

Iceland Trip Summary

Monday – August 6, 2012-

Left for the airport at 2:30pm. Plane was delayed until 5:15pm. Arrived in Dallas and experienced another delay because they didn't have a crew for the airplane. Left Dallas at 10:30pm headed for Washington DC.

Tuesday – August 7, 2012

Arrived in Dulles Airport at 2:15am. Took a taxi to the home of our Airbnb host Catherine Ives and husband Bob. Stayed in bed until 8:30am. Had breakfast with our hosts. Bob took us to downtown Reston where we casually walked around for several hours. We checked out the shops then had lunch in a small hamburger palace known as The Counter Custom Burgers. We shared a plate of small hamburgers with sweet potato fries and onion ring slices. It was a good lunch. After lunch Bob picked us up around 2:00pm and we headed back to his home to pack for our trip to Iceland. A taxi took us to the airport where we boarded Icelandair at 8:45pm. We arrived in Kevlavik at 6:00am the next morning.

Wednesday – August 8, 2012

We had a light breakfast at an airport shop then walked around the airport for an hour until we were able to identify where to pick up our car. We walked down the street about ½ mile to the SIXT rental car place and we were off and running by 8:15am. Our first stop was at a light house at the extreme western part of the country. We took a few pictures then headed back to the car because it was cold and misty in the morning. We continued on our journey southward and stopped at a bridge where the two continents are joined together through the Atlantic ridge tectonic plates. The plates are moving apart 2cm every year. After taking a few pictures we were on our way to a hot geyser area where we took a few more pictures then headed for the Blue Lagoon. We parked in the parking lot, which was filled with buses of other tourists. Within a few minutes we were in our swim suits and in the war water of the Blue Lagoon. The temperature ranged from 98 – 102 degrees so we walked and swam around for about an hour. We spent a few minutes in the steam bath as well. After leaving the Lagoon we headed to the home of Triggs & Didda Paulson, our Rotary hosts for two nights. We arrived at their home, after driving around for awhile, getting lost in the city of Reykjavik. We found their home around 3:00pm and were greeted by Triggs and his grandson and his grandson's friend. After formalities we settled in our room and waited until Didda, his wife, came home from work. They made dinner for us and their daughter and son-in-law, and granddaughter. It was a delicious dinner of Artic trout with shrimp and crabmeat, along with a salad and bread rolls. After dinner and conversations to get to know each other, we went to bed. We were exhausted from not having slept well for two nights.

Thursday – August 9, 2012

After breakfast with Triggvi (Didda had to leave for work before we woke up), we began our walking tour of Reykjavik. We headed toward the coast and stopped at a sculpture of a Viking ship in the harbor for a few pictures. Next stop was the 871 +_2 Museum only a few blocks from the harbor. This museum was the home of an original longhouse from the year 870 AD. It was the stone and remaining foundation of the original building. All around the outside of the structure were pictures, displays and signs describing the era and how the people lived at that time. Later that morning we toured a local “dig” with an archaeologist who explained the process they go through to unearth and identify the things they find at the dig. Finally before lunch we stopped at the Volcano House to watch two documentary movies about the 1973 and 2010 volcanic eruptions on the island. It was interesting and informative and gave us a better appreciation of the devastation both eruptions caused to the country and the people.

For lunch we shared a meaty, spicy sandwich at a local food stand, then we headed to Iceland’s National History Museum which was only a short walk from our lunch place. It took an hour or so to complete the tour after which we headed for the municipal center to see a scale topographic map of the country. We ended the day’s walk by visiting the local church, one of the architectural wonders of the city, then headed back to Triggvi’s home before dinner. It was our turn to buy dinner so the four of us walked to a local Italian restaurant and sat and talked while eating our meal. After that we went home and went to bed.

Friday – August 10, 2012

This morning we had a wonderful breakfast with Triggvi & Didda then drove off headed for the first adventure on our own. Our first stop was at the Geyser National Park area where we looked around, took a few pictures and finally got one while one of the geysers was erupting. Next stop for Sodafoss falls. This is one of the most spectacular falls in all of Iceland. Only a picture could describe it. You have to be there to experience the majesty and power of the water as it rips its way through the Iceland landscape. Following a quick lunch of crackers and an apple, we headed to our next destination – the of Vik. Along the way we stopped and visited two or three more incredible waterfalls before making our way to the Guesthouse Lundi in the town of Vik. Our room was very small and dated. It had two single beds and little room for anything else. We were on the third floor, the toilet was on the second and the kitchen on the first. Donna made dinner for us of boxed mac & cheese with a peanut butter and jelly sandwich, which worked out great and saved us the expense of buying dinner at the local restaurant. We went to bed early and woke up at 7:00 am the next morning.

Saturday – August 11, 2012

After a quick breakfast of orange juice and dehydrated oatmeal we were off again. We did take some time this morning to reload some El Paso library books onto Donna’s nook,

via my laptop. Our first stop was a Skatfell National Park where we saw a brief movie about the 1996 eruption and spent about 20 minutes reviewing the displays and exhibits at the visitor's center. Following that we went east for several miles past our stopping point for the night, to a lake area where we boarded Zodiac's and had a grand tour on a river filled with melting icebergs. We came within a few feet of a glacier and took some incredible pictures during the trip. Later we turned around and drove west, back to our planned guesthouse for the night. This place was much cleaner and more modern than the previous nights. We had a larger room and more open access to the kitchen and bath facilities. Donna made dinner again, this time it was dehydrated noodles with tuna. It was really spicy but very good. We had yogurt for desert. After dinner we took a walk, snapped a few more pictures and retired for the night.

Sunday – August 12, 2012

Did some early morning computer work (before breakfast) then packed up the car and began our long journey to our next destination. It was overcast and cloudy most of the day, so we couldn't see most of the spectacular views we were hoping to see as we drove along Iceland's largest glacier. We stopped for lunch at a roadside rest then proceeded to the other side of the mountain where the sun finally came out. After crossing the mountain to get to ur hotel (Blabjorg) we blew a tire and had to replace it with the spare. We found a tire repair shop in the small town we were staying for the night and he was able to repair it for \$50.00. We could probably have replaced the whole tire for that amount, but we didn't have that option available to us at the time. Just before dinner we took a walk around the town and took a few pictures of the area. This evening we watched the closing ceremony of the 2012 Olympics before heading to bed for the night.

Monday – August 13, 2012

After breakfast we headed back down the mountain to Egilstad for groceries, gas and a chance to wash the car. I also changed the spare tire and put the original back on. From there we drove fro several hours, stopping at a roadside rest to have lunch, then a 45 minute stop at Godfoss falls. What an incredible site. We arrived at our guesthouse about 6:00pm and had pizza for dinner. After dinner we called Mom & Dad on Skype then sat and had a cup of tea and chatted with some of the other guests before retiring for the night.

Tuesday – August 14, 2012

This was mostly a travel day. We drove about 200 miles until we reached the city of Borgannes, our stop for the night. We visited a museum called The Settlement Center, which told the history of the country from the early Viking days. It was interesting but a little too expensive for the value offered. We found our room at the Hotel Bru, and had a delicious dinner at the hotel buffet. They had salad, bread, potatoes and several types of local fish. We were overdue for a nice dinner because we've been living on pizza and mac-n-cheese for a few days. After a cup of tea we headed to our room to work on emails and related computer things before going to bed for the night.

Wednesday – August 15, 2012

After a great breakfast at the Holtel Bru we headed off to our next destination – Borgannes. We drove until we reached a small town called Arnstapi where we went for a mile hike along the coast; took several pictures then returned to our car. We stopped to take a couple more pictures of the Troll in the town before heading to Hellnar where we visited a local museum/travel stop. Following that we ate lunch in the car then headed toward the town of Borgannes where we stopped for the night.. We found our guesthouse shortly after visiting a local museum that gave us a brief history of the area. Donna made fish cakes for dinner in the kitchen of our guesthouse, then we walked into town for ice cream. On the way we spotted a place to wash the car and vacuum the inside which took us about an hour. After that we went to bed.

Thursday – August 16, 2012

After our breakfast of dehydrated oatmeal we took off for the town of Stickneyville. On the way we came across a sacred mountain which the Norse god legend says you should climb and make 3 wishes, so we did. We climbed to the top without looking back, then made our 3 wishes in secret – so the legend goes. We arrived in Stickneyville at 11:05am, 5 minutes after the Unique Boat tour left, so we had to wait until the next tour – 3:30pm. We spent the next several hours visiting various places around the town, including the church, the Library of Water, a Norwegian homestead and we walked to the top of one of the island peaks to check out a lighthouse. At 3:15pm we boarded our Unique Tour boat and began our tour of the various islands around the fiord. Several had many of the local birds, including several puffins. The highlight of the tour was when the captain ordered his mates to trawl the bottom of the sea floor for a local catch. When they brought of the trawler, they had hundreds of scallops, sea urchins, starfish and crab. They cut them open and we ate the scallops right out of their shell. They were delicious. After the tour ended and the boat docked we made our way back to Reykjavik to stay at Tryggvi's home again for the night.