

## **NDSU GEOLOGY 496/695 Field Experience to Iceland 2004**

### **TRAVEL TIPS FOR ICELAND: WHAT TO EXPECT AND WHAT TO TAKE**

#### **WEATHER**

Temperatures could be from the 40's to the 70's, so dressing in the layer method is recommended. Weather can change unpredictably, so be prepared. The ferries could be chilly or even cold and windy. Some evenings may also be cool. Rain is always a possibility.

#### **HEALTH**

If you are on special medication, be sure to bring along sufficient quantities to serve you during your stay. You may have your doctor write a prescription using the drug's generic name, because brand names vary from country to country. To avoid problems with customs agents, carry prescription drugs in their original, clearly-labeled containers. Don't put prescription drugs in your checked baggage; keep it in your carry-on. If you wear prescription eyeglasses, carry a copy of the prescription, or better yet, a spare pair of glasses in case of loss or breakage. The International Student Identity Card (<http://www.istc.org/>) provides students with some medical and emergency benefits. You are responsible for having adequate accident/health insurance.

#### **PASSPORT**

All passengers require a valid passport from the country where they hold citizenship. Iceland does not require a visa for American citizens. If you plan to travel to another country after the trip, you should determine whether you need a visa or if there are any special requirements such as vaccinations, etc.

#### **MONEY**

\$1.00 equals about 73 Icelandic Kroner. An easy way of making conversion to US dollars is to remember that 350 Kroner equals about \$5.00; or 3,500 Kr = \$50; etc.

I suggest that you bring about \$200 emergency money in cash or equivalent. For acquiring Kroner, ATM's can be found throughout Iceland. Some bank machines only accept 4 digit numbers, so make sure your account number and card will work in Iceland.

Remember that banks have short hours and there are likely to be fees for money exchanges. Visa, Mastercard, and to a lesser extent American Express can be used for purchasing, but Discover will not be useful. Charging purchases will give you a good exchange rate.

#### **SECURITY**

Make photocopies of your passport (identification page) and your airline ticket and itinerary, and keep these in a separate place from the originals. It's not a bad idea to bring along a duplicate set of passport photos to speed the process of getting a replacement document if your passport is stolen or lost. Also keep a page with telephone numbers of your credit card issuers in case you need to cancel your cards. Leave another copy of all this information with someone at home.

When traveling anywhere in the world, you must take precautions against loss or theft. Never leave anything valuable in the guesthouse room. Keep an eye on your airline ticket, passport, and credit cards or traveler's checks (all in ziplock bags). To a large degree, it just comes down to being sensible.

## GUIDE BOOKS AND READING

Choose a guide book that seems to accommodate best your needs and interests. Browse the bookstores. Suggestions are Michelin Green guides, Rick Steve, Access guides, Fodor's, Let's Go, Lonely Planet's Iceland, and others. Try to learn about Iceland through books, films, music, etc. before leaving. For example, consider checking out some Icelandic films at the video rental (examples: No Such Thing, 2001; Cold Fever, 1995; more at <http://imdb.com/Sections/Countries/Iceland/>).

Book suggestions include Independent People by the Nobel Prize-winning Icelandic author Halldór Laxness, and the recent edition of The Sagas of the Icelanders: A Selection By Robert Kellogg with a preface by Jane Smiley. We will be meeting with Minnesota author of Icelandic descent Bill Holm in Hofsós; his most recent work is Playing the Black Piano : Poems; see also Eccentric Islands: Travels Real and Imaginary and others.

## PACKING

The fewer things that you pack, the less you have to carry around and keep track of. We will be towing a trailer behind our minibus, so please help to conserve space when packing. In addition to your duffel/small suitcase and camping gear, also bring a small backpack (possibly your carry-on) for day trips. Although we will be gone only two weeks, you may wish to wash some clothes and hang them overnight in your room to dry (if so, bring soap and a clothesline).

A Provisional List:

_____ Sleeping bag	_____ Tent w/ ground cloth
_____ Sleeping pad	_____ Work gloves (protection against wind and sharp lava)
_____ Small (!) pillow	_____ Sunglasses
_____ Knife, fork, spoon, cup, plate, can opener	_____ Caps: stocking & other
_____ Flashlight and batteries	_____ Poncho or rain gear
_____ Camera and film / memory cards	_____ Hiking boots
_____ Two changes of clothing	_____ Pencils w/ pencil sharpener
_____ Toiletries, Toothbrush, etc.	_____ Swimsuit! For hot springs
_____ T.P.	_____ Wet wipes / kleenex
_____ Towel/wash cloth	_____ Water bottle
_____ Day pack for hikes	_____ Cooking gear (propane burner) (share in "cooking group")

- \_\_\_\_\_ Passport and plane tickets - double check these before leaving for the airport!
- \_\_\_\_\_ Money, credit cards, phone cards, traveler's checks; a money belt is recommended
- \_\_\_\_\_ Appropriate clothing; lightweight; clothing to wear as layers -- shirts, sweaters -- and pants, skirts, shorts, underwear (washable), sleep wear, etc. Icelanders dress well and are not sloppy. Lightweight pants or jeans are good, and shorts may be needed if it gets warm. Wrinkle free clothing works well when living out of a suitcase.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Comfortable walking shoes or hiking boots that are broken in. We will be walking in the cities and hiking on the volcanoes, so you will need something comfortable. You may wish to bring a pair of sandals or a second pair of shoes to change into at the end of the day.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Windproof jacket
- \_\_\_\_\_ A couple of pencils, a pen, and a notebook for journal/field notes
- \_\_\_\_\_ Medicines, all with prescription labels clearly visible
- \_\_\_\_\_ Sun screen and possibly sun burn lotion (if you burn easily) and a hat for sun protection
- \_\_\_\_\_ A few ziplock plastic storage bags always seem to come in handy (e.g., good for camera if it is raining; or for a wet wash cloth)
- \_\_\_\_\_ One or two large plastic bags for dirty clothes and in case you need to keep some things dry
- \_\_\_\_\_ One or two books to read or pack of cards, just keep the weight down

For those taking the Geology Course:

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| _____ Rock hammer/chisel        | _____ Hand lens       |
| _____ Hard-bound field notebook | _____ Collection bags |