

GOLDEN CIRCLE

a guide to the
best stops

8 Stops on the Golden Circle No One Tells You About

The Golden Circle is by far the most popular tourist route in Iceland. With its proximity to Reykjavik, it is an easy way to see some of the popular highlights in Iceland. If you are doing a quick stopover in Iceland or are short on time, the Golden Circle definitely offers some beautiful attractions.

The main attractions on the Circle route are Þingvellir, Geysir, and Gullfoss. BUT as long as you are driving all the way out there, there are plenty of hidden gems along the route that are definitely worth a stop!

Here is a list of places you should include if you are driving the Golden Circle. For convenience, I have listed these places in geographical “circle” order and included a map at the bottom.

Happy exploring!

Þórufoss

Sometimes there are places I come across that are just an absolute WIN. Þórufoss is one of those places. This will be a slight detour off the regular Golden Circle route, but it is definitely worth the time to stop. Not to mention you will likely be the ONLY person there!

Location

: After about 15km on Route 36, turn left onto Route 48. Drive for about 5km and look for a small sign on the right for Þórufoss.

Hours: 24/7

Price: free!

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Laugarvatn Fontana

I know the Blue Lagoon gets all of the credit with the tourists, but Laugarvatn Fontana is a great alternative. What makes this spa experience unique is that it's located next to a freezing cold lake, so really fun to go back and forth between hot and cold. Plus the scenic view from the pool is what makes this place worth a stop!

Location: Road 37 on the way to Geysir in the town of Laugarvatn

Hours

: Open daily June-August 10:00 – 23:00 // 11:00 – 21:00 the rest of the year

Price: Adults 3800 ISK / \$33 USD, free for children under 12

Website: <http://www.fontana.is/en>

Efsti-dalur

If you love the sound of ice cream straight from the farm, then this is the stop for you! This place is too adorable, a family run farm turned into a ice cream parlor and restaurant. The ice cream is just as delicious as it looks – I can highly recommend the salted caramel! I've also heard their burgers are amazing. There's also a Bed & Breakfast on the property, if you need a place to stay!

Location

: 801 Bláskógabyggð // On Route 37, after the split from 365, drive about 12km (you will pass Route 366 on the right). You will see a sign for the farm on the left side of the road.

Hours

: May 16th – September 14th 11:00 – 22:00 Daily // September 15th – May 15th Sunday-Thursday: 11:30 – 20.00, Friday-Saturday: 11:30 – 21:00

Price: depends on how many scoops you get

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Brúarfoss Waterfall

This waterfall is out of control beautiful. The contrast of the bright blue water on the black lava is stunning! The only downside to this waterfall is trying to find it!

Location

: As you are driving North on road 37 there is an area with summer houses on your left (just past the intersection for road 337). Turn left into the third driveway and drive straight ahead. Drive down the gravel driveway until you come to a split in the road, take the left fork. Drive for a short distance until you come to a small area on your left to pull off. (When you get out of your vehicle you will be able to hear the falls in the distance.) There is a small walking path that brings you over a small wooden bridge. Walk for about 10 minutes until you arrive at this glorious blue falls.

Hours: 24/7

Price: free!

Faxi Waterfall

I don't know about you, but I can never see too many waterfalls! Faxi is a little waterfall hidden gem that most people drive right by. We were literally the only ones there! And even though it was pouring down rain, it was still pretty to see!

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Location

: Road 35 between Geysir and the town of Reykholt (there is a small sign on the left when you are driving South pointing towards the falls)

Hours: 24/7

Price: free!

Friðheimar

Friðheimar is a huge greenhouse that grows tomatoes and cucumbers. Their growing methods are completely sustainable and eco friendly. This is the ultimate farm-to-table experience, I love the concept of this place!

Do not miss their most popular dish – all you can eat tomato soup served with an assortment of homemade breads. This is not your average tomato soup, this is hands down the most delicious tomato soup I've ever tasted! Don't forget to add fresh basil from the plant on the table. They also have a delicious sounding dessert menu, featuring – you guessed it – tomatoes! For drinks, the Bloody Mary is classic, but I prefer the Happy Mary – made with gin and green tomatoes!

Location: Road 35 in Reykholt

Hours: 12-16 daily

Price

: \$1900 / \$14.50 ISK for all you can eat amazingly delicious homemade soup and bread

Website: <http://fridheimar.is/en>

*Note: Reservations are REQUIRED!
fridheimar@fridheimar.is to reserve a table.

Call (354) 486 8894 or email

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Gamla Laugin

If you're looking for a natural geothermal pool in the raw Icelandic nature, then Gamla Laugin is for you! Also known as the Secret Lagoon, this pool is kept as natural as possible. The water temperature stays at a toasty 38 Celsius all year long. Changing facilities are available on site.

Location: Road 30 near the town of Flúðir

Hours: 12.00 – 20.00

Price

: Adults 2800 ISK / \$25 USD, free for children under 16 // towel rental 500 ISK / \$4 USD

Website: <http://www.secretlagoon.is/>

Kerið Crater

I think Kerið is one of the most unique things I have seen in Iceland. Its an old volcanic crater with crystal blue water! The best time to visit would be summer or fall to see the beautiful colors around the crater. (We recently stopped in the winter and it looks completely different.)

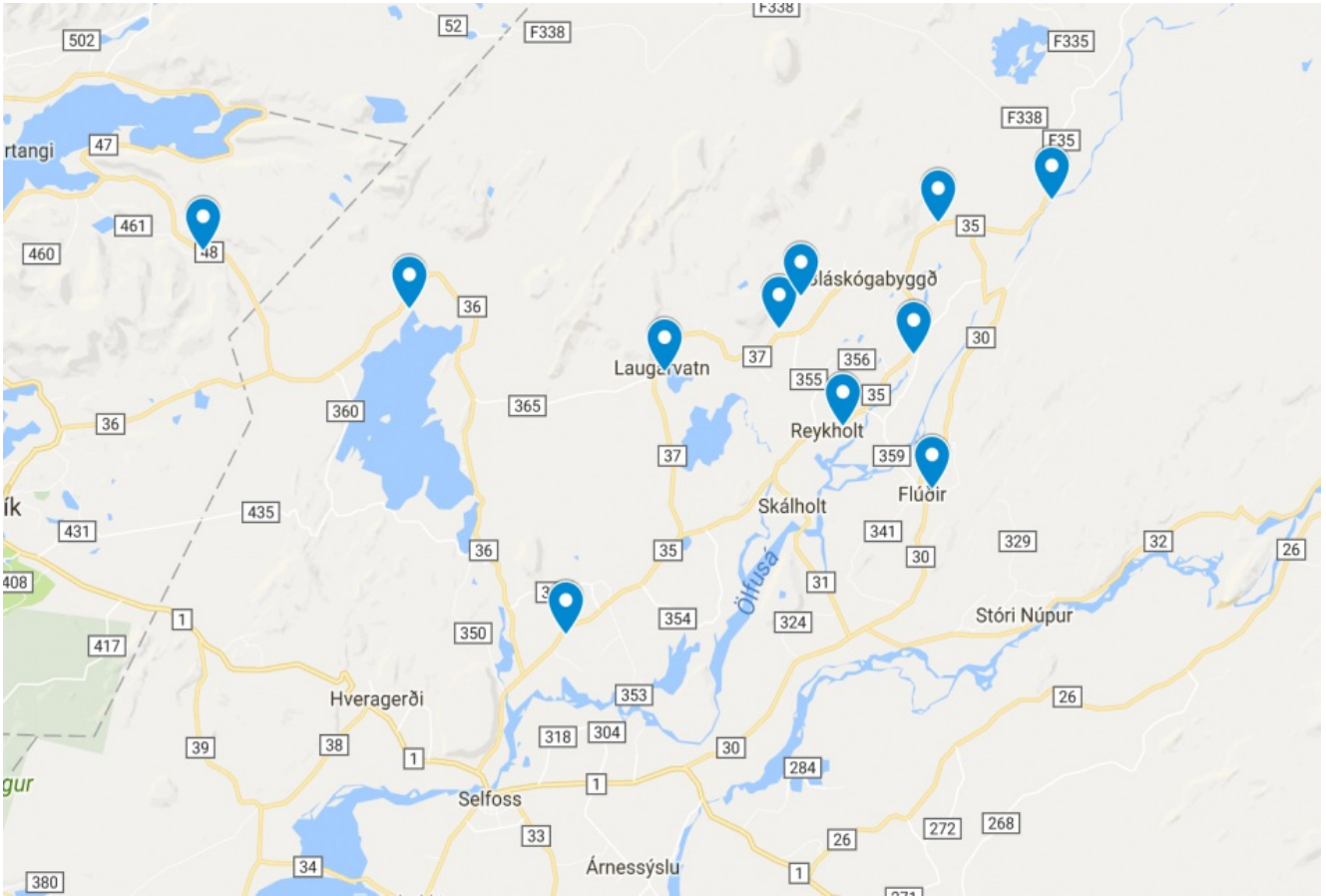
Location

: Road 35 between the towns of Reykholt and Selfoss. Look for a sign on the left.

Hours: 24/7

Price: 400 ISK / \$3 USD

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To to use this map interactively, click the bracket in the top right corner of the map.

- Jeannie

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