

GOOD TO KNOW

START/FINISH

Hraunhafnartangi Lighthouse
to Dyrhólaey Lighthouse

SEASON

Mid-June to the end of September

ACCOMMODATIONS

Those hiking the complete traverse will spend most of their nights wild camping. Alongside your evenings in a tent will possibly be the occasional stay in one of the route’s backcountry huts (which are a godsend in stormy weather).

HIGHLIGHTS

- 1. Ásbyrgi and Jökulsárgljúfur canyons
- 2. The waterfalls of Dettifoss and Skogafoss
- 3. Lake Mývatn
- 4. Side trip to Askja (see Bonus Track)
- 5. Ódádahraun desert
- 6. Laugavegur and Fimmvörðuháls trails (p. 220)
- 7. Dyrhólaey promontory

HELPFUL HINTS

GETTING THERE & AWAY

As of 2022, the closest you can get to the northern terminus using public transportation is the town of Húsavík. From there, you can either try your luck hitching or organize a shuttle service to the lighthouse (Húsavík-based “Travel North” offers a shared service upon request). The southern terminus at Dyrhólaey Lighthouse lies 19 km (11.8 mi) from the full-service town of Vík (and 6 km/3.7 mi from Route 1). You can either hitch, call a taxi, or walk (approx. 3.5–4 hours).

WHAT TO BRING

Recommended items include a 50–65 L backpack, sleeping bag rated to -5 °C (23 °F), well-insulated sleeping mat, three-season tent that holds up well in stormy conditions, trail running shoes or lightweight synthetic hiking boots, water bottles, first aid kit, lightweight potty trowel, sun protection (hat, glasses,

sunscreen), compass and GPS app on your smartphone, overview maps of the route, headlamp, toiletries, power bank for charging electronics, Personal Locator Beacon, and trekking poles (optional).

Recommended clothing includes a light to midweight fleece, down jacket, rain jacket, rain pants, beanie or buff, three pairs of socks (one kept clean for sleeping), hiking pants, head net, long-sleeved hiking shirt, fleece gloves or mittens, and medium-weight thermal underwear for sleeping.



RESUPPLY

Many hikers take a hybrid approach of buying along the way and sending resupply boxes. The easiest option for sending packages is via “Reykjavík Excursions” buses, which have a wide-ranging number of routes around the country (including the interior). From north to south, the main resupply options are as follows: Kópasker (small grocery store), Ásbyrgi (small supermarket), Mývatn/Reykjahlid (large grocery store), Nýidalur hut (packages only/no food available for purchase), and Landmannalaugar (expensive snacks and basic staples).

BONUS TRACK

ASKJA

Among a myriad of possibilities, the Askja Caldera is the one side trip that shouldn’t be missed during the Iceland Traverse. For specific details on the area, see Viti Crater Lake Trail (p. 180). For traverse thru-hikers, perhaps the easiest way

to access Askja is via the marked route which leaves the F910 approximately 800 m (0.5 mi) south of Dyngjufell mountain hut (see Map). The out-and-back excursion measures 30 km (18.6 mi) and takes an average of 10 to 12 hours to complete.

BACKGROUND

ICELAND’S SOUTHERNMOST POINT

The southern terminus of the Iceland Traverse is the lighthouse and promontory of Dyrhólaey. Located near the village of Vík, up until 1918, Dyrhólaey was the southernmost point in the country. That changed after the Katla volcano erupted, forming the nearby Köt lutangi (the Katla Spit), which extended more than a kilometer (0.6 mi) further south than Dyrhólaey. The title is expected to return to Dyrhólaey in the not-too-distant future, as the sands of Köt lutangi are rapidly being reclaimed by the Atlantic Ocean, and at the time of writing, the spit is now only 250 m (820 ft) south of Dyrhólaey.

FLORA & FAUNA

WHY ARE THERE HARDLY ANY TREES IN ICELAND?

When Iceland was first settled at the end of the 9th century, approximately 25 percent of the country was covered in birchwood forests. Over the next three centuries, settlers cleared almost all of this woodland for agriculture, grazing, firewood, and construction. By the mid-20th century, the amount of forested land in Iceland was estimated to be less than 1 percent of the total area. This deforestation, combined with the layers of volcanic residue left by the island’s many eruptions, has meant that much of Iceland’s soil is of poor quality, doesn’t hold moisture, and is prone to erosion. Despite these challenges, in recent decades, the national government has undertaken large-scale reforestation programs with the aim of achieving a 5 percent forest cover over the next 50 years.

