

# The 2 Idiots Travel Blog

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## Perfect Itinerary for The Golden Circle in Iceland

### Why do the 2 Idiots Recommend The Golden Circle?

The Golden Circle, in our opinion, is one of the most beautiful drives a person can ever take in their lifetime. It comprises three stunning locations in the southwest of the country--Þingvellir National Park, the Geysir Geothermal Area, and Gullfoss waterfall. It's quite surreal, frankly—and we saw so many incredible sites that we had never seen before or will likely see again.

### Navigating The Golden Circle

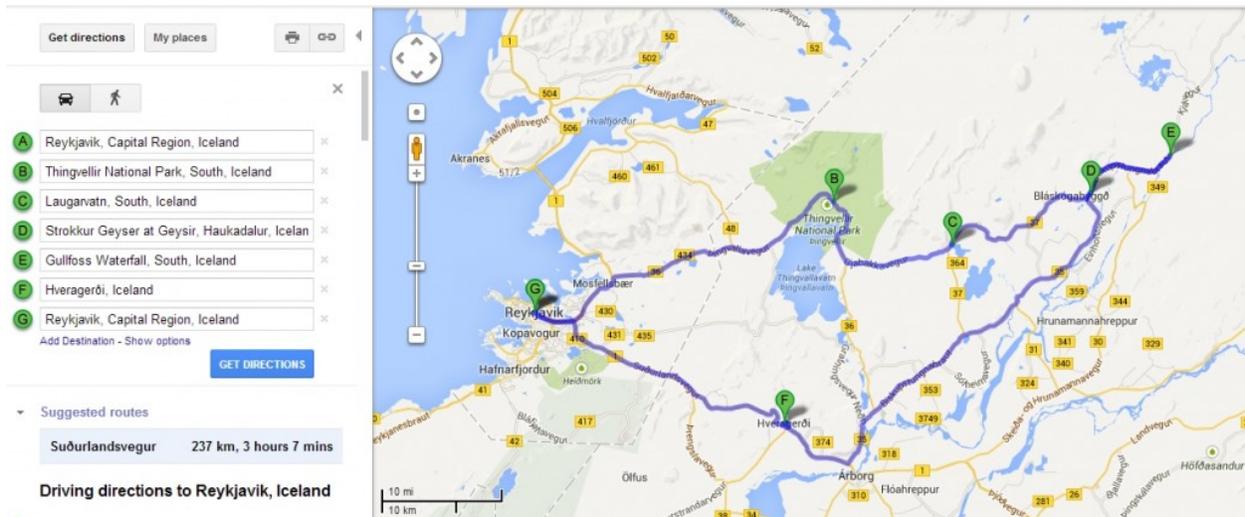
Of course, there are many ways to traverse The Golden Circle, and myriad tours are available to tourists; however, we decided to rent a car in order to explore the area. We were originally worried about driving in Iceland, but those fears proved unfounded as it was very easy to drive and get around. We rented a mid-sized SUV and it drove well. What's more is that The Golden Circle's infrastructure was constructed with tourists in mind. The roads are great and there is ample signage.

### Planning Your Drive

The day we explored The Golden Circle we left around 8:30 am, and as a side bar, we encourage you to check out what we wrote about on [how to effectively travel with your child while driving](#). We didn't return to Reykjavik until 8pm that night. Spending 11 hours in the car with your child is no joke and it's a long day, so you want to be prepared.

At the same time, we were visiting Iceland in August, so the sun doesn't set until 11 or 12 at night. This means that even after a full day on the road, we still had several hours of daytime once we returned. And, this also means that even if you get a later start than we did in the morning (and you happen to be visiting around the same time of year), you still have plenty of daylight hours to take advantage of and you won't get stuck driving in the dark.

### What to See



Map of Golden Circle Drive

*Tentative schedule for the day*

Destination	Est. Arrival Time	Est. Time to Spend	Est. Departure Time
Depart Reykjavik	N/A	N/A	8:30 a.m.
Pingvellir	10 a.m.	1 ½ hours	11:30 a.m.
Geysir	Noon	2 ½ hours	2:30 p.m.
Gullfoss Waterfall	3 p.m.	2 hours	5 p.m.
Kerid Crater Lake	6 p.m.	30 minutes	6:30 p.m.
Arrive in Reykjavik	7 p.m.		

*Pingvellir National Park (Reach there around 10am; leave around 11:30am)*

The first spot that we saw about an hour and a half into our journey was called Pingvellir National Park; this was the site of Iceland’s parliament from the 10<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, so outside of being a beautiful place to visit, there is also historical significance. On the way there, we stopped at a marked lookout point (there are many so you will have your choice). The Park itself is a UNESCO Heritage Site. It is one of the only places on earth where you can see two tectonic plates—in this case the North American and Eurasian plates. It’s quite interesting to see and you can walk around and explore while you are there. We actually had [our stroller with us](#) and there was enough of a path for us to use it.

*Geysir Geothermal Area (Reach there around noon; leave around 2:30pm)*

Our next stop was Geysir, which is where the word geyser originated from. This entire area is a hotbed of geothermal and volcanic activities—and we saw dozens of geysers. It was probably our favorite stop of this entire day. Word to the wise, it does smell like Sulphur, but it’s bearable when considering what you get to witness.

The Geysir Geothermal Area also features well-marked pathways, so it is very easy to navigate and push a stroller. While you walk around, you are able to see many geysers as well. The best geyser of them all is the Strokkur Geyser which erupts frequently (every 15-20 mins) and can go up as high as a 100 feet in the air! We spent almost an hour just at the Strokkur Geyser and witnessed 3-4 eruptions and captured

some amazing photographs (AJ could have spent the whole day just watching this amazing feat of nature).

There is another geyser, we are unsure of its official name, but for the sake of this post will call it The Transparent Geyser—you can actually see right into the water which was incredible in itself. There is also a blue geyser where the water is the most stunning shade of turquoise. Both of these are must sees—and after seeing the geysers we recommend grabbing lunch at the café nearby before heading out to the next stop.

*Gullfoss waterfall (Reach there around 3pm; leave around 5pm)*

From there, we went on to Gullfoss waterfall, a very popular spot. We have seen many waterfalls; however, we were struck by this site for its complexity and size alone. There are two sections where you can view the falls. The upper section that you reach via a gravel pathway doesn't have a barrier or guard railing, so there were some daring people going right to the edge to take pictures, which made us nervous. We hung back a bit and were still able to get good photos. Then, there is another lower viewing area that you can visit that offers a great glimpse of the falls. You can either take the stairs to reach this point or drive your car and park. Additionally, there is a pathway that leads from the lower viewing area, ends with a rock formation (that you do have to climb up), and gets very close to the falls. Just a note, we couldn't use our stroller here very well, so we had to carry our son and stroller separately. Ultimately, be prepared for some walking. All in all, this part of your journey will take you about an hour and a half.

*Kerid Crater Lake (Reach there around 6 p.m.; leave around 6:30 p.m. and reach back at 7:30 p.m.)*

After we left Gullfoss, we headed south to Kerid Crater Lake, our fourth and final stop. This site comes out of nowhere quite frankly, and it's overwhelming to lay your eyes on. There is a parking lot where you can stop, but really keep your eyes peeled for this because it's easy to miss. Keep in mind that you do have to pay an entry fee (\$3 USD per person) to see the Lake. You do not need to take a stroller here. And if you are visiting without children, or if your kids are older, you do have the ability to hike down to the Crater and back up. We would recommend you spend 30-45 minutes here.

## Connectivity in Iceland

The one thing that we will recommend when you are considering a visit to The Golden Circle is to ensure you have a quality data plan on your phone. Connectivity, we found, was pretty good and that was a positive thing because we used the navigation and map tools on our phone to make sure that we were on the right route. We did have a paper map to consult as well, but it was nice to be able to see exactly where we were via our phone.

## Kid-Friendly Tips

- Keep jackets, scarves, and anything else that you believe you will need in the car. This, particularly, was key for us.
- Remain aware of what areas are roped off at Geysir and which are not. We felt the area was safe, but you do need to stay observant of your surroundings and keep your little ones close.
- One of the most breathtaking things we saw was the Strokkur geyser—it erupts every 20 minutes and spouts water a hundred feet up in the air. This attracts large crowds, so we believe

they keep it pretty safe. However, we still turned Aarav's stroller around to face the other way (he was sleeping anyway), just in case any of the spray fell in our direction (which it didn't).

## Other Tips

- Before you leave Reykjavik, ensure you have a full tank of gas—you don't see many gas stations once you get on the road.
- You will need a jacket, gloves, scarves—even during a month like August. It can be very cold and windy (and because of this we also recommend having a windbreaker).
- We packed some sandwiches for our day because we weren't sure of what we might have access to food-wise. However, our first three stops all had cafés and restrooms. Kerid Crater Lake was the one stop that did not have any café or restroom.
- You do have the opportunity to scuba dive and visit a museum while at Þingvellir National Park. However, this would require time than what a day trip provides. We did not do these activities.
- You can use your credit card almost anywhere. Have a bit of cash on hand, of course, just in case.