



About Iceland

Iceland is a great place to visit, and we don't just mean the supermarket! It is the westernmost country in Europe and has the nickname The Land Of Fire And Ice. That's not surprising at all. Temperatures rarely get above 14°C in the hottest month of July and plummet to well below zero in the winter. Add to that 130 volcanoes, and you can see why it is a land of extremes!

It's not just the weather that is extreme in Iceland. During the summer months of June and July, the sun never really sets. Daylight lasts for almost 24-hours a day. In the winter, it's almost the exact opposite. In December and January, the people of Iceland are used to only having around 4 hours of daylight.

The capital city of Iceland is Reykjavik. Over 120,000 people live in Reykjavik, which is over a third of Iceland's total population. This is perhaps because over 11% of Iceland is covered in glacial ice. Much of the rest is affected by active volcanoes.

Iceland itself is northwest of the United Kingdom, between the Greenland Sea and the North Atlantic Ocean. It is roughly half the size of the United Kingdom but has a much smaller population. Iceland's population is around 317,000, whereas the UK is over 66.65 million! That means people in Iceland have much more space per person.

When Iceland was first settled, the only land mammals were foxes. The Vikings and later explorers brought domesticated animals and reindeer with them. Most of Iceland's natural wildlife is now protected by conservation laws.

Iceland is one of the leading countries in the world for renewable energy. The volcanic landscape and access to the oceans means that they have access to considerable amounts of heat and water. These can be used to generate electricity efficiently and without impacting the planet.



They produce nearly 100% of their electricity from these renewable sources.

Tourists flock to Iceland to see the volcanoes and the beautiful landscape. Whale watching is one of the most popular tourist attractions, as well. Over 12 species of whale, dolphin and porpoises swim off the coast of the island. Tourists love to head out to sea to watch them all. Iceland welcomes around 270,000 visitors each year.

The Icelandic flag is a mixture of red, white and blue. These represent the snow and ice, the fire and lava, and the oceans that surround it.

RETRIEVAL FOCUS

1. How hot does the temperature normally reach in Iceland at its hottest?
2. How many volcanoes are there in Iceland?
3. How much daylight does Iceland get in the summer?
4. What is the capital city of Iceland?
5. What is the population of the UK?

VIPERS QUESTIONS

- V** Find and copy a word that means “to drop quickly”.
- S** Why do people in Iceland have more space than people in the UK?
- V** Which word in the text means that an animal has been trained to live alongside humans?
- S** Why is Iceland so energy-efficient?
- I** Which colour on the Iceland flag do you think represents the volcanoes? Why?