

## Reykjavík Self Guided Walking Tour Information on Interesting Sights

- 1. Hallgrímskirkja Church**- Opens at 9 am. Elevator to top of the tower costs 900ISK per person. Hallgrímskirkja is one of Reykjavík's best known landmarks. At 73 metres (244 ft) Hallgrímskirkja is the largest church in Iceland and the sixth tallest architectural structure in Iceland. It is visible from all over the city and was named after the Icelandic poet and composer Hallgrímur Petursson. The design of the church was inspired by the landscape of Iceland. You can see the country's volcanoes, ice caps, and basalt columns all represented in this architecture designed by Guðjón Samúelsson. The design for this Lutheran church was commissioned in 1937; however, construction did not begin on the church until 1945. It took another 38 years to complete Hallgrímskirkja. The church was completed in 1974 and its nave was constructed in 1986. In 1992 construction on the 25 ton pipe organ was completed. This organ is truly spectacular at 15 meters tall hosting 5,275 pipes! A statue of explorer Leif Eriksson sits in front of the church. This statue was a gift from the United States in honor of the 1930 Alþingi Millennial Festival, commemorating the 1000th anniversary of Iceland's parliament at Þingvellir in 930 AD.
- 2. Stjórnarráðið** - Stjórnarráðið, translated to Government House, is the location of the prime minister's office and the headquarters of the Icelandic Government. It was originally the first prison in Iceland. Construction on the building began in 1761 and was completed 10 years later. The prison was closed in 1816 and the first Icelandic Ministry began working in the building in 1904.
- 3. Menntaskólinn í Reykjavík** - This beautiful building is the Reykjavík Junior College. This institution remains one of the oldest in Iceland having originated in 1056 in Skálholt. The school was moved to Reykjavík in 1786, but was forced to move again in 1805 to Bessastaðir. In 1846 the school was moved to its current location, and this building was erected. At the time was the largest building in the country and it can be seen on the 500 Icelandic krona bill.
- 4. Frikirkjan í Reykjavík** - The Free Church in Reykjavík was established in 1899. This independent Lutheran church had a large and fast growing congregation with the desire to bring the church closer to the people.
- 5. Lake Tjörninn** - Bird feeding is a popular pastime here and has led to the lake being called "the biggest bread soup in the world". A beautiful variety of birds can be seen swimming, feeding, and nesting around the lake. There are also beautiful views of colorful houses and Frikirkjan í Reykjavík church and Hallgrímskirkja church. Reykjavík City Hall also sits along it's shores. The name of the lake, Tjörninn, translates to "the lake" or "the pond".
- 6. Landakotskirkja** - Landakotskirkja is the cathedral of the Catholic Church in Iceland. It is often referred to as Kristskirkja, or Christ's Church. The first Catholic priests arrived in Iceland from France in the early 19th century. After establishing several small churches they found the need to build a bigger church for the growing number of Catholics. They commissioned Guðjón Samúelsson, the same designer of Hallgrímskirkja church. Landakotskirkja was sanctified in 1929 and was the largest church in Iceland at the time.
- 7. Old Harbor** - Reykjavík Old Harbor is a booming area filled with interesting art, restaurants, museums, and the majority of the city's marine activities. Built from 1913 to 1917 it was the largest construction project to that point in Icelandic history. Before construction of the harbor ships had to drop anchor well out to sea and transport goods in by rowboat.
  - Þúfa** - This art piece is relatively new to Reykjavík and was opened to the public in early 2014. Þúfa is essentially a perfectly dome shaped man made hill with a small shed on top. The shed was made for drying fish and you may be able to spot some hanging inside. The name translates to mean "Mound" or "Tussock" and was designed by visual artist Ólöf Nordal.
  - Vikin Maritime Museum** - (1500ISK per person) For centuries Icelanders depended heavily on the sea for survival giving the country a long and rich maritime history. The Maritime Museum is an ode to this history and is filled with beautiful ship-models, realistic scenery, and live fish! Step aboard the magnificent Coast Guard Vessel Óðinn, who took part in all three cod wars, docked outside the museum in the beautiful harbor.

8. **Harpa Conference & Concert Center** - Harpa is the cultural hub of the city. Its steel framework fitted with geometric shaped colorful glass panels creates a unique glass honeycomb. This concert hall is home to national opera & symphony and has hosted many concerts and cultural events. Not long after the construction of this amazing building was started in early 2007 financial crisis struck Iceland and the project was almost scrapped. It was not until over a year later that the government decided to fund the rest of the project and the opening concert was held in May 2011.
9. **Sun Voyager (Sólfar)** - Sólfar is an iconic sculpture created by Jón Gunnar Árnason. It is an ode to the sun and a representation of the promise of undiscovered territory, a dream of hope, progress, and freedom. This stainless steel material mounted on a ring of granite tiles has an amazing ability to catch the light of the sun and reflect it beautifully. The Sun Voyager was the champion of a competition held by the city of Reykjavík as it searched for a new sculpture to commemorate the 200th anniversary of the city. The Sun Voyager was unveiled on the bicentennial celebration of Reykjavík on August 18th, 1990.
10. **Höfði House** - Built in 1909 this house is was initially made for the French consul in Iceland and is still labeled with R.F., the abbreviation for the French Republic. For many years it was the residence of Einar Benediktsson, a famous Icelandic entrepreneur and poet. He was the editor of Iceland's first daily newspaper, Dagskrá, and his poetry is said to have played a major part in the motivating the Icelandic people to find their independence from Denmark. His statue was recently moved from Klambartún park in central Reykjavík to it's current location next to Höfði House. The Höfði House has hosted many renowned guests including the Queen of England, Winston Churchill and Marlene Dietrich. The house is best known as the location for the 1986 summit meeting of presidents Ronald Reagan and Mikhail Gorbatsjov. A historical event effectively marked the end of the Cold War. It is also said to be host to a ghost called "The White Lady". Höfði House is owned by the the City of Reykjavík and is currently used for official receptions and meetings so it is not possible to enter the house.