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HOFSA

ICELAND

WELCOME



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Pre-Travel information for Hofsa, Iceland

Arrival at Keflavik International Airport

On arrival you will enter the main reception area of Keflavik International Airport and continue downstairs to the Baggage Reclaim and Duty Free area.

Having collected your bags and fishing equipment, you will pass through the customs zone and will be asked to display your veterinary letter confirming that your waders and fishing tackle have been sterilised. This is to protect the pristine Icelandic rivers from any risk of infection from bacteria or disease from foreign rivers that may be present on waders or other equipment.

Please be aware that you will not be allowed to pass through airport security with your waders and fishing tackle unless you have a veterinary letter confirming that your equipment has been sterilised or else agree to have your equipment sterilised at the airport. There is a charge for this and depending on the numbers of fishermen on the plane it can take time. We suggest that wherever possible you have a vet do it beforehand.

Transfer to Reykjavik/Reykjavik Domestic Airport.

Having passed through customs you will be met by your transfer driver (if you have requested one to be arranged for you by Ripp Sporting), they will take you either to Reykjavik to overnight (less than one hour drive) or directly to Reykjavik Domestic Airport to catch a connecting flight to.



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Pre-Travel information for Hofsa, Iceland

Flying to Akureyri or Egilsstaðir

With several flights a day with Air Iceland to Akureyri or Egilsstaðir, it is sometimes possible to fly onwards on the day of arrival. This will then mean an overnight stay. Feel free to contact us for hotel recommendations. Akureyri boasts many good restaurants and has a full range of amenities including a Vinbud, the only alcoholic beverage vendors in Iceland. If you arrive before closing time you might want to stop by and purchase wine, beer or spirits, as the shop has limited opening hours.

Travel from Akureyri to Hofsa

The overland trip east by road goes through some beautiful scenery and takes about 3 hours.

On arrival at the Arhvammur lodge you will be greeted by one of the guides and shown to your room. If you have booked this trip without a guide you will be met by the river keeper at the lodge. Please be advised that this applies to your timely arrival at the lodge.

The Hofsa lodge is located on the North bank of the river, about fifteen minutes up river from the town Vopnafjörður.

Travel from Egilsstaðir to the river

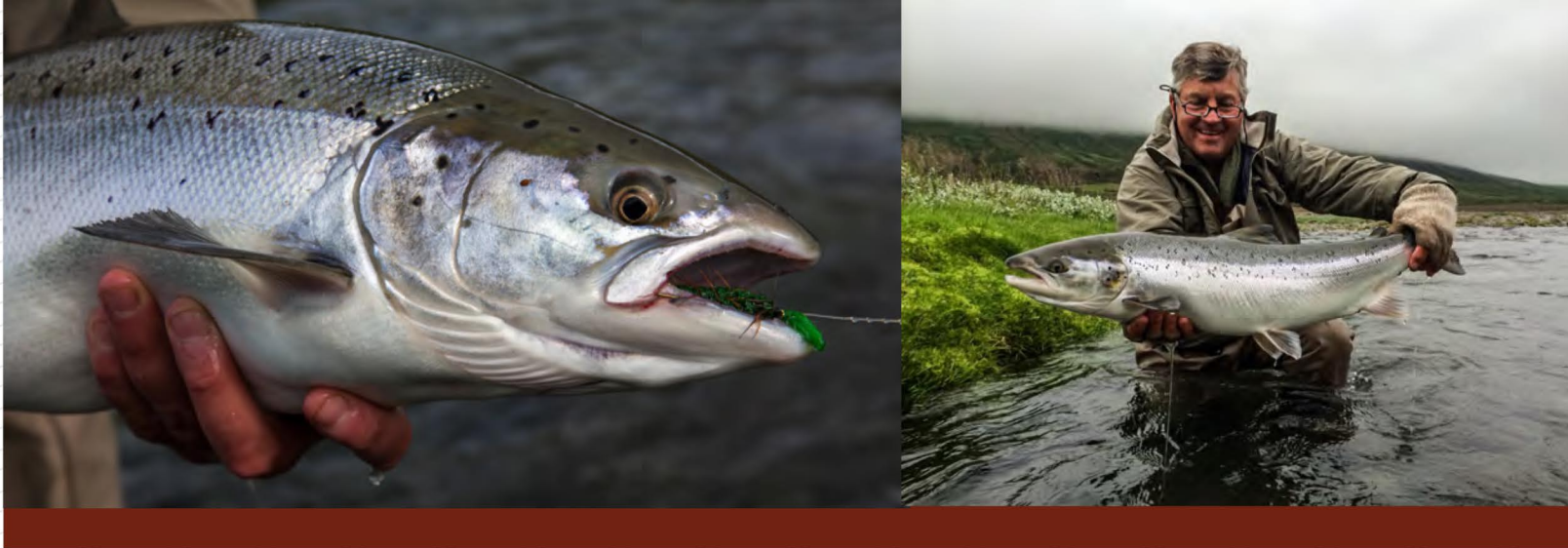
This is another scenic route through some very rural landscape and takes just over an hour. On arrival at the Arhvammur lodge you will be greeted by one of the guides and shown to your room. If you have booked this trip without a guide you will be met by the river keeper at the lodge. Please be advised that this applies to your timely arrival at the lodge.

The Hofsa lodge is located on the North bank of the river.

The nearest town is Vopnafjörður, just few minutes away from the river mouth.



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When departing Hofsa

On the last day of fishing, you will stop fishing at 12 o'clock. Depending on travel plans, transport can be arranged to Akureyri or Egilsstadir for the onward flight to Reykjavik. Please contact Ripp Sporting for details

Beat rotation and first fishing session

The fishing day on Hofsa is split into two sessions. The morning session is from 8am to 1pm and the afternoon session from 4pm to 10pm. After mid August the fishing stops at 9pm but you are allowed to go out at 3pm if you like.

New fishing group always start their fishing trip in the afternoon session as is Icelandic tradition. Fishing finishes at 12 noon after the morning session on the final day.

Having been welcomed to the Hofsa lodge and shown the facilities, fishers are invited to draw for the beats on which they will commence fishing that afternoon. The fishers then rotate through the beats, fishing one beat per session. Having drawn beats, rods are introduced to their guides and a tackle and tactics discussion commences before heading out fishing for the afternoon session. Prior to going out on the river, if you would like coffee or tea or cold drinks whilst out fishing ask the guide in advance.

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Hofsa River & Beats

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Hofsa River & Beats

There are seven rods on the Hofsa, fishing seven beats over 17km of fishable water.

There is private access via a gravel and dirt tracks to all of the river. It takes almost an hour to reach the uppermost pools on the river. Some pools require a short walk to reach them and most pools are easily accessed. On beat one and partially on beat two, you will need to walk a bit from your car. It is highly recommended that you carry a small waterproof rucksack or similar so you can spend as much time fishing as possible without returning to the guide's car.

Few notes on the beats: There are seven beats on the Hofsa. The top beat is beat number one and it's by many considered the most beautiful part of the river. The beats are accessible by car and most of the pools are within a walking distance for your car. On beats one, and partially also on beat two, you will need to walk to some of the pools. There is a track up Long Merlin pool on beat one, from there anglers need to walk up river to the Foss pools and fish their way down when they fish beat one.

Beat rotation is such that if you draw a particular number, let's say beat number 4 in the first afternoon, you will then fish beat number 6 the following morning and beat number 1 in the afternoon, and so on.



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Recommended Tackle when fishing Hofsa

Rods

On Hofsa the most effective rods are either powerful single-handed rods or a small double-handers.

For single-handed rods we suggest a 9 to 10 ft fly rods with floating lines, 7 or 8wt.

Many fishers also bring 11 to 13 ft lightweight double-handed rods with floating lines, 7, 8 or 9wt. These often prove very useful in windy or high water conditions. The vast majority of fishing on Hofsa employs short to medium length casts.

Reels

You will need a good quality fly reel that will hold the right line for your rod and at least 100 metres of quality backing.



Lines

On the Hofsa, most fishing is done with a floating line. As casts do not have to be far and flies are frequently stripped, if using double-handed rods we recommend shorter bellied or shooting head lines rather than the longer bellied Spey lines. It is advisable to bring line dressing to ensure the line remains very buoyant, particularly at the tip. Generally speaking the water tends to be higher early season dropping away as the season progresses but it is wise to pack a sink tip in case of flood. Your reel should also have at least 100 metres of quality backing.

Leaders & Tippet Material

Hofsa has a good proportion of multi-sea-winter fish so the most common tippet strength is 14lbs to 20lbs.

Typically salmon are not leader-shy but when considering the clarity of the Icelandic rivers a rod length leader or more is ideal.

Fishers should take spare spools of tippet material that you can tie on as frequent fly changes will shorten leader length rapidly (often when you are targeting an individual fish it will rise to two or three patterns of fly before finally taking).



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Flies

Before you travel, make sure you have decided on flies. You will get the best selection in Iceland. This will save you buying flies that are unsuited to the local fishing conditions. We are more than happy to point out to you where you should pick up your flies.

We recommend using fairly small flies of various patterns with strong hooks. Double hooks are most common. Under high water conditions we use bigger flies or tube. Hitch tubes or Sunray Shadow type of flies are also very popular.

Lightly dressed flies on silver double or treble hooks or lightweight black double hooks are most favoured at Hofsa. Some of the favourite flies include Hairy Mary, Blue Charm, Haugur, Black Sheep, Silver Sheep, Undertaker, Munro's Killer, Frances to name a few. Common sizes are 12s, 14s and even 16s in low water conditions.

Also highly effective are 1/4-1/2 inch micro- tubes tied with short, dark wings and silver or bare plastic bodies used either 'hitched' or fished sub-surface with a size 14 or 16 treble. The most common sizes of fly are 12s and 14s.

Other very useful patterns in fast water or late in the evening are the Collie Dog and Sunray Shadow.

Under high water conditions, tube flies can be very effective.

Waders

Although deep wading is rare, often there is some wading to be done. It is essential to fish Hofsa wearing chest waders, allowing you to not only cross the river at a given safe point but also sit down on the damp bank and fish through periods of rain without getting wet and cold. Be sure to test your waders before you go to make sure they are watertight. Nothing is more frustrating than fighting seam leaks through a week in cold water. We recommend Gore-Tex/breathable waders of good quality for comfort and ease of movement.

Wading on Hofsa can be tricky with large boulders and fast flows so in certain conditions a good collapsible wading staff may come in handy. This will give you extra confidence and help on the occasional difficult wade. We also recommend you consider a flotation vest or jacket. Some fishers are more comfortable not wading at all. Please make this clear to your guide and he will make adjustments for you.



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All larger fish (over 70cm) must be returned by fishers

Catch & Release

Fishing on Hofsa is mostly catch and release. Rods are trusted to exercise a sensible approach to retaining fish and not to retain more than one fish per day regardless. All larger fish (over 70cm) must be returned by fishers and only one grilse (one sea-winter salmon generally not more than 5-6lbs) can be retained per day.

If this policy can be observed there is no reason why fishers cannot continue to enjoy the privilege of wild Atlantic salmon on their table. If not, a more heavy-handed approach with mandatory catch and release will need to be imposed in future years. The future policy rests in the hands of fishers.

Iceland is seeing a huge effort being put into researching and preserving the fish stocks in these beautiful and sensitive rivers by leaseholders, farmers and fishermen alike. The leaseholders of many of Iceland's prime rivers work throughout the year with the Fisheries Institute and other regulatory and research bodies to assess fish stocks and spawning success rates and are constantly striving to improve the welfare of the Icelandic salmon population and provide information about the Icelandic success story for the benefit of other Atlantic salmon systems.



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Fishing Methods

First of all, the Icelandic fishing day is made up of two long sessions. Be patient, fish wisely and carefully and think positively!

When fishing try to...

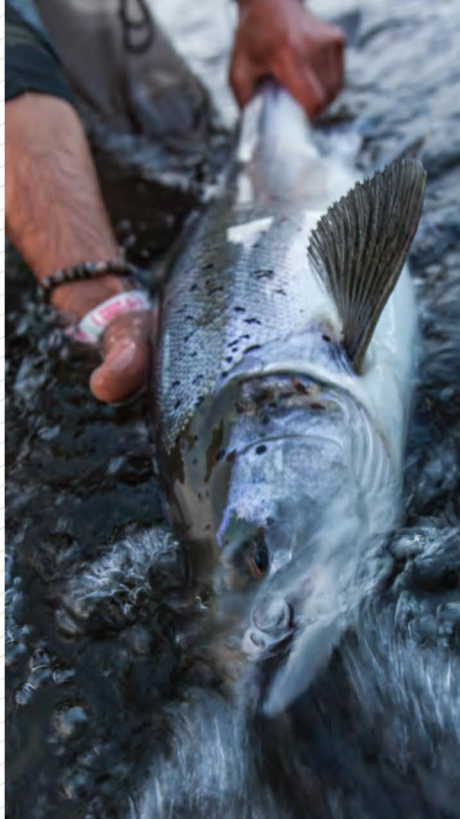
Make every cast count. Good extension of the leader is crucial with often only a short section of the swing covering the likely taking zone. It is important to allow the fly to swim/swing from the minute it hits the water until you pick it up for the next cast. Moving with thoughtful precision through holding water, trying different flies and different retrieves give you the greatest chance of success.

- **Communicate with your guide.** Take advantage of his knowledge by asking questions and demonstrating that you are willing to do exactly what he suggests. Techniques used in Iceland may seem bizarre to you but then prove productive. Remember – the guides do know their river and will put you over fish.
- **Fish slowly and methodically through holding water.** Although the water is very clear, often a fish will only take properly if the fly presents in a very particular way.
- **Always start with a short cast**, lengthening each one gradually; then move downstream, one or two feet every cast. On Hofsa there are pools where you need to stay in the same place to ensure that the fish do not see you. Ask your guide what the strategy is for each pool before starting to fish.
- **Make sure you vary the fly speed** – Icelandic salmon often like a short (7-10 inch) strip retrieve through the arc of swing. Very small flies probably favour swinging across the pool slowly but larger patterns can fish better quickly.

- Think about the angle at which you cast and the amount of mend, upstream or down, that you put into your presentation.
- Employ different casting angles and imparting different motions to your fly on retrieve. **Do ask your guide to teach you the riffled hitch technique.** It works so often on the Hofsa and sometimes can excite salmon into taking when other conventional wet-fly methods are not productive.
- On most beats you will have an opportunity for effective bank casting. When casting from the bank, **check your fly periodically**, particularly if you are in the habit of hitting things on your back cast (rocks, mounds of volcanic earth etc), because fly hooks break when this happens.
- **Avoid alarming the fish.** With such clear water it is best to exercise caution whilst wading or approaching the bank. Move slowly and carefully into a casting position and be aware of the position of the sun and where shadows will be cast.



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Fishing Methods

When fishing try NOT to...

- **Get discouraged when you think you are on a beat that is not productive.** This is when fishers get tired and cast 'lazily', and that is just when the action can happen.
- **Strike when a salmon takes, like you might strike when a trout takes.** The moment a salmon takes is a critical time, and for an inexperienced salmon angler, striking is a common mistake.
- **Lift your rod before you feel the fish.** Often you will see disturbance in the water before the salmon has the fly in its mouth, if you strike at this stage you will not hook the salmon and stand a good chance of spooking him as well. When you do feel the fish, lift the rod in a firm, deliberate manner to hook the fish. Do not strike sharply (or try to reset the hook multiple times as you might a tarpon!)
- **Cast the main line over a salmon and never slash the water on presentation.** Even if a salmon closer to you will not take a fly, if you scare him, he will likely scare others around him. This is where patience, teamwork and deliberation with you guide to apply the best approach can really pay off.

Remember, do not
strike!



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If you 'move' a fish...

This is one you should work on as it has shown a propensity to move to the fly. Keep your eye on your fly, and if the salmon rolls after it, or even if you see a silvery flash near your fly, mark the distance of this cast, allow your fly to finish swinging, strip in your line and wait a couple of minutes before you cast to him again. Keep the position of the fish carefully in mind and cast once or twice more to him. If he does not take, rest him again and change flies, working with your guide on alternating sizes and colours. Sometimes, on a sunny, still day, you can 'move' the fish like this half a dozen times before he eventually takes. Sometimes he will never take, but chances are if you work him patiently you can entice him. Once he has shown himself to your fly, he is often the best candidate in the pool at that time to be taken, so work him accordingly.

When you've hooked a fish...

Learn to fight a salmon aggressively. Most fishermen play a salmon too timidly; this causes people to lose more fish than when putting the heat on them. Remember, however, to 'bow' to a salmon when he jumps.

Learn to anticipate jumps as line is running out and surfacing at the same time. Be prepared and drop your rod forward and down when the fish jumps, rather than keeping tight line tension on him at that moment which can lead to breakage of the tippet.

In general, when fishing Icelandic rivers...

- Use bright small flies on bright days and darker/duller coloured flies during reduced light levels.
- The lower the water temperature, the larger the fly and the warmer the water, the smaller the fly.
- Likewise, the more quiet flowing the water is, the smaller the fly and the faster the water, the larger the fly.
- Smaller flies are more effective later in the season or in holding pools where salmon may have been for some time.
- Try smaller, darker dressings on a fish that is coming but refuses to take the fly. More sparsely dressed patterns, including the hair wings, are more effective than the traditional fully dressed patterns of days gone by.
- Salmon should be rested more often in low water and bright weather.
- Accurate casting and precise manipulation of the fly are twice as important as fly pattern in most salmon fishing.



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Recommended Clothing & Outerwear

- Chest waders (preferably Gore- Tex/ breathable for comfort and mobility)
- Waterproof wading or fishing jacket or wading vest with hood
- Fleece type windproof jacket
- Waterproof hood or hat
- Peaked cap or hat to assist vision into the water
- Fishing shirts - ideally cotton or brushed cotton/wool
- Warm sweater or fleeces
- Warm, comfortable wading socks
- Thermal/microfibre long underwear
- Warm fishing trousers
- Light fishing gloves (open mitt is excellent for improved line control)
- Light windbreaker jacket
- Life vest, pack or inflation belt
- Wading staff (ideally folding)
- Polaroid glasses (one spare pair is ideal) with amber or light brown lenses.
- Comfortable, casual clothing for travel and for wearing at the lodge
- Suitable transformer for electric shaver or other appliance (Iceland has 220 240 volt, 50 cycle current)





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Hofsa Lodge – Arhvammur



Arhvammur lodge

The lodge on the Hofsa is homely and while not the most luxurious, it does not detract from the river's appeal. There are seven rooms with en suite bathrooms and two single rooms with shared access to shower facilities. The lodge caters for a total of 7 rods. There is a nice sitting room with a fire place and good facilities. Connecting to the living room there is a bright dining area with a great view of the river and the nearby mountains. From the dining area you can walk out to a nice balcony and enjoy the view.

Meals at Hofsa Lodge

The Hofsa lodge is full service. If the rods fishing the top beat wish to leave very early in the morning so that fishing time is not lost, they can have an early breakfast while everyone else on the lower beats can enjoy a more leisurely approach.

Lunch is served as soon as the anglers come back from the morning session. Dinner is served when the last person returns from the river usually at about 11.00pm.

The chefs at Hofsa are used to cater for individual requirements if you have special wishes within the course of a normal week.

Alcoholic Beverages

Alcoholic and soft drinks are not included as part of the fishing package. Alcoholic drinks are available at the lodge at reasonable prices. You can also purchase your alcoholic drinks in the "Vinbud" in Reykjavik, Akureyri, Egilsstadir, Vopnafjordur or Thorshofn.





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Laundry

Laundry service is available. Ask the staff in the morning for assistance. This is free of charge but tipping is highly appreciated.

Internet & Telephone

The signal on the Hofsa is fairly good and there is wifi at the lodge.

Smoking

Smoking is not permitted within the lodge other than in designated smoking areas or on the lodge deck overlooking the river where seating and communal areas are well provided.

Gratuities & Currency

If guests choose to give tips to either the house staff or guides, this can be done in cash.

It is normal for each fisherman to tip approximately GB£15 / USD\$20 / EUR€20 to the house staff and perhaps GB£20 / US\$25 / EUR€25 to the guide, per day.

Please remember that tips, at least in Iceland, are discretionary – please do not feel obliged to tip unless you feel you have received an excellent level of service....we are confident that you will receive an exemplary service.



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Useful information for travel planning and other recommendations:

Restaurants in Reykjavik:

Reykjavik is home to many great restaurants, to name a few:

Apotek Restaurant

<http://apotek.is/?lang=en>

Grillmarket

<http://www.grillmarkadurinn.is/en/>

Fishmarket

<http://fiskmarkadurinn.is/english/>

Austur India Fjelagid

<http://www.austurindia.is/en>

Kolabrautin

<http://www.kolabrautin.is/en/>

Hotels in Reykjavik:

There are many hotels to choose from, to name a few:

Icelandair hotels

<http://www.icelandairhotels.com/>

Hotel Holt

<http://www.holt.is/english>

1919 Radisson Blu

<https://www.radissonblu.com/en/1919hotel-reykjavik>

101hotel

<http://101hotel.is/>



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Emergency Numbers

If you experience problems during travel, please feel free to call:

Angling Club Strengur: +354 696 1130 (Gisli Asgeirsson)

River Keeper at Hofsa: +354 899 5458 (Jon Magnus)

Fossgerdi, the Sela lodge: +354 473 1260

Arhvammur, the Hofsa lodge: +354 473 1464

In case of emergency, the number to dial for Icelandic emergency services is: **Police & Ambulance: (+354) 112**

Insurance

Angling Club Strengur recommends that guests take out travel insurance and trip cancellation insurance. Please contact your insurance company for assistance.

Thank you. We wish you safe travels, a fantastic visit to Iceland and tight lines at Hafralonsa.

A large, white, serif capital letter 'R' is positioned in the top left corner of the dark red background.

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Have a
great time
at the river