

Country:	Iceland
Type of Business:	Tour Operator
Business Name:	Exploring Iceland

A Regenerative Approach to Tourism



Our Story and Journey – The people, place, uniqueness and values.

Exploring Iceland is a small enterprise with only 2-3 full time employees. The company was founded in December 2015, our first full operational year was 2016. From the start we wanted to create a company that put strong emphasis on sustainable travel, animal welfare and fair trade. The company offers three main types of services: Group tours, FIT and small and personal horse-riding tours. In all of our tours we try to encourage slow travel, visiting local businesses and services, reusable materials such as reusable water bottles and real tableware. For our FIT we put emphasis in encouraging the use of electrical cars and public transportation where feasible. We employ local professional guides that are strong in storytelling because we believe that our customers deserve authentic experiences. The CE4RT experience has been a journey full of inspirations on what can be done to improve Regenerative Tourism practices. We have now joined the **Travelife Certification** program and are excited to learn about more carbon reduction and compensation.

Regenerative Practices

Champions Local Places

- Wherever possible we try to include visits to local businesses such as restaurants, museums and other service providers.
- For groups we have arranged to visit with local artists both to introduce Icelandic culture but also to give local artist a chance to reach a wider audience.
- If possible, we try to employ locals to give a talk about certain issues such as the Icelandic Search and Rescue Teams or local farmers.

Benefits Host Communities

- We try to give back to society wherever we can, for example by
- Visiting the Old Peoples home with our horses in our home community to brighten their day and to bring back old stories from their childhood.
- We support students from all over the world with their studies by giving them a chance to meet with us, learn from us and interview us regarding certain critical issues, for example Iceland ´s whaling situation or the Bloodmare issue.
- We support local youngster who do not have the means of owning horses by mentoring them and giving them a chance to “adopt a horse”

Tackles Climate Action

- We encourage the use of electrical cars in our tailor-made self-drive tours.
- We encourage our customers to embrace slow travel .

- We work remotely thus reducing carbon footprint significantly by avoidance of daily commuting.
- We have composting mini greenhouses for our office waste and only use LED lighting and low energy appliances.
- We use reusable water bottles and tableware for our tours that include picnic lunches.
- We have joined the Travelife Certification Program.

Empowers Visitors

- We put a lot of emphasis on education in our tours by using strictly professional local guides that are encouraged to use local contacts to give our guests direct and authentic insights into Icelandic country life by visiting farms and local enterprises such as Search and Rescue teams, local artists and charities.
- We encourage our guests to be hands on by planting trees, collecting garbage and supporting local charities.
- We do not shy away from discussing “sensitive subjects” with our guests such as whaling in Iceland while trying to give our guests an insight into the historical and sometimes problematic and diverse views of Icelandic society to a sensitive subject.

Delivers Long-Term Sustainability and Profitability

- We strongly believe that good quality pays off! We try to give every customer - be it a direct client or a B2B partner that they are important to us and that we are willing to go the extra mile for them by giving that personal touch to every request and booking. We believe that this is the reason that a lot of our customers come back again and again because they have come to appreciate this personal touch.
- We invest in our B2B partners by offering them online trainings. This way we help them to understand Iceland and its opportunities and challenges better, thus giving our partnering agents confidence in selling Iceland as a destination. Although such online trainings do take time, they have proven to be worth it!

Future of the Regenerative Tourism Journey

- Learn more about regenerative and sustainable tourism.
- Embrace carbon auditing and compensation.
- Think out of the box in finding new ways to support local businesses while giving our guests a personal insight into Icelandic way of life.
- Find always new ways to reduce, reuse any products we use!
- Stay strong in convincing customers to have the courage to make changes by using electrical cars and slow travel. Try to convince them that sometimes less is more!
- Work and connect with partners all over the world that share the same passion for travelling with sustainability at heart!
- Improve and talk about animal welfare wherever we can!



Images that Represent Our Business and Place

This picture shows our Exploring Iceland team visiting the local home for the Elderly (Hrafnista, Reykjavík) this autumn. All of our trail horses retire with dignity and it was a heartwarming event when Kári and Hljómur, two of our retired horses, went for a visit to Hrafnista, Home for the Elderly. Keep in mind that many of the Elderly were born in a time when horses were used for all aspect of live such as postal services, haymaking and were often the only means of transportation. Meeting with our horses brought back cherished moments of childhood memories and endearing stories of former horses.

Website, Social Media and Contacts:

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