

POLAREXPLORERS

VATNAJÖKULL SKI EXPEDITION



A spectacular traverse alongside volcanoes and mountains to experience the best of Iceland

If you are looking for an adventure that is exciting, unpredictable, beautiful and remote our crossing of the Vatnajökull Glacier in Iceland is the perfect choice. This stunning traverse of Europe's largest glacier will inspire even the most seasoned explorers. You'll ski past majestic mountains and camp on the rims of active volcanoes. Like other polar glaciers Vatnajökull has unpredictable weather with the potential for strong winds and some precipitation. Our expedition is timed to take advantage of the best weather conditions but we remain prepared for anything. We will be traveling expedition style, camping in tents, with two nights at the Grimsfjall Hut* on the rim of the Grimsvötn Volcano (the hut comes complete with a geothermal suuna!) This expedition combines the best of ski touring with the geological wonders of Iceland. An incredible combination that you will be sure to love.



**Based on availability*

Skill level:



When you are proficient in the basic and intermediate skills of any sport and are ready for long days, challenging weather, backcountry camping and a chance to push your limits, this is your level. Prepare in advance for some strenuous days in order to fully enjoy this adventure.

Distance: Roughly 110 km.

Duration: 7 nights on the glacier, 10 nights all-in.

Sled weight: 25 kg - 35 kg

Training for Greenland or Antarctica? A traverse of Vatnajökull offers the perfect trial run for your Greenland or Antarctic expedition. Though temperatures are generally warmer, the wind, white-outs, brilliantly sunny days and rolling glacial terrain combine to give you a very realistic training ground. Our guides can also offer specific training as requested.

Daily Itinerary

Pre-expedition: Arrive in Reykjavik. Transfer to your hotel in downtown Reykjavik. Your guide will set up a time to check your gear to ensure you have everything you need.

Day 1: A busy day as we review group gear, group food and expedition logistics.

Day 2: Today starts very early for our private super truck transfer to Vatnajökull. The transfer can take 5- 7 hours depending on off road conditions. The first 2 hours are on highway, then we go off-road to head towards the highlands and Vatnajökull's west edge. We hope to start skiing in the early afternoon.

Day 3-4: The first few days allow us to settle into our routine. We awake, make breakfast, melt snow for our daily water provisions and break camp. Our skiing for the first two days is primarily east. As we gradually ascend the nunataks and mountains fade away. On the fourth day we will turn to the north and ski the final ascent to the Grimsfjall Hut on the caldera of the Grimsvötn Volcano.

Day 5: A layover day to relax and enjoy the Grimsfjall Hut (based on availability). In the afternoon we will review glacial travel techniques in preparation for the coming days.



Day 6: Departing Grimsvötn we descend back onto the undulating glacier. Today is one of our longer days with 15+ miles of skiing. In good visibility we might enjoy riding our pulks down some of the gentle hills, like toboggans.

Day 7: As we arrive at Hermannaskaro Pass we will make a decision about our route. If weather conditions are favorable for the coming days we will ascend towards Öraefajökull, an ice-covered volcano on the southern edge of Vatnajökull. This is home to Hvannadalshnukur, the highest peak in Iceland at 2,110 meters (6,920 ft). If weather conditions are variable (as is typically the case) we will follow the good weather down the spectacular Breioamerkurjökull Glacier, which is a famous outlet glacier of Vatnajökull. Either way this marks the transition from purely glacial terrain to terrain that is more alpine in nature. We will see mountains on either side of our route. The prominent sub glaciers that exit Vatnajökull can also be seen with their crevasse fields and dark streaks of volcanic ash.

Day 8: A beautiful day of skiing with incredible scenery no matter which route we take. Mountains, icefalls, and distant views of the ocean can be seen on a clear day. The terrain is crevassed so we will be traveling in

a rope team(s) and choosing our routes carefully. If we have ascended to Öraefajökull and if the weather forecast remains good we will prepare for an early morning optional ascent of Hvannadalshnukur tomorrow. This is a non-technical ascent but it does require excellent weather, which can be elusive.

Day 9: Today we descend off the glacier. If we are descending off the Breioamerkurjökull Glacier the descent is gradual yet exciting with sounds of rushing water increasing as we reach the glacier's terminus. If we are descending from Öraefajökull our descent will be steep, and, depending on conditions, either on snow or on a combination of snow and hiking path. In case of the latter we must be prepared to carry our sled bags and sleds as backpacks. From our ending point we will be transferred to a local guesthouse where we will enjoy hot showers and a night indoors.

Day 10: A bus transfer will bring us back to Reykjavik where we will spend our final night enjoying a celebratory dinner and the comfort of a hotel.

Day 11: The official end of the expedition. Transfer to Keflavik airport or stay on in Iceland for further adventures!

This itinerary is highly dependent on a number of factors and it is subject to change.





Click here to watch this moment on YouTube!

Ask us for references!

We have guided hundreds of people in the polar regions. Ask us for references from your city or country and we will put you in contact with someone who has done this expedition and can give you the “inside scoop”. References can be the BEST way to learn about the expedition.

Getting there:

Getting to Reykjavik is easy. Iceland Air offers direct flights to Keflavik Airport (near Reykjavik) from 27 European cities and 12 North American cities. From Keflavik Airport a Flybuss will connect you with your hotel in Reykjavik (roughly 45 minutes). Taxis are also available.

Additional information:

Please contact us for links to our expedition videos, expedition reviews, equipment checklist, dates and rates and FAQ.

Meet us!

We are always free to meet you, check your gear, or discuss your expedition via Skype or Google. Give us a shout!

WANT TO JOIN? HERE'S HOW:



- 1 Complete and return our application.**

To join one of our expeditions you'll need to complete and return our [online application](#). You can also request an application by emailing annie@polarexplorers.com.
- 2 Reserve your space with a deposit.**

A 25% deposit will reserve your space on any expedition. Contact us at annie@polarexplorers.com to request an invoice for your deposit. Deposits can be paid by wire transfer, credit card or USD check. Currency exchange fees and credit card processing fees may apply.
- 3 Review your eConfirmation Kit.**

Upon receipt of your completed application and deposit we will send you a comprehensive eConfirmation Kit that includes all the information you need to prepare for your expedition including what to expect, what to pack and how to prepare. From this point on we are always available answer any questions and to offer assistance during your preparations.
- 4 Get ready!**

All of our expeditions require varying degrees of preparations. There will be forms to complete and travel insurance to purchase. We can assist you with any of these requirements. Some of our expeditions also require physical and mental preparations or participation on our [Polar Shakedown Training](#). We are always available to talk with you about training regimens and to help you prepare as best as possible.
- 5 Let the adventure begin!**

As the expedition approaches we will be in touch on more regular basis. We will meet you at the expedition's starting location and check your kit to ensure you have everything you need. With your preparations behind you now is the time to let the adventure begin. We will be right beside you to help you make the most of the expedition!



Connect with us!



+1-847-245-4409
800-RECREATE (in USA)



annie@polarexplorers.com
eric@polarexplorers.com



facebook.com/polarexplorers



www.youtube.com/polarexplorers

(in USA)