

Iceland

Continent: Europe

Languages Spoken: Icelandic

Population: 376,000

Currency: Icelandic króna (ISK)

Area: 103,000

Main Landmarks:

- {'name': 'Blue Lagoon', 'writeup': 'A geothermal spa known for its milky blue waters rich in minerals, located in a lava field.'}
- {'name': 'Thingvellir National Park', 'writeup': 'A UNESCO World Heritage site where the North American and Eurasian tectonic plates meet.'}
- {'name': 'Geysir Geothermal Area', 'writeup': 'Famous for its erupting hot springs, including the active Strokkur geyser.'}
- {'name': 'Hallgrímskirkja', 'writeup': 'A distinctive Lutheran church in Reykjavik, known for its unique architecture and panoramic city views.'}
- {'name': 'Vatnajökull National Park', 'writeup': '"Home to Europe's largest glacier and diverse volcanic landscapes."}

Head of State / Government:

President Guðni Th. Jóhannesson

Main Cultural Events:

- {'name': 'Iceland Airwaves', 'writeup': 'An annual music festival showcasing Icelandic and international artists.'}
- {'name': 'Þorrablót', 'writeup': 'A midwinter festival celebrating traditional Icelandic food and heritage.'}
- {'name': 'Reykjavik International Film Festival', 'writeup': 'An event promoting independent films from around the world.'}
- {'name': 'National Day', 'writeup': '"Celebrated on June 17th, marking Iceland's independence from Denmark in 1944."}
- {'name': 'Winter Lights Festival', 'writeup': 'A festival celebrating the return of light with art, culture, and outdoor activities.'}

Food & Cuisine:

Icelandic cuisine features fresh seafood, lamb, and dairy products, with traditional dishes like skyr, hákarl (fermented shark), and rye bread. The cuisine reflects the island's Nordic heritage and reliance on local ingredients.

Brief History:

Iceland was settled by Norsemen in the 9th century. It established a commonwealth in 930 AD, later coming under Norwegian and then Danish rule. Iceland gained full independence in 1944 and has developed a strong economy based on fishing, renewable energy, and tourism.

Important People:

- Leif Erikson - Norse explorer believed to be the first European to reach North America.
- Björk Guðmundsdóttir - Internationally acclaimed singer and artist.
- Halldór Laxness - Nobel Prize-winning author.
- Vigdís Finnbogadóttir - First democratically elected female president in the world.
- Jón Sigurðsson - Leader of the 19th-century Icelandic independence movement.

Current Conflicts:

Iceland is generally peaceful with no active conflicts. It maintains a policy of neutrality and is a member of NATO.

Youtube Links:

- Iceland Travel Guide - Top Things to See & Do
- The Geology of Iceland Explained
- Icelandic Culture and Traditions
- Why Iceland is the Happiest Country in the World
- Exploring Reykjavik - Iceland's Capital City