

HIGHLAND BASE

KERLINGARFJÖLL

Fact sheet





Kerlingarfjöll

An extreme paradise

A remote mountain range deep in Iceland's central Highlands, Kerlingarfjöll is an extreme paradise of steaming geothermal valleys, glacial rivers, perennial snow fields, and panoramic vistas.

For centuries, this primal wilderness has been the source of myths and folktales. The name itself was inspired by a 25-meter pillar of volcanic rock—the legendary geological remains of a giantess who roamed the mountains and turned to stone when she was stricken by the first rays of the rising sun.

Kerlingarfjöll holds a special place in the hearts of generations of Icelanders who have been visiting this untouched region year after year. To move across the vivid rhyolite hills and into the towering mountainscape is to walk in the footsteps of adventurers from across the ages.

Highland Base

Opened in July 2023 and located in the Ásgarður Valley at the edge of Kerlingarfjöll, Highland Base is a sanctuary of warm comfort, hearty cooking, and geothermal bathing—a place to relax and recharge in the heart of a forbidding environment.

From the outdoor purity of tenting to the refined pleasures of the hotel rooms and the elevated affluence of the suites and lodges, Highland Base was conceived as a welcoming oasis for both the simple traveler and the lavish explorer. An 80-seat restaurant, a lounge, and the Highland Baths augment its range of accommodations, providing savory nourishment and relaxing warmth.

Inheriting, honoring, and enhancing the treasured legacy of the Kerlingarfjöll Mountain Resort—which was operational from 2000 to 2020—this isolated outpost reimagines and revitalizes highland hospitality, creating a multifaceted staging ground for exhilarating adventures and breathtaking visions.





Protecting and honoring the land

In 2020, Kerlingarfjöll was designated a Protected Nature Reserve by Umhverfistofnun—the Environmental Agency of Iceland. This classification aims to preserve and honor the geological, geographical, and geothermal sanctity of Kerlingarfjöll.

We are committed to maintaining the purity of Kerlingarfjöll. The resort aspires to exist in harmony with nature, upholding the principles of planetary wellbeing. All construction processes and materials have been chosen in accordance with the standards developed by BREEAM—the world's leading sustainability assessment method for buildings.





The geological and cultural history of Kerlingarfjöll

Covering 150 square kilometers, Kerlingarfjöll is a circular mountain range with peaks reaching to 1500 meters, where the sweeping vista of the highlands is punctuated by the grand glaciers Hofsjökull and Langjökull, presenting hikers with awe-inspiring perspectives on the monumental wonders and raw powers at the extremes of Iceland.

Formed over 300,000 years ago with a series of subglacial volcanic eruptions, the mountains transform with the seasons. In summer, fields of snow and ice create abstract patterns across the barren range. In winter, the mountainscape becomes a white wonderland, with snow blanketing every inch of the terrain.

At lower elevations, icy rivers converge with the steaming valleys and scalding streams of the Hveradalir geothermal area, forming a breathtaking red hillscape of pulsating fissures, boiling mud pools, and searing hot springs. Colonies of thermophilic plant life adorn the hissing vents and carpet the slopes, creating multicolored floral tapestries.

Unexplored for centuries, Kerlingarfjöll remained an untamed wilderness until the 1930s when a pioneering naturalist and entrepreneur—Guðmundur Einarsson—initiated mountaineering classes at the remote locale. Inspired by Einarsson's efforts, Ferðafélag

Íslands (Iceland Touring Association) launched hiking tours of the region, constructing a cabin in 1937.

Beginning in 1961, with the advent of summer skiing at Kerlingarfjöll, the area blossomed into a prime vacation destination, and the cabin accommodations that had risen in the Ásgarður Valley grew to include a dormitory and a dining facility for ski students. Each year, from June to August, Icelanders flocked to these mountains, with thousands of youths learning how to ski at Kerlingarfjöll's seasonal ski school.

At the turn of the millennium, faced with the reality of receding snow-fields, the ski school ceased operations, but the aging accommodations were renovated and expanded, becoming the Kerlingarfjöll Mountain Resort. Encompassing a hotel, cabins, campgrounds, and a restaurant, this riverside oasis served as a base camp for hikers and adventurers until 2020.

In 2023, the Kerlingarfjöll Mountain Resort was reborn in the form of Highland Base—a year-round hospitality oasis with accommodations for everyone from the simple traveler to the lavish explorer. Though the facilities are far more inviting than the first basic cabin built in 1937, the spirit of this remote outpost remains the same: it is the base for unforgettable journeys into the mystical frontiers of Kerlingarfjöll.



Resort overview

Operational throughout the year, Highland Base is a refuge of warm hospitality and the gateway to a mesmerizing mountain range.

The seasons

The dramatic contrast between winter and summer is a hallmark of Kerlingarfjöll. For eight months out of the year, the region is difficult to access. With the change of seasons, long dark days give way to endless light. Bitter cold, deep snow, and buried trails transform into mild temperatures, barren mountains, and a landscape ripe for hiking and exploration. But winter holds its own unique attractions, with the snow-covered wilderness creating a dreamscape for downhill and cross country skiing, and snowmobiling. Likewise, the supremely dark nights bring forth astonishing visions of the Arctic skies.

The accommodations

Encompassing a 48-room hotel, 6 private lodges, 7 huts, and a sprawling campsite, Highland Base's accommodations are calibrated for both simplicity and luxury. The campground is a place of minimal conveniences, but its riverside location and views of the mountains make for a welcoming oasis. At the other end of the hospitality spectrum, the hotel features rooms and suites ranging from 18 to 44 square meters, while the private lodges include a private entrance and are designed for ultimate comfort.

The restaurant and lounge

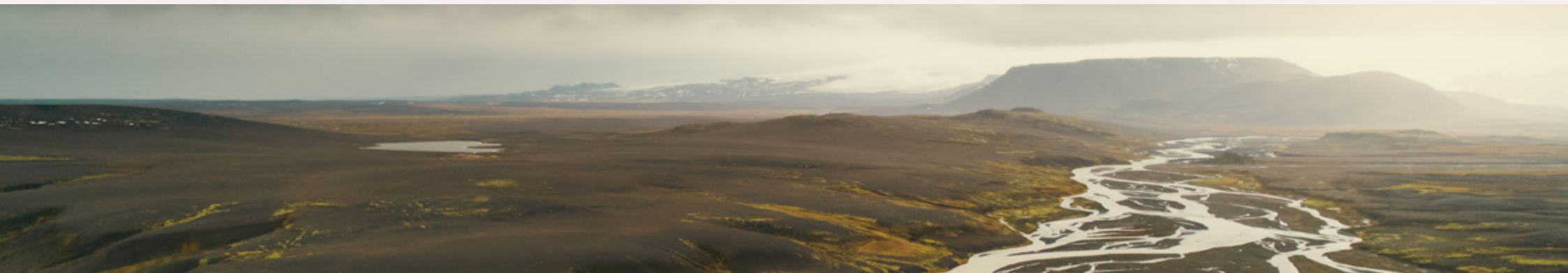
Highland Base's 80-seat restaurant combines hearty cooking and culinary excellence. The lounge, located above the restaurant, is a place of cozy warmth and communal togetherness with captivating views of Kerlingarfjöll.

Highland Baths

Located in the heart of the Ásgarður valley, these baths provide stunning views of the surrounding mountain range. The facilities include a steaming pool, a cold plunge, a stunning sauna, and a bar where guests can order refreshing drinks. The water, drawn from nearby geothermal fields, provides natural warmth and deep relaxation under the Arctic sky. Whether in the midst of a blizzard or beneath the midnight sun, the baths offer a soothing escape as part of the Highland Base experience.

The adventures

From e-biking, skiing, buggy tours, and snowmobiling to hikes of all difficulties that take you deep into the wilds of Kerlingarfjöll, Highland Base opens a world of adrenalizing adventures. Inspiring, challenging, rewarding—each activity becomes a uniquely thrilling odyssey.



Architecture and design

Highland Base was architected with sturdy, sustainable materials to withstand the elements and catalyze wellbeing, incorporating clean lines, aged wood, vaulted ceilings, muted tones, and textured walls to create robust, rustic living spaces that blend modernity and tradition.

Designed to harmonize with the surrounding environment, the resort's cozy minimalism echoes through the furnishings, decor, and lighting, producing an enduring sense of peace, warmth, and comfort.



HIGHLAND BASE

KERLINGARFJÖLL



- Highland Base Hotel
- Highland Base Restaurant
- Highland Baths
- Highland Base Lodges
- Highland Base Huts
- Service house for the campsite
- Campsite



Hotel

Premium accommodations to simple comforts
48 rooms | Standard, deluxe, and suites | 18 m²-44 m²



Hotel

Warm and inviting

Highland Base Hotel is a warm and welcoming oasis. In the newly built Hamar wing, you'll find beautifully designed deluxe rooms and suites with stunning views. The Aldan wing, a heritage building that's been thoughtfully refurbished, offers standard accommodations, perfect for couples and families who appreciate simple comforts. Every space is crafted with warmth and relaxation in mind. Underground passageways connect the hotel with the restaurant and Highland Baths, enabling guests to move across the property without battling the elements.

Rooms: 48

Sizes: 18 m²-44 m²

Types: 6



Deluxe double room

Calibrated for comfort, the Deluxe double room combines clean lines, textured walls, cozy furnishings, and deep windows to create a warm and welcoming sanctuary in an extreme environment.

Details

- Room size: 22 m²
- Located in Hamar
- Bed type: 1 double bed
- Max occupancy: 2 guests
- Private bathroom with shower
- Large window with a view (upper floors)
- Terrace (ground floor)
- Hairdryer, towels
- Shower gel, shampoo, conditioner, hand lotion, hand soap
- Coffee/tea facilities



Deluxe twin room

Clean lines, textured walls, cozy furnishings, deep windows, the room is a place of warmth and comfort with two single beds.

Details

- Room size: 22 m²
- Located in Hamar
- Bed type: 2 single beds
- Max occupancy: 2 guests
- Private bathroom with shower
- Large window with a view (upper floors)
- Terrace (ground floor)
- Hairdryer, towels
- Shower gel, shampoo, conditioner, hand lotion, hand soap
- Coffee/tea facilities



Deluxe family room

Designed for families, this spacious room is a place of warmth and comfort featuring a double bed and a sofa bed. It is rustic, sturdy, cozy, and modern—a relaxing base within Highland Base.

Details

- Room size: 30 m²
- Located in Hamar
- Bed type: 1 double bed / 1 sofa bed
- Max occupancy: 4 guests (2 adults / 2 children)
- Private bathroom with shower
- Large window with a view (upper floors)
- Terrace (ground floor)
- Hairdryer, towels
- Shower gel, shampoo, conditioner, hand lotion, hand soap
- Coffee/tea facilities



Suite

Aged wood, articulated ceilings, modern furnishings, and rustic design elements create a space of total relaxation—a luxurious base for extraordinary journeys. Located on the hotel's top floor, each suite features a sheltered terrace with a geothermal hot tub and breathtaking vistas of the surrounding mountains.

Details

- Room size: 44 m²
- Terrace with hot tub
- Relaxation swing
- Located in Hamar
- Bed type: 1 double bed
- Max occupancy: 2 guests
- Private bathroom with shower
- Large window with a view
- Hairdryer, towels
- Shower gel, shampoo, conditioner, hand lotion, hand soap
- Coffee/tea facilities
- Minibar with selection of soft drinks, beer & snacks
- Lounge area
- Books on outdoor adventure, skiing, hiking, and the latest outdoor trends



Standard twin room

This room is simple, modern, cozy, and warm—the prime elements of relaxation in the heart of a forbidding frontier.

Details

- Room size: 18 m²
- Located in Alda
- Bed type: 2 single beds
- Max occupancy: 2 adults
- Private bathroom with shower
- Towels, shower gel, hand soap



Standard family room

A place of simple comfort and relaxing warmth conceived for families exploring the highlands—this cozy space features a queen-size bunk bed and floor-to-ceiling windows.

Details

- Room size: 18 m²
- Located in Alda
- Bed type: Queen bunk bed
- Max occupancy: 4 guests (2 adults / 2 children)
- Private bathroom with shower
- Towels, shower gel, hand soap



Lodges

Premium accommodations | 6 lodges | 44 m²-88 m²



Lodges

The ultimate Highland Base accommodations—a private residence designed for deep relaxation. With a sunken lounge area and deep picture windows revealing remarkable views of Kerlingarfjöll, each lodge is a lavish staging ground for highland adventuring.

Lodges: 6
Size: 44 m²
Types: 2



Lodge

An exclusive residence conceived for two people seeking the heights of highland hospitality.

Details

- Size: 44 m²
- Independent unit *
- Private entrance
- Bed type: 1 double bed
- Max occupancy: 2 guests
- Lounge area
- Private bathroom with shower
- Large window with a view
- Hairdryer, towels
- Shower gel, shampoo, conditioner, hand lotion, hand soap
- Coffee/tea facilities
- Minibar with selection of soft drinks, beer and snacks
- Books on outdoor adventure, skiing, hiking, and the latest outdoor trends

* Two lodges (including one with a sofa bed) are connected and can be combined for an 88 m² grand lodge suitable for families.



Lodge with sofa bed

An exclusive residence conceived for families (two adults and two children) seeking the heights of highland hospitality.

Details

- Room size: 44 m²
- Independent unit
- Private entrance
- Bed type: 1 double bed / 1 sofa bed
- Max occupancy: 4 guests (2 adults / 2 children)
- Lounge area
- Private bathroom with shower
- Large window with a view
- Hairdryer, towels
- Shower gel, shampoo, conditioner, hand lotion, hand soap
- Coffee/tea facilities
- Minibar with selection of soft drinks, beer and snacks
- Books on outdoor adventure, skiing, hiking, and the latest outdoor trends

Inclusions

Hotel and lodges

The hotel and lodges provide a range of inclusions that elevate the comfort and enchantment of the guest stay.

- **Breakfast buffet**
- **Wi-Fi**

- **Highland Baths**

The baths are free for hotel and lodge guests.

- **Telescopic stargazing** (winter)

Explore the heavens with our high-powered telescope. Gaze on the cosmos from a place beyond the reach of light pollution. We'll hunt for Northern Lights, planets, stars, nebulae, and galaxies (note that sightings can not be guaranteed). A hypnotic feast for the eyes. An astrophotographer's dream. Offered on clear nights from October to April at 21:00.

- **Storytelling** (winter)

Bring your thirst for knowledge to the lounge. Enjoy a welcome drink as our storyteller takes you on a journey covering the history and geology of Kerlingarfjöll. Learn about the mountain range and the first mountaineers who conquered its summits in the 1940s. Discover the evolution of shelter in this extreme frontier—from the first cabin to the ski school to the birth of Highland Base. Offered nightly from October to May at 17:00 in the lounge.





Huts and campsite

Budget accommodations | Summer only

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Hut for
15 people

Hut for
6 people

Hut for
3 people

Huts for
2 people

Huts for
2 people

Service
house

BBQ area

Parking

Campsite

Campsite

Campsite

Campsite

Campsite

Campsite



Huts

If it's summertime and you're traveling light, our huts—configured for private groups of two to fifteen people—are the perfect base for your highland adventures. Built to withstand the elements, these sturdy structures offer basic comfort, bringing you an authentic highland experience. All guests of the huts are welcome to dine at Highland Base Restaurant and purchase admission to the Highland Baths.

Open from June 15 to September 30.

Hut – 2 people

A 15 m² hut for sleeping bag accommodations. Equipped with 2 single beds and a WC. Includes access to the campground's kitchen and shower facilities.

Hut – 3 people

A 27 m² private hut for sleeping bag accommodations. Equipped with 3 single beds and a WC. Includes access to the campground's kitchen and shower facilities.

Hut – 6 people

A 33 m² private hut for sleeping bag accommodations. Equipped with 6 single beds and a WC. Includes access to the campground's kitchen and shower facilities.



Hut for 15

Your group's highland haven! With fifteen single beds, this 67 m² hut invites you to crawl into your sleeping bag after a fantastic day in great company. Features a kitchen and bathroom. Shower facilities are available at the campsite.



Campsite

In summer, when the snows have melted and endless light floods the land, Highland Base Campsite comes to life—a sprawling riverside campground at the base of Kerlingarfjöll. A place of spartan comforts, it has access to a shared service house with kitchen, shower, and bathroom facilities. Likewise, all campers are welcome to dine at Highland Base Restaurant and purchase admission to the Highland Baths.

Open from June 15 to September 15.



Shared areas for campsite and huts

Highland Base's shared areas provide minimalist though modern conveniences. Bathrooms, kitchen facilities, parking, and a welcoming staff ensure basic cleanliness, comfort, and security for backpackers and campers.



Restaurant

Hearty cooking and entrancing views | 80 seats



Restaurant

Hearty cooking and entrancing views are the ingredients for a fulfilling meal. With a bar on the ground floor and a lounge on the upper floor, the Highland Base Restaurant is a cozy refuge of warmth and nourishment.

Seating: 80 people

Cuisine: Icelandic/International

We offer a variety of menu options

- A breakfast selection in the morning
- An à la carte bistro menu during the day
- An à la carte dinner from 18:00
- During summer, an afternoon waffle buffet is served, while in winter, waffles are a menu staple
- For those on the go, we offer breakfast and lunch takeaway packages

Opening hours

07:00 - 10:00: Breakfast

12:00 - 17:00: Lunch/Bistro

15:00 - 16:30: Icelandic waffle buffet

18:00 - 20:30: Dinner (last seating)

Advance dinner reservations recommended.





Highland Baths

Unwind in the wilderness





Highland Baths

Encompassing a trio of hot pots built into the earth and sourced from a nearby geothermal field, the Highland Baths evoke natural hot-spring bathing—a lively, communal experience of the earth’s revitalizing heat. The facilities include a sauna, changing rooms, a bar, and an underground passageway that connects to the hotel buildings, providing convenient, sheltered access.

Entry to the baths is included with hotel and lodge accommodations. Guests of the campground and the huts, as well as adventurers exploring Kerlingarfjöll on their own, can purchase admission to the baths.



Activities on site

Year-round adventures





Summer activities

Hiking

A vast network of trails ranging from one kilometer to 50 kilometers creates exciting possibilities for hikes of all distances and difficulties, guided and unguided. The extraordinary world of Kerlingarfjöll is yours to discover. Explore the enchanting geothermal valleys in three hours or spend a day scaling Kerlingarfjöll's highest peaks.

Biking

With a fleet of electric mountain bikes, Highland Base offers motorized cycling—exhilarating, eco-friendly, guided journeys that traverse the raw and colorful mountainscape. A great way to explore Kerlingarfjöll.

Buggy tour

A 1-hour adventure that starts by the hotel with a quick intro from our expert guides, so both seasoned riders and first-timers will feel prepped and ready for action. Guests will tackle rough terrain, steep hills, and river crossings, with plenty of stops to soak in the breathtaking views.



Winter activities

Skiing

From September to June, Kerlingarfjöll becomes a highland paradise of skiing possibilities, where an array of exciting adventures await. Our guided tours have equipment for rent, and our knowledgeable guides are keen to take thrillseekers to the most spectacular spots. From cross-country trails to untamed backcountry, we have something for everyone. Whether you want to learn the basics or dream of weaving across a glacier and around steaming hot springs, we've got you covered. Keep in mind, we embrace the authentic ski experience—no ski lifts here! We hike to the peaks and carve our way down, or traverse the stunning landscape cross-country.

Snowmobiling

Our guided snowmobile adventure sets you free to glide across sprawling snowscapes, ascend Fannborg mountain, and motor through icy plains towards the mammoth Hofsjökull glacier. The adventure is always thrilling and never the same.

Buggy tour

A 1-hour adventure that starts by the hotel with a quick intro from our expert guides, so both seasoned riders and first-timers will feel prepped and ready for action. Guests will tackle rough terrain, steep hills, and river crossings, with plenty of stops to soak in the breathtaking views.



How to get here

A thrilling journey



● Akureyri

● Egilsstaðir

▲
●
Highland Base
Kerlingarfjöll

Amazing
Basecamp
Skjól ●

● Gullfoss

● Reykjavík

● Keflavík
International Airport

● Blue Lagoon

● Vík



Accessibility

Located in the central highlands, the resort is at an elevation of 700 meters. During the summer, it is accessible by car, private transfer, and bus.

How to get here

From Reykjavík, the trip takes approximately 3.5 hours, covering nearly 200 kilometers—an adventure moving from paved highways to the challenging gravel roads of the country's interior.

How to get here in winter

In winter, we can only be reached by 4x4 modified super jeeps driven by professionals. The journey is a heart-pounding adventure across icy tundras and frozen snowfields. Whether it takes three hours or six hours, the thrill is timeless.

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Get in touch

If you are a travel professional,
contact our sales representatives at sales@highlandbase.is