

Conditions Assessment

Your name	Stuart Thomas
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Goal trip

Location, trail, or route	Laugavegur trail, Iceland
Season, month, or specific dates	July/August 2021

Conditions

Climate/Weather

- Average high and low temperatures, adjusted for elevation
- Precipitation amount
- Longevity, frequency, and intensity of storms
- Common weather patterns

Findings	<p>The climate of Iceland is subpolar oceanic (Köppen climate classification Cfc) near the southern coastal area and tundra (Köppen ET) inland in the highlands.</p> <p>The average July temperature in the southern part of the island is 10–13°C (50–55°F). Warm summer days can reach 20–25°C (68–77°F).</p> <p><u>Rainfall</u>: 52.3mm (2.06) to 67.3 mm (2.65). The pattern of precipitation in Iceland reflects the passage of atmospheric low pressure cyclones across the North Atlantic Ocean from south-westerly directions, exposing the south coast to heavy precipitation.</p> <p><u>Wind</u>: The dominant wind directions in Iceland are from easterly directions, E, NE-SE, and reflect the passage of cyclones on paths just south of Iceland</p>
Sources	<p>Wikipedia: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Climate_of_Iceland</p> <p>The dynamic climate of Iceland: https://notendur.hi.is/oi/climate_in_iceland.htm</p>

Daylight

- Hours between civil sunrise and civil sunset
- Dates of new and full moons, or the moon phase during the trip

Findings	On July 29th @ 64.9, -18.1, civil twilight starts at 0430 and
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	ends at 22:30, amounting to 17 hours of usable light. A new moon starts on August 8th.
Sources	TimeandDate.com

Footing

- Description of the most common walking surface(s)
- Composition (dirt, rock bits, sand, slickrock, granite slabs, talus) and characteristics (dry, wet, dusty, muddy, slick or sticky)
- Coverage and composition of snowpack, and daily and weekly changes to it

Findings	The trails include lava fields, black sand, geothermal springs, glaciers and ice cold river crossing. Some snowpack and ice is still present in higher altitudes. Crampons or microspikes are not needed as the trail is packed down.
Sources	

Vegetation

- Prevalence of shade and thermal cover
- For off-trail routes: thickness, entanglement
- Existence of unfriendly types, like thorns and poison ivy
- Availability and suitability of fuel for open fires

Findings	Zero shade due to lack of trees. Only 1% of Iceland is forested. No open fires allowed.
Sources	Photos from online trip reports

Navigational aids

- Visibility
- Prominence of topographic relief
- Quality of trail tread
- Obviousness of unofficial use trails
- Reliability of signage, blazes, cairns, and posts

Findings	The trails are well blazed and are easy to follow; all junctions are marked. Clear skies, open views, and distinct topography are the norm on the trail.
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	Trail views can be whiteout conditions due to severe weather including gales, snow and sleet.
Sources	

Sun exposure

- Usual daily exposure, which is a function of altitude, sun angle, cloud cover, tree cover, and reflectivity of ground surfaces like snow and granite

Findings	Low elevation and altitude (64 degrees) gives high probability of cloud cover reducing sun exposure. Low temperatures requiring winter clothing also helps with protection.
Sources	Topographic maps and climate data

Water availability

- Distance, terrain, and time between water sources
- Reliability of mapped and unmapped sources
- Quality

Findings	All mapped creeks and lakes -- which are abundant -- will have ample high quality water due to glacier run off. There are reports of not needing to filter water due to high quality.
Sources	Topographic maps

Problematic wildlife

- Behavior of black and/or grizzly bears in area
- Presence of "mini bears" like mice, raccoons, and marmots

Findings	The arctic fox is the only land mammal.
Sources	

Insects

- Types, like mosquitoes, black flies, no-see-ums, and ticks
- Months typically with moderate and extreme bug pressure
- Intensity fluctuations based on time of day, location, wind

Findings	Normally, July is the peak season for mosquitoes. Reports indicated higher probability of insects along the coast.
Sources	

Sources	

Remoteness

- Distance and time to the closest trafficked road and the closest town with services •
- Natural barriers to self-rescue, e.g. canyons, thick brush, big rivers
- Reliability of cell reception

Findings	Distances between huts and F-roads tend to vary between 7 and 12 miles. Huts have communications and emergency supplies. Cell coverage is excellent in the region.
Sources	Topographic maps, and cell coverage map.

Natural hazards

Including but not limited to:

- Lingering snowfields
- Avalanches
- River fords
- Flash floods
- Tides
- Lightning
- High altitude

Findings	Unbridged creek crossings can sometimes be a challenge in July. Some crossings do have bridges. Glacial crossings are to be avoided due to unknown crevasses and other dangers. Thunderstorms are not that prevalent in the summer. The max altitude only reaches 3400 feet (1036m) not requiring acetazolamide.
Sources	

Red tape

- Where, when, and how to obtain backcountry or trailhead permits, if applicable •
- Food storage regulations
- Regulations pertaining to group size, open fires, dogs, restricted camping areas, etc

Findings	Wardens at each hut require you to sign in upon arrival. Iceland SAR also provides the opportunity to file a trip plan. COVID testing to enter and leave the country are required.
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	No bear canisters or hanging of food is required.
Sources	https://safetravel.is/travel-plan

