


How to Plan a Romantic Honeymoon in Iceland

It's the perfect destination for adventurous honeymooners.

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Iceland may not be the first place that comes to mind as a traditional honeymoon destination, but the island nation is truly out of this world. For adventurous travelers who prefer black-sand beaches over tropical isles; thundering waterfalls over gentle waves; and lagoons over hot tubs, it's a heavenly experience. If that sounds like [the adventure](#) you and your spouse-to-be have been searching for, here's everything you need to know about planning the ultimate [Iceland](#) honeymoon.

[The 50 Best Honeymoon Destinations in the World](#)

Planning Your Iceland Honeymoon

From soaking in hot springs to exploring some of the world's most awe-inspiring natural landscapes, Iceland is an idyllic destination for couples who want to travel somewhere beautiful and full of [opportunities for adventure](#). And even if you're not the adventurous type, there is still plenty to do — the nation boasts incredible local cuisine both in and around Reykjavík (the capital city), charming hotels, and abundant [wellness](#) offerings. Plus, it's one of the best places to view the Northern Lights—does it get more romantic than that?

In terms of when to visit, experts recommend deciding what you want to prioritize while on the trip. If you're hoping to see whales, for example, the best time of year is June or July. For the Northern Lights, mid-October through March offers the most darkness, and therefore the greatest chance of seeing the often-elusive aurora borealis. If couples want to prioritize spending time soaking in the many hot springs across Iceland, you can do that anytime, but in order to avoid crowds, try booking a trip in a shoulder month, like October. (Keep in mind that warmer summer months will always be more crowded.)

Before you get to planning, here are our Iceland basics:

Language: Icelandic

Currency: Króna

When to Go: Anytime, but peak season is July through October

Getting There: Iceland is only about a five-to-six-hour plane ride from New York City. From the west coast of the U.S., it's between seven and 12 hours, depending on whether there is nonstop service available.

Transportation: In terms of getting around in Iceland, renting a car tends to be the most popular option (and gives travelers the most flexibility), although there is a public bus system called the Strætó, and taxi services available. (Iceland does not have trains.) Private tour buses are a convenient way to get around but must be booked in advance.

Must-Pack: Since you'll likely be doing day excursions (hiking, hot springs, or day drives), be sure to bring a good backpack for packing all the daily essentials.

Places to Stay During Your Iceland Honeymoon



BLUE LAGOON ICELAND

The Retreat at Blue Lagoon

Located just 20 minutes from Keflavík International Airport and 45 minutes outside of touristy Reykjavík lies the town of Grindavík and the winding walls of [the Retreat Hotel at Blue Lagoon](#). This 62-suite hotel is situated in a stunning landscape of centuries-old lava craters and mossy plateaus and boasts a clean Scandinavian design and an ethos based on relaxation and rejuvenation. (Can you think of anything better after all those months spent on [wedding planning](#)?) All of the suites are free of TVs for the ultimate tranquil experience, and in exchange, all the rooms feature otherworldly views of that unique Icelandic terrain. The best part? The Retreat is located on a private inlet of the UNESCO Global Geopark, right alongside the waters of the famous Blue Lagoon itself. (More on that below.) In fact, some of the suites even offer in-room access to the Blue Lagoon. Simply open up the glass door that leads outside and float out into those milky blue waters you've seen all over Instagram.

Umi Hotel

Located just under 87 miles from Reykjavík, with the backdrop of a striking mountain range, [Umi Hotel](#) brings travelers to the southern part of Iceland for a true countryside retreat. The family-run operation touts peace, quiet, and a connection to the surrounding landscape as focal points of the hotel experience, and guests can expect elegantly appointed rooms in the 28 accommodations on-site, alongside a top-tier Nord-Icelandic restaurant that offers sweeping views of the Westman islands and the southern coastline.



COURTESY OF [ION ADVENTURE HOTEL](#)

ION Adventure Hotel

For those in search of an adventure (or several), this hotel is the perfect fit; just look at the name! Located in Nesjavellir, a southwest region of Iceland and less than an hour's drive from Reykjavík, guests can anticipate no shortage of things to do at [ION Adventure Hotel](#). From fly fishing to glacier treks and Northern Lights excursions, this special property, set against the backdrop of lava fields, is like a gateway to some of the country's most epic attractions. On-site, there is plenty of opportunity for relaxation, whether it's at Lava Spa, the award-winning Northern Lights Bar, or just in the cozy rooms or suites.

101 Hotel

This design-forward boutique hotel in the heart of Reykjavík features spacious yet minimalist guest rooms, an on-site art gallery curated with local art, a relaxation spa and gym, and a restaurant and bar. The perfect home base for the city portion of your honeymoon, step just outside [101 Hotel](#) and you'll be immersed in the hustle and bustle of exciting Reykjavík.

Siglo Hotel

Waterfront accommodations, proximity to nature, and multiple on-site restaurants make [Siglo Hotel](#) a must for those planning to travel to the northern part of the country. Surrounded by mountains and a striking fjord, Siglo Hotel is located in one of Iceland's prettiest towns, Siglufjörður. The property offers guests a peaceful place to stay, as well as wellness features like a hot tub and sauna, delicious local cuisine, and classically decorated bedrooms. Step outside to explore the neighborhood and you'll find a local brewery, several museums, and a beautiful harbor and marina, ideal for romantic walks.

Hotel Búðir

Located in western Iceland's Snæfellsnes Peninsula, and just two hours by car from Reykjavík, [Hotel Búðir](#) is the epitome of romance in an awe-inspiring landscape. All rooms offer unparalleled views of either the sea, the glacier, the mountains, or the lava fields. On-site, guests will find one of Iceland's best culinary experiences at the hotel's gourmet restaurant, which puts local cuisine, fresh fish, and farm-sourced ingredients at the menu's center. With plenty of distance from the bustle of Reykjavík, Hótel Búðir is one of the best places to try and see the Northern Lights.

Things to Do During Your Iceland Honeymoon

Once you touch down in Iceland, take a few days to get your bearings and relax before heading out into the epic landscape. Here are a few of the can't-miss activities we recommend—and remember, when possible, book experiences ahead of time!



BLUE LAGOON ICELAND

The Blue Lagoon

The crowning jewel of the aforementioned Retreat Hotel is the Blue Lagoon itself. (You've probably heard of it.) The Blue Lagoon is a geothermal spa, famous for its warm milky-blue waters (temperatures are around 98° to 104°F), silica, and for being on the bucket list of just about everyone you know. Thousands of people every year venture to the Blue Lagoon to bathe in its tranquil waters, which means two things. One, bathing in the warm blue reservoir is worth the trek; and two, it's bound to get crowded. However, the Retreat removes the crowds from the equation, giving you and your new spouse a peaceful place to soak in the healing waters.

The Retreat's Lagoon is separated from the public Blue Lagoon, as the warm water flows through the public pools into [the Retreat Spa](#) for a secluded subsection reserved for hotel guests and spa patrons only. You'll enter the spa through the hotel lobby and from there, you can wade into the Retreat's Lagoon, a private waterscape that crawls between black-stone ravines and is seemingly a million miles away from the tourists in the public Blue Lagoon. The waters are relaxing and serene, offering plenty of places to cuddle up with your partner. And while the lagoon is phone-free, you can still

snap those [honeymoon photos](#) for Instagram. You'll often see the hotel staff walking around the Retreat's Lagoon, asking guests if they'd like to have their photos taken (the snapshots will then be sent to your email). Possibly best of all, there is even a float-up bar where you can toast your new marriage with a glass of champagne while soaking in the warm waters.

While therapeutic for body and mind, the silica and algae in the lagoon water are extremely drying for hair, so before taking the plunge, coat your tresses in conditioner.

The Retreat Spa itself is built into an 800-year-old lava flow and the treatments there center around the naturally rejuvenating powers of the geothermal seawater. Their signature treatments even take place in the lagoon itself. We bet you never experienced anything like the in-water massage, where you lay atop a floating mattress within the lagoon as a masseuse works out every knot you got on the flight over. Serious question: Is this Iceland or heaven?



[LAURIE NOBLE](#) / GETTY IMAGES

Explore the Unique Terrain

You can get a taste of Iceland's otherworldly terrain right from your home base of Grindavík. Spend a day exploring Iceland's southern peninsula with its moss-covered lava fields, moon-like craters,

billowing steam vents, and ocean-jutting cliffs. You can even walk between the Eurasian and North American tectonic plates and return to the Retreat Hotel in time for lunch. Speak to the concierge about arranging a car service or even an ATV adventure along the black-sand beaches and lava fields. The Retreat also hosts daily guided hikes along the volcanic surroundings and nearby peaks. For a more relaxing itinerary, attend a guided yoga session in the Retreat's yoga room which offers stunning views of the surrounding landscape. (You'll need it to recover from all that [wedding stress](#).)

You can also take a day trip to explore Iceland's Golden Circle from nearby Reykjavík, just 45 minutes from the Retreat. A 300-kilometer circular driving route, the Golden Circle can be explored in as little as a few hours and boasts a host of natural wonders such as Thingvellir National Park (a UNESCO World Heritage site), Strokkur geyser (an active geyser that erupts with plumes of steam every few minutes), Gullfoss waterfall (which thunders into the canyon of the Hvítá river), and even Icelandic horses.

Go Whale Watching

If you're honeymooning during whale season (which begins in April and ends around mid-October), be sure to also book a boat trip from Reykjavík and search for the humpback whales, porpoises, and orcas that frequent the waters.

Explore a Volcano

Hungry for even more adventure? Try descending 400 feet into a dormant volcano. Tour company [Inside the Volcano](#) offers a caving tour of the dormant Þríhnúkagígur volcano daily from Reykjavík. (Yes, really.)



[GOLF WAS HERE](#) / GETTY IMAGES

Try to Catch the Northern Lights

And you can't talk about an Icelandic honeymoon without mentioning the northern lights. (Trust us —when you return home *everyone* will be asking if you saw them.) Booking your honeymoon between the months of October and March offers the best chance of seeing this incredible natural phenomenon, and staying in more remote places, like Grindavík (which has much less light pollution than Reykjavík), will also increase your chances.

Can't Miss Experience: Whether it's the Blue Lagoon or Reykjadalur Steam Valley, or a more off-the-beaten-path spot (like Landbrotalaug or Hveravellir), make sure to put time aside to explore at least a few hot springs; they're truly magical and one of the most romantic experiences you can enjoy together in Iceland!

Where to Eat During Your Iceland Honeymoon

Icelandic cuisine is incredibly fresh, thanks to the bounty of local seafood and root vegetables, and includes traditional dishes like lobster soup, lamb stew, and plokkið (a fish stew).

Dining in Reykjavík

Couples will be spoiled for choice when it comes to romantic restaurants in Iceland's capital city. Fresh local ingredients meet Lebanese and Moroccan flavors at [Sumac](#), an elegant Beirut-inspired space that's perfect for date night. For something that feels a little exclusive, book a dinner at [ÓX](#), an eleven-seat restaurant hidden in downtown Reykjavík. For excellent harborside views and creative Icelandic cuisine, book a table at [Kopar](#), which offers a romantic atmosphere and terrace seating. Dine on superb Scandinavian cuisine under the dimmed, romantic lighting at Matarkjallarinn, where couples can anticipate live piano music, multi-course menus, and an amazing wine list.

Dining in Grindavík

To toast your nuptials, book a pair of seats at the chef's table at [Moss Restaurant](#) within the Retreat Hotel. There you'll dine on a seven-course feast with wine pairings that are full of local seasonal ingredients and modern spins on classic Icelandic recipes. Expect dishes like hand-caught scallops, reindeer from Eskifjörður, and fresh cod and lobster from Grindavík. Plus, the chef's table itself is carved from actual lava rock (how cool is that?), and you can drink in the views of the volcanic horizon while you dine, thanks to the floor-to-ceiling windows of the 2019 Michelin Guide–recommended restaurant. Another Grindavík can't-miss spot is the harbor-front [Bryggjan](#), a small authentic fishermen's café where the walls are stacked with sailing memorabilia and the tastiest homemade lobster soup is served.

Dining in Southern Iceland

There is no shortage of fresh seafood and delicious, local ingredients across the restaurants of southern Iceland, but a few stand out amongst the rest. [Tryggvaskáli](#), in Selfoss, boasts high-quality dishes crafted from local, fresh ingredients—and their special weekend brunch menu (hard to find outside of the capital city) is a must. Also in Selfoss, couples should consider [Ingólfsskáli Viking Restaurant](#), which is really more of an experience than just a restaurant (we'll give you a hint: it really is a Viking-inspired experience). Located in Reynisfjara, not far from the famous Reynisfjara Black Sand Beach, [The Black Beach Restaurant](#) offers beautiful views of the famous Dýrholaeý Sea Arch, along with a rotating menu of delicious local favorites.

Budgeting for an Iceland Honeymoon

Iceland is known for being a pricey destination. Lots of popular attractions (like the Blue Lagoon) can be very costly during peak seasons, and in general, dining out is expensive. Because U.S. citizens will need to take a transatlantic flight to get to Iceland, there will be a significant transportation cost

before you even consider accommodations, activities, and dining in Iceland. According to the Iceland travel experts at [We 3 Travel](#), couples can plan to spend roughly \$350 per day, per person (with the cost of airfare included in this estimate). Of course, this number can vary greatly depending on whether or not you honeymoon in Iceland during peak season, the types of accommodations you book, whether you rent a car, etc.

If you're looking for ways to keep your Iceland honeymoon on a tighter budget, consider booking hostels or Airbnbs, spend time exploring the countryside (rather than booking paid experiences), and book your airfare far in advance (roughly six months) to find the best prices.