

Where in the World Is Iceland?

ICELAND IS AN ISLAND COUNTRY that lies between the Greenland Sea and the North Atlantic Ocean. It about 168 miles (270 km) south of the **Arctic Circle**.



Did You Know?

The Arctic Circle is an imaginary line that circles around the top of the globe. During the summer **solstice** (June 21 or 22), the sun never sets in the Arctic Circle. It never rises during the winter solstice (December 21-22).

Flying Time

To: Iceland

From: London, England: 3 hours

From New York, NY: 5 hours

From Sydney, Australia: 29 hours

From Greenland 2 hours, 14 minutes

Cool Facts About ICELAND

ICELANDERS:

- Eat more cheese than anyone else in the world;
- Drink more Coca-Cola than anyone else in the world;
- Go to more movies than anyone else in the world.

For 21 years (from 1966 to 1987), television was not available on Thursdays in Iceland. Why? The government wanted to promote more face-to-face interaction among the citizens.



Iceland has almost three times as many sheep as it has people. Maybe that's why the most famous food dish in Iceland is lamb soup.

Sports in Iceland

Iceland's national sport is handball.

Professional boxing has been banned (not allowed) in Iceland since 1956.

For 74 years (from 1935 to 1989), beer was banned in Iceland. Today, March 1 is celebrated each year as Beer Day!

Chapter 2

Early Civilizations The Vikings

Period: AD 800 to 1100

MORE THAN A THOUSAND YEARS AGO, there was a group of people called the Vikings. They lived in northern Europe in areas now known as Denmark, Norway, and Sweden.



A Conversation with Vikin

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What does the word Viking mean?

It comes from the word "vikingr," which is a word in the Old Norse language. It means "pirate raid."



Why were people afraid of the Vikings?

Where were the Vikings from?

The Vikings were people from Scandinavia - present-day Norway, Denmark, and Sweden.

Well, I look pretty scary, don't I? Actually, we could be pretty mean.

Chapter
3

Landmarks and Attractions The Blue Lagoon

Fun Fact

In some parts of Iceland, hot water runs from geothermal power plants under pavements and roads to help melt ice.

A young man with short brown hair and round glasses is smiling broadly. He is shirtless and appears to be in a hot spring or lagoon, with water up to his chest. The background is a soft, out-of-focus blue and white, suggesting a natural outdoor setting.

IMAGINE TAKING A BATH in a giant hot tub. You can do something like that at the Blue Lagoon in Iceland.

The Blue Lagoon is a special spa where the water temperature averages 102°F (39°C). The warm waters are rich in minerals. Many people believe the minerals are very good for people's skin.

The water in this man-made lagoon comes from a nearby **geothermal** power plant.

The Blue Lagoon is one of the most popular attractions in all of Iceland.

Chapter

4

PEOPLE and Customs

The Color Race

THE COLOR RACE is called the "happiest 5k on the planet." Winning isn't the goal; having fun is. And thousands of Icelanders -- called Color Runners -- join in the fun and excitement each year

At each kilometer in the race, the Color Runners get splashed with a rainbow of colored powder. The more the better.

After the run, there's a party full of music, dancing, and more colored powder thrown on everyone!

The color Run is held in more than 300 cities around the world. Is yours one?

Chapter 5

The Wildlife of Iceland

The Arctic Fox



WHEN THE FIRST VIKING EXPLORER arrived in Iceland, there was only one land mammal: the Arctic fox. At the same time, there were many different birds and marine animals, such as whales and dolphins.

Today, there are many different animal **species** in Iceland – some, like the Arctic fox are wild; some, like the Icelandic sheep or horse, are **domesticated**.

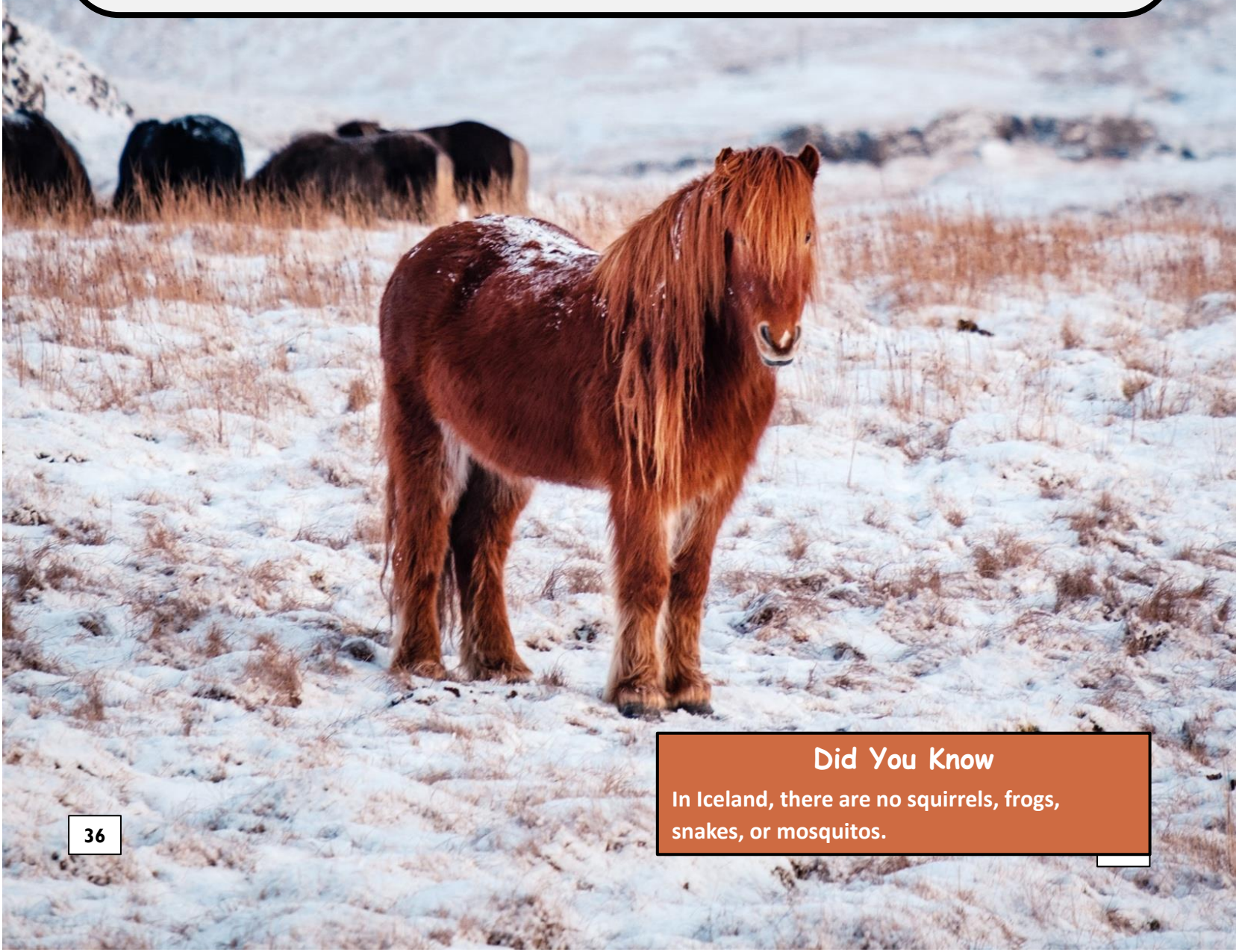
In this chapter, we take a brief look at some of the fascinating animals in Iceland.

The Wildlife of Iceland, cont.

Icelandic Horse

THE ICELANDIC HORSE is different from almost any other horse in the world. First, it stands only about 55 inches (140 cm) high; the average horse, on the other hand, measures as much as about 62 inches (157 cm) tall at the withers (*the area at the base of the horse's neck, between its shoulder bones*).

The Icelandic horse is famous for being gentle, friendly, and easy-going – and also very intelligent. Other horses can be a little temperamental.



Did You Know

In Iceland, there are no squirrels, frogs, snakes, or mosquitos.