

## Reykjavik, Iceland: A Disney Cruise Line Port of Call Review

by Cheryl Pendry, PassPorter Featured Columnist

At first glance, Iceland isn't somewhere you'd expect a cruise ship to visit. We tend to think of sandy beaches and tropical breezes for a cruise. But for some lucky passengers on the **Norwegian fjords itineraries**, Iceland is exactly where they're headed.

□ There aren't many ports of call that warrant an overnight stay, but the country's capital, Reykjavik, is one of them. Having spent five nights there during a winter trip to the city earlier this year, there's **plenty to see and do**. In fact, we were so impressed with Reykjavik, we're planning a return trip next year.

Perhaps one of the biggest attractions in Iceland are the country's **hot springs**, and at the Blue Lagoon, they've certainly made the best of this natural attraction. It's a massive tourist attraction, conveniently located near to the city's international airport, which made it perfect for our visit. It is arguably a little harder to get to on a shore excursion, as it's about half an hour or so away by bus. While undoubtedly commercialized, we adored our day at the Blue Lagoon, and found it a wonderfully relaxing experience, albeit slightly surreal given there was snow on the surrounding mountains when we visited in February!

□ **Bathing at the Blue Lagoon** is one option -- it provides transportation there and back, along with a good couple of hours to soak in the waters -- for \$139/adults (\$74/ages 2-13). Although the water wasn't burning hot, I'm not sure I'd recommend it for children, and we didn't see any during our visit.

□ There are various **helicopter and flightseeing tours**, but as with things of this kind, they do tend to be at the pricier end of the market. We thought about perhaps taking one and asked about prices, but were immediately put off by the cost. We felt for the price, you didn't actually get that much time in the air, although I have no doubt the views probably would've been stunning.

Another much more expensive option is **Let's Go Volcano and Bathing at the Blue Lagoon**, which will set you back \$379/person for ages 12 and up. This adds in a journey around the volcanic landscape of Reykjanes Peninsula. This excursion includes a trek around a lava crater and through a lava cave before enjoying lunch, and then a jaunt to the lagoon for an afternoon of relaxation. By that point, it will probably be much needed! You can also just do the Let's Go Volcano option, but even that's \$289.

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□ Another of the country's most famous attractions is what's called the **Golden Circle**. It takes in the three major landmarks: the Thingvellir National Park, where legislative meetings took place as long ago as 930 AD; the Geysir area, home to numerous hot springs, which are quite something when they explode into life; and the stunning Gullfoss waterfall. When we visited, the waterfall was mainly covered in ice. In the summer, it's a very different, but still just as impressive sight. We took the Golden Circle tour during our time in Iceland and we loved it. It offers some very different glimpses of the country's natural beauty. There's a version for everyone (\$139/ages 10 and up and \$69/ages 3-9), an adult only option, and one including a family barbecue, all for the same price.

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□ If this sounds like a bit too much for one day, and it is a fair bit of driving between the different sites, then there are other options that just include Thingvellir National Park. One is the fun sounding **Ring of Fire** (with an adults only option), which takes you to a geothermal plant and a town with hot springs. Another is the **Fontana Spa and Geothermal Taste**, which adds in a two hour spa stop. **Lunar Landscapes and Hot Springs** takes you to visit bird cliffs and a geothermal power station.

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□ If you're thinking all the shore excursions are outside of the Reykjavik, then you'd be wrong. Reykjavik itself also offers a number of things to **see and do**.

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□ **Panoramic Reykjavik** (\$29/adults, \$19/children) gives a very superficial view of the city, as most of it is on board a coach, but for those with limited mobility or who want a quick glimpse, it's perfect. Landmarks on this tour include the stunning Hallgrímskirkja Church, the country's largest, only recently built (it was completed in 1950) and unlike any church you've seen before, the modern Harpa concert hall, and the old centre of the city.

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□ **Reykjavik Highlights** (\$69/adults and \$39/children) with an adults only option, adds in a stop at the Arbaer Open Air Museum, not something that was open during our winter visit, as it would've been too cold for most people, and time at the National Museum of Iceland. Personally, I'd say the 45 minutes they give you here is way too little, as we happily spent a couple of hours there, learning all about the history of the country.

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□ Another attraction in Reykjavik is to be found out on the water, and that's **whale watching**. Although we didn't see a single whale on our visit, we were given a voucher to try again, although that's hardly going

to be of great help when you're on a cruise. The landscape from the water was still beautiful, and I'm glad we did it. However, the Whale Watching and Whales Museum doesn't come cheap at \$159/adults, and \$89/children, but then again, the whale watching even through an independent operator isn't exactly cheap either.

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□ Other options include various **private vehicle tours**, which of course will cost the proverbial arm and a leg. Something else we had no chance of enjoying during our winter visit was the puffin watching adventure. I adore these beautiful birds, and would love to see them, but sadly their season in Iceland started long after our trip took place. The more active may enjoy Iceland on Horseback, Snorkeling into the Blue, the Sea Angling Adventure, or White Water Rafting on the Glacier River. Thrill junkies may prefer some of the 4 x 4 options available, including a Glacier Safari that also includes a visit to an ice cave.

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□ Reykjavik is a port of call on the 12-night Norwegian fjords and Iceland Disney cruise from Copenhagen, leaving on July 13, 2016. A similar 11-night itinerary sets sail from Dover on June 28, 2017.

*About The Author: Cheryl and husband Mark live in England and love to travel, particularly to America. They are in the process of visiting every Disney theme park around the world, having already been to Disneyland Resort Paris, Hong Kong Disneyland and both American Disney resorts. They are now planning for their trip to Japan in the spring to visit the Tokyo Disney Resort. [Click here to view more of Cheryl's articles!](#)*

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