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 visited 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

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 luxuries 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 geothermal 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 & 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.

Highland Base is 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 & 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 10,000 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 snowfields, 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 2022, the Kerlingfjöll Mountain Resort was reborn in the form of Highland Base—a location that expands the horizons of hospitality in the heart of an extreme wilderness. Though the accommodations 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.

Akureyri
Egilsstaðir
Highland Base
Kerlingarfjöll
Gullfoss
Reykjavík
Keflavík
International Airport
Blue Lagoon
Vík

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 nearly inaccessible. 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, snowshoeing, and snowmobiling. Likewise, the supremely dark nights bring forth astonishing visions of the arctic skies.

The accommodations
Encompassing a campsite, huts for hosteling, and a multi-building hotel complex with rooms, suites, and lodges, 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 are designed for ultimate comfort.

The restaurant & lounge
Highland Base's 80-seat restaurant combines hearty cooking and culinary excellence, offering bistro comfort food by day and buffet dining by night. The lounge, located above the restaurant, is a place of cozy warmth and communal togetherness with captivating views of Kerlingarfjöll.

The baths
Three interconnected hot pots form Highland Base Baths. Sourced from the geothermal bounty of the Hveradalir hot springs, these pools of natural warmth bring forth deep relaxation under the arctic sky. Whether a blizzard is raging or the Midnight Sun is flooding the mountains, the baths are a soothing dimension of the Highland Base experience.

The adventures
From e-biking, skiing, 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 & 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 - Standard Twin & Family - Opening July 1
Highland Base Hotel - Deluxe, Premium & Suites - Opening July 1
Highland Base Restaurant - Opening July 1
Highland Base Baths - Opening October 1
Highland Base Lodges - Opening July 1

Highland Base Huts - Opening July 1
Service house for the campsite - Opening July 1
Campsite - Opening July 1

Property overview

Building/Location	Room type	No. of rooms	Occupancy	Size	Season	Room Layout
Highland Base Hotel	Standard Twin Room	15	2 adults	18 m^2	All year	2 single beds
	Standard Family Room	5	2 adults + 2 children	18 m^2	All year	Queen bunk bed
	Deluxe Twin Room	15	2 adults	22 m^2	All year	2 single beds
	Deluxe Double Room	7	2 adults	22 m^2	All year	Double bed
	Premium Room	4	2 adults + 2 children	30 m^2	All year	Double bed / sofa bed
	Highland Suite	2	2 adults	44 m^2	All year	Terrace with hot tub Double bed
	Highland Lodge	6	2 adults + 2 children	44 m^2	All year	Private entrance, Double bed / sofa bed, Lounge area
Hostel Huts	Sleeping bag accommodation	1	15	67 m^2	Summer only	Bed in shared dormitory with shared WC and cooking facilities
	Sleeping bag accommodation	1	3	27 m^2	Summer only	Private hut with sleeping bag accommodation / 3 single beds / private WC / shared shower facilities at campsite
	Sleeping bag accommodation	2	8	33 m^2	Summer only	Private hut with sleeping bag accommodation / 2 double beds and 4 single beds / private WC / shared shower facilities at campsite
	Made up beds & breakfast included	4	2	15 m^2	Summer only	Private room in hut with private entrance and made-up beds / 2 single beds / private bathroom
	Made up beds & breakfast included	2	3	27 m^2	Summer only	Private room in hut with private entrance and made-up beds / 3 single beds / private bathroom
Campsite					Summer only	

Additional details

- There are 3 wheelchair accessible rooms.
- A crib can be added to selected rooms.
- All rooms are non-smoking.

Highland Base Hotel

Composed of multiple structures encompassing 46 rooms, 2 suites, and 6 lodges, Highland Base Hotel is an oasis of deep warmth and relaxing comfort. Accommodations range from the simple to the luxurious, but coziness is intrinsic in every space. Underground passageways connect the hotel with the restaurant and the baths, enabling guests to traverse the grounds without battling the elements.

Rooms: 54
Sizes: 18 m^2 - 44 m^2
Types: 6

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 m^2
- Located in the east wing
- Bed type: 2 single beds
- Max occupancy: 2 adults
- Private bathroom with shower

Inclusions

- Buffet breakfast
- Wi-Fi

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 m^2
- Located in the east wing
- Bed type: Queen bunk bed
- Max occupancy: 4 guests (2 adults / 2 children)
- Private bathroom with shower

Inclusions

- Buffet breakfast
- Wi-Fi

Deluxe Twin Room

Calibrated for comfort, the Deluxe Twin Room 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 m^2
- Located in the west wing
- Bed type: 2 single beds
- Max occupancy: 2 guests
- Private bathroom with shower
- Coffee/tea facilities

Inclusions

- Buffet breakfast
- Wi-Fi

Deluxe Double Room

Radiating warmth and comfort, the Deluxe Double is a place of rustic coziness. With deep windows and a double bed, this room is an eminently relaxing abode.

Details

- Room size: 22 m^2
- Located in the west wing
- Bed type: 1 double bed
- Max occupancy: 2 guests
- Private bathroom with shower
- Coffee/tea facilities

Inclusions

- Buffet breakfast
- Wi-Fi

Premium 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 m^2
- Located in the west wing
- Bed type: 1 double bed / 1 sofa bed
- Max occupancy: 4 guests (2 adults / 2 children)
- Private bathroom with shower
- Coffee/tea facilities

Inclusions

- Buffet breakfast
- Wi-Fi

Highland 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 Highland Suite features a sheltered terrace with a geothermal hot tub and breathtaking vistas of the surrounding mountains.

Details

- Room size: 44 m^2
- Terrace with hot tub
- Located in the west wing
- Bed type: 1 double bed
- Max occupancy: 2 guests
- Private bathroom with shower
- Lounge area
- Coffee/tea facilities

Inclusions

- Buffet breakfast
- Wi-Fi

Highland Lodge

The ultimate Highland Base accommodation—a private residence designed for luxurious 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.

Details

- Room size: 44 m^2
- Independent unit
- Private entrance
- Bed type: 1 double bed / 1 sofa bed
- Max occupancy: 4 guests (2 adults / 2 children)
- Lounge area
- Coffee/tea facilities

Inclusions

- Buffet breakfast
- Wi-Fi

There are six lodges. Two lodges can be connected to create an 88 m^2 Grand Lodge.

Hostel Huts

Our hostel huts comprise a range of accommodations. Whether you seek a bunk bed and shared facilities in a communal space or a private hut experience with exclusive facilities, our unadorned though sturdy A-frames offer elemental comfort, bringing you an authentic highland hostel experience. All guests of the huts are welcome to dine at Highland Base Restaurant and purchase admission to Highland Base Baths.

Highland Base Camp

In summer, when the snows have melted and endless light floods the land, Highland Base Camp comes to life—a sprawling riverside campground at the base of Kerlingarfjöll. A place of spartan comforts, there are no inclusions and the bathroom and kitchen facilities are shared with the hostel huts. However, campers are welcome to dine at Highland Base Restaurant and purchase admission to Highland Base Baths.

Shared areas

Highland Base's shared areas provide minimalist though modern conveniences. Bathrooms, kitchen facilities, parking, and an information center ensure basic cleanliness, comfort, and security for hostelers and campers.

Highland Base Restaurant

Hearty cooking, alpine-style seating, 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 restaurant is a cozy refuge of communal warmth and savory nourishment in a remote highland frontier.

Seating: 80 people
Cuisine: Icelandic/International
Menus: Breakfast, bistro á la carte menu until 18:00, lunch set menu options, dinner buffet from 18:00, breakfast/lunch take-away packages.

Opening hours:
Breakfast: 07:00 - 10:00
Lunch/Bistro: 12:00 - 18:00
Dinner: 18:00 - 21:00 (last seating)

Advance dinner reservations recommended.

ICELAND

Highland Base Baths

Encompassing a trio of hot pots built into the earth and sourced from the Hveradalir geothermal field, the Highland Base Baths evoke natural hot-spring bathing—a lively, communal experience of the earth's revitalizing heat. Opening in the fall of 2023, the facilities include a sauna, changing rooms, and an underground passageway that connects to the hotel buildings, providing convenient, sheltered access.

Entry to the baths is included with hotel accommodation. Guests of the campground and the hostel huts can use the baths for an additional charge.

Activities on site

Hiking (Summer)
A vast network of trails ranging from one kilometer to 50 kilometers creates exciting possibilities for hikes of all distances and difficulties. 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 (Summer 2024)
With a fleet of electric mountain bikes, Highland Base offers motorized cycling—exhilarating, eco-friendly journeys that traverse the raw and colorful mountainscape, taking you into the heart of a dazzling frontier.

Skiing (Summer/Winter)
Skiing is a year-round element of Kerlingarfjöll. In summer, well-chosen sheets of snow avail themselves to downhill adventures. In winter, the entire mountain range becomes a highland paradise of skiing possibilities.

Cross country skiing (Winter)
In winter, cross-country skiing is a fulfilling and invigorating activity that enables inspiring excursions across the snow-covered wilderness.

Snowmobiling (Winter)
A fleet of snowmobiles sets you free to zoom across the sprawling white wonderland, exploring Kerlingarfjöll's breathtaking panoramas as you thrill to the adrenalizing rush of a motorized adventure.

Accessibility / How to get here

Accessibility
Located in the central highlands, Highland Base is at an elevation of 700 meters. In summer it is accessible by car, private transfer, and bus. During the winter, we can only be reached with a 4x4 super jeep driven by a professional.

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.

HIGHLAND BASE
KERLINGARFJÖLL

Get in touch

· If you are a travel professional, contact our sales representatives at **sales@highlandbase.is**
· If you are an individual wishing to make a direct booking, contact us at **info@highlandbase.is**