Experience beauty Iceland ’ Golden Circle route Discover stunning landscapes waterfalls geothermal wonders Go World Travel reader-supported may earn commission purchases made links piece eagerness palpable partner undertake expedition Iceland August usually warm month average daily temperatures 50-59°F fished way many rivers hot summer days perspired way Amazon looking forward arctic breezes cool clear streams chilly blast wind welcomes us deplane Iceland set Golden Circle route southern Iceland One drive route covers 140 miles 3 hours would want much see Looping Reykjavík back main features Þingvellir National Park Gullfoss Waterfall geothermal area Haukadalur Geysir Strokkur geysers Haukadalur Geysir mostly dormant many years Strokkur erupts every 5–10 minutes stops include Hellisheiðarvirkjun geothermal power plant plan see Þingvellir Park Thingvellir brave wind walk right mountainous divide North Atlantic Ridge Iceland sits atop European North American tectonic plates magma welling earth ’ core constantly creates new land plates drift apart ’ exciting climb top stand atop split moving imperceptibly constantly cleft mountains Thingvellir Vikings held congressional gatherings 930 AD 1798 named surrounding area Valley Gathering Þingvellir least forty clans converged annually recite laws make speeches present ideas submit proposals also two-week festival merchants storytellers traders bustling site ’ UNESCO World Heritage site oldest parliament world gathered Fragments around 50 booths built turf stone visible remnants gatherings frigid wind accompanies us approach Geysir Geothermal area explosive power Strokkur geyser streaks skyward Iceland geothermal activity black lava fields twisted rope-like coils resembles Yellowstone Park though Iceland vaster noses detect pungent sulfur wafting mustard-yellow rivulets spewing percolating mud like Yellowstone lunar landscape ’ surrounded sky-blue hot pools steaming fields sulfur odor minor inconvenience observe short stocky Icelandic horses drive Gullfoss Waterfall Icelanders developed breed sure-footedness ability cross rough terrain Circle extends farther reach Gullfoss Waterfall traverse narrow path get close-up view massive two-tiered waterfall