

Botanical Iceland

Land of Fire & Ice & Nature's Paradise!

July 2-11, 2016

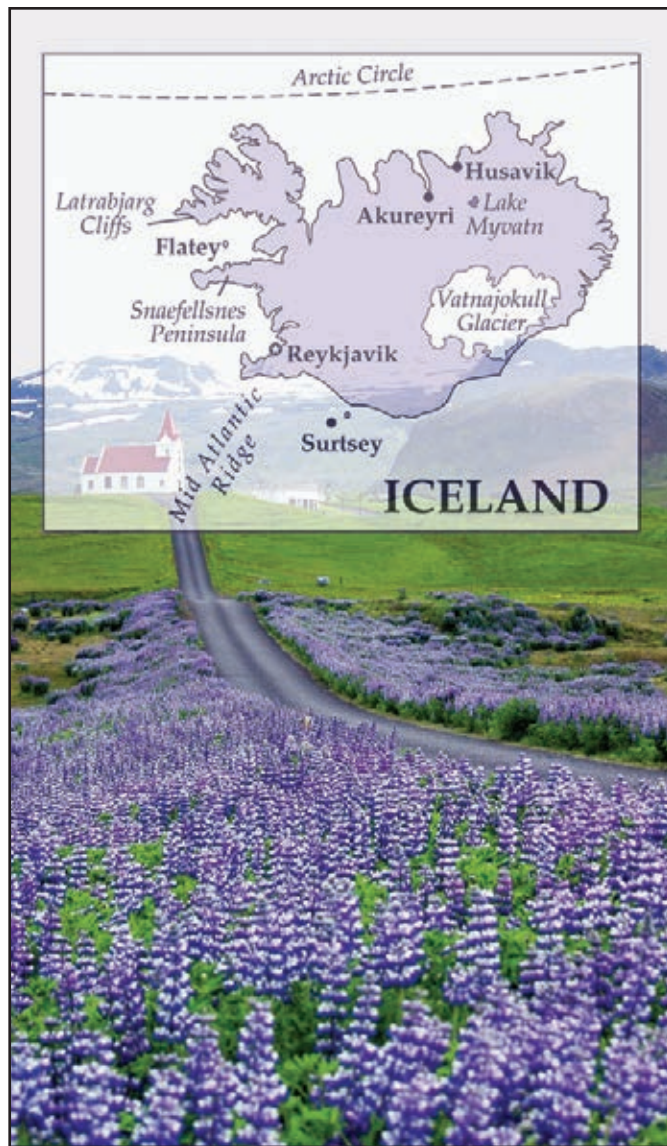


Outdoors enthusiasts grab your cameras and field guides, and come explore Iceland! Discover Iceland in all of its great natural beauty.

Iceland has captured the imagination of people all over the world since Jules Verne wrote "Journey to the Center of the Earth" in 1871. Iceland has a proud heritage—it is the world's oldest democracy. Its plant life and natural wonders are truly magical!

Come join our excellent Icelandic naturalists and see for yourself! This trip is a tremendous introduction to the heritage of Iceland, from geology to history and landscapes with fascinating plants.





LEADERSHIP

Leading this botanical exploration of Iceland will be **Jonas Helgason** and **Dr. Starri Heidmarsson**. Joining them will be a Pacific Horticulture Society representative **Carol Moholt**.

Jonas Helgason was born on a farm at Lake Myvatn in the northeast of Iceland and has a BS degree in Geography from the University of Iceland and a B.Ed. from the same University. He has taught Geography, Geology, and tourism courses at Akureyri Junior College and now leads educational trips. He has led past trips for Betchart as well as to the Faeroe Islands and groups to Eastern Europe.

Dr. Starri Heidmarsson holds a Ph.D. in botany from Uppsala University, Sweden. Starri is the Head of the Botany Department at the Iceland Institute of Natural History and has published on the lichens of Surtsey Volcano, diverse vascular plants, and is head of the bird banding program at the Institute.

Carol Moholt is Executive Director of the Pacific Horticulture Society and has served on the boards of both the Western and Pacific Horticulture societies and local environmental planning commissions. Carol has traveled the world for work and pleasure and Iceland has been on her short "must visit" list for decades.

Our leader team looks forward to sharing the natural wonders of Iceland with you!

ITINERARY

Days 1/2 Seattle to Reykjavik

Today we will depart from the Seattle International Airport for Reykjavik. Arrive on the morning of Day 2. Meet your Iceland naturalist guides and transfer to the *Baron Hotel* (2 nights).

Have an introduction to the heritage of Iceland and city tour. Then enjoy a visit to the Reykjavik Botanical Garden. Have lunch in the Cafe Flora noted for its traditional soups and open face sandwiches. This afternoon join a landscape architect to see some of the modern green buildings that incorporate energy efficient features to produce both a stunning visual and environmentally compatible building. See the Icelandic Institute of Natural History, the Harpa Concert Hall, and the Nordic House among others. B,L

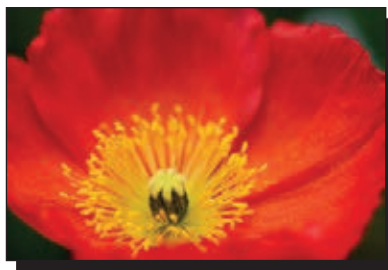
Day 3 Gullfoss Falls & Thingvellir Plain

Today we'll visit Thingvellir (the "plains of parliament"), where Iceland's democracy began in 930 AD. See the array of plants growing along the roads and in parks at Strokkur Geysir, and walk to see the incredible misty Gullfoss Falls, Iceland's star attraction. We'll also walk atop an astonishing geologic feature, the Mid-Atlantic Ridge, which separates Europe and North America! B

Day 4 Snafellsnes Peninsula & Stykkisholmur

Depart for the Snafellsnes Peninsula this morning which has some of the oldest rock formations at the western and eastern edges of the country. In the middle portion of the country are the youngest rocks with Holuhraun erupting continuously since August 31, 2014. During the last year it has become the largest eruption in Iceland in the last 100 years.

Words cannot express the mystery, wonder and almost surreal energy of the Snafellsnes Peninsula! The major landmark is the Snafellsjökull Glacier which



is renowned for its mystical powers and has captured the imagination of people all over the world, ever since Jules Verne wrote "The Journey to the Centre of the

Earth" in 1871. The area features plant filled moorlands, meadows, marshlands, rivers, streams, and small ponds along with beautiful rock and lava formations.



The Snaefellsnes Peninsula is without a doubt one of the best places in Iceland for nature and wildlife watching during summer. Today we can expect to see a great variety of flowering plants, birds, and seals. Look for three species of Veronica, alpine gentians, two species of forget-me-nots, the inconspicuous orchids, and many species of horsetails.

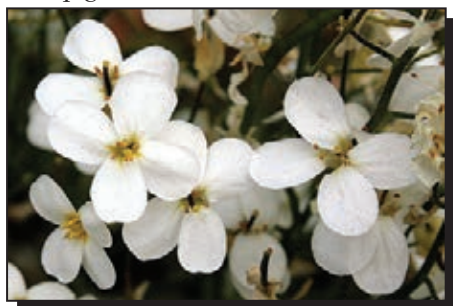
After traveling around the Peninsula we will make our way to the north shore. *Stykkisholmur Hotel*. B

Day 5 Breidafjörður Bay & Flatey Island

We will start today with a visit to the Eldfjallasafn Volcano Museum in Stykkisholmur. View a unique exhibition of international art old and new, showing volcanic eruptions as well as objects, artifacts, and volcanic rocks from the unique collection of professor Haraldur Sigurdsson who has carried out research on volcanoes worldwide for forty years.

The ferry will take us across Breidafjörður Bay. This bay is located between the Westfjords in the North and Snaefellsnes Peninsula in the south and has both landscape and seascape of a different kind. It consists of small fjords and bays and is literally dotted with around 3,000 islands, islets, and skerries.

After making a tour among the islands we will land on Flatey Island where we stay for the night. Flatey Island is a small island almost in the middle of the bay. The hamlet is mostly intact and the remaining houses have been renovated. Over 200 species of vascular plants have been recorded on Flatey, but sheep graze much of the island. Look along cliff edges



and fenced off areas for native vegetation like Ranunculus species, Roseroot, Galium, and the many species of ferns.

The birdlife on the island is very used to living closely with people, so there may be extremely tame individuals. The eiderdown farmers can pick up some of the female Eiders, collect part of their down nesting material and put them comfortably back on their nests. *Hotel Flatey (shared facilities)*. B,D

Day 6 Latrabjarg Bird Cliff & Westfjords

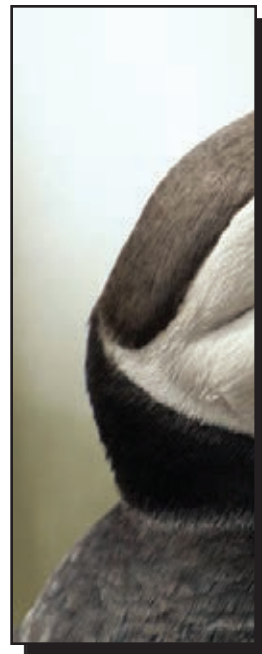
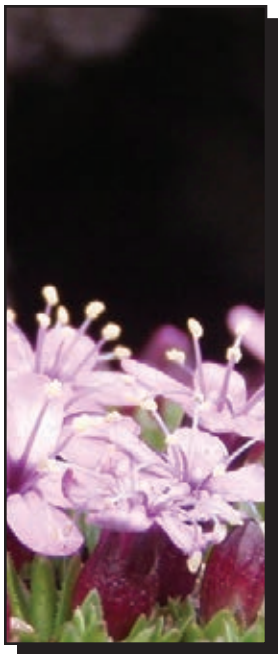
This morning we will continue by ferry to the other side of Breidafjörður Bay. From here we make our way through the remote Westfjords towards the magnificent Latrabjarg Bird Cliff. Along the cliff edge look for dwarf willows, and small patches of one of the birch species only a few inches tall.

Latrabjarg is the largest seabird colony in Europe and extends over a 14 km long cliff. You will be astonished by the numbers, sounds and smell of seabirds along the cliff. The Puffins are so tame here that you can almost pick them up with your bare hands! We will also visit the Egill Ólafsson Museum at Hnjótur with a unique collection from the Westfjords which offers insight into daily life and people's struggle for existence and the resourcefulness it took to survive under harsh conditions in centuries past. *Hotel, Vatnsfjörður*. B

Day 7 The Westfjords & Hvammstangi

Today we will make our way along the rugged southern coastline of the Westfjords peninsula through spectacular fjords and past thundering waterfalls to the Daeli Holiday Farm in northern Iceland. Much of the day will be spent driving through dramatic scenery.

This afternoon we visit Steinbogi Waterfall and Kolugljúfur Canion. We will walk among low growing Mountain avens (*Dryas octopetala*), Grass of Parnassus (*Parnassia palustris*) two species who's origin is not solely from Europe. Many other species are present along the trail and on the cliff edges. Steinbogi or "Stone Arc" (direct translation) is a waterfall with a natural stone bridge. The hike offers a variety of local flora, views of nearby horse farms and a beautiful landscape. *Daeli Holiday Farm, Hvammstangi*. B,D



Day 8 Akureyri Botanic Garden & Husavik

This morning we will drive to Akureyri, Iceland's northern most city. A major highlight today is a visit to the Akureyri Botanic Garden, the world's northern most botanic garden, situated just below the Arctic Circle. It has a wide variety of both Icelandic and foreign flora. The park was established in 1912 and the botanic garden in 1957 when Jon Roanvaldsson's plant collection was added by the city. He was a leading force in the garden for many years along with Margrethe Schioth, a Danish woman who lived in Akureyri. The park has the best examples of mature trees in Iceland, though most are introduced. More than 400 species of native flora are represented and over 6,000 species from around the world. There are an astonishing array of tropical and sub-tropical plants from around the world and some will be in flower.

We will depart for Husavik and visit the Husavik Whale Museum on Skjalfandi floi Bay. Large numbers of cetacean species have been recorded in the bay (up to 12 species in total), including Minke Whales (which are the most common species here), or White-beaked Dolphins and Humpback Whales. *Fosshotel Husavik. B,D*

Day 9 Lake Myvatn

This morning, we will depart for Lake Myvatn. The whole area is a natural wonder of its own in a world that has nothing else like it. The recent lava terrain offers a new habitat for pioneering plants and commonly seen are ferns, Sedums, lichens, and many species of grasses. The protected parks offer some of the best stands of Downy birch (*Betula pubescens*) and Tea-leaved willow (*Salix phylicifolia*) which are the climax vegetation in Iceland.

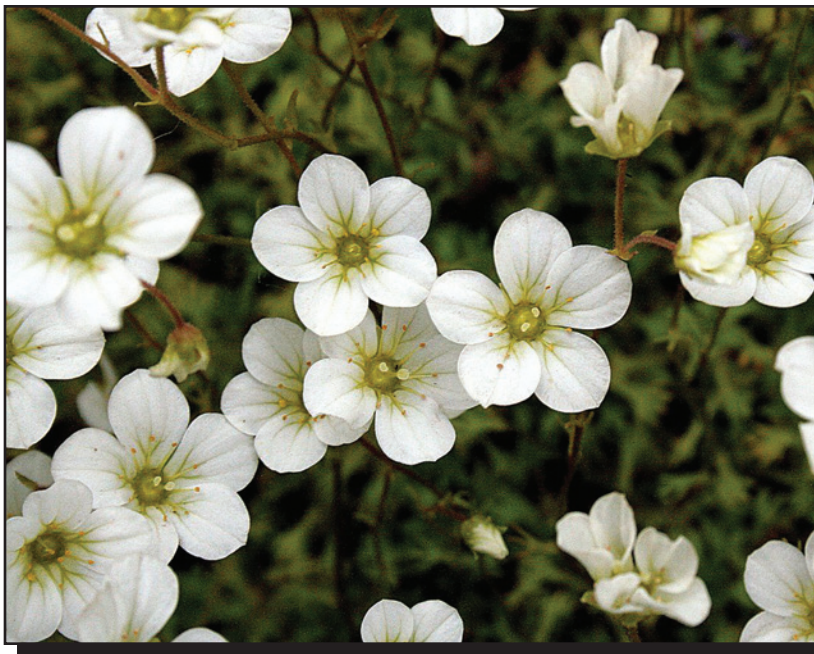
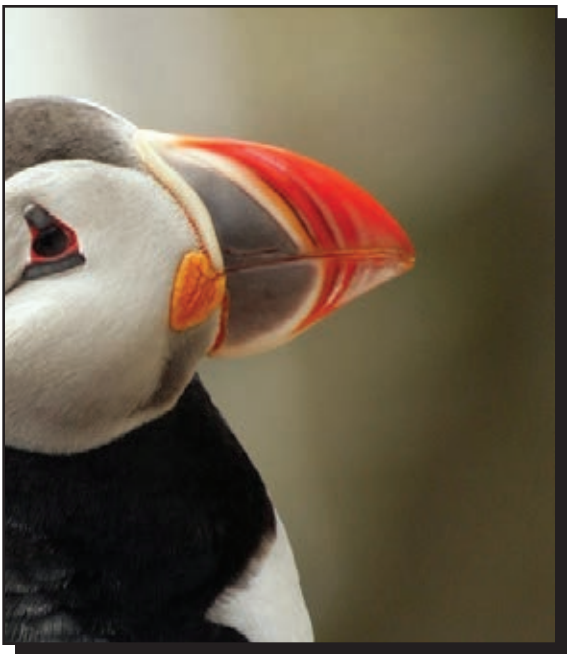


The lake itself is approximately 37 sq km, making it Iceland's fourth largest lake.

This area has been described as a meeting place of two worlds where you are able to find flora and fauna from both the temperate and the Arctic zones. It is also a highly active volcanic area situated on the west edge of the meeting point of the Eurasian and North American plates. You are likely to see a variety of bird species. Have a festive dinner this evening in celebration of our journey! *Hotel Laxa. D*

Day 10 Akureyri, Reykjavik to USA

Today we make our way to Akureyri where we take a short flight to the Keflavik Airport for our return flights to the USA. B



RESPONSIBILITY

Betchart Expeditions Inc. and Pacific Horticulture Society act only as agents for the passenger with respect to transportation and hotels, and exercise every care possible. However, we can assume no liability for injury, damage, delay, loss, accident or irregularity in connection with the services of any airplane, ship, motorcoach, or any other conveyance used in carrying out the arrangements of the tour. We cannot accept any responsibility for losses or additional expenses due to delay or changes in air or other services, sickness, weather, strike, war, quarantine, terrorism, acts of God, or other causes beyond our control. All such losses or expenses will have to be borne by the passenger, as tour rates provide for arrangements only for the time stated. We reserve the right to substitute another leader of similar expertise or reserve the right to cancel any tour prior to departure, in which case the entire payment will be refunded with no further obligation on our part. The right is also reserved to decline to accept or retain any person as a member of the tour. No refund will be made for the unused portion of any tour unless arrangements are made in sufficient time to avoid penalties. The price of the program is based on current tariffs and rates, and is subject to change. Any tariff, exchange rate, or fuel increases will be passed on to participants. Baggage is carried at the owner's risk entirely. It is understood that the air ticket when issued shall constitute the sole contract between the passenger and the airline concerned. The airlines concerned are not to be held responsible for any act, omission, or event during the time passengers are not on board their plane or conveyance.

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Photos courtesy of Taunya DeYoung, Hedwig Storch.

Ljuba Brank (Wikipedia Commons) and others.

CST# 2036304-40

RESERVATIONS

#1422

Yes! I/we want to join the **Botanical Iceland Expedition, July 2-11, 2016**, offered by the **Pacific Horticulture Society and Betchart Expeditions Inc.** Please reserve _____ space(s). As a deposit, I/we enclose a check for \$_____ (\$500 per person) payable to Betchart Expeditions Inc. Trust Account.

Name(s) _____ Age _____

_____ Age _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone: Home (_____) _____

Work (_____) _____

Email Address _____

Membership in Pacific Horticulture Society? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Membership in Pacific Horticulture Society is \$28 per year; join before registering for this tour and you will receive the member donation rate. Follow this link to join PHS:

<http://membership.pacifichorticulture.org/joinrenew>

Accommodations Preference:

☐ Twin ☐ Single Twin Share: ☐ with a friend or

☐ Nonsmoker ☐ Smoker ☐ assign a roommate

Signature _____ Date _____

Signature _____ Date _____

Please Mail To:

**Botanical Iceland 2016, Betchart Expeditions Inc.
17050 Montebello Road, Cupertino, CA 95014-5435**



*Discover the Land of Fire
& Ice & Nature's Paradise...*
BOTANICAL ICELAND!
July 2-11, 2016

COSTS & CONDITIONS

Trip Fee: \$4,295 per person twin share plus \$250 per person contribution to Pacific Horticulture Society and air \$1,295 from Seattle to Iceland, RT plus \$195 in-tour flight Akureyri/Reykjavik.

Expedition Fee Includes: Land transport; group airport transfers; accommodations twin share; all breakfasts, 1 lunch, and 3 dinners; entrance fees; tips to local guides and drivers; baggage handling; leadership, administration.

Expedition Fee Does Not Include: Air fare (quoted separately); independent transfers; gratuity to expedition leaders and botanical expert; personal items such as laundry, phone calls, alcoholic beverages, snacks; personal insurance, or foreign airport departure taxes.

What to Expect: This expedition is for travelers who would like to explore botanical Iceland, led by an Icelandic naturalist and botanical expert. This is a rich natural history experience with great opportunities for plant walks in the spectacular landscapes of volcanic Iceland. The group will travel from 2 to 6 hours by bus or van most days. There will be short bird and whale watching boat trips. Walks will be at a leisurely pace suitable for discovering plants (good quality hiking boots are recommended). It will be summer with midday temperatures in the 50's to 60's with a few sprinkles every other day. The expedition will be a tremendous experience for travelers with an appetite for adventure who would enjoy exploring Iceland! We will have a grand adventure of discovery. (No smoking in vehicles, during lectures, or meals please.)

Air Fare & Airline Ticketing: Please phone **Taunya at Betchart Expeditions, (800) 252-4910** for information about the group flights. The group flight departs from Seattle or other IcelandAir gateways on IcelandAir. All group members

take the in-tour flight Akureyri to Keflavik airport July 11.
AIR FARES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE.

Accommodations: Are in a comfortable first class hotel in Reykjavik, charming Hotel Flatey, and in country style lodges and hotels in remote areas twin share with a private bath (except on Flatey Island where facilities are shared). Limited single accommodations are available for a supplement of \$895.

Reservations, Deposits, & Payments:

Please mail a deposit of \$500 per person with the completed reservation form to:

**Botanical Iceland 2016,
Betchart Expeditions Inc.
17050 Montebello Road
Cupertino, CA 95014-5435**

The balance is due 60 days before departure.

Questions: Please call **Betchart Expeditions Inc.**

Telephone: **(800) 252 4910**

or **(408) 252 4910**

Fax: **(408) 252 1444**

Email: Taunya@betchartexpeditions.com



Cancellations & Refunds:

The initial deposit is refundable up to 60 days before departure less a handling fee of \$100 per person. There is no refund after the 60-day period unless your place is resold, then only the \$100 per person handling fee is withheld. There are no refunds for unused meals or other expedition features.