

Learning Journey - North Iceland Food Excellence (NIFE)

12 – 19 September 2021



In September 2021, a group of food tourism & hospitality professionals from the UK will travel to North Iceland for a learning journey focused on the cultural heritage, flavours, and sense of place which contribute to the area's overall visitor experience.

We invite you to join them.

Tell me about the learning journey

North Iceland Food Excellence (NIFE) is a mobility project, supported by Erasmus + and arranged between UK partner Tourism Angles and our North Iceland host partner Markaðsstofa Norðurlands (Visit North Iceland). It is designed to cover changes and innovations which have occurred since an original successful co-operation between the partners six years ago in 2015.

The purpose is to facilitate growth in staff competences, abilities and skills development to benefit the tourism and hospitality sectors. It assists educators and employers come together in an environment of focused learning, exposure to best practice and peer review. The ability for first-hand study of European examples offers increased value for the participating staff.

Project objectives are:

- to facilitate an intensive, 7 nights (incl travel days) mobility focused on food tourism.
- to exchange expertise and best practice in relation to food tourism through a series of site visits and case study group work.
- to give staff the chance to look beyond their own working environments with a European dimension to training, through working and learning with a peer group.
- to encourage the tourism industry and higher education sectors to work together to develop current, relevant, and fit for purpose qualifications through better understanding of staff skill requirements.
- to build the foundation for new partnerships and facilitate future cooperation through an expanded network of contacts.

Over the week you'll travel as part of a group of like-minded people, meeting some of Iceland's local entrepreneurs, food producers and tourism businesses. Through visits to cultural attractions, accommodation, farmers and growers - you'll get a concentrated taste of North Iceland. You'll exchange stories, successes and lessons learnt along the way, with them and with each other. You'll be part of a group developing **Case Studies** on one of three themes we've identified for you to explore during the visit.

You may be involved in hospitality, tourism, education & training, food events & festivals or pioneering something innovative. Can you learn from your Icelandic and other British counterparts? Can they learn from you?

Designed for busy yet innovative tourism and hospitality professionals like you, this focused programme is a chance to learn new skills, experience new ideas and meet new contacts.

Does it cost?

A grant from the Erasmus+ European Programme means we can offer this amazing opportunity to 25 people who meet the project eligibility criteria. If selected, each participant will have a substantial part of the costs covered for the 7 night visit – including flights, accommodation, transport, meals, and admission fees.

In return each participant's business, organisation or educational establishment will contribute up to a maximum of £500 per person. Due to rising costs in Iceland and the addition of Covid-19 restrictions, we will confirm the exact amount within the next month or so.

You will have some free time on the final day where you will cover the costs of your own food/drinks/activities during that time. Participants are responsible for their own travel arrangements and costs to and from the designated departure airports i.e. London Gatwick or Glasgow.

What about the Covid situation?

We anticipate this learning journey taking place in September 2021; however we are mindful of the ongoing Covid-19 situation, the ever-changing travel restrictions, and quarantine requirements so there is a possibility that the trip may be postponed to Autumn 2022. We should be in a position to confirm this by late June. For now, we proceed on the basis that the learning journey will take place as scheduled in September 2021.

Can I take part?

Yes, if you have one or more of the roles shown on the attached eligibility document, are willing to participate fully and you can attend the full week (participating in workshops/case studies and attending the full week is a stipulation of the Erasmus+ funding rules). You must also comply with all Covid-19 obligations required at that time, which could include testing prior to travel or confirmation of receiving a vaccination. We will keep you advised on all necessary health requirements prior to travel.

We encourage SMEs, food producers and chefs to apply. You may even be asked to deliver a presentation/workshop or to be a case study group leader – it is important that we share such roles among our group and not rely on just a few.

If you are interested, and excited by the prospect of bringing knowledge back to your tourism organisation/destination, educational establishment, or business, please complete the eligibility document and send it to Karen Donnelly at karen@tourism-angles.co.uk by **Monday, 19 April 2021**.

What happens next?

We will notify successful applicants by the end of April, at which point we will begin to make all bookings, accommodation and travel reservations on your behalf. We will confirm the final programme; send you a package of pre-visit materials and a full list of participants before we leave. Please be aware that, if you subsequently drop-out having accepted a place in writing, you are liable for all costs incurred on your behalf. We strongly urge you to arrange appropriate travel insurance, including Covid-19 cover, following written acceptance. Please note should the learning journey be cancelled or postponed to alternate dates by us; you may withdraw if the dates are unsuitable for you/your business/organisation.

What to expect?

If you've never taken part in a vocational learning journey visit it's a wonderful opportunity to see things from new perspectives, to gain practical knowledge, new contacts and new experiences to apply in your place of work. It's no holiday – but there is plenty of time for visiting places that will inspire a return trip one day. Take a look at the outline draft programme below and if it's of interest please complete the attached application and eligibility form.



Previous Erasmus+ study visit participants in North Iceland 2015.

OUTLINE PROGRAMME

(This is a draft indicative programme at this stage and may be subject to change.)

North Iceland Food Excellence (NIFE) - 12 – 19 September 2021

- Sun 12th:** Travel from UK airports to Keflavik Airport
Coach transfer to Akureyri, North Iceland
Check in/accommodation
Dinner
- Mon 13th:** Breakfast
Group briefing and case study time
*Site Visits including lunch
Dinner
Accommodation:
- Tues 14th:** Breakfast
Case study group/workshops
*Site Visits including lunch
Dinner
Accommodation:
- Wed 15th:** Breakfast
Case Study group/workshops
*Site Visits including lunch
Dinner
Accommodation:
- Thur 16th:** Breakfast and check out
Transfer to Reykjavik with site visits en route
Potential site visit or meeting
Dinner
Accommodation:
- Fri 17th:** Breakfast
Case study groups/workshops
Presentations/meeting with Promote Iceland
Project debrief meeting
Free time
Dinner
Accommodation:
- Sat 18th:** Breakfast
Self-study & Free time
- Sun 19th:** Transfers for departures to UK

*We will finalise the exact programme following participant recruitment and dependent on any Covid-19 restrictions. Examples of site visits could include:

Ekta Fiskur - A fifth generation business Bacalhau (dried and salted cod) fish production business. The owner Elvar invites groups to hear the story of the business and also about the traditional Icelandic "rotten shark". Over the last few years, they have developed a restaurant as well as hot tubs on the black sands. This business has continued to grow, develop, and innovate but still with fish production at its core.

Viking Sushi Tour - A boat trip experience with a difference. Visitors go on the tour with commentary provided about birds/local wildlife. While the boat is out, a net is cast and later raised with the catch spread onto a table. Members of the crew invite visitors to taste scallops and sea urchins straight from the sea. Great interaction with visitors who tend to be curious but also wary of eating the fresh catch.

Dalvik - This small town is the venue for an annual Great Fish Day attended by around 200,000 visitors. The event is supported by the main fish processing company, working with a local committee to set up a free festival, where all food and drink is offered free of charge. Musicians perform on a large stage creating a festival atmosphere for the weekend. Many of the residents provide an "open door" policy inviting visitors to come into their homes/gardens and have food with them, often traditional Icelandic fish soup.

Arctic Coast Way - We will drive part of the route. This is a new concept/marketing campaign launched on 8 June 2019. The project is managed by Visit North Iceland who will make a presentation about the project, its development, objectives, how businesses collaborate, encouraging participation and the challenges faced. The project website promotes the route as:

Travelling the Arctic Coast Way means leaving the common routes behind you and going off the beaten track to discover some of the most remote places in North Iceland; a unique adventure following 900km of coastal roads close to the Arctic Circle. Here, where volcanic land meets the icy ocean, nature's force has carved a coastline of wild and pure beauty. The route includes six peninsulas reaching far out in the ocean, taking you from black sandy beaches to spectacular cliffs, along glacial river deltas and fjords to high mountains. Going one step further into remoteness, five beautiful islands offer unforgettable experiences and you might even want to straddle the Arctic Circle. Each of the little towns along the way tells unique stories about life on the edge of the Arctic.

Reykjavik Old Harbour - The colourful Old Harbour, built between the years 1913 and 1917, is the fast growing boom area creating a new vibrant quarter for Reykjavik. A beautiful place to walk with views across the bay to Mount Esja, and signalled by Harpa, the city's concert hall, the Old Harbour area is where the majority of marine activities such as whale watching, and puffin tours are concentrated. But it's the development and new lease of life being given to the former fish processing buildings which are catching attention. The area houses museums and collections including the Viking Maritime Museum, numerous top quality restaurants, breweries, coffee houses and a range of activities from scooter rides to segway tours.

Kaldi Brewery. This was Iceland's first micro-brewery in a country where beer drinking only became legal relatively recently on 1 March 1989 (celebrated as beer day). This business was created through necessity when the owner was made redundant and had to find something to do. Kaldi is now a top seller and the owners have since created a Beer Spa and also a restaurant. The beer spa is very innovative; the hot tubs contain beer with the hot water.

Kaffi Ku – is a family run working cattle farm which uses highly advanced technology for milking the cows. They offer a restaurant, serving a range of foods including a delicious family recipe stew/soup, visitor experience and retail shop.

Holar University College – is Iceland's leading agricultural college which specialises in rural topics including equine science and aquaculture as well as tourism and hospitality qualifications. They have developed particular expertise in the farming of arctic char.

The programme will be finalised in the next couple of months; the above gives a flavour of what to expect. We will endeavour to provide as many site visits as possible during our short time in Iceland.

Feedback from previous participants:

“The level of engagement and learning opportunities were fantastic from both the participants and encounters with business owners.”

“What an inspiring and amazing week. Difficult to believe you can gain so much in such a short space of time.”

“Amazing. Thanks so much for such a well planned and productive week. These journeys are incredible and so useful for everyone. The balance is perfect.”

“Back at my desk this morning, surrounded by brochures, notebooks and a head full of ideas and plans!”

“I can't thank you both enough for the amazing opportunity, I am literally starting to annoy people with my constant Iceland chat!”

“From looking at the paperwork before we went I could see some obvious common ground with chefs and food business owners but I never realised I would learn so much from the academic side.”

“This was the most worthwhile trip to enhance business and personal skills - to open your eyes to the possibilities and opportunities that you may otherwise miss.”