South Iceland

The Vatnajökull region

The Official Tourist Map

Welcome to South Iceland

The Icelandic nature is magnificent, but fragile. The vegetation is easily breached. It suffers greatly from too much trampling and its wounds are slow to heal.

Police regulation for municipalities in South Iceland states:

"*It is forbidden to stay the night in tents, campers, caravans, collapsible campers, tent trailers and other compatible equipment, outside of designated camping areas.*"

Please be considerate of our beautiful and fragile nature and only camp over night in designated camping areas.

Enjoy your travels - drive safe!

More information on camping in South Iceland:
south.is/campingwinter
south.is/camping

You can find more information about South Iceland in these regional tourist maps.

Do you need information about accomodation, activities, dining and culture in South Iceland?

Visit us at: www.south.is

Visit South Iceland

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SÓKNARÁÆTLUN SUÐURLANDS

The Vatnajökull Region

The Vatnajökull Region reaches from majestic Lómagnúpur in the west to scenic Hvalnes in the east. In this area travelers can visit Vatnajökull, the largest glacier in Europe, and its surrounding area, which has a lot to offer. Vatnajökull National Park is a magnificent area that boasts incredible ice caves, magical lagoons of floating ice, and crawling outlet glaciers, some within easy reach. Black sand beaches are a common sight in the Vatnajökull Region. The black sand is the result of the glacier grinding down its bedrock. Much of it is carried to the sea by glacial rivers where the waves, winds and currents mold it into complex scenic formations. In the most western part of the Vatnajökull Region is Skeiðarársandur which is the largest black "glacier" sand area in the world.

The area offers a wide variety of restaurants, many using locally grown ingredients. In the magnificent nature of the Vatnajökull Region, everyone can find enjoyable recreation. There are options for adventure trips as well as relaxing trips both in summer and winter and for all ages. Visitors in the Vatnajökull Region can choose from a variety of activities, scenic views, historical sites and points of interest. You can choose from vast outdoor activities such as golf, bird watching, fishing, horseback riding, mountaineering, trekking, ice climbing, glacier walks, kayak tours, boat tours, snowmobile tours and super jeep tours. The area also proudly presents marked hiking trails in various areas at the edge of Vatnajökull Glacier.
Visit Þorbergur Centre of Culture or The Art Gallery in Höfn. Take a swim in the heated swimming pool in the town of Höfn or relax in the geothermal hot tubs in Hoffell.
You will be in awe while travelling along the stunning countryside in the southeast, nested between the glaciers and the Atlantic coastline. In addition, the scenic fishing town of Höfn is well worth a visit, as it is also known as the "Lobster Capital" of Iceland.

Glacial Lagoons

There are many stunning glacial lagoons in Vatnajökull Region. Jökulsárlón and Fjallsárlón lagoons have facilities for boat rides on the lagoons. The picturesque and scenic boat tours are an experience one would not want to miss. In addition, there is the option to go kayaking on Heinabergslón and Jökulsárlón lagoons. These lagoons are open for sailing from May to September, but during the winter season the lagoons are mostly covered with ice.

Glacier Trails

Hiking is always a popular mode of travel and many hiking trails exist in the region. A hiking map is available in the Vatnajökull Region which shows walking trails from Jökulsárlón lagoon in Breiðamerkursandur and Fjallsárlón lagoon; the trail is 15 km long.
The most recently opened trail is called Mýrajöklar. The trail is 22 km long and reaches from Haukafell in the east to Skálafell in the west. In both hikes you will learn about the flora and fauna of the area as well as getting a glimpse into the ways of life in this isolated area that has been dominated by glacier tongues and fierce glacial rivers. This is a part of a walking route that is being developed in the Vatnajökull Region and is expected in the future to extend from Skaftafell in the west to Lónsöræfi in the east. Hiking maps are available in Vatnajökull National Park visitor centers in Höfn (Gamlabúð) and Skaftafell.

Glaciers and Ice Caves

Southeast Iceland is an area of great contrasts with volcanoes nesting underneath the majestic Vatnajökull ice cap, green birch forests rising in the black, sandy beaches and crystal blue ice caves hidden in the glaciers. The season for visiting glacial ice caves is from November to March, depending on weather conditions. The ice caves can shift and change from year to year and we warn you never to enter ice caves without the proper equipment and an experienced guide. There are various companies in the Vatnajökull Region that provide travelers with glacier activities, including glacier hikes, boat tours on ice lagoons and visits to the picturesque ice caves. A visit to the Vatnajökull Region is truly a once in a lifetime experience.

The Northern Lights

Aurora Borealis is a common sight in the south of Iceland during the winter season. The prime conditions for experiencing the northern lights would be on a clear, bitter cold and cloudless night between late November and March. If you wish to travel off the beaten track in search of the northern lights, you will be sure to find experienced guides in the area that know the best and most picturesque spots for Aurora hunting and photographing.

Höfn í Hornafirði

Hornafjörður is a vast municipality of 260 km of shoreline, with a population of just over 2,200 inhabitants. The southern part of Vatnajökull National Park is situated within the municipality and the scenery from the town of Höfn is breathtaking. This is an area rich in agriculture although the town blossomed around the diverse and rich fishing industry and is known as the "Lobster-capital" of Iceland. A visit to the local "Lobster-festival" is recommended, which is an annual event in the town of Höfn.

Tourism is a growing industry in Höfn and the town offers diverse accommodation, restaurants and activities. The area is also rich in varied birdlife and migratory birds from many different places. Southeast Iceland is one of the few places to see wild reindeer roaming the countryside. Many great hiking locations are in the area, most mountains other than the very highest can be safely hiked in good weather.
Local artists have opened workshops in town that provide insights to the local design, art and craft, that often is inspired by nature. A visit to charming Gamlabúð, which houses Vatnajökull National Park Visitor Centre by the harbor in Höfn, is recommended upon arrival.

3 Skaftafell

Skaftafell in Öræfi district was one of Iceland´s most isolated areas until the early 70´s when the last glacier river at the vast sands of Skeiðarársandur was bridged to complete the Ring Road of Iceland. Skaftafell is a must-see for all visitors of the Vatnajökull Region. Skaftafell is known as one of Iceland´s most beautiful places with its magnificent contrasts of white glaciers, black sands and green meadows. The area of Skaftafell is one of the most eminent jewels in Vatnajökull National Park; providing an array of hiking trails, a perfect place to witness the range of contrast and natural wonders that the national park boasts. Additionally, Skaftafell has a good visitor centre where visitors can access practical information about activities and accommodation in the area. **GPS N64° 00.994', W16° 27.964'**

4 Svartifoss

Svartifoss is one of the unique waterfalls in South-Iceland. It is situated in Skaftafell, which belongs to Vatnajökull National Park. Svartifoss is a 20 meters (80ft) high. It is bordered on both sides by tall black basalt columns. The hike to Svartifoss starts at the Visitor Centre in Skaftafell. There you can also find all sorts of information and advice about the area. The hike is about 1.9 km or 45 minutes (one way).
GPS N64° 01.661', W16° 58.513'

7 Fjallsárlón

Scenic Fjallsárlón is a glacial lagoon located around 10 km. west of Jökulsárlón, at the southern edge of Vatnajökull glacier. With the steep glacier tongue, Fjallsjökull coming down from Vatnajökull and all the way into the lagoon, makes it a perfect peaceful place for photos as well as enjoying the untouched nature. Fjallsárlón also offers boat-tours on the lagoon as well as a bistro with fresh and tasty refreshments.
GPS N64° 00.964', W16° 12.806'

8 Breiðamerkursandur

Next to Jökulsárlón is a less known attraction named Breiðamerkursandur, which are fields of sand that get strewn with chunks of glacial ice, carried along the river Jökulsá in Breiðamerkursandur, towards the sea and then sent back upon the sands by the tides. The diamond-like pieces of glacier create a mesmerizing atmosphere in the close mist that often visits the beach. These glistening ice-diamonds create an even more spectacular vision in the winter months when the sun comes out and bathes the beach in magical lighting, which reflects off the ice. Waiting around in the darkness for the rising of the sun will be well worth the wait, despite the cold of the Icelandic winter night.
GPS N64° 02.661', W16° 10.596'

11 Heinaberg

Heinaberg is a beautiful area that consists of Heinabergsjökull glacier, the glacial lagoon Heinabergslón, where you can go kayaking among the icebergs during summer, and stunning landscape. The Heinaberg area is part of Vatnajökull National Park. The gorgeous glacial lagoon of Heinaberg, Heinabergslón, is accessible by car and is often studded with large chunks of glacier that break off the Heinabergsjökull glacier. The area offers excellent conditions for hikers, as it has several interesting hiking trails, along which one can see waterfalls, ravines, volcanic intrusions, and even, on a lucky day, a reindeer. **GPS N64° 17.878; W15° 39.048'**

12 Fláajökull

Fláajökull is an easily accessible outlet glacier from Vatnajökull. The area offers spectacular views of the ever-receding glacier that has receded 2 km during the last one hundred years, leaving a glacial lagoon in its wake. The area can be described as a hikers´ paradise as it has several good hiking trails and offers a rich variety in birdlife. The area is therefore an excellent destination for bird watchers, hikers and all who are interested in witnessing how the movement of the glacier shapes the surrounding landscape. **GPS N64° 19.395', W15° 33.581'**

16 Almannaskarð

Almannaskarð is an old mountain road about 10 km to the east of Höfn. Today the south-west ramp is closed for car traffic, as in 2005 it was replaced by a 1300 m long tunnel that curves under a mountain. Since then the area has become a popular hiking path for locals and at the top of the road is a magnificent viewpoint where you can enjoy a panoramic view of the Hornafjörður region as well as Vatnajökull glacier, on a clear day. It is a charming stop for those who crave the tranquility and natural beauty of the countryside. **GPS N64° 17.032; W15° 02.129'**

17 Horn/Stokksnes

One of the first settlement farms in Iceland was Horn, built by Hrollaugur son of Rögnvaldur Earl of Møre in Norway. The Hornafjörður municipality and several natural sites are named after the settlement farm. Horn means the same thing in Icelandic and English. The area is approximately a ten-minute drive away from Höfn. The Horn area is below Vestra-Horn, a 454-meter-high mountain and it is an interesting geological site composing of un-stratified plutonic rock, mostly gabbro but with some granophyre. East of the mountain is a strange-shaped outcrop called Brunnhorn that stretches out to sea. Seals also tend to hang out on the stretch of sand, so if you're lucky you can catch a picture of a lazing seal as well. In the Second World War, the Horn area became a base for the British army and later a NATO radar station was set up at Stokksnes, south of Horn. At Stokksnes you can feel the power of the Atlantic Ocean as the waves hit the rocky shore with massive force.
GPS N64° 15.295', W14° 59.734'

1 Vatnajökull

Vatnajökull is the largest glacier in Iceland, and the largest glacier by volume in the whole of Europe. It covers over 8 percent of Iceland measuring an area of 7,800 km², with an average thickness of 400 m and the highest point, Hvannadalshnúkur, measures at 2,110 m (6,921 ft.). Vatnajökull has around 30 outlet glaciers flowing from the ice cap, all of which bear a name; glaciers and outlet glaciers all have names that end in "jökull" in Icelandic. Vatnajökull belongs to the Vatnajökulsþjóðgarður (Vatnajökull National Park) and covers a large area surrounding the glacier, including the glacier itself. The National Park offers numerous interesting sites to visit and is a must for all who are interested in Geology and beautiful, natural vistas.

2 Skeiðarársandur

Skeiðarársandur is a large area of black sands, reaching from Skeiðarárjökull (a part of Vatnajökull) and to the sea. It covers an area of 1300 km² and was formed as the glacial rivers in the area washed material towards the sea. The rivers bring forth material that surfaced during sub-glacial volcanic eruptions in Vatnajökull. Near the glacier the ground is gravelly and even rocky and as it reaches the sea it has turned into sand and clay. There used to be little vegetation to be found on Skeiðarársandur, but in the past decade a self-sprouted forest of birch trees has been growing lushly in the middle of the area. Skeiðarársandur is a large nesting area for the great skua. **GPS N63° 57.650', W17° 10.938'**

5 Öræfajökull

Öræfajökull is an ice-covered volcano at the southern extremity of Vatnajökull glacier. It is Iceland's highest mountain, 2,110m or 6,870 feet. Its height depends on the seasons and the depth of the snow, since the peak itself, Hvannadalshnúkur, is topped with ice which is thickest in spring and thinnest in autumn. **GPS N64° 00.850', W16° 40.622'**

6 Ingólfshöfði

At the edge of the Atlantic Ocean, Ingólfshöfði is a headland which is isolated by black sands and perilous rivers from the rest of the mainland. This historical cape is named after the first settler of Iceland, Ingólfur Arnarson, who spent his first winter there with his family after moving to Iceland, 874-875 A.D. However, it's home to thousands of nesting seabirds and gulls, especially puffins and the great skua. Ingólfshöfði is only accessible by organised tour.
GPS N63° 48.101', W16° 38.207'

9 Jökulsárlón

Jökulsárlón is a glacial lagoon by the ring road, and was recently designated as a part of Vatnajökull National Park. It's still blue waters are a sight not to be missed, as it is dotted with the icebergs from the edge of Breiðamerkurjökull, a part of the Vatnajökull glacier. The lagoon flows through a narrow gateway into the Atlantic Ocean, leaving the spectacular sight of the large chunks of ice on the black sandy beach. In wintertime the fish-filled lagoon hosts numbers of seals, which visit the lagoon for an easy meal. Year-round curious seals can be seen basking on the blue-tinted icebergs. The lagoon is accessible from the beach all year round, and so is the café on the banks of Jökulsárlón. For hikers, a marked hiking trail between Jökulsárlón and Fjallsárlón is recommended as a scenic trip through unforgettable surroundings. **GPS N64° 02.899; W16° 10.795'**

10 Skálafell - Hjallanes

Skálafell is situated in the exact middle between the glacial lagoon Jökulsárlón and the town of Höfn in Hornafjörður. Skálafell offers access to beautiful, marked walking paths around the area offering a mere 45-minute walk to the edge of Vatnajökull glacier. Furthermore, a new walkway bridge over river Kolgríma opens the hiking area of Heinaberg from Skálafell. This area is very popular when it comes to visiting glacial areas. **GPS N64° 14.898', W15° 41.127'**

13 Haukafell

Haukafell is a forestry project that was launched in 1985 and now offers ample shelter to the low-lying, local vegetation, which mostly consists of berry-bushes that are ripe for picking in August. The area is situated east of Fláajökull glacier and is a popular outdoor area for the locals. There are various hiking trails to be enjoyed in the beautiful surroundings and the crispy fresh air. From Haukafell you find a marked hiking trail to Fláajökull glacier, where you cross a recent walkway over the Kolgrafardalsá river. In Haukafell you find a good campsite in a beautiful area. **GPS N64° 20.781', W15° 29.882'**

14 Hoffell

Hoffell is a farmland area characterized by a large outlet glacier named Hoffellsjökull and gabbro rock. Gabbro rock is originated deep in the Earth but is visible in the area due to the uplift of the area and glacial erosion, which gives the environment a greenish hue in the otherwise dark rocks. The area is preserved for outdoor recreation, as it is rich in vegetation, wildlife, and geological variety. The area's many hiking trails offer a stunning view of the diverse beautiful wonders it has to offer. **GPS N64° 25.074', W15° 23.831'**

15 Ósland

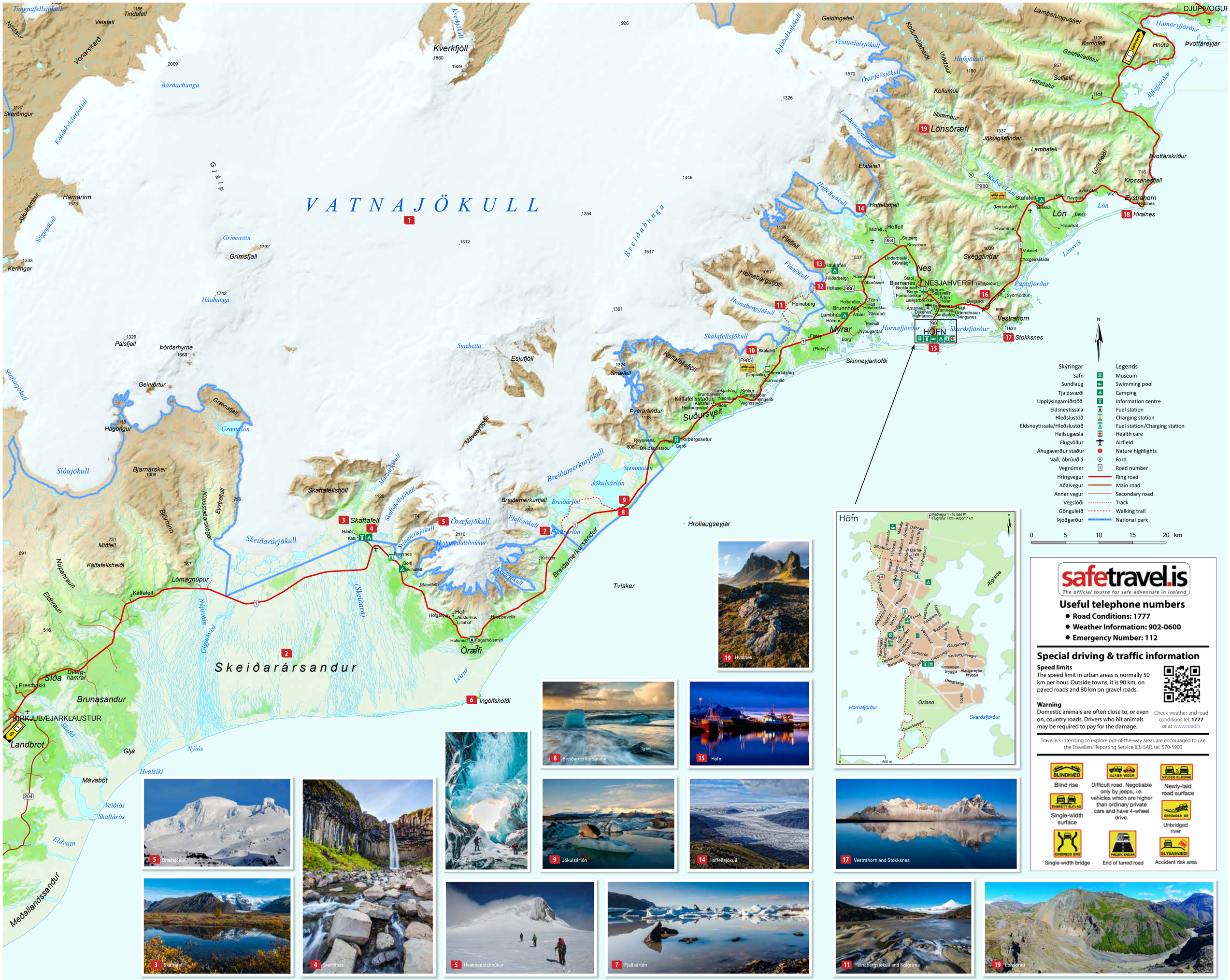
Ósland is an island accessible by a manmade isthmus (land bridge) and is situated just a few steps from the harbour area. There is rich birdlife in the area and the Arctic Tern is predominant during the nesting season. Ósland is situated just a few steps from the harbor area in Höfn. Walking trails circle the pond, Óslandstjörn, and are along the shore. From Ósland you can follow the nature trail that has been set up to model the solar system – it's been scaled down and has its sizes and distances in correct proportion.
GPS N64° 14.645', W15° 12.308'

18 Hvalnes

Hvalnes is a small peninsula with a black pebble beach that stretches on for a few kilometers. Sitting on its tip is a picturesque old, yellow lighthouse and an old turf farm with the same name of Hvalnes. The beach stretches for a few kilometers and would make a nice walk or you can just hang out on the beach and enjoy the view. It is an excellent location for bird watching and photography. **GPS N64° 24.338; W14° 32.455'**

19 Lónsöræfi

In Lón county, the most eastern area of the Vatnajökull Region, lie the Stafafellsfjöll mountains, also called Lónsöræfi. They dominate the skyline east of Vatnajökull glacier and have long comprised one of Iceland´s most extensive protected areas. Besides the deep, rugged canyons, the landscape displays a wide range of colors owing to the presence of rhyolite and other colorful rocks. In contrast, there are also lushly vegetated and sheltered valleys offering a very good chance of spotting reindeer. The numerous hiking trails make this area perfect for hiking. Keep in mind that getting there can be very difficult and one should seek advice from a visitor- or information centre before attempting to go there. **GPS N64° 33.194; W15° 09.078'**


VATNAJÖKULL
Skeiðarársandur
Öræfi
Suðursveit
Höfn
Hornafjörður
Lón
Nes
Myrar
Brunnhóll
Heinaberg
Hoffellsfjall
Hoffell
Stafafell
Hvalnes
Þvottárskriður
Krossanesfjall
Eystrahorn
Vestrahorn
Stokksnes
Skinneyjarhöfði
Lónsöræfi
Jökulgilstindar
Lambafell
Skeggtindar
Kollumúli
Illikambur
Hofsdalur
Selfjall
Kambfell
Hnúta
Þvottáreyjar
Hamarsfjörður
Ajtafjörður
Papafjörður
Lónsvík
Skarðsfjörður
Hrollaugseyjar
Tvísker
Ingólfshöfði
Kverkfjöll
Kverkjökull
Geldingafell
Vesturdalsjökull
Eyjabakkajökull
Kollumúlaheiði
Víðidalur
Hofsjökull
Öxarfellsjökull
Lambatungnajökull
Hoffellsjökull
Fláajökull
Heinabergsjökull
Skálafellsjökull
Breiðabunga
Grímsvötn
Grímsfjall
Háabunga
Bárðarbunga
Hamarinn
Jökulkambur
Sylgjujökull
Kerlingar
Skerðingur
Köldukvíslarjökull
Tungnafellsjökull
Nýidalur
Valafell
Tindafell
Vonarskarð
Síðujökull
Bjarnarsker
Skaftárjökull
Skaftafellsfjöll
Skaftafellsjökull
Morsárjökull
Breiðamerkurjökull
Breiðamerkursandur
Jökulsárlón
Stemmulón
Fjallsjökull
Fjallsárlón
Breiðamerkurfjall
Svínafellsjökull
Hvannadalshnúkur
Skeiðarárjökull
Skaftafellsheiði
Lómagnúpur
Kálfafell
Núpsvötn
Núpsvatn
Eldhraun
Núpahraun
Gígjukvísl
Skeiðará
Svínafell
Sandfell
Hof
Hofgarðar
Austurhús
Litlahof
Hnappavellir
Fagurhólsmýri
Freysnes
Bölti
Hæðir
Kvísker
Leirur
Síða
Dverghamrar
Prestbakki
Brunasandur
KIRKJUBÆJARKLAUSTUR
Landbrot
Skaftá
Gljá
Nýjós
Hvalsíki
Mávabót
Veiðivötn
Skaftárós
Eldvatn
Meðallandssandur
Geirvörtur
Grænafjall
Grænalón
Hágöngur
Bjarnarsker
Björninn
Eystrafjall
Miðfell
Kálfafellsstaðarskógar
Þórðarhyrna
Pálsfjall
Esjufjöll
Snæfell
Snæhetta
Mávabyggðir
Kálfafellsstaður
Kálfafell
Hrollaugsstaðir
Reynivellir
Breiðabólstaður
Þverártindur
Þorbergssetur
Gerði
Lækjarhús
Brunnavellir
Neðribær
Krókur
Gamligarður
Vagnsstaður
Hestgerði
Jaðar
Smyrlabjörg
Sunnuhlíð
(Uppsalir)
Skálafell
(Flatey)
Flatey
Borg
Nýpugarðar
Einhólt
Lambhús
Hólmur
Arbær
Holtahólar
Hvat
Holtabrekka
Stóraból
Tjörn
Holtasel
Hillóarberg
Rauðaberg
Óbarðssel
Haukafell
Lindarbakki
Stóralág
Miðfell
Setberg
Krossbær
Volasel
Þorgeirsstaðir
Hraunkot
Hvammur
Stapi
Bjarnanes
Brekkubær
Borgir
Fornustekkar
Lækjarbrekka
Akurnes
Sellavellir
Artún
Hóar
Dynjandi
Hagi
Grænahraun
Þinganes
Árnanes
Dilksnes
Hafnanes
Sauðanes
Hvammstangi
Syðrifjörður
Hólabrekka
Einholt
Nýpugarðar
Hólar
Reyðará
Svínhólar
Vík
Hlíð
Brekka
Stafafell
(Þórisdalur)
(Bær)
Hvalnes
Lónsheiði
Ægisíða
Hafnarbraut
Miðtún
Hlíðartún
Hrísbraut
Hvannabraut
Hlíðarbraut
Hólabraut
Hlíðartröð
Hlíðarvegur
Hrísbraut
Vesturbraut
Kirkjubraut
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