



# A CENTENARY CELEBRATION

Celebrating 100 years as an Independent Republic today, Iceland was proclaimed an Independent Republic on 17th June 1944, but it actually gained independence from Denmark on 1st December 1918, with the signing of the Act of Union with Denmark. This Act recognized Iceland as an independent state under the Danish Crown.

Iceland is a Nordic island country in the North Atlantic. In an area of 103,000 km. it boasts a population of 348,580 inhabitants, making it the most sparsely populated country in Europe. Reykjavik is the capital and its largest city. The surrounding areas in the southwest of the country are home to over two-thirds of the population. Iceland is a country of vivid contrasts, where fire and ice co-exist. It is a country of startling contrasts where apparently the harsh winters are offset by the radiance of the summer's midnight sun.

Resting on the edge of the Arctic Circle and sitting atop one of the world's most volcanically active hot spots, Iceland is an inspiring mix of magisterial glaciers, bubbling hot springs and rugged fjords, where activities such as hiking under the Midnight Sun are complemented by healthy doses of history and literature.

Iceland is a place where nature reigns supreme. Aside from the modern and cosmopolitan capital, Reykjavik, population centres are small, with diminutive towns, fishing villages, farms and minute hamlets clustered along the coastal fringes.

The Interior, meanwhile, remains totally uninhabited and

unmarked by humanity: a starkly beautiful wilderness of ice fields, windswept upland plateaux, infertile lava and ash deserts and the frigid vastness of Vatnajökull, Europe's largest glacier. Iceland's location on the Mid-Atlantic ridge also gives it one of the most volcanically active landscapes on Earth, peppered with everything from naturally occurring hot springs, scaldingly hot bubbling mud pools and noisy steam vents to a string of unpredictably violent volcanoes, which have regularly devastated huge parts of the country. The latest events came in 2010, when Eyjafjallajökull erupted and caused havoc across Europe; and in 2015, when the eruption at Holuhraun created a huge new lavafield.

Historically, the Icelanders have a mix of Nordic and Celtic blood, a heritage often held responsible for their characteristically laidback approach to life. The battle for survival against the elements over the centuries has also made them a highly self-reliant nation, whose former dependence on the sea and fishing for their economy was virtually total.

Having spent years being dismissed as an insignificant outpost in the North Atlantic (Icelanders gave up counting how many times their country was left off maps of Europe), the eruption under Eyjafjallajökull in 2010 saw the tourist industry, at least, wake up to Iceland's potential. Now close on a million foreigners visit annually – three times the national population – and Iceland is on a steep learning curve as it struggles to cope with tourist-driven inflation and sagging infrastructure at popular sights.

Courtesy - [www.rough guides](http://www.rough guides)

## Guðni Th. Jóhannesson PRESIDENT OF ICELAND



Guðni Thorlacius Jóhannesson is an Icelandic politician serving as the 6th and current President of Iceland since 2016. He took office after receiving the largest number of votes in the 2016 election, 71,356. A historian, he was a docent at the University of Iceland until his election.

His field of research is modern Icelandic history, and he has published a number of works on the Cod Wars, the 2008–2011 Icelandic financial crisis and the Icelandic presidency, among other topics

## Katrín Jakobsdóttir PRIME MINISTER OF ICELAND



Katrín Jakobsdóttir is an Icelandic politician serving as the 28<sup>th</sup> and current Prime Minister of Iceland since 2017. She is the member of the Althing for the Reykjavik North constituency since 2007. She became deputy chairperson of the Left-Green Movement in 2003 and has been their chairperson since 2013.

Katrín was Iceland's Minister of Education, Science and Culture and of Nordic Co-operation from 2 February 2009 to 23 May 2013.

## Ranjit S. Wijewardene CONSUL GENERAL IN SRI LANKA

Excellency, please accept my heartiest congratulations and good wishes to Your Excellency and the people of Iceland, who I am proud to represent here in our Island of Sri Lanka, on the occasion of the Centenary celebrations of Iceland's Independence.

With renewed good wishes and the assurances of my highest consideration.

# 10 MUST – SEE NATURAL ATTRACTIONS IN ICELAND



Blue Lagoon



Great Geyser



Lake Myvatn



Asbyrgi



Seljalandsfoss



Glymur



Gullfoss



Raufarholshellir



Latrabjarg



Hornbjarg

Iceland - a land of striking contrasts: the ice and fire, the barrenness and stunning beauty, the hip, roaring nightlife and the stillness of the highlands. The puffins, the ponies, the elves, the geysers, the culture.... Iceland has a bit of everything.