

Iceland Prepare to Travel Zoom Virtual Meeting Thursday, August 19, 2021. 7:00 p.m. Central

Meeting Summary

Note: This is the “Cliff Notes” version of the information discussed on the virtual meeting. It is recommended that you also view the video of the meeting if you were unable to participate in the live Zoom meeting.

Roger Kraemer of CIE Tours introduced himself and gave an overview of the company that the Fiber Garden partners with for our tours.

Important!! CHECK YOUR EMAIL DAILY!!!! (And your spam folder!!)

Traveling to Iceland during the pandemic

- Things are constantly changing in terms of travel requirements, country pandemic protocol, etc. This is the most up-to-date info we have. Deb will be monitoring the situation and will notify the group of any updates.
- COVID situation with CDC and Iceland. Tour is a “go” unless Iceland closes their border to foreign travelers. Excellent safety protocols will be in place throughout all aspects of our tour. In addition, Iceland does not have a high population density.
 - You need to determine your own comfort level with traveling. If you feel it’s in your best interest to cancel, please send the request to me in writing via email. We are in penalty right now. Currently 25%, soon to be 35% cancellation fee. The longer you wait to cancel, the higher the penalty. You can review the cancellation policy on the website. (But of course, we hope everyone is able to travel as planned!) 😊
- COVID testing requirements for entrance to Iceland and on return to U.S.
 - You MUST be tested within 72 hours of departure from the U.S. (Not a minute earlier!)
 - Accepted tests for entrance to Iceland: Rapid antigen tests and PCR tests (including RT-PCR, qPCR, RT-qPCR) are accepted. Home tests are NOT accepted.
 - You can get tested at a pharmacy, clinic etc. There will probably be no charge. For a fee, some of the major airports do COVID testing with very rapid results provided (about 15 minutes for rapid tests and 30-60 minutes for PCR). Most important...make sure you get this done and bring your certificate of a negative test with you to the airport! You will need it to board the plane.
 - We will also need to be tested to return to the United States. Do not worry about this! Deb will work with our guide on these arrangements. It is expected that our guide will be working with the hotel to have the testing done at the hotel.
- Pre-registration on Iceland visitor site prior to departure – Deb will send this link to you closer to the date of our travel. This registration must be done within 72 hours of departure from the U.S.
- You will need to bring proof of full vaccination. Your original CDC card (not a copy) is accepted. You will need to show it upon arrival in Iceland. (DO make a copy or take a photo of your vaccination card in case you lose the original.)
- Mask-wearing and social distancing is mandatory when inside public spaces or when adequate social distance is unable to be maintained in outdoor public spaces. This includes while on the bus. When entering restaurants, masks are worn until you get to your table.
- Our coach driver will be doing extra sanitizing. Each time we depart the bus, all high touch surfaces will be disinfected.

- There are no requirements for a specific type of mask. (N95/KN95). Cloth masks are OK. If you have a health condition that might require an extra layer of protection, consider an N95 mask or double masking.

Passports

- Bring your original passport, but also make a copy and/or take a photo!! This will make it much easier in the unlikely event that you lose your passport and need to get another one.
- Keep in your carry-on...do not pack in your checked luggage!

Medications and health issues.

- Any dietary or health issues you did not indicate when you registered...let me know ASAP via email.
- Medications should be packed in your carry-on in case your luggage gets delayed.
- Distilled water for CPAP machines is expected to be available at our hotels.

Currency

- Iceland is a near-cashless country! Most everything is charged on credit cards.
- You may want a very small amount of local currency for small incidentals, or for a housekeeping tip, etc. You can exchange currency at the airport or get local currency at an ATM
- Credit cards – take more than one. Notify your CC company that you will be traveling outside of the country
- Tipping. No tips expected in restaurants or pubs. Service charges are included in your bill! Standard tip for our tour guide would be \$8 per day = total of \$80. If we have a separate driver, \$5.00 per day = \$50. Total for both about \$130. These tips can be paid in U.S. dollars! Deb will “pass the pouch” on the coach to collect gratuities during a day when we have more road time.

Time and weather.

- Iceland is on Greenwich Mean Time, like the British Isles. The difference is that Iceland does not observe daylight savings time. They are 5 hours ahead of Central Daylight Time
- Temps averaging 30 – 50 degrees. Of course, we can't predict the weather! Layering your clothing is the key!
- Sunrise about 7:30 a.m.; sunset about 7:30 p.m.

Purchases and shipping home.

- Please do not plan on shipping items home. It's usually difficult to find time in our schedule, and a location to do this. There is some free time in Reykjavik at the end of our tour if you want to find a shipping center on your own. The best strategy is to have the merchant's ship your items home for you, if they provide this service. You will pay the shipping fees, but you will not be charged the 24% VAT. And...do not overpack!!! Leave room in your suitcase for purchases. Pack a couple of extra compression bags to squeeze your purchases into your suitcase.

Phones/wifi/communications.

- Your best bet for communications is WiFi. Check with your cell phone company as to how to set your phone to make sure you do not get charged for international data charges!!! Deb will have her phone available for anyone needing to make a call that cannot do so through WiFi.

Travel insurance

- Bring your travel insurance policy info with you in case you need to contact the insurance company while you are traveling or show proof of insurance to someone.

Care Packages. What everybody looks forward to! 😊 The contents will include:

- Electric adapter for Iceland. You will not need to purchase one unless you want an extra or want to purchase an adapter with USB ports for charging your phone, etc. Please do NOT bring any small appliances (hair dryer, curling iron, etc.) with you. You will damage them! Hairdryers will be in the hotel rooms. If you “need” a curling iron, etc. purchase one locally. (But seriously...we don't care what your hair looks like!)
- Backpack. Great for our day trips. Fits under airline seat. You are not required to bring/use it. If you choose to bring a different carry-on, make sure it is not much bigger than the backpack. Otherwise it will not fit on the coach in the storage rack.
- Plastic “raincoat in a pouch”. Good for getting caught in a waterfall!
- Luggage tags – one for your suitcase and one for your carry-on/backpack. Use them! (Even if you have other luggage tags.)
- Luggage strap – place in carry-on and put on your suitcase on arrival in Iceland. Then, anytime your luggage is to be picked up by staff, have your strap on your suitcase for easy identification.
- Itinerary. This will be the most up-to-date itinerary...and it is still always subject to change!
- List of hotels and contact info to leave with family/friends back home
- Literature “go to” brochure for Iceland and Ireland. (Not all info in this brochure will apply to our group.) There is some good info in here, including a good packing list.
- Map of Iceland
- Name tag – please wear out of respect to fellow group members. (Especially important since we'll all be wearing masks! 😊) Wear anytime we are doing a group activity. You don't need it if you are exploring during our free time.
- Rain jacket. These are very nice, lined, hooded jackets that are great for layering under. They are a gift, and you are not required to bring/wear them. (But we sure look good in photos when we wear them!)

Packing.

- In addition to the applicable items on the packing list in the “go-to guide”:
 - Extra compression bags
 - Plenty of masks
 - Good walking/hiking shoes/boots. An extra pair in case one is wet. We will be doing a far amount of walking on very uneven terrain, near waterfalls where the ground may be wet or muddy, etc. Make sure your shoes are comfortable!!
 - Small bottle of hand sanitizer for your pocket. Good for use during meals, etc.
 - Do. Not. Overpack!!! You can wear pants and shirts multiple days! Seriously, it's OK to do that!

Travel to Iceland.

- Knitting needles and crochet hooks

- Iceland air is not clear on knitting needles; “it depends” is their policy! It depends on how sharp the point is and taking them on the plane is at the discretion of the security personnel
- Delta – TSA guidelines DO permit needles and hooks in your carry-on. No restrictions are noted. (Although if a TSA agent wants to take your needles, they will do it.)
- It is highly recommended that you pack your good set of knitting needles in your checked luggage and only take the needles you are working on onto the aircraft. It’s also recommended that you consider using bamboo needles during the flight to reduce concern by airport security staff.
- E-tickets. If you haven’t downloaded the app for the airline you are flying, they are very nice to have for updates, boarding passes, and luggage notices.
- Check your flights!!! Start checking a couple of days prior to travel, the day prior, and before you leave for the airport! It is your responsibility to stay on top of your flight times and get yourself to the airport on time! Recommended three hours prior to an international departure.
- Arrival into Iceland. Everyone is arriving within 30 minutes of each other! Deb plans to be there to greet you and point you to the currency exchange, our bus, etc.

Group communications during tour.

- Deb will set up a WhatsApp group. Use WhatsApp to text me at the number I will provide in the email follow-up to this meeting. (Only use this number for texting!) Be sure and tell me your name when you message me through WhatsApp!
- If you have been on a previous tour with the Fiber Garden, you only need to contact me if your cell # has changed since your last trip.

Departure from Iceland

- One group transfer in the morning for the half of the group departing about 9:30.
- The other half the group is departing about 5:00 p.m. Those on the afternoon flight have three choices:
 - Come to the airport with the morning group and spend the day there
 - Stay at the hotel, spend the day in Reykjavik and get your own transport to the airport. (Deb can arrange for a transfer to the airport for you.) If there is a group of you, you can share taxis. Cost will be about \$150 for a taxi and a standard taxi can take three passengers with luggage.
 - Take a trip to the Blue Lagoon. Go from your hotel to the Blue Lagoon with a 9:30 or 10:00 a.m. entry time. A couple hours at the Lagoon, and transportation to the airport to arrive about 2:00 p.m.
 - Deb will need to know ASAP if anyone wants her to arrange the Blue Lagoon option with transportation. Otherwise, once on the tour, everyone in the afternoon flight group will need to decide if they are riding on the morning transfer.

Miscellaneous.

- Join our Facebook travel group! Link was shared in the tour update sent immediately following the Zoom.
- Deb will be taking photos and doing a daily photo journal on Facebook. Let her know if you do not want your picture posted! No names are used, but sometimes a nametag can be seen.

Reminder: CHECK YOUR EMAIL DAILY!!!! And I’ll see you in Reykjavik on September 16!