks and sweatshirts. Cotton absorbs moisture and sticks to your body, which keeps you wet and cold.

Following is a list of things to bring along. How much of everything is up to you. Some may want to travel light while others are comfortable with carrying heavier packs.

### Must have

- Hiking boots or sturdy trail running shoes
- Warm hiking socks 2 pairs
- Woolen or thermal underwear 2 pairs
- Warm hat and gloves
- Hiking pants
- Wind and waterproof jacket and trousers
- Waterproof inner layer inside backpack
- Fleece or wool sweater
- Light weight shirt or sweater
- T-shirts
- Sunglasses
- Light shoes or sandals to wade rivers and wear if hiking boots get wet
- Sleeping bag good for +5°C if sleeping in huts and -10°C if camping
- Swimwear and/or shorts, towel
- First aid kit with blister kits, pain relief medicine, bandages
- Survival kit with survival blanket, whistle, knife, matches, shoe laces, tape
- Sunscreen
- Drinking bottle 1 L
- Drinking cup
- Compass & map, GPS – learn how to use it!
- Food for required number of days
- Campers need to carry tents
- Campers need to carry cooking equipment and fuel



Nice to have:

- Hiking poles
- Mobile phone
- Diary & pen
- Earplugs
- Eye shades for sleeping / 24 hours of daylight
- Camera
- Napkins or toilet paper / toilet paper is provided at huts

### The trail's elevation and length

The laugavegur trail is 55 km long and the elevation gain is roughly 500 m. Most guides recommend taking 4 days for the hike, hiking 12-16 km per day. This is to best soak in the gorgeous landscape and enjoy the hike. By most professionals this hike is rated 3 out of 5 in difficulty.

### Risks and safety

The Laugavegur Hiking Trail is truly a rewarding trek in good conditions but keep in mind that weather, bad luck and insufficient preparation can change your journey into a bad experience. Mobile service is available on some parts of the trail but very limited in others. Electricity to charge mobile phones is not available, except at the Volcano Huts in Þórsmörk.

Weather is a deciding factor and can change very quickly. Very strong winds with heavy rain, hail, fog and even snow can occur with little warning. Sudden change in weather may cause a severe drop or rise in temperature. Always check the weather forecast and make sure that you stay warm, and that your equipment and clothes stay dry in your pack.

Most outdoor related fatalities in Iceland are related to cold and bad weather, resulting in hypothermia.

Sudden rain or rise in temperature may cause flash floods in streams and rivers. Wait for other travellers to come by if you are unsure about crossing a river. Learn how to cross rivers before you go. Google it, then practice!

Wandering away from the trail can be rewarding in some places but be sure to find your way back to the marked trail. Make sure someone knows about your travel plans and stick to the plan, or inform someone about changes to your plan.

We strongly advise all travellers to list their travel plans online with [Safetravel.is](https://safetravel.is) and even download the Icelandic emergency App 112 for smartphones.

You can also sign your name at a safety list in all the huts along the trail but listing with Safetravel.is is a far better way to ensure your safety.



## Follow these steps to ensure your safety

- Leave your travel plan online with [Safetravel.is](https://safetravel.is)
- Stay warm and stay dry
- Keep your clothes and equipment dry in your pack
- Cross rivers where they are wide and with great caution
- Do not cross rivers if unsure and alone – wait for others to come by
- Carry a first aid kit and practice first aid procedures
- Carry a map & compass and/or a GPS – know how to use it!
- Share your safety tips & stories with other travellers on our [Facebook page](#)

## Leave no trace

Because of the unique nature of the Laugavegur Hiking Trail, thousands of hikers from all over the world come to experience its wonders. We all want to experience it in its most natural and unspoilt condition, so let's all try to make as little impact on its nature as possible. The soil and vegetation in the Icelandic highlands is especially fragile and any damage to it can cause massive erosion and take years to heal.

Tread lightly and stay on the path, don't litter and respect the land. Simple as that!

Share your tips, tricks and stories about how to minimize impact on nature on our [Facebook page](#).

# Day-by-Day Itinerary

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The Laugavegur Hiking Trail is usually done in 4 days where travellers stay in huts or camp along the trail. You can make your own version and skip stages or stay longer in certain places and have walks around areas of particular interest to you. Keep in mind your personal fitness and capabilities and remember that this time it really is the journey and not the destination that matters. Enjoy the trek and soak in the natural beauty of the trail.

Times are approximate and will vary according to fitness, pace of group and weather conditions.

If you intend to do a shorter version, we recommend combining the first two days in one stage (Landmannalaugar – Álftavatn, 22 km) or the second and third days (Hrafninnusker – Emstrur, 27 km).

## Day one: Landmannalaugar - Hrafninnusker

- **Distance: 12 km, 4 – 5 hours**
- **Elevation increase: 470 m**
- **Starting coordinates GPS: N63°59.600 – W19°03.660**
- **Finish coordinates GPS: N63°55.840 – W19°09.700**

Starting the trek from – Landmannalaugar brings you to an easy hike through the lava field of Laugahraun towards the colourful mountain Brennisteinsalda. There you start a gradual climb through dissected hills with views of an incredible spectrum of colors. After 3 – 4 hours you should arrive at the Stórihver geothermal area and hot springs. About 2/3 of the way is likely to be covered with snow until late summer.





At an elevation of around 1.000m you can expect fog to show up suddenly and without warning. The trail is clearly marked but hikers must be careful not to lose the track in poor visibility.

Hrafninnusker Hut (Höskuldsskáli) will appear suddenly about 2 km past a memorial of a traveller, who sadly died of hypothermia in this area in June 2004.

Evening walks from the Hrafninnusker hut: 20 minute walk to Mt. Söðull (beautiful views) or 40 minute walk to ice caves. Ask warden for more information.

## Day two: Hrafninnusker - Álftavatn

- **NEW: Restaurant in Álftavatn is open 7 am - 11 pm**
- **Distance: 12 km, 4 – 5 hours.**
- **Elevation decrease: 490 m**
- **Starting Coordinates GPS: N63°55.840 – W19°09.700**
- **Finish coordinates GPS: N63°51.470 – W19°13.640**

Heading out from the Hrafninnusker hut the trail takes you through a valley with small ravines that sometimes may be filled with snow. A short and steep incline leads you to the highpoint of today's walk. If the visibility is good, a side trip to the summit of mountain Háskerðingur (1.281 m) will reward you with a breathtaking view. This is best done from the western slope of the mountain. But take care as you have to cross a glacier on the way. Ask the hut warden for further information.

Soon after you will leave the colorful rhyolite mountains and enter an area with contrast of dark palagonite mountains and white glaciers. You will also notice a considerable increase in vegetation. The trail down the Jökultungur is quite steep and care must be taken during the descent. The last few kilometers to the huts by the lake Álftavatn are on flat land. The two huts at Álftavatn take up to 52 persons and plenty of room is for tents at the campsite.

Evening walks: Hike up Mt. Brattháls, which takes 1 – 2 hours return. Wet feet are included as it's necessary to wade the little stream running from Lake Álftavatn. Another good hike takes you up the Mt. Torfatindur (818m), estimated walking time 1 – 2 hours.

## Day three: Álftavatn - Emstrur (Botnar)

- **Distance: 15 km, 6 – 7 hours**
- **Elevation decrease: 40 m**
- **Starting Coordinates GPS: N63°51.470 – W19°13.640**
- **Finish coordinates GPS: N63°45.980 – W19°22.480**

The trail leads you over the Brattháls Ridge into Hvanngil Ravine, wading across the small Bratthálskvísl River. In the Hvanngil Ravine you will find two huts, one built for shepherders in 1963 and one for tourists, built in 1995. As Álftavatn and Hvanngil are only 5 km apart, Hvanngil can be used as an alternate accommodation. The huts have toilet facilities, showers and a small camping site in an old lava field.

Leaving Hvanngil you cross a bridge over the Kaldaklofskvísl River. On the eastern bank of Kaldaklofskvísl River the trail splits in two. You should take the path leading south to Emstrur and



Þórsmörk. The other branch leads east to Mælifellssandur (Road F 210). Soon after that, another river has to be waded.

For a few kilometers, the Laugavegur Trail joins a mountain road. You can stay on the road all the way to the Emstrur hut or take a hiking trail alongside the road.

You will have to cross the powerful Nyrðri Emstruá River on a bridge that the road will take you to. After crossing the bridge you will traverse few kilometers on flat land until you suddenly find the Botnar huts in Emstrur.

Evening walk: Markarfljótsgljúfur canyon is a 40 to 90 minute hiking tour with beautiful views of the canyons and neighboring mountains.

## Day four: Emstrur (Botnar) - Þórsmörk

- **Distance: 15 km, 6 – 7 hours**
- **Elevation decrease: 300 m**
- **Starting Coordinates GPS: N63°45.980 – W19°22.480**
- **Finish coordinates GPS: N63°41,4 – W19°35,59**

In about 45 minutes, after heading out from the Emstrur huts you should be on a steep path leading towards the canyon of Syðri-Emstruá River. The river can be crossed on a hiking bridge in a narrow part of the canyon, with the river raging beneath your feet. From the canyon you will be walking through a hilly area known as Almenningar with the first view of Þórsmörk in sight. At the end of Almenningar you will have to wade the Þröngá River the deepest on the Laugavegur Trail. When wading it is good practice to go hand in hand and head downstream or to use hiking poles to keep your balance. After crossing the Þröngá River you will enter the forested area of Þórsmörk. Follow the path to an intersection with signs that show directions to different huts in Þórsmörk. From there you should reach the Volcano Huts in Húsadalur Þórsmörk or Langidalur hut in 30 minutes.

Evening walks: In Þórsmörk you will find many possibilities for evening walks such as onto the Mt. Valahnúkur or to the Sönghellir Cave. We recommend staying at least one extra day in Þórsmörk as the area is one of the most beautiful areas in Iceland with endless hiking trails to explore.

# Laugavegur Trail Accommodation

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## Huts and Camping

Huts and camping sites along the Laugavegur Hiking Trail are open from the end of June until middle of September, depending on snow and trail conditions.

Most people travel from north to south, from Landmannalaugar to Þórsmörk and do the trek in 4 stages. That way you would start in Landmannalaugar and stay at the huts in Hrafninnusker, Álftavatn, Emstrur and Húsadalur in Þórsmörk at the Volcano Huts.

Huts and camping grounds are located in the following areas



- Hrafninnusker
- Álftavatn - **NEW: Restaurant open daily from 7 am - 11 pm**
- Emstrur (Botnar)
- Húsadalur Þórsmörk -Volcano Huts

The huts along the way are basic mountain huts with sleeping bag accommodation in dormitories. All the huts have toilets and showers are in Álftavatn, Emstrur and Þórsmörk showers. Basic cooking facilities are available to hikers that stay in the huts but campers do not have access to indoor facilities except in



Þórsmörk. At the Volcano Huts in Þórsmörk you will find a restaurant & bar, small pool and sauna, private and shared [accommodation](#) and a camping site. The Þórsmörk bus station is at the Volcano Huts.

## Glamping in Þórsmörk

Combine the comforts of a hut and the privacy of camping. A new addition to the accommodations in Þórsmörk Nature Reserve is glamping (“glamorous camping”). Glamping tents are fully furnished and heated. Each spacious tent comes with a twin or double bed, comfortable chairs and tables to hold your luggage. The tents have electric, gas or wood burning heaters. Just a few steps away are bathrooms, restaurant, sauna and a small pool.