

Learning Journey - North Iceland Food Excellence (NIFE)

12 – 19 September 2021



In September 2021, a group of food tourism & hospitality professionals from the UK will travel to North Iceland for a learning journey focused on the cultural heritage, flavours, and sense of place which contribute to the area's overall visitor experience.

We invite you to join them.

Tell me more about the project

North Iceland Food Excellence (NIFE) is a mobility project, supported by Erasmus + and arranged between UK partner Tourism Angles and our North Iceland host partner Markaðsstofa Norðurlands (Visit North Iceland). It is an opportunity to cover new changes and innovations which have occurred since an original successful co-operation between the partners in 2015.

The project facilitates growth in staff competences, abilities and skills development to benefit the tourism and hospitality sectors. It is required to assist educators and employers come together in an environment of focused learning, exposure to best practice and peer review. The ability for first-hand study of European examples offers increased value for the participating staff.

Project objectives are:

- to facilitate an intensive, 5 days (+ travel days) mobility focused on food tourism
- to exchange expertise and best practice in relation to food tourism through a series of site visits and case study group work
- to give staff the chance to look beyond their own working environments with a European dimension to training, through working and learning with a peer group
- to encourage the tourism industry and higher education sectors to work together to develop current, relevant and fit for purpose qualifications through better understanding of staff skill requirements
- to build the foundation for new partnerships and facilitate future cooperation through an expanded network of contacts

Over the week you'll travel as part of a group of like-minded people, meeting some of Iceland's local entrepreneurs, food producers and tourism businesses. You'll learn their stories, their successes and some of the lessons they learnt along the way. And you'll share your experiences with them and each other.

Through visits to cultural attractions, accommodation, farmers and growers - you'll get a concentrated taste of Iceland.

During the week you'll be part of a group developing **Case Studies** on one of three main themes we've chosen for you to explore during the visit.

You may be involved in hospitality, tourism, education & training, food events & festivals or pioneering something innovative. Can you learn from your Icelandic and other British counterparts? Can they learn from you?

Designed for busy yet innovative tourism and hospitality professionals like you, this focused programme is a chance to learn new skills, experience new ideas and meet new contacts.

Does it cost?

A grant from the Erasmus+ European Programme means we can offer this amazing opportunity to 25 people who meet the project eligibility criteria. If selected, each participant will have a substantial part of the costs covered for this 7 night – including flights, accommodation, transport, meals and admission fees.

In return each participant's business, organisation or educational establishment will contribute a maximum of £500 per person. Due to rising costs in Iceland we will be confirm the fee within the next month or so.

We aim to provide you with some free time on the final day where you will cover costs of your own food/drinks/activities during that time. Participants are responsible for their own travel arrangements and costs to and from the designated departure airports in London or Glasgow.

Can I take part?

Yes, if you have one or more of the roles shown on the attached eligibility document, are willing to participate fully and you can attend the full week (participating in workshops/case studies and attending the full week is a stipulation of the Erasmus+ funding rules). You must also comply with all covid-19 obligations as required at that time, this could include testing prior to travel or confirmation of receiving a vaccination. We will keep you advised on all necessary health requirements prior to travel.

We would like to encourage SMEs, food producers and chefs to apply. You may be asked to deliver a presentation/workshop or to be a case study group leader – it is important that we share such roles among our group and not be reliant on just a few.

If you are interested, and excited by the prospect of bringing knowledge back to your tourism organisation/destination, educational establishment or business, please complete the eligibility document and send it to Karen Donnelly at [XXXXXXXX](#) by **XXXXXXXXXX**.

What happens next?

We will notify successful applicants by **XXXXXXXX**, at which point we will begin to make all bookings, accommodation and travel reservations on your behalf. We will confirm the final programme; send you a package of pre-visit materials and a full list of participants before we leave. Please be aware that if you subsequently drop-out having accepted a place in writing, you are liable for all costs incurred on your behalf. We strongly urge you to arrange appropriate travel insurance, including Covid-19 cover, following written acceptance.

What to expect?

If you've never taken part in a vocational learning journey visit it's a wonderful opportunity to see things from new perspectives, to gain practical knowledge, new contacts and new experiences to apply in your place of work. It's no holiday – but there is plenty of time for visiting places that will inspire a return trip one day. Take a look at the outline draft programme below and if it's of interest please complete the attached application and eligibility form.



Previous Erasmus+ study visit participants in South Iceland 2016.

OUTLINE PROGRAMME

(This is a draft indicative programme at this stage and may be subject to change.)

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Sun 12th:	Travel from UK airports to Keflavik Airport Transfer to Akureyri, North Iceland Check in/accommodation Dinner
Mon 13th:	Breakfast Group briefing and case study time *Site Visits including lunch Dinner Accommodation:
Tues 14th:	Breakfast Case study group/workshops *Site Visits including lunch Dinner Accommodation:
Wed 15th:	Breakfast Case Study group/workshops *Site Visits including lunch Dinner Accommodation
Thur 16th:	Breakfast and check out Transfer to Reykjavik with site visits en route Potential site visit or meeting Dinner Accommodation
Fri 17th:	Breakfast Case study groups/workshops Presentations/meeting with Promote Iceland Project debrief meeting Free time Dinner Accommodation
Sat 18th:	Breakfast Self study & Free time
Sun 19th:	Transfers for departures to UK

*We are currently developing the programme and will finalise this following the recruitment of participants but examples of site visits could include:

Ektafiskur - A fifth generation business Bacalhau (dried and salted cod) fish production business. The owner Elvar invites groups to hear the story of the business and also about the traditional Icelandic "rotten shark". Over the last few years, they have developed a restaurant as well as hot tubs on the black sands. This business has continued to grow, develop and innovate but still with fish production at its core.

Viking Sushi Tour - A boat trip with a difference. Visitors go on the tour with commentary provided about birds/local wildlife. Whilst the boat is out, a net is cast and later in the tour the net is raised and the catch is spread onto a table. Members of the crew invite visitors to taste scallops and sea urchins straight from the sea. Great interaction with visitors who tend to be curious but also wary of eating the fresh catch.

Dalvik - This small town is the venue for an annual Great Fish Day. Where around 200,000 visitors descend to celebrate. The main fish processing company works with a local committee to set up a free festival, where all food and drink is given free of charge. Musicians perform on a large stage and a party atmosphere created for a weekend. Many of the residents provide an "open door" policy inviting visitors to come into their homes/gardens and have food with them, often traditional Icelandic fish soup.

Arctic Coast Way - We will drive part of the route. This is a new concept/marketing campaign launched on 8 June 2019. The project is managed by Visit North Iceland who will present to us about the project, its aims, objectives, how the businesses collaborate, how they bring everyone on board and will share any difficulties they have had. The project has recently launched its website and promotes the route as:

Travelling the Arctic Coast Way means leaving the common routes behind you and going off the beaten track to discover some of the most remote places in North Iceland; a unique adventure following 900km of coastal roads close to the Arctic Circle. Here, where volcanic land meets the icy ocean, nature's force has carved a coastline of wild and pure beauty. The route includes six peninsulas reaching far out in the ocean, taking you from black sandy beaches to spectacular cliffs, along glacial river deltas and fjords to high mountains. Going one step further into remoteness, five beautiful islands offer unforgettable experiences and you might even want to straddle the Arctic Circle. Each of the little towns along the way tells unique stories about life on the edge of the Arctic.

Reykjavik Old Harbour - With the impressive addition of Harpa - the city's award winning new concert hall - and a growing number of other interesting places and businesses, the colourful Old Harbour, which was built between the years 1913 and 1917, is fast becoming a new boom area. Apart from it being a beautiful place to walk with stunning views across the bay to [Mount Esja](#), the Old Harbour area is where the majority of marine activities, such as [whale watching and puffin tours](#) are concentrated; it's also home to the excellent Viking Maritime Museum and the Icelandair Hotel Reykjavik Marina. The numerous new businesses being established, offering everything from scooter rides to the city's best dark-roasted coffee, are a testament to the wonderful community spirit responsible for generating the success of the [Old Harbour](#) and re-establishing it as a new vibrant quarter of Reykjavik City.

Kaldi Brewery. This was Iceland's first micro-brewery in a country where beer drinking only became legal on 1 March 1989 (celebrated as beer day). This business was created through necessity when its owners were made redundant from their previous jobs and had to find something to do. Kaldi is now a top seller and the owners have since created a Beer Spa and also a restaurant. The beer spa was very innovative! Their hot tubs contain beer with the hot water!

Kaffi Ku - a working cattle farm using technology (robots for milking the cows). They offer a restaurant, visitor experience and retail shop.

Holar University College, Iceland's rural college. They are very involved in the farming of arctic char and have a variety of rural qualifications.

Our programme will be finalised soon but we hope that the above gives a flavour of what can be seen and we will endeavour to provide as many site visits as possible during our short time in Iceland.

EXAMPLE

Feedback from previous participants

"The collective working of the businesses we met has been inspirational"

"Initially, I wasn't too sure what to expect - by the end of the trip I was really impressed. There were some truly amazing experiences, and opportunities for personal development. Everything we were put into was engaging and well thought out."

"I will never forget the experiences and opportunity that this amazing trip gave me"

"I plan to develop links with academic members to help with skills shortages in my area"

"The trip exceeded my expectations in terms of networking and relationship building. I didn't expect it to have the impact it did on how I view my own destination."

"It offered me new ways of looking at some of the marketing challenges that face small businesses."

"After 30 years in tourism marketing it's easy to get stale and confined to a particular area. The study visit was refreshing in many different ways and injected enthusiasm and energy into the tourism industry networking I arrange, being able to talk about new experiences and ideas."

This was the most worthwhile trip to enhance business and personal skills - to open your eyes to the possibilities and opportunities that you may otherwise miss.

"The level of engagement and learning opportunities were fantastic from both the participants and encounters with business owners."