**2023 Global Adventure Trip Proposal Summary and Risk Assessment**

**Trek Hut to Hut Between Icefields, Peaks and Ocean in Remote Eastern Iceland**

August 6-17, 2023

Up to 12 participants

Overview

This Global Adventure consists of back-to-back hut treks in the seldom-visited, dramatic fjord, peak and glacier hinterlands of Eastern Iceland – the Víknaslóðir Trail and the Lónsöræfi trail. We’ll meet in the town of Egilsstaðir in the heart of the East Fjords to begin our adventure (participants are encouraged to spend a day or two in Reykjavik before the trip begins, and they can either fly to the domestic airport in Egilsstaðir or take the opportunity to drive around the northern Ring Road to meet the group. ) The trip will end in Hofn on the south coast, with flights available back to Reykjavik or the opportunity to join up in a rental van for a drive along the south ring road to Reykjavik, visiting some of the island’s most famous glacial lagoons, waterfalls and lovely coastline along the way.

It's a short drive from our lodging in Egilsstaðir to the start of the Víknaslóðir trail at Seydisfjordur, on a narrow fiord surrounded by majestic mountains. From here participants will trek between rustic self-catered huts for 4 days, over passes in the coastal mountains, into deserted North Atlantic coastal inlets, through massive valleys where the colors of the adjacent hills and mountaintops provide a colorful feast for the eyes, and along ancient paths between high-country farms and now-abandoned harbors. We’ll end our first trek at a nice hotel in the village of Borgarfjörður with teeming puffin breeding grounds on cliffs just down the road.

From Borgarfjörður we’ll pass back through Egilsstaðir to reprovision (and maybe soak in the local natural hot pools at Vok!) before transferring southwest to the shadow of the massive vatnajökull glacier to start our next trekking segment, the Lónsöræfi trail. This 4-day hut to hut route features the deep canyons, waterfalls, iridescent green valleys, incredible multi-colored rhyolite cliffs and snow-topped peaks that make Iceland so special. This segment starts with a hike long the impressive river banks of the glacier river Jökulsá with Mt. Snæfell looming overhead; then over the mountain of Geldingafell with views over the Vatnajökull glacier, and along the top of the valley of Vesturdalur before descending down to lake Kollumúlavatn where one of our huts is found. Then we’ll pass the columnar basalt of the Tröllakrókar cliffs, which give way to the rolling purple, pink, orange and yellow rhyolite landscapes colorful landscapes contrasting with the vibrant green moss. Finally we’ll follow the glacial river Jökulsá í Lóni south to the old farmstead of Eskifell, where we’ll transfer to the south-coastal town of Hofn for our farewell dinner and the end of the official trek.

The daily distances and gains/losses appear fairly moderate - between 7 and 9.5 miles with a pack (not counting side hikes) with elevation gains and losses well under 2000 feet. Altitude never exceeds 3570 feet and most of the time is much lower. Still, trails are often minimally defined, with rugged sections and stream crossings, so the going can be somewhat slow and arduous.

No technical climbing skills are required but there will be bouldery and steep terrain to negotiate. The weather can change quickly from warm sun to cold, steady rain with wind, and the wet weather can last for days, so everyone will need good gear to stay warm and dry. There will be a lot of wading and a few swift water crossings, so water shoes and poles will be required to avoid falls or foot injury. Participants will be screened for experience with multi-day backpacking in harsh conditions and for confidence and good balance. Road access points only exist at each end of the two treks, so up to a 19 mile walk would be required to get to a road; for this reason, options to get out for rest and then back to the group are limited.

The routes are quite remote with little foot traffic, and not always well marked (due to constantly flowing water, erosion and moving glacial features), so an experienced local guide will be used. The huts are rustic buildings with bunks, water and basic cooking facilities and WCs outside; none of the huts have food service or bedding. To keep pack weight down, we will reprovision between the two 4-day treks so that participants will have to carry only a max of 4 days food at a time. Helicopter rescue services are available all around Iceland and there are modern medical facilities within 1-3 hours drive from the two ends of our trekking routes, but the walk to one of the trailheads could be as much as 19 miles, prohibitive for an injured person, so we’ll be dependent on helicopter rescue (and suitable weather for it) to deal with significant injury or illness. Our outfitter will carry a satellite phone as well as a VHF radio, and multiple people will have InReach satellite communicators with SOS capability. Huts are never more than about 4 miles away so there will be places to take shelter while waiting. Our guide has Wilderness First Responder training.

Transport along the route is provided in 4 wheel drive vehicles or minibuses by professional drivers, with luggage stored for us in Egilsstaðir so that we can have it when we get off the trail in between segments.



