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The town chapel in Vík ©Pixabay

How to Have the Perfect Wedding in Iceland

By: James Taylor

Iceland's magnetic landscapes capture the imagination like nowhere else. Couples seeking a unique location for their wedding are drawn by the wild and surreal scenery, which promises a breathtaking start to life together against a dramatic backdrop of ancient glaciers, jagged volcanoes and bubbling hot springs. After all, marriage is an adventure.

PRE-WEDDING WELCOMES

Once family and friends have arrived and settled in, take them out amongst the Icelandic nature, with some help from friendly locals. Head to Hveragerði, where you can book a tour and hop on the sturdy Icelandic pony for a ride into the geothermal valley of Reykjadalur. You'll pass steaming mud pots, hot springs, and the mossy waterfall Djúpagilsfoss. Cap off the ride with a dip in the nearby river, which is naturally heated by the mountain springs to about 38°C.

REHEARSAL DINNER IN REYKJAVIK

As the evening sets in, make your way back into Reykjavik, the buzzing cosmopolitan capital city of Iceland. Host an unforgettable rehearsal dinner at the memorable Matur og Drykkur, a former salt fish factory-turned modern eatery. Let the chefs impress you and yours with masterful combinations of classic Icelandic ingredients and recipes presented with a contemporary twist. Afterwards, nestle up with your loved

ones on the comfy cushions in the brightly lit Apotek bar and talk wedding details while sipping some of the best cocktails in the city.

VOWS IN VÍK

The morning of the big day, make your way to the picturesque seaside village of Vík. The town chapel, a quaint little red and white structure, sits on a hill above the town, and is the perfect place for pledging everlasting love. With stunning panoramic views over a lush green landscape against toothy cliffs, it will be a ceremony your guests will never forget. Nearby, a spectacular cluster of sea stacks in the ocean known as Reynisdrangar represents an Icelandic legend of trolls turned to stone by the breaking dawn - an enchanting display of permanence, if not a conventionally romantic one.

NOT YOUR TYPICAL WHITE WEDDING

When it comes to capturing the day of your dreams, Iceland is a wedding photographer's dream. Stick to the south coast

for all of its natural wonders, and head to Reynisfjara. White waves crash up against the black sand of this famous beach, with towering basalt columns sculpted into the cliffs at one end. The dramatic area perfectly encapsulates the powerful volcanic energy found in Iceland, and makes for some truly unique wedding photos. In another area of the south shore, the torrential waterfall Skógafoss sits nestled between towering mossy cliffs, pouring forth a polished pearly spray which often forms a portrait-perfect rainbow over the river.

A RANGÁ RECEPTION

With the wedding photos out of the way, it's time to celebrate in true Icelandic-style. Link back up with your guests at the nearby Hotel Rangá, a countryside resort suffused with log-cabin style warmth. Hot tubs await outside as prime spots for your guests to view the northern lights dancing overhead, and the hotel's four-star restaurant can curate a gourmet Nordic wedding menu (think smoked puffin, reindeer and wild mushroom) that promises to impress. Rangá offers a collection of cozy rooms for families of all sizes, an event staff who loves to customize according to taste, and a variety of wedding packages which include live music, floral arrangements, and even access to a stargazing observatory.

HONEYMOONING IN HOT WATER

After bidding goodbye to your wedding well-wishers, consider staying a few days to honeymoon in one of Iceland's most enchanting and romantic spots: The Blue Lagoon. The most celebrated geothermal spa in the country, this lagoon features curls of mist shifting across pools of milky water cut into the surrounding debris of blackened lava. Whether enjoying a tempting in-water massage or a glass of bubbly at the outdoor bar, these whimsical waters offer an incredible way to toast new beginnings.



"With stunning panoramic views over a lush green landscape against toothy cliffs, it will be a wedding your guests will never forget."



Bride and groom walking along beach at Hotel Rangá ©Compliments of Hotel Rangá

When you go

Whether planning your ideal Icelandic wedding or a honeymoon escape, consider these must-do's during your visit to the land of ice and fire:

- Watch and listen as glaciers slowly float out to sea at the Jökulsárlón Glacier Lagoon.
- Plan to see the magical northern lights dancing across the sky from late August until early May.
- See the Snæfellsnes Peninsula, which is strewn with lava fields and windswept beaches, and a beautiful two-day trip from Reykjavik.
- Take a hike to Dynjandi waterfall: the crown jewel of the Western Fjords.
- Catch the quirky puffins as they nest on cliffs across the country from April until the end of August.
- Explore Vatnajökull National Park, the largest in Europe.



Icelandic ponies in Hveragerði ©Pixabay