



F132

## Eldfell - the Volcano in Vestmannaeyjar

June 10, 2011 – June 24, 2011

### MEETING POINT

IN REYKJAVIK  
09.00h, June 10, 2011  
Hverfisgata 88  
101 Reykjavik  
+354 771 3604

or

AT THE WORKCAMP  
June 10, 2011  
Ferry terminal, Heimaey  
To coordinate meeting call:  
+354-868-2324



## **ABOUT WORLDWIDE FRIENDS**

Worldwide Friends Iceland (WF) was founded in 2001 as a non-governmental, non-profit organization promoting nature and peace-oriented activities for people interested in spending time in Iceland as volunteers. WF also sends Icelanders abroad who wish to have similar volunteer experiences elsewhere in the world. The main activities offered by WF Iceland are workcamps, exchange programs, and educational seminars. Our activities are suitable for anyone over the age of 18.

In our present time the endeavour of attaining world peace has become a tangible possibility, and the development and strengthening of bonds of cooperation and friendship through contact with people from other countries and cultures has proven to be one of the most fruitful means of achieving understanding and unity among nations. Veraldarvinir's main aim is to increase intercultural understanding through offering foreign volunteers the opportunity to take part in nature- and peace- related activities.

For volunteers coming to Iceland, such projects will give them a unique opportunity not only to explore and directly interact with Iceland's unique culture and landscape, but also to work with other international volunteers the local residents in challenging and unfamiliar contexts. This direct interaction with unspoiled nature and with people from different backgrounds provides the participants with invaluable opportunities to learn more about themselves as individuals, their international fellows, other cultures, and the human and natural richness of Mother Earth. These are all unique opportunities for building bonds of unity and understanding between societies around the world.

Worldwide Friends staff members include Tóti Ivarsson, the Director and Antonio Perez, Social and Artistic Activities Manager.

# Important Information!

## ACCOMMODATION BEFORE & AFTER WORKCAMP

Make sure to arrive in Iceland at least one day before the first day of your workcamp and depart the country no earlier than one day after the last day of your workcamp.

Worldwide Friends offers sleeping bag accommodation and shared cooking facilities for arriving and departing volunteers at our facilities in Reykjavik. At only 15 Euro per night, you won't find a better deal in town! Please let us know if you need accommodation in Reykjavik before or after the workcamp. You can make bookings by contacting us at [bookings@wf.is](mailto:bookings@wf.is). Make sure to state how many nights you will need to stay, including the exact dates.

Accommodation includes a mattress and bed linens, as well as wireless internet (WiFi) and access to shared desktop computers. You will need to bring your own sleeping bag and towel, and for the days before and after the workcamp you will need to provide your own meals. The accommodation before and after workcamps in Reykjavik includes free access to a shared washing machine during specific hours.

If you will be arriving during the night or early morning, please make sure to notify us several days in advance by email to [bookings@wf.is](mailto:bookings@wf.is), and when you arrive at Hverfisgata 88, call or send an SMS to +354 771 3604.

## MEDICAL DISCLOSURE

Remember to inform us in advance about any special health conditions or allergies and be sure to bring along any medication you need. Please also let us know before camp starts about any special needs, dietary requirements, or other important information concerning you. In Iceland there are many different kinds of grass, so if you suffer from hay-fever it is advisable to bring your medicine with you.

## CONTACT INFORMATION

WF Iceland / Veraldarvinir  
Hverfisgata 88  
101 Reykjavík, Iceland

Website: [www.wf.is](http://www.wf.is)  
Telephone/Fax: + 354 552 5214  
Emergency Phone: + 354 849 2860

[bookings@wf.is](mailto:bookings@wf.is)

Accommodation reservations before/after the workcamp and minibus reservations to/from workcamp

[wf@wf.is](mailto:wf@wf.is)

Any other request

Antonio Perez + 354 771 3601  
Social and Artistic Activities Manager

Tóti Ivarsson + 354 868 2324  
Director of Veraldarvinir

## EXTRA PARTICIPATION FEE

This year we are charging an extra participation fee for all of our camps. We are still looking for additional external funding for the organization, therefore it is possible that some of the fees will be lower than originally specified. We will provide you with updates about these changes in the event they occur. Volunteers are expected to pay the workcamp fee in cash (EUR, USD or Icelandic Krona) upon their arrival to the camp.

WF Iceland charges an extra participation fee for the following reasons:

1. Lack of support from the government and other sources
2. In some of our workcamps WF itself has to supply food which is quite expensive in Iceland compared to other European countries
3. In most of our workcamps located in Reykjavik, WF itself has to cover both food and accommodation costs
4. Most of our partner organizations in other countries cover their administration costs through the fees they charge to the volunteers they send abroad. WF does not send enough volunteers abroad in order to cover administrative expenses so we need to charge a participation fee from the volunteers we receive.

The extra participation fee for this work camp is € 120.





# Eldfell, the Volcano in Vestmannaeyjar

## PROJECT LOCATION

The Westman Islands, or Vestmannaeyjar, consist of a group of fifteen beautiful islands which are situated at a short distance off the south coast of Iceland. The islands were given this name by the nordic residents of Iceland after the Irish slaves that the Norse captured that were settled there.

All of the islands are the result of submarine volcanic eruptions during comparatively recent geological time. Heimaey is the largest and only inhabited island in the group, and is Iceland's largest offshore island, with an area of 13,4 sq. km. Fishing, fish processing, and subsidiary trades are the main source of income. Heimaey is sheltered to the north by low mountains. Between the colorful town, the beautiful cliffs full of birdlife, and the fresh lava and volcano, the landscape gives the islands a scenic interest as varied in character as any in the country.

Eldfell is a composite volcanic cone just over 200 metres high. It was formed in a huge volcanic eruption - the name means Mountain of Fire in Icelandic. This volcanic eruption is considered the largest natural disaster in Iceland in recent history. The eruption began on January 23rd 1973 on the island of Heimaey, forcing the evacuation of the inhabitants for the five months that the eruption continued. At the time, there was uncertainty as to whether or not the island could ever be repopulated. The eruption caused the destruction of a third of the town, and the massive changes to the landscape of this tiny island made world news. Afterwards, the island became a destination for tourists and scientists alike from all over the world. Now, more than 30 years have passed, and the memories and signs of the spectacular eruption are fading, but lava and ash still cover almost 400 homes and buildings.

## WORK

Worldwide Friends volunteers assist the local residents in preserving the volcano cone. Volunteers fight erosion by adding soil to the slope and building fences to shelter the soil from the wind. Please note that this is very hard physical work!

## TRANSPORTATION TO THE WORKCAMP

Worldwide Friends arranges convenient transportation from Reykjavik to the workcamp location.

1. Flights from outside of Iceland arrive at Keflavik International Airport (KEF).
2. From the airport, the easiest way to get in to Reykjavik is to take the FlyBus ([www.flybus.is](http://www.flybus.is)), which costs 1.950 ISK. The FlyBus has departures scheduled after every flight arrival (24 hours a day), and takes approximately 45 minutes to drive to BSI Bus Station in Reykjavik.
3. From the BSI Bus Station it is a 10-15 minute walk to Worldwide Friends' location at Hverfisgata 88, Reykjavik - this is the meeting point in Reykjavik.
4. WF Iceland will organize a shared minibus from the meeting point in Reykjavik to the workcamp site for 45€ (ferry included), which also includes an excursion around the Golden Circle. The price for the minibus from the workcamp site back to Reykjavik is 25€ (ferry included).

Alternatively, participants may arrange their own transportation to Heimaey in Vestmannaeyjar. However, it is recommended that you travel with WF on the minibus, as this allows you to meet and to get to know the other volunteers.



## **LEISURE TIME**

Worldwide Friends volunteers have free access to the local geothermally-heated swimming pools. Traditionally, natural pools have played an important social role in Icelandic culture. Most Icelandic pools offer indoor and outdoor swimming, as well as hot tubs and saunas or steam rooms. In addition, an excursion or a boat trip can be organized by the hosting partner.

## **ACCOMMODATION DURING THE WORKCAMP**

Worldwide Friends volunteers stay in an indoor community facility. Mattresses are provided, however volunteers should bring their own warm sleeping bags.

## **FOOD**

Food is included for the duration of the workcamp, however everyone is expected to do their fair share of the cooking and cleaning. Since it is always nice to try new and different dishes, volunteers are encouraged to bring along their favorite recipes from home!

**LANGUAGE REQUIREMENT:** Basic English

## WHAT TO BRING

First, and most important, bring plenty of enthusiasm, loads of good energy, and a huge smile!

Icelandic weather is varied and can change very rapidly. For that reason, you really need to prepare for any type of weather. You will also need a sleeping bag, and to take advantage of Iceland's many swimming pools and hot springs you should make sure to bring a swimsuit. Finally, as volunteers with WF, you will be doing work which may include physical work outside, painting, or other manual labour, and so you should bring clothes that are appropriate for working in!

Remember to bring:

- Raincoat and rain-pants
- Warm clothes and waterproof hiking boots
- Warm sleeping bag
- Swimsuit and towel
- Work clothes and shoes which can get stained, dirty, or damaged
- Full supply of any medications you may need

In addition, please pack your favourite CDs, games, musical instruments, and recipes, as cooking and other social activities will greatly depend on your own initiative.

## INSURANCE

We strongly advise you to take out private insurance for the duration of your stay here in Iceland. If you take out private insurance, make sure you remember to bring along your insurance card as well as all the important phone numbers, and also leave a copy of the insurance details and phone numbers at home.

Also, if your country of origin is part of the European Union, make sure to bring your European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) with you as this will entitle you to healthcare services in Iceland.



## PASSPORTS, VISAS, AND CUSTOMS REGULATIONS

Citizens from many countries do not require a visa to visit Iceland for up to three months, so long as their passport is valid for more than three months after their planned arrival date.

These countries include the European Economic Area (which includes the EU, Norway, and Liechtenstein), the US, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. For a complete and up-to-date list, please refer to the following website:

[http://www.utl.is/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=55&Itemid=57&lang=en](http://www.utl.is/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=55&Itemid=57&lang=en)

For more detailed information on visas, please visit:

<http://www.utl.is/index.php?lang=en>

## BANKS AND EXCHANGE

Iceland has three banks – Íslandsbanki, Landsbanki Íslands and Arion Banki. Normal banking hours are Monday to Friday 9.15am to 4pm, although some locations in Reykjavík have longer hours. Branches are found all around the country, even in many single-street villages. Most locations have an ATM, often located in a weather-proof lobby that can be accessed outside of normal banking hours.

Credit cards are widely used in Iceland for just about everything (even for buying hot dogs!). MasterCard and Visa are the major brands, valid not just for shopping but also for cash advances over the counter at all banks and a few of the larger post offices. To rent a car or get fuel at most of the gas stations outside Reykjavík you will need a credit card.

All banks handle foreign exchange with a similar commission. Outside banking hours, you could also try major hotels or The Change Group, which has three branches in Reykjavík and one in Akureyri – rates, however, are poor and commissions high in both cases.

Travellers' cheques can be purchased prior to travel through banks and travel agents, and are the safest way to carry your funds around. They can be cashed in at all Icelandic banks and many hotels, and can be replaced if lost or stolen – just keep a list of the serial numbers separate from the cheques.

All visitors to Iceland, irrespective of country of origin, can only bring a limited quantity of certain products into the country, including:

Either:

- one litre of spirits and one litre of wine, or
- one litre of spirits and six litres of beer, or
- one litre of wine and six litres of beer, or
- two litres of wine.

In addition to this 200 cigarettes or 250g of other tobacco products are also permitted. For more information on customs regulations, please refer to the official information at:

[http://www.tollur.is/displayer.asp?cat\\_id=300](http://www.tollur.is/displayer.asp?cat_id=300)

## GETTING AROUND

Iceland's small scale makes getting around fairly straight-forward, at least during the warmer months. From Reykjavík it's possible to fly or catch a bus to all of the island's major centres. In summer there are even scheduled buses through the interior highlands of the island. It's also easy to hire a car to get to know parts of Iceland where even buses don't go.

On the ground, whether you're planning to take buses around the country, hire a car, or hitch-hike, you'll probably spend a good deal of time on Route 1, called Hringvegur (the Ringroad). It largely follows the coast in a 1.500-kilometre circuit of the country via Reykjavík, Akureyri and Egilsstaðir. Most of the Ringroad is surfaced. Elsewhere, while stretches around towns might be surfaced, the majority of Icelandic roads are gravel roads. Some of these are perfectly decent if bumpy to travel over, while many others – such as roads through the Interior – are only navigable in high-clearance four-wheel-drive vehicles.

Note that interior roads are only open between June and August: the exact date when each road opens and closes – or whether some open at all – depends on the weather, and the going can be difficult even then. You can check out the current road conditions anywhere in Iceland by logging on to [www.vegag.is](http://www.vegag.is), a continually-updated website in English and Icelandic that shows maps of the country with roads colour-coded according to their current status.

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#### a) Buses

Buses are pretty much the most convenient way to get around a large chunk of Iceland. Iceland's umbrella long-distance-bus organization, BSÍ ([www.bsi.is](http://www.bsi.is)), based at the bus station in Reykjavík, puts out a free, comprehensive timetable of scheduled departures and tours run by various companies. Between May and October, scheduled services cover the entire Ringroad and many other routes, with regular tours tackling interior destinations once the roads open between June and August.

To take these buses is about the only way to see many remote places, unless you have considerable off-road driving experience and the right vehicle. On the down side, bus travel is expensive, especially for the relatively small distances involved. In purely point-to-point terms you may find it cheaper to fly, and if you can get a group of at least three people together, car rental will cost you even less.

#### b) Hitch-hiking

Hitch hiking around Iceland is possible, at least if you have plenty of time. Expect less traffic the further you go from Reykjavík. Even on the Ringroad there are long stretches where you may go for hours without seeing a vehicle, though it's likely that the first car passing will stop for you.

The best places to line up lifts are either at campsites, hostels or at fuel stations which are located on the outskirts of every settlement. It is possible too, that staff in remoter places might know of someone heading your way.

Having said this, holidaying Icelanders will probably already have their cars packed to capacity, so make sure you have as little gear as possible – without, of course, leaving behind everything you'll need to survive given the climate and long spaces between shops. And though Iceland may be a safer place to hitch hike than elsewhere in Europe, Australia, or the US, doing it still carries inherent risks. If you want or must hitch hike, never do so alone and remember that you don't have to get in just because someone stops. Given the wide gaps between settlements it will probably be obvious where you are heading for, but always ask the drivers where they are going rather than saying where you want to go.

#### c) Flights

Iceland's international airport is Keflavik (KEF), located 45 minutes south of Reykjavik by bus. Several airlines operate out of Keflavik, including the national carrier IcelandAir. Information on other airlines can be found at <http://www.kefairport.is/English/Service/Airlines/>.

Flying within Iceland is good value: the single airfare from Reykjavík to Egilsstaðir, for instance, is around 7.000kr – little more than half the price of a one-way bus fare for the same journey – and takes just one hour instead of two days. As an added bonus, you'll get a different take on Iceland's unique landscape from above – flying over Vatnajökull's vast expanse of ice is about the only way to get a grasp of its scale.

The main domestic carrier is Flugfélag Íslands, who fly all year round almost daily from Reykjavík to Vestmannaeyjar, Ísafjörður, Akureyri, Egilsstaðir and Höfn (Hornafjörður).

Other airlines out of Reykjavík and Akureyri concentrate on connections to remoter settlements across Iceland's northwest and northeast. Íslandsflug is the largest of these operators, and also offers combined air-and-land tours of a day's or more duration from Reykjavík to various popular spots: Húsavík for whale watching; Mývatn for the lake and nearby hot pots; and Vestmannaeyjar for puffins and more volcanoes.

Booking flights presents no particular problems. Note however that bad weather can cause cancellations at short notice and that it's best to book ahead for summer weekends and holidays. For up-to-date fares, online booking, and other information go to [www.airiceland.is](http://www.airiceland.is).

#### d) Car Rentals

Most of the biggest international car rentals have agents here in Iceland but the prices are usually high, especially during the summer time. For a directory of car rental agencies, please go to [www.visiticeland.com](http://www.visiticeland.com) and search for car rentals.







## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

**Q What is the name of Iceland's International Airport?**

A Keflavik International Airport (KEF)

**Q How do I get from Keflavik Airport to Reykjavik?**

A The easiest way is to take the FlyBus from Keflavik to BSI Station in Reykjavik. The FlyBus costs approximately 2.000 ISK ([www.flybus.is](http://www.flybus.is)).

**Q Does the WF minibus go from the airport to Reykjavik?**

A No, the minibus is arranged by WF for travel from Reykjavik to the workcamps outside of Reykjavik only.

To get from Keflavik airport to Reykjavik you should take the FlyBus ([www.flybus.is](http://www.flybus.is)).

**The minibus to the workcamp is not needed for workcamps located in Reykjavik.**

**Q When should I plan to arrive and to leave Iceland?**

A Make sure to arrive in Iceland at least one day before the first day of your workcamp and depart country no earlier than one day after the last day of your workcamp.

**Q I want to stay with Worldwide Friends before or after my workcamp. What kind of accommodation is available?**

A The accommodation includes basic sleeping and cooking facilities. Please be aware that you will have to share a room with other volunteers. For more information on booking accommodation with WF, please refer to "Accommodation Before and After the Workcamp" earlier in this infosheet.

**Q Can I do my laundry?**

A The accommodation before and after workcamps in Reykjavik includes free access to a shared washing machine during specific hours.

**Q When do I pay for the accommodation if I stay with WF before or after my workcamp?**

A Please pay when you arrive at the accommodation.

**Q My plane arrives late at night. What should I do?**

A No problem, the FlyBus operates at all times of day and the BSÍ bus station is open all night. You may arrive at Worldwide Friends accommodation at all hours.

Please send an email with your exact arrival time to [bookings@wf.is](mailto:bookings@wf.is) several days in advance. For more information on booking accommodation with WF, please refer to "Accommodation Before and After the Workcamp" earlier in this infosheet.

**Q I would like to get to know my fellow participants before the camp starts. How can I do this?**

A Many volunteers choose to stay with WF in Reykjavik before the workcamp. If you stay with us too, you will definitely meet some of the other participants.

**Q When do I pay the participation fee for the workcamp?**

A Please pay on the first day of your workcamp.

**Q What will the accommodation be like during the workcamp?**

A The accommodation is usually quite basic, and you will sleep on mattresses on the floor. In most cases, our participants are hosted in a community facility like a school or a community house.

**Q Do I have to bring my own mattress to the workcamp?**

A No, you don't have to bring a mattress, it will be provided by us. You do need to bring your own sleeping bag and towel though.

**Q Does the accommodation in Reykjavik include internet access?**

A Yes! WF provides free wireless internet (WiFi), as well as shared desktop computers. As everyone shares the same bandwidth, volunteers are asked not to download movies, music, or other large files.