



## **Iceland ~ Land of Fire and Ice**

**June 14 – June 28, 2011**

Iceland, our newest tour location, lies on the skirt of the Arctic Circle. Sitting atop of the North Atlantic Ridge, one the world's most volcanically active hotspots, Iceland is a land of glaciers, bubbling hot springs and rugged fjords. It is also home to large seabird colonies teeming with millions of Atlantic Puffins, Razorbills, Common and Thick-billed Murres, Kittiwakes and Northern Fulmars.



While bird photography will be one of the goals of the tour, we will also be devoting a generous amount of time to photographing the unique landscape of Iceland. We'll explore a diversity of habitats, and make striking images of snow-capped peaks, green mountains rising out of black sand, numerous waterfalls, delicate Heath

spotted orchids, Roseroot growing in fertile heathlands, striated glaciers, icebergs and much more!



### **About the Tour**

A few years ago we spent a month in Iceland and while still there we started to consider the possibility of returning with a small group of people. We realized that dream with two



tours to Iceland taking place in 2008 and again in 2010. This experience was extremely gratifying for us and our fellow travelers! We place Iceland on the same level with Antarctica for sheer natural beauty. Since Iceland is located so far north, it receives more than 20 hours of light each day during mid-summer. When the weather is cooperative we will take advantage of this bonus of daylight hours by photographing for extended periods of time.

We'll plan on photographing when the best light occurs, some days this will be between the hours of 8 PM and 2 AM. It is possible to photograph all day long if it is cloudy but, if the sun is shining, we'll go scouting, hiking, or rest in anticipation of the day's best light. If everything goes as planned, our schedule will be pleasantly exhausting!

## ITINERARY:

It would be impossible to show you every last bit of Iceland. Instead we'll linger in strategic locations carefully selected for their seabird cliffs and a variety of scenic wonders to photograph. We'll devote extra time mid-tour to experience some of the best landscape photography Iceland has to offer. The following itinerary provides an outline of the places we plan to visit; weather and logistics may alter our daily schedule.

June 14

**Day 1** ~ Flights from the US arrive at the Keflavik (KEF) airport between 6 am and 8 am. Since most people will be tired from overnight flights we have made special arrangements with the Keflavik Hotel to allow early check-in for our group. Please take advantage of the hotel's sumptuous breakfast buffet after getting settled in. After a rest period the group will gather for a short orientation meeting at 4:30 PM.

Overnight in Keflavik (breakfast) Lunch and Dinner – on Own



June 15

**Day 2** ~ The tour begins with an early departure from the hotel lobby. We will take off towards Hellnar on the shores of the Snaefellsnes Peninsula. We'll stop along the way to enjoy the scenery and photograph. After arriving in Hellnar, those that are not too tired from travel can have their first taste of photographing at the seabird colony. The nearby colony is home to Black-legged Kittiwake, Northern Fulmar, Common Black-headed Gull and the Icelandic race of Black-

tailed Godwit. There is also an Arctic Tern colony which we can try to photograph – if it does not cause too much disturbance. Arctic Terns are known to aggressively defend territory even when not actively nesting.

Overnight in Hellnar (breakfast, lunch and dinner)

June 16

**Day 3** ~ We will spend part of the day photographing in and around the Snaefellsnes National Park and at the Arnarstapi seabird colony. We will then go back to Arnarstapi to photograph seabirds, Arctic terns and the magnificent columnar basalt sea stacks for which the area is famous.

Overnight in Hellnar (breakfast, lunch and dinner)



June 17

**Day 4** ~ In the morning we'll travel to the community of Stykkisholmur to take the ferry across the Breidafjörður Bay. This journey will take us to our next major destination – the West Fjords, a remote region that is home to a huge seabird colony at Latrabjarg. If the weather is cooperative (cloudy) we will visit the Dynjandi waterfall on the way. Also known as Fjallfoss (“mountain falls”), this 328 foot high cascade pours off the edge of the mountain, then fans out to a width of 197 feet at its base. Below it is a series of cascading waterfalls with lyrical names: Hundafoss, Strokkur, Gongumannafoss, Hrisvadsfoss and Baejarfoss.

After dinner we'll make our first photographic trip to Latrabjarg. (*Weather will factor into the days, times and frequency of visits to the Latrabjarg Cliffs. We'll remain flexible to take advantage of changing weather conditions and may need to change the itinerary based on this.*)

Overnight in Breidavik (breakfast, lunch and dinner)



June 18

**Day 5** ~ We will drive southeast of the Latrabjarg cliffs to a very remote area overlooking a magnificent stretch of red sand beach at Raudasandur. In the evening we'll return to the Latrabjarg seabird colony, which



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hosts one of Iceland's greatest concentrations of seabirds (weather dependant. Thousands of seabirds perch on cliff edges, undeterred by human observers. We'll see some very approachable Atlantic Puffins along with Razorbills, Black Guillemots, Brunnich's Guillemots (Thick-billed Murre), and Common Guillemots (Common Murre). This is where we have witnessed the classic kleptoparasitic behavior of Arctic Skuas (Parasitic Jaeger). These spectacular tail chases usually resulted in the victimized seabird dropping fish held in its beak or disgorging its stomach contents. This is also an excellent place to photograph

grand landscapes of the coast. If interested, we can arrange a guided hike along a section of the crest of the 1465 foot high cliff. (*Weather will factor into the days, times and frequency of visits to the Latrabjarg Cliffs.*)  
Overnight in Breidavik (breakfast, lunch and dinner)

June 19



**Day 6** ~ Today we'll venture out into the countryside to photograph along the edges of the Patreksfjordur. Here we will find a picturesque lighthouse and rippled sand beaches edged with aquamarine blue waters. In the evening we will return to Latrabjarg for our last photographic experience along the western most region of Europe. Night owls can stay up to photograph the historic church bathed in "afterglow" at Breidavik before retiring for the night.

Overnight in Breidavik (breakfast, lunch and dinner)

June 20

**Day 7** ~ We will depart early on what will be our longest travel day of the tour. We will take the ferry back across the Breidafjardur Bay then travel south. After check-in to our hotel in Reykholt we will have dinner then venture out a short distance to photograph the lovely cascading Hraunfossar and thundering Barnafoss waterfalls.

Overnight in Reykholt (breakfast, lunch and dinner)



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June 21

**Day 8** ~ We will depart early so that we can push on toward remote Hrauneyjar, located in the southern highlands, on the edge of Iceland's most active and impressive volcanic areas. We'll end the day with a hike to photograph the beautiful Raudufossar "red waterfalls".

Overnight in Hrauneyjar (breakfast, lunch and dinner)

June 22

**Day 9** ~ We'll travel into Landmannalaugar, part of the Fjallabak Nature Reserve, where we will see mountains composed of rhyolitic rock of varying delicate colors. This is an area of indescribable splendor, featuring hills awash in a painter's palette of reds, bright yellows and greens. Landmannalaugar is a land born of hot springs, with steam rising from every corner of the valley.

We will want to linger a few days to explore the spectacular regions around the Hrauneyjar area.

Overnight in Hrauneyjar (breakfast, lunch and dinner)



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June 23

**Day 10** ~ In addition to Landmannalaugar and the Fjallabak Nature Reserve, we'll also photograph in the volcanic district of the Veidivotn fissure. This fissure is one of Iceland's youngest fissures, with recently created lava formations and craters. In calm weather, a multitude of small pools capture reflections from the dramatic geologic formations. Overnight in Hrauneyjar (breakfast, lunch and dinner)



June 24

**Day 11** ~ We'll depart early so we can take our time while driving the scenic North Fjallabaksleid (mountain route) towards Hof. We will stop many times along the way to photograph scenes as they reveal themselves. Overnight in Hof (breakfast, lunch and dinner)

June 25

**Day 12** ~ Today begins with an early (5AM) excursion into the Ingolfshofdi Nature Reserve to photograph Puffins, Black-legged Kittiwakes and Great Skuas. The Ingolfshofdi Headlands is an excellent location to photograph Great Skuas. In the afternoon, we'll drive east up the coast to the Jokulsarlon Glacial Lagoon to photograph "captive" icebergs which have calved off the Breidamerkurjokull glacier. We will stop



along the way to photograph sections of the Fallsjokull, Svinafellsjokull, and Kviarjokull glaciers. *(Weather will factor into the days, times and frequency of visits to the Ingolfshofdi Nature Reserve. We'll remain flexible to take advantage of changing weather conditions and may need to change the itinerary based on this.)*



Overnight in Hof (breakfast, lunch and dinner)

June 26

**Day 13** ~ We will remain in the area to visit places that we either missed or wish to return to (Jokulsarlon or Vatnajokull glacier). In the evening we will take advantage of our last opportunity to photograph seabirds with a trip the Ingolfshofdi headland. We'll depart for the headland at 7:45PM and return at 11 PM or sooner if the light drops off.

Overnight in Hof (breakfast, lunch and dinner)



June 27

**Day 14** ~ We will start to make our way back by working west along the southern coast of Iceland. On the way we'll stop near the pleasant coastal village of Vik, which sits along a dramatic stretch of Iceland's coastline. Here we will see waves crashing on a black sand beach rated one of the world's top ten beaches by *Islands* magazine. Then we'll continue on to the Skogafoss waterfall.

Overnight in Keflavik (breakfast, lunch and dinner)

June 28

**Day 15** ~ Prepare for early afternoon flights out from Keflavik. Transfer to airport.

Afternoon in Keflavik (breakfast) Lunch on own

## **Accommodations**

In the past, we've camped to keep costs down, but participants will spend their nights with a roof over their heads and electricity for their computers. We will stay in a variety of hotels and guest-houses, with accommodations based on double occupancy and private baths (when available). This helps to keep the cost of the tour down (if we have an odd number of women we may have to assess an additional fee for a single room supplement). If we have an odd number of single men, one will room with the guide.

## **Weather**

It can rain a lot in Iceland. We'll make the best of rainy periods by offering a moderate hike for those who wish to stretch their legs or just take a break from the rigors of photography. We may also use these times to download images, catch up on sleep or travel between locations.

## **Icelandic Guide**

"Hawk", born and raised in Iceland, will act as our driver/guide. He is one of the most respected photographers in Iceland who also owns one of the largest stock photo agencies in Iceland. His intimate knowledge of Iceland, passion for the land, and knowledge of photography makes him an excellent choice for the tour. We are thrilled to be working with him again! He understands the vagaries of light and its impact on photography, our need to keep unusual hours, and most importantly, he knows what makes photographers tick. He will also act as our interpreter when necessary (though you'll discover that most Icelanders speak fluent English).

## **Meals**

With few exceptions, Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner are included in the cost of the tour. Typically, we will eat breakfast at our host hotel / guesthouse. On a normal day we will eat dinner in a restaurant, depending on availability and the lighting conditions around dinner time. For lunch we have found that utilizing box lunches allows us to spend more time in the field. Please bear in mind that when you factor in the drive time associated with remote shooting locations, time to order, eating and then driving back to the field - having lunch in a restaurant is not practical. Since this tour is about *making beautiful images* and not spending time in a restaurant we won't be scheduling photography around meal times.

## **Modesty**

We will be driving and photographing in extremely remote areas, "pit-stops" may have to take place in the field. Since there are no trees, the overly modest might have difficulty with this aspect of the tour. We will keep an eye out for any natural features like big rocks, bushes or sand piles that are suitable to hide behind. During our 2008 and 2010 tour this actually posed very little problem but we thought we should mention it...

## **Spouses / Partners**

Spouses or partners are welcome and encouraged to share this Iceland experience with our photographic clients. However, we must stress that this a tour that is devoted to photography, and non-photographers or those with only a passing interest in natural history are not likely to appreciate the schedule that we will be keeping. If you feel your partner is up to the rigors of traveling with nature photographers and would enjoy the trip they are more than welcome. Iceland is a special place, one that you will enjoy sharing with your partner. Please understand that no changes can be made to the itinerary to suit the needs of an accompanying spouse (shorter field trips, shopping excursions, etc.)

**Vehicle:** We'll get around in 4x4(s) designed for just the type of travel we will be doing. This mode of travel also allows us the flexibility of crossing rivers in the back country and comes highly recommended by Hawk, who is experienced with photographic tours.

**Number of Participants:** 10

**Tour Leaders and Guides:** Rod and Marlene Planck

**Icelandic Guide and Driver:** "Hawk"

**Cost of the Tour:** \$7450-7750 includes accommodations (double occupancy) beginning June 14 through June 27, land transportation (except individual transfers), entrance fees and meals (breakfast, lunch and dinner). Why a range in price? Iceland currency as well as the Euro is currently in flux. This gives you a best case – worse case scenario. We will strive to meet the lower amount but bear in mind that many factors are involved. Single Supplement (single occupancy) rates are available upon request.

**Payments & Cancellations:** Initial deposit: \$500. Second deposit: ½ of balance on January 1, 2011. Final payment: last ½ of balance is due March 1, 2011. Until 120 days or more prior to departure, payments are refundable except for \$500. Refunds given 119-80 days prior to departure will be subjected to a charge of 40% of the tour price, 79-60 days prior to departure, a charge of 50%, and 60 days or less prior to departure, no refund will be paid unless we can fill your space. Cancellation insurance is strongly recommended (see below). *There is a possibility of a fuel surcharge if fuel prices rise dramatically over the current price of 198 ISK / per liter (7/15/10).*

**Not included in base price:** Lunch and dinner are not included on June 14 and June 28. This will permit you to make your own selection of the area restaurants or take a day trip to Reykjavik. Tour cost does not include air transportation, airport departure taxes, separate airport transfers, (group transfers are included) personal items such as laundry, wine, liquor, meals not included in itinerary, beverages not included with meals, medical expenses, faxes/telephone/email charges and insurance. Nor activities listed as optional, or those taken on your own; passport/visa expenses; personal medical or travel insurance. Estimated flight cost from US to Keflavik, Iceland \$1000 or less (coach).

**Responsibility:** Rod Planck Photography, McMillan, Michigan act only as agents and shall not be responsible or become liable for any delay incurred by any person in connection with any means of transportation, nor for the loss, damage, or injury to person or property by reason of any event beyond the control of the agency or default of such agency suppliers. We reserve the right to cancel the tour prior to departure in which case full refund will constitute full settlement to the passenger. No refund will be made for any unused portion of the tour unless arrangements are made at the time of booking. ***All rates are based on current tariffs, exchange rates and fuel costs and are subject to adjustment in the event of any change therein.*** We reserve the right to change the itinerary if we deem by doing so we provide a better experience for participants. You will be notified in advance if a change is made. By sending your initial deposit, you agree to accept our payment schedule as a contract. If payments are still outstanding two weeks after the due date, your space may be forfeited. Baggage is at the owner's risk.

**Conditions:** Travel to remote places like Iceland is exciting, but understanding and accepting the risks, both medical and logistical, are important. There are clinics where minor medical problems can be treated, but due to the remoteness of most of our itinerary, there can be no expectation for immediate medical attention. If this fact concerns you too much, do not choose this trip for your vacation. Anyone with health problems needing close medical supervision should **not** consider going on this trip. Bring enough medication for the duration of the trip for any chronic medical needs. When you send your tour deposit and signed reservation form, you certify to us that you do not knowingly have any physical or other conditions that would create a risk for yourself or for other trip participants.

**Travel Insurance:** Trip insurance information is available from us and will be sent with in-depth trip information and your deposit receipt at the time of making your reservation. It is your responsibility to obtain trip insurance and is strongly advised due the changing nature of the location and cost of the trip.

**Registration Form – Iceland – Land of Fire and Ice**  
**June 14 – June 28, 2011**

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Please Fill in Form below and Mail with Personal Check or Money Order for deposit(s) to:

Rod Planck Photography  
PO Box 100  
McMillan, MI 49853  
906-293-3339

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_ I have enclosed initial deposit(s) of \$500 per person