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Gay Iceland – the best Reykjavik gay  
bars, tours & more

PASSPORT

Iceland is easily one of the coolest countries we've ever visited and anyone who's been will tell you the same. The island is awesome, unique and its natural landscapes and geothermal wonders will put you in awe.

Iceland also happens to be one of the most gay-friendly countries in the world. It leads the pack and ranks among the top places for LGBT equality and legal protections. Iceland officially recognized same-sex partnerships in 1996 and later allowed full marriage equality in 2010 becoming the 9<sup>th</sup> country in the world to do so. In 2009, Johanna Sigurdardottir was elected as Iceland's Prime Minister and made world history as the first openly gay/lesbian head of state.

Iceland sits on top of the North American and Eurasian tectonic plates and is slowly being ripped apart. But this geographic placement gives the island its identity and the geothermal phenomenon that is so well known throughout the country. Boiling mud baths, perfectly timed geysers and naturally heated pools can be found across the island and these attractions are what keep people coming back for more. Tack on things like glacier hiking, whale watching or seeing the Northern Lights and it is clear why Iceland is a natural wonder. Heck, being gay friendly is just icing on the cake!

## **General Tips**

The high season in Iceland is in the summer from June to August and prices for accommodations, transportation, sights and tours are accordingly higher during these months. A visit during shoulder season, like May or September will still afford you reasonable weather but with reduced prices. If you're adventurous, you can visit during the winter in offseason for a completely different experience, though still worthwhile given the opportunities to see the Northern Lights, beautiful winter landscapes and participate in outdoor winter activities. Don't forget to pack warm and waterproof clothing regardless of the time of year. Even in August when we visited, there were several times when we wore our warm jackets and were blasted with unexpected winds and rainstorms.

Alcohol is disproportionately expensive compared to other travel costs but things like accommodation, transportation, food and tours can still be quite pricey. The best money-saving thing you can do is to buy alcohol from the duty-free shop upon landing in the Keflavik Airport. You'll save 50-75% on regular pricing otherwise found in the city.



### Transportation & Airport Transfer

Unless you're renting a car immediately upon arriving in Iceland, you'll probably need an airport transfer to Reykjavik, some 45 minutes away from the Keflavik International Airport. Taxis are incredibly expensive but there are several bus companies that provide reliable transfers. They arrange their transfers to coincide with flight arrivals and departures so you won't wait long upon arriving and you can pick a convenient time to return to the airport.

[Book Transfer →](#)

Some visitors opt for a rental car to get around the island, as it gives you the most freedom. [For the lowest price in car rentals, check out SADcars](#), which is a low-cost rental company based in Reykjavik. They offer used cars for rental, so you might be cruising around in a car from the '90s, but you'll be saving a bundle compared to others in town.

Local buses are less expensive than renting a car but [the schedules are a bit complex to navigate](#) and you don't have the freedom to explore anything more than the set routes. Hitchhiking is surprisingly common and safe in Iceland and is popular with the backpacker crowd.

## **Gay Hotels in Reykjavik**

There aren't currently any [gay hotels](#) in Iceland, but there are many gay-friendly options.

[Icelandair Hotel Marina](#) – Set in the popular 101 harbor district of Reykjavik. Guests can work out for free at Slipp Gym or relax beside the fireplace in the lobby area. Icelandic films can be watched at Slipp Cinema. Restaurant Slippbarinn offers a selection of light meals at all times. A variety of drinks can be enjoyed at Slippbarinn.

[Alda Hotel](#) – Located on Laugavegur shopping street in central Reykjavik, this hotel offers modern rooms with a gym, sauna and outdoor hot tub. Bicycles can be rented on site. Guests can also have a drink at the hotel bar.

[Radisson Blu 1919](#) – located in the fashionable 101 District, close to Reykjavík Harbor. Icelandic salmon, lobster and lamb are served in the stylish 1919 Restaurant & Lounge. The bar features designer cube-shaped seats, floor-to-ceiling windows and a varied cocktail menu.

[101 Hotel](#) – This sleek and modern boutique hotel is located in central Reykjavik, next to the Icelandic Opera House. Contemporary design, along with black and white interior is featured in every guest room. The in-house restaurant serves traditional Icelandic and international cuisine. It also features special menus for both happy hour and brunch.

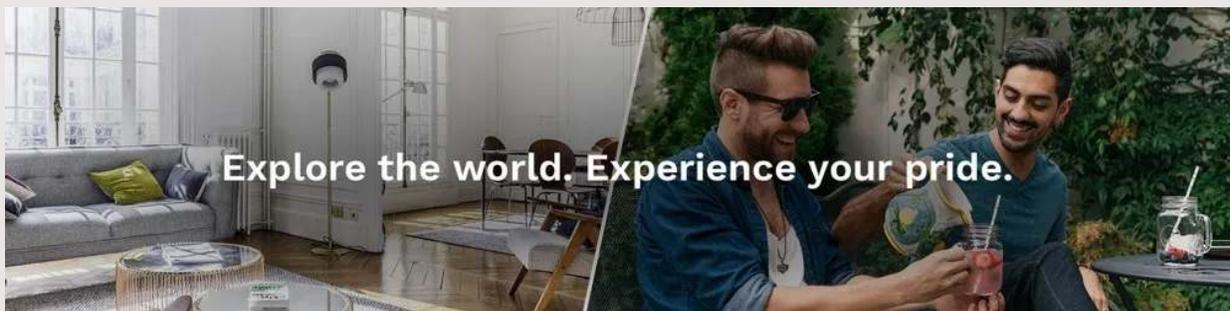
[Hotel Borg](#) – The elegant Art Deco-style Hotel features a central location in Reykjavik, overlooking the historic Asuturvollur Square. It offers brightly decorated rooms with wooden floors and stylish art deco furniture. Guests can enjoy an in-house spa and gym that features a hot tub, sauna and steam room. It is also possible to book massages.

*Budget*

Another option to consider in Iceland is camping if you're brave enough to fare the ever-changing Icelandic weather. This is probably the least expensive option, though if you're not traveling with a tent, it might not be ideal. Camping in Iceland is quite popular and the choice for many backpackers.

### *Apartments*

There are many sites for apartment rentals in Iceland, with [AirBnB](#) probably being one of the most popular. Prices are generally comparable to budget hotels, especially if you're willing to get a room in a shared apartment. [Book AirBnB →](#)



There are even a few LGBT-oriented booking sites like [misterb&b](#) with listings from gay hosts for gay guests where you can either rent a whole apartment or a private room in a shared apartment. Understanding Reykjavik's gay scene is much more easily done with the help of a local and apartment sharing is one of the best ways to meet someone living in the city who knows how things work, where and when are the best nights to go out, and what places to eat at and which to avoid.

### **Special Offer!**

Sign up with [AirBnB](#) or [misterb&b](#) and you will receive a free \$25 credit to use on your first booking!

[JOIN AIRBNB](#) [JOIN MISTERB&B](#)

## Sightseeing & Activities in Iceland

Dyrhólaey Nature Reserve – puffin breeding ground with hundreds of birds visible in the evening during the summer months.

Black Sand Beaches – Reynis Beach in Vík is a great option with amazing views. Later, head to Hálsanefshellir, another black sand beach with a sea cave and the famous Basalt Columns, which have been used symbolically throughout Iceland’s art and architecture.



[The Blue Lagoon](#) – one of Iceland’s most famous sites and tourist attractions. The lagoon space itself is naturally occurring but the warm waters you find that fill the space are actually the byproduct of the nearby geothermal power plant. But unlike other types of power production, the waters are completely safe and actually therapeutic. Be warned that if you visit the Blue Lagoon, it’s best to make reservations in advance to ensure there’s space. [Book tour →](#)

Thingvellir National Park – Iceland actually straddles two continental plates and you can visit the UNESCO World Heritage Site called Thingvellir National Park, where you'll find the divide that is slowly ripping apart the island. This park also happens to be the location of the oldest parliament in history – the former site of a Viking settlement which housed the national parliament of Iceland started in 930 AD and held sessions until 1798. If you happen to have more time, you can even snorkel or scuba dive in the lake of the Silfra fissure – some of the clearest waters on earth.

Snaefellsjokull National Park – Just a two- and a half-hour drive from Reykjavik is world famous glacier and stunning coastline of Snæfellsjökull National Park. The park is located at the foot of a volcano completely covered by a glacier of the same name. Besides the picturesque views of the Snaefellsjokull glacier, you can find great sites for bird watching, black pebble beaches, lava tube caves, countless waterfalls plus tiny fishing villages with occasional sightings of orcas and seals along the coastline.

The Northern Lights – catching a glimpse of the elusive northern lights can be a challenge and it's best done in the company of a local guide. These experts know the best time and place to get a chance at experiencing this unique phenomenon firsthand. Though finding this feature of Mother Nature is never a guarantee, you'll have the best chance during October or February.

Geothermal Sites and Baths – besides the Blue Lagoon, places like [Laugarvatn Fontana Steam Baths](#) make for a great stop to enjoy a warm soak in the naturally warm waters. Or if you happen to visit farther south on the island, don't miss the region near Hveragerdi. Nearby, you'll even find a river named Varma, which is considered a "hot river" due to the hot springs that flow into parts of the river itself. You can bathe in the warm area of the river, but this requires a 45-minute hike to the hot spring site. If you don't have time for the hike, you can enjoy a riverside hot tub or steam bath at one of the many riverside hotels in the area.

The Ring Road – If you have the time, one of the best things to do in Iceland is to travel the Ring Road. This road starts and ends in Reykjavik and circles the entire island. The best way to see the Ring Road – or rather the attractions along the route – is to rent a car and slowly make your way around the island, stopping each night at local campgrounds or hotels. The complete trip takes about 7-10 days.



## **Pink Iceland Gay Tours**

A great way to take advantage of your time in Iceland is to hook yourself up with one of [Pink Iceland's tour packages](#). Pink Iceland is the only tour company in Iceland catering to the LGBTQ community. It was founded in 2011 by Eva Maria and Birna, a lesbian couple who started organizing tours in Iceland as well as same-sex, destination weddings. You can see from their phenomenal [5-star reviews on TripAdvisor](#) that they are ranked among the top activities in all of Iceland.

[Bi-monthly Gay Golden Circle](#) – a fabulous day out with fellow LGBT+ people, a wonderful guide, spectacular landscapes followed by a couple of drinks to get to know each other for those who want at the end of the tour. [Book Tour →](#)

[Pink South Shore Safari](#) – the South Shore Safari will take you through the breadbasket of Iceland on your way to the gems of the south. You'll see the villages and farms of the southern flat lands before arriving at the mountain ranges. In clear weather you can see volcanos and glaciers that have erupted 9 times in the last 50 years, the latest of which was the infamous Eyjafjallajökull eruption of 2010 that stranded millions of travelers all around the world. [Book Tour →](#)

[Pink Iceland West Iceland Safari](#) – Glacier carved landscape and ancient curvy rivers, Iceland's largest lava cave and the worlds' most powerful hot spring – these are just few of our favorite things on Pink Iceland West Safari. On the journey West you'll drive through the tranquil Whale fjord bay, which is rarely visited these days. The name gift of Whale fjord bay is uncertain, but most believe the name derives from an old legend of Rauðhöfði the infamous Red Headed Whale whose Reign of terror ended with his heart exploding on top of Whale Mountain. [Book Tour →](#)

[Iceland Lesbian Summer Escapade](#) – lesbian women's tour hosted by Out Adventures and Pink Iceland. From cosmopolitan Reykjavík to the pristine countryside, this 8-day adventure will immerse you in everything a girl could love about the land of Björk. Explore the stunning South Shore, visit an Icelandic Goat farm, meet a female brewmaster, and soak away your worries in the healing waters of the Blue Lagoon. Now let's get going, or as the Icelandic say, "Let's get on with the butter". [Book Tour →](#)



[Iceland: Countryside & City Pride](#) – gay men's tour hosted by Out Adventures and Pink Iceland. From the surprisingly cosmopolitan and capital of Reykjavík, to the remote and pristine countryside, this 8-day adventure will immerse you in everything there is to love about the Land of Fire and Ice. You'll explore the stunning South Shore, float between tectonic plates, traverse a glacier by super-jeep, and – best of all – celebrate Reykjavík Pride with an international group of LGBT travelers and all the friendly locals. [Book Tour →](#)

### **Gay Cruises in Iceland**

[VACAYA Iceland Cruise](#) – Land of Luminosity – [VACAYA](#) makes history with the first all-LGBT+ circumnavigation (that means we're going all the way around!) of Iceland on the brand new luxurious 5-star Le Jacques Cartier from Ponant Cruises. This is the ultimate voyage of discovery of Iceland and the Arctic Circle – a truly exotic summer adventure on the trail of the Vikings. For 8 days, VACAYA will take you to extreme lands and breathtaking scenery. Glaciers, lava fields, geysers, and steam baths await those with a passion for travel and a love for the finer things in life. Iceland is a destination worthy of all superlatives. [Book Cruise →](#)

### **Restaurants and Cafes**

The price of food and drink in Iceland is high and can add up quickly, especially if you're eating out frequently. Below is a list of recommended options at all price ranges to help you keep your budget in check.

[Babalú](#) – gay Icelandic café with good coffee and cakes. Look for the yellow house with cute graffiti. If the weather is pleasant, you can sit outside on their outdoor terrace.

[Ida Zimsen](#) – lesbian-owned café, bookstore and gift-shop in downtown Reykjavik.

[Núðluskálin](#) – gay owned noodle restaurant with take away food.

[Baejarins Beztu](#) – one of the least expensive, yet tasty foods you'll find is the traditional Icelandic hot dog. In fact, Iceland's hot dogs are famous and even former US president Bill Clinton visited here.



[Jómfrúin](#) – home of Danish smørrebrød in Iceland. It's a gay Icelandic restaurant which specializes in open-face, Danish sandwiches. The sandwiches usually feature rye sourdough bread with different combinations of seafood, meat, vegetables and condiments, and is typically enjoyed with a cold local beer.

**Grillmarket** – the Grillmarket works closely with local farmers, buying their produce directly from the farm. You can choose from the full menu or opt for the tasting menu, which consists of three appetizers followed by a steak with fries and vegetables and a tasting of the restaurant’s desserts. Reservations recommended.

### **Reykjavik Gay Bars**

The gay scene in Reykjavik is very small yet quite prominent at the same time. Alcohol can be expensive in Iceland, so be sure to keep an eye out for happy hour specials. Many restaurants and bars, especially in Reykjavik, offer happy hour deals usually with reasonable specials on beer and wine.



Kiki Queer Bar – Reykjavik’s only gay specific bar and club is a great spot to dance, listen to good music, and mingle. The façade is painted in bright rainbow colors so you can’t miss it. It’s the perfect place to spend the night connecting with locals and other LGBT visitors. Though pretty much any bar in town is totally gay welcoming, this is where you can connect with other members of the LGBT community.

Bravó – a little bar with friendly and fun staff. They offer a selection of local beers on draft at happy hour. Though not a gay-specific bar, many LGBT locals frequent the place and it's located right below Kiki Queer Bar.

*Note: Iceland is quite small and there is no specific gay neighborhood. There is no gay sauna in Reykjavik.*

## **Iceland Gay Events**

[Reykjavik Gay Pride](#) – Reykjavik Pride is a well-structured week of fantastic events. The Opening Ceremony at the famous Harpa Concert Hall is one of the biggest nights during Reykjavik Pride and consists of opening speeches, music, drag queens and general queer entertainment. Though Reykjavik Pride does not have any sort of dedicated outdoor festival or pride park, it has a great line up of activities throughout the week. The Pride Parade has an incredible turn out for the country with about 100,000 spectators (one third of the entire island popular!) coming to watch it take over the streets. The overall feel of the pride is not [party](#) heavy, but very friendly and relaxed. It has more of a laid-back festival, community celebration vibe.

[Rainbow Reykjavik](#) – offers a great mixture of nature, activities, culture, cuisine, music and nightlife. The event hosts multiple group dinners and nighttime [parties](#) plus operates tours to the famed Blue Lagoon, the Golden Circle and does Northern Lights excursions. After celebrating with a friendly and upbeat crowd, you're just a short trip away from seeing the stunning landscapes of this small island nation.

[Bears on Ice](#) – come fall time, visitors will also find the event called Bears on Ice, another great locally organized opportunity, open to anyone of course, but specifically for those that embrace bear culture.