

Grímsey

A legend ties the name of the island Grímsey to a settler named “Grímur” who sailed here from the Sogn district in Norway.

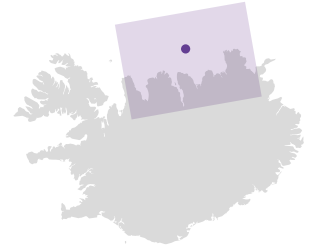


Photo: Gyða Henningsdóttir

The unique Arctic Island

Grímsey is situated on the Arctic Circle 41 km off the north coast of Iceland. The island is 5.3 km² in size and is formed by volcanic rock which in places creates beautiful basalt columns.

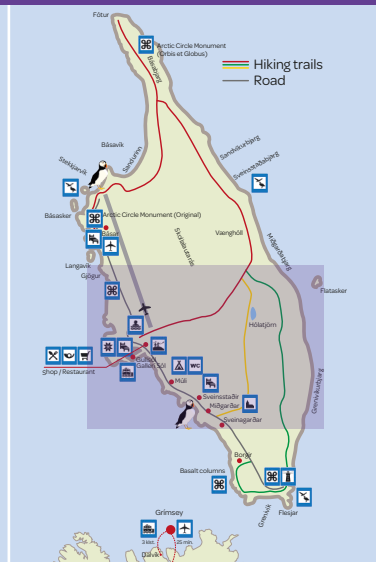
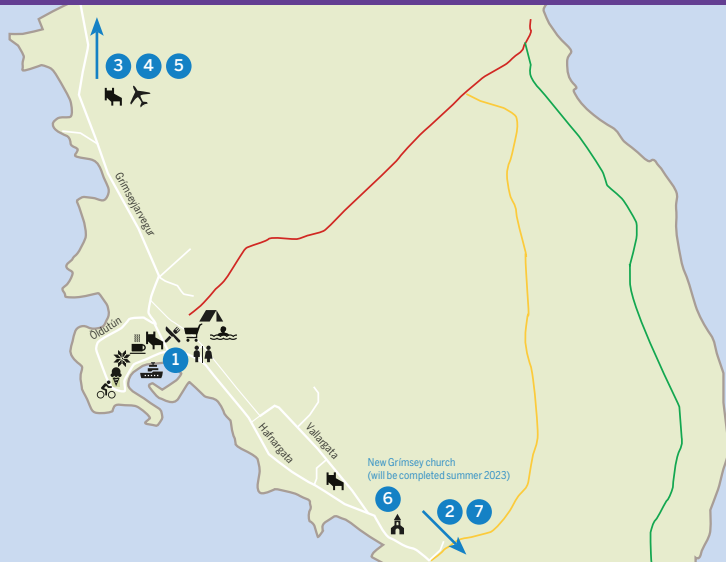
Grímsey has been inhabited since the Viking settlement of Iceland. The present population is around 70 inhabitants. Subsistence farming, bird hunting and egg gathering were formerly of great importance to the locals, they still exist but today the focus is on modern fishing, fish markets and tourism.

The birdlife in Grímsey is unique with numerous different species and unusually dense populations, including one of the biggest colonies of puffins in Iceland.

The Arctic Circle, the midnight sun during summer and the northern lights during winter are some of the island's highlights.

Recommendations / What to do:

- The bridge and the signpost: The original monument for the Arctic Circle, close to the airport terminal.
- Orbis et Globus: The new Arctic Circle Monument on the island's northern part, consists of a huge concrete sphere artwork, 3 meters in diameter.
- Lighthouse & Basalt Columns: on the island's south side one finds the picturesque yellow lighthouse and areas with some beautiful basalt columns.
- The birds: Watching and photographing the birdlife is captivating but please respect wildlife and stay on the track. Note that the Arctic Tern can be quite aggressive in protecting its chicks so wearing a hat and mittens can be useful or holding a stick above one's head! Puffins are normally on the island from mid-April till around 10 August.
- Hikes: Grímsey is very much about nature and the best way to experience it is by taking a walk. There are different circular walks available from about 4 to 10 km.



PLACES TO GO

- 1 Fiske Memorial
- 2 Basalt Columns
- 3 Arctic Circle Monument (Original)
- 4 Arctic Circle Monument (Orbis et Globus)
- 5 Bird cliffs
- 6 Grímsey church (constructed 2022)
- 7 Grímsey lighthouse

Scale Up Area

Guidelines

- Enjoy a stroll around the village or take a hike along the paths/roads in the beautiful nature. Please leave all flora, birds, and heritage untouched and undisturbed. We don't have any sidewalks, but stay on the right side of the road so that we can pass when needed.
- If visiting the Arctic Circle and the art piece Orbis et Globus, note that the walk is about 7 km (roundtrip) through a hilly landscape and takes about 3+ hours along uneven and sometimes slippery tracks.
- The only public toilet is located by the harbour.
- The harbour is a busy part of the village. Please be careful and, for your safety, stay out of the way of people working. Also note you are welcome to take photos of our colourful boats, but please do not enter.
- In the Autumn of 2021 the old village church built in 1867 was lost in a fire. The inhabitants of the island are working on building a new one. If you would like to support their fundraising, you can do so by donating, collection boxes can be found on the island.
- Our local drinking water is excellent; you can drink it from the tap, e.g. at the outdoor sink by the pool building.
- The use of drones is prohibited on the island.
- Warning! Please refrain from standing too near the edge of cliffs and high ground bordering the sea, as the nest burrowing puffins might have loosened and destabilized the ground, causing danger of falling over the edge.
- There is no ATM available in Grímsey, but the shops, restaurant and café take foreign cards and Icelandic krona.
- Please help us keep tourism sustainable by conserving nature and helping sustain the small community on the island. Leave no trace and pick up your trash – there are bins in the village and along the road.
- You are welcome to visit our local pool heated with the cooling water from the generator producing electricity on the island. Opening hours on the door. Every guest is required to wash thoroughly without a swimsuit before entering the pool.
- Wi-Fi is available at the café – show thanks by buying goods or refreshments!



Photo: María Tryggvadóttir

There are many species of birds on Grímsey and it is one of the best places on Iceland's coast to view sea birds on the cliffs. Cliff birds arrive in March and leave the cliffs in August. The largest flock of puffins on the north coast of Iceland lives on the island.



Photo: María Tryggvadóttir

The Arctic Circle crosses Grímsey. At the summer solstice each year the artwork Orbis et Globus is moved to show the new position of the Arctic Circle on the island.



Photo: Gyða Henningsdóttir

Grímsey is Iceland's northernmost point and the only place in Iceland where the sun stays above the horizon on the summer solstice making the summer nights very bright. During winter it is also one of the best places to watch the northern lights due to the dark sky.