

Snæfellsjökull National Park

Snæfellsjökull (Snæfell glacier) National Park was established on June 28, 2001. The Park's purpose is to protect and conserve the area's unique landscape, indigenous plant and animal life as well as important historical relics. At the same time, the Park is meant to allow visitors easier access as well as improved opportunities to get to know the area. Park Rangers operate in the area during the summer months, providing information as well as monitoring and tending the area. Visitors are encouraged to contact Park Rangers for assistance or information about the area.

The Snæfellsjökull Glacier

The Snæfellsjökull glacier is 1446m (4745 ft) above sea level. It was first climbed in 1754. The mountain is an active volcano, having been built up through numerous eruptions during the last 800,000 years. The summit crater is 200m (650 ft) deep, and full of ice. The latest eruption was very large and took place around 1800 years ago. Light-coloured ash covered the northern half of Snæfellsnes Peninsula and was carried over much of the West Fjords. Lava flowed down the southern slopes of the mountain and the Háahraun lava field was formed during this eruption. The glacier has been a never-ending source of inspiration for poets and artists from around the world. Indeed, more than a few people say they feel a powerful influence from the glacier and consider it to be one of the world's seven most potent energy sources.

Historical Tracks

In times past there were a large number of paths in the area around the glacier, some of which still exist and are still passable. One trail follows the coastline and remains in reasonable condition, although some boulders have intruded onto parts of the track. This track is long and best followed in several stages. A second track, known as Efstivegur, lies at the foot of the glacier.

Gufuskálar

Around Gufuskálar, in the lava field, there are a number of presumed fish-drying stone structures. They are just a 10-minute walk from the road. On the opposite side of the present-day road is a track leading to Írskrbrunnur (Irish well). A short, clearly marked path leads from Írskrbrunnur to Gufuskálavör landing, where trails remain from the keels of boats dragged up onto land after fishing.

Móðuvör – Skarðsvík – Öndverðarnes, 4 km/2.5 miles (3-4 hours).

This is a pleasant footpath that passes through Skarðsvík, an attractive sheltered little bay with light-coloured sand. On Öndverðarnes are relics of fishing and domestic occupation. An ancient well named Fálki was a water source for the residents of Öndverðarnes.

Öndverðarneshólar

From the road to Öndverðarnes there are several paths leading to hillocks. The walk to Vatnsborgarhóll and nearby crater Vatnsborg is 2 km/1.5 miles (40 min.) and the walk to Grashóll is another 1 km/0.6 miles (1 hour). There are delightful paths from the hillocks leading down to Skálasnagi and Öndverðarnes, or into Berúvík.

Klofningsrétt in Berúvík – Litlalón – Hólahólar, 4 km/2.5 miles (2 hours).

This is an attractive coastal path. Coastline features are varied and the path is easy on the feet, passing mostly over grassland. Berúvík was once a lively community while Hólahólar was a large homestead.

Djúpalónssandur – Dritvík, 1 km/0.6 miles (30 min.).

The path from Djúpalónssandur to Dritvík is easy and popular. On Djúpalónssandur there are some large boulders fishermen lifted to show off their strength. On Suðurbarði there is an old labyrinth, made by fishermen for amusement. In the 18th century Dritvík was a bustling community of up to 600 people during fishing season. It is possible to continue from Dritvík along the old fishermen's track past Berúvíkuhraun to Sandhólar. The entire route from Djúpalónssandur to Dritvík and on to Sandhólar is 4 km/2.5 miles (2 hours).

Svalpúfa – Malarrif, 2 km/1.5 miles (1 hour).

A short path winds along the coast, passing by the lava pillars of Lóndrangar.

Eysteinsdalur

The road up the Eysteinsdalur valley runs alongside Móðulækur, towards the Snæfellsjökull glacier. Beautiful short walks from the road include Rauðhóll and Sjónarhóll. The dolerite-capped hill Klukka and the waterfall Klukkufoss are just a short distance from the road. Blágil is a deep ravine that is easily reached. An abundance of peaks await visitors. Hreggnasi (469m/1539 ft) is quite an easy climb, while Bárðarkista (668m/2192 ft) and West Geldingafell (830m/2723 ft) are the highest of the glacier's foothills and have summits that are more challenging.

Visitor Centre

The National Parks Visitor Centre at Hellnar is open daily from 10am-6pm from May 20th until September 10th. The information at the parks office at Hellissandur is open in office ours on weekdays.

Notes for Visitors

Please keep to marked trails. Vehicles and bicycles are restricted to roads and tracks. The glacier can be dangerous due to cravasses, specially in the later part of the year. Contact the National Park for information.

There are no campsites in the National Park but backpackers are welcome to camp for one night.

Although we welcome you to explore this area, please help us conserve its ecology, its remarkable geological features and its tranquillity. Do not drive off roads, disturb geological formations or wildlife, or light fires. And please take your litter with you.

Enjoy your visit!

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