

## Cottage Vulcano at Reynifell, within the Njals saga and Mt. Hekla area, South Iceland

### Facilities:



The size of the cottage is 42 m<sup>2</sup> for 5 persons (possibly for 2 more). It has two bedrooms, one with a queen size bed and one with 1.5 size bed and a single bed (bunk bed), a kitchen, living room with a sofa that can be turned into sleeping bed for 2 persons, and one bathroom with a shower. There is a great view from the large windows of the living room. All around the house is a large terrace with benches, tables, and BQ grill. There is also a hot tub for 5 persons.

The cottage is located on the boundaries where the Icelandic highland begins. The last 10 km of the road leading to the cottage is gravel and in spring (April) when the earth is melting after cold winter the last 3 km of the road can have some potholes and puddle if it is raining. At that time it is better to have a jeep (4x4) and always necessary if planning to visit the Icelandic highlands.

### The recreation, history, and the geology of the area:

The cottage Bjork is within the Njals saga area and located about 20 km Southwest of **volcano Mt. Hekla**, at the border of the magnificent lava fields from the volcano that have been active for centuries.



On the bank of the river Eystri-Rangá, within 5 minutes walking distance from the cottage (around 600 m), stands the famous rock Gunnarssteinn from the **Njals saga**. There fought Gunnar and his two brothers some 30 men, killing 14 of them but Hjortur, one of the brothers was slain there.



Archaeologists have found some bones and other things in ancient burials near the rock to verify this. About 2.5 km south of the cottage (4 km by road) is the farm of Keldur (<http://www.thiodminjasafn.is/english/for-visitors/historic-buildings-collection/nr/3416>; <http://stuckiniceland.com/south/the-medieval-seat-of-power/>). It is a unique cluster of oldest surviving type of **historic turf buildings** in Iceland. This farm also played part in many of the Icelandic sagas, including Njals saga. It is now a part of The National Museum Building Collection, and has been maintained as such.

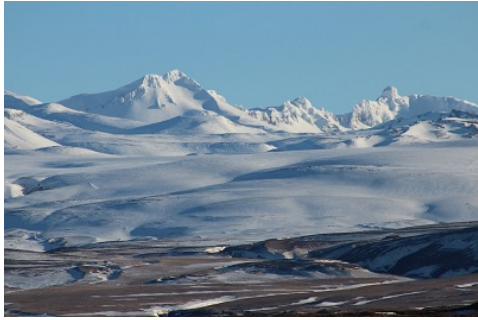
At the town Hvolsvöllur (20 km distance from cottage) is Saga Centre exhibition of the Njals Saga.

The summerhouse Björk is located in a great recreation area, see also at <http://volcanohekla.net/>. The surroundings consist of incredible contrasts in an unspoiled nature, green fields against black lava and white glaciers in the horizons. There are many opportunity of longer or shorter **hiking** in untouched spectacular lava nature. Those who are willing to climb some mountains have lots of possibilities. Volcano Hekla and the mountain Þrihyrningur (Mt. Thrihyrningur; meaning "Three-Horned-Mountain") are the most popular mountains to climb in the area. The height of **Mt. Hekla** is 1,491 m (4,892 ft).



The magma chamber under Mt. Hekla is full now, more than last time when it erupted and being the

most active volcano in Iceland and usually erupts with very short notice (within one hour, maybe only 15 minutes) climbers must take great care, especially if there are some earthquake monitored in the area. The **Mt. Prihyrningur** is 678 m (2,224 ft) height. Mt. Prihyrningur is in only 5.5 km distance from the cottage (one small river have to be crossed in a jeep). The hike at Mt. Prihyrningur takes at least 2-3 hours and the hiking trails have been marked in the south-east side, although rather steep slopes it is easy hiking for those who are in decent shape. The view from Mt. Prihyrningur is magnificent in all directions, including many glaciers e.g. **Eyjafjallajökull**, **Tindfjallajökull**, **Mýrdalsjökull** (where **volcano Katla** is placed), and far in the north Langjökull. The view also includes the **islands**



**Vestmannaeyjar**. After a good walk there is nothing better than relax in the hot tub, particularly at the bright summer nights and watch when the evening redness and the break of dawn converge due to the **midnight sun** just slips for couple of hours behind the mountains on the horizons in the far north, or at the winter, to gaze at the stars in the sky or watch how the **Northern Lights** (Aurora Borealis) dances in the sky far from all city lights. Within a 10 km distance from the cottage is a farm named Hróarslækur, there people can go **horse riding**

(<http://hotellaekur.is/horserental/>). The Icelandic horses are famous for being small (nearly a pony-sized) and that they display two gaits in addition to the typical walk, trot, and canter/gallop commonly displayed by other breeds. Golfers can find a decent **golf course** within an 18 km drive from the summerhouse Björk (Golf Club Hella - golf course Strandarvöllur).

In about 20 km distance south of the cottage are two small towns, **Hella** and **Hvolsvöllur**. There are some **restaurants, grocery stores, banks, pharmacy**, and naturally warm **swimming pools**. In about 50 km distance from the cottage is a bigger town, **Selfoss** with all necessary services like **supermarkets** (Bonus, Kronan, and Netto), swimming pool, and banks. The **Reykjavik capital** (city center) is in a 115 km distance.



#### Places worth visiting within a 50 km radius:

The islands Vestmannaeyjar, waterfalls Seljalandsfoss and Skógarfoss, natural pearl Þórsmörk (Thorsmörk), Volcano visitor center of Eyjafjallajökull placed on the farm Þorvaldseyri ([www.icelandserupts.is](http://www.icelandserupts.is)), an exhibit about the massive Eyjafjallajökull volcano eruption in 2010. Fjallabak the reservation area in the highlands, Landmannalaugar with natural geothermal pool, the most popular hiking trails in Iceland called Laugavegur and Fimmvörðuháls (eruption in 2010), the reconstructed Viking farm Stöng in Þjórsárdal (Thorsardalur Valley).



#### Places worth visiting within an 80 km radius:

Waterfall Gullfoss, the hot springs Geysir and Strokkur, cathedral Skálholt, and the National Park Þingvellir (Thingvellir) famous of its historical, cultural, and geological importance. There the Vikings established the first parliament in the world in the year 930 and it is the only place in the world where the Mid-Atlantic Ridge comes above water and the Eurasian



and North American tectonic plates drifts apart. Þingvellir is a designated UNESCO World Heritage Site.

### Other places worth visiting taking a full day tour:

Drive east to the largest glacier in Europe, the glacier Vatnajökull (about 240 km). In that area are many attractions like go on bird-watching tour with local family company to cape Ingólfshöfði nature reserve (about 270 km from the cottage, <http://www.localguide.is/>, it is a trip that we would recommend) or glacier walk (with same guide) or just go hiking in Skaftafell National Park. If you plan a tour east you must also see is the magnificent glacial lagoon Jökulsárlón (290 km from



cottage), where you can even go on boat trip.

Other possibility is to go bird-watching in island Vestmannaeyjar (Westman Islands) or just sail around the islands (e.g. <http://www.randburg.com/is/boattours/>). First you have to drive east about 53 km to the harbor Landeyjarhöfn, where you take a ferry to the Vestmannaeyjar island

([http://eimskip.is/EN/iceland\\_domestic/herjolfur/Siglinga%C3%A1%C3%A6tun.html](http://eimskip.is/EN/iceland_domestic/herjolfur/Siglinga%C3%A1%C3%A6tun.html)).

### Restaurants and Café in the area:

There are some restaurants and café in the area. Below are few mentioned:

- *Kaffi Langbrók Café* - is in 15 km distance from the cottage – but necessary to have a jeep because of crossing little river. Otherwise it is through Hvolsvöllur and is about 30 km distance from the cottage. <http://rang.is/langbrok/>
- *Gallerý Pizza* (20 km distance). One of the family favorite because it is not so far from the cottage and there you can have fine pizzas, hamburgers and even fish and fries for a decent price. <http://gallerypizza.weebly.com/>
- *Hótel Rangá* (16 km distance). A renowned gourmet restaurant and probably one of the best in Iceland. <http://hotelranga.is/is/>
- *Hótel Selfoss – Riverside restaurant* (around 50 km distance). If you want to have a fine dinner in a relaxed restaurant by the river Ölfusá in the town Selfoss. <http://www.selfosshotel.is/>
- *Menam* – (around 50 km) is placed close to Hotel Selfoss, not far from the church. There is served Thai food. <http://www.menam.is/>
- *Fjöruborðið restaurant* (around 72 km distance) in a little town named Stokkseyri and stands by the sea. It is most famous for its gourmet lobster and lobster soup. [www.fjorubordid.is](http://www.fjorubordid.is)
- *Hafið Bláa* (around 85 km) stands by the seashore and by the mouth of the river Ölfusá. Their specialty is fresh fish. <http://www.hafidblaa.is/>
- There are many diners by the highway and also in the town Selfoss, where you can even find *KFC* and *Subway*. There are also decent Café beside the main road, e.g. *Kaffi Krús Café*.



### Movies filmed in Iceland:

If you are interested in follow in the footsteps of Hollywood film stars you can visit the places where some natural scenes were filmed in the following movies: *Tomb Raider* (2001); *Die Another Day* (2002); *Beowulf and Grendel* (2005); *Batman Begins* (2005); *Nova Zembla* (2011); *Prometheus* (2012); *Oblivion* (2013); *The Secret Life of Walter Mitty* (2013); *Noah* (2014) *Game of Thrones* (TV) (2011) <http://www.filminiceland.com/case-studies/filming-locations/>

### More information about swimming pools and natural hot spring

There are swimming pools in every town in Iceland (<http://www.swimminginiceland.com/>). The shortest way from the cottage are small pools at the towns Hella or Hvalsvollur (both about 20 km distance). Then there is a bigger and very nice swimming pool at the town Selfoss and in the Reykjavik capital are several, the best probably is the Laugardalslaug. There is also very nice pool in the town Hveragerði.. From the town Hveragerði is about 40-90 min. walk up to the valley Reykjadalur where is one of Icelandic natural hot pot in (people can go by themselves or by travel agency e.g. <http://www.trekkinginiceland.com/DayTours/HikingDayToursfromReykjavik/HotSpringHunt/>).

One of the most famous natural hot pot in Iceland is in Landmannalaugar – where you can only go by jeep (4x4) or by bus ([http://www.nat.is/travelguideeng/bus\\_stop\\_rek\\_landml\\_rek.htm](http://www.nat.is/travelguideeng/bus_stop_rek_landml_rek.htm)).

Then there is the natural **Blue Lagoon geothermal spa**, which is not so far from the national airport at Keflavik and something everyone should visit <http://www.bluelagoon.com/>

