

Blue Lagoon, Iceland

The [Blue Lagoon Iceland](#) in **Reykjavik** is an outdoor geothermal spa in a surrealist setting.



Some places must be experienced to appreciate their unique beauty; the Blue Lagoon in Reykjavik is one such place as it shows the ingenuity of the Icelandic people. In 1976 a power company drilled the geothermal area creating a large hole, which subsequently filled with a mineral rich mixture of salt water and fresh water. In 1981, people living in the area requested permission to bathe in the geothermal waters and noticed an improvement in their arthritis and psoriasis conditions. By 1987 the first public bathing facilities opened, in 1984 a clinic for psoriasis opened and was recognized by the Icelandic Ministry of Health, and in 1999 the new Blue Lagoon Spa formally opened. Today, people travel to Iceland from all parts of the world to soak in the geothermal waters for health as well as beauty.

Located 45 minutes from Reykjavik, and only 20 minutes from the Keflavik International Airport, we visited the Blue Lagoon in April 2007 before flying back to the United States. As we approached the Blue Lagoon we noticed the steam rising dramatically against a backdrop of mountains in the distance, and rough volcanic topography in the foreground. Once we entered the parking lot, it took us ten minutes before we reached the door to the Blue Lagoon, not because of the distance, but because we stopped every few feet to photograph the intriguing volcanic formations along the way.



We met with Ingi Gunnar Olafsson, Reception Manager, who took us on a tour of the Blue Lagoon, and when we stepped outside onto the wooden bridge over the water, we felt like we had just landed on the moon. Imagine mist rising over a vast crater filled with turquoise water, skies so blue they seemed unreal against fluffy white cumulus clouds and blazing sunshine; in a word, it was spectacular.

Ingi Gunnar Olafsson told us many interesting facts about the Blue Lagoon, which holds six million liters of geothermal salt water obtained from a depth of 2,000 meters which is renewed every 40 hours, is kept between 37 - 39° C (98.6 - 102° F), and has a rich concentration of minerals,



silica (which firms the skin), and two types of algae (one type of algae helps to prevent collagen breakdown, and the other type increases the production of collagen), and due to its unique ecosystem, requires no added chlorine. Other major elements include sodium, potassium, calcium, magnesium, carbon dioxide, sulphate, chlorine, and fluorine. Armed with our new knowledge, we were eager to experience the Blue Lagoon.



We changed into our bathing suits in the locker rooms, took a shower, and this being April and still cold in Iceland, made a hasty retreat from the showers to the Blue Lagoon. Descending the steps and entering the deliciously warm water was a most memorable experience, as we saw white silica mud faced Spa goers basking in the sunshine. A sign above a wooden box instructed visitors that a silica mud mask helps to "cleanse, exfoliate, and revitalize the skin," so naturally we had to try it. Using a ladle to scoop up the silica, we smoothed the silica mud on our faces and joined the legion of other silica-faced visitors, laughing at each other with our mud masks.



We then read about the Blue Lagoon's special silica massages, and although we did not have enough time to schedule a massage treatment, we decided that we would massage the silica mud on our arms and backs, which required us to remain partially elevated out of the water in order for the silica mud to dry for 10 minutes. It seemed like a good idea at the time as we walked with our arms lifted above our heads until a light, and cold we must add, rain started. We put our arms back in the water, submerged our bodies up to our chins, and waited out the momentary rain shower. The weather in Iceland can quickly change from sun to rain to hail and back to sun all in the period of 30 minutes, which we experienced during our stay. Since most of our silica mud had washed away in the rain, when the sun came out we repeated the process, followed by an invigorating massage under the waterfall.

Created by: Debra C. Argen and Edward F. Nesta



We soaked and floated in the warm waters until our skin was absolutely prune-like. Exiting the water albeit reluctantly, we returned to the locker rooms, took showers to remove the seawater, and immediately noticed that our skin felt silkier and smoother. However, (Debra) forgot to use conditioner after washing her hair, resulting in a decidedly wild hair day, but it was a small price to pay for the other Spa benefits.

The Blue Lagoon has an excellent restaurant with dramatic floor-to-ceiling windows (7 meters/22 feet high), and we had lunch sitting at a table by the window where we had a dazzling view of the lagoon as the dappled play of sunlight and mist over the water created an almost other worldly atmosphere.



For our first course we had a light curry coconut soup laden with an abundance of shrimp and a decorative swirl of pesto oil accompanied by warm bread. We continued with salmon on a bed of mixed salad greens with diced feta cheese, sun-dried tomatoes, new potatoes, broccoli, cauliflower, carrots, zucchini, celery, cucumbers, and radicchio with a drizzle of pesto oil and balsamic lines on the plate. Deciding to forego dessert, we ended lunch with steaming cups of coffee enjoyed with chocolates.



Leaving thoroughly refreshed and relaxed, visiting the Blue Lagoon before driving to the airport was a fabulous way to leave Iceland with a lasting memory of the natural beauty of the country. We now understand the Blue Lagoon motto "Energy for life through forces of nature," and look forward to returning, only the next time (Debra) will remember to use conditioner!

The **Blue Lagoon** is open daily, hours vary throughout the year; September 1 - May 14 from 10:00 am - 8:00 pm; May 15 - May 31 from 9:00 am - 9:00 pm; and June 1 - August 31 from 7:30 am - 9:00 pm. Admission is charged; free admission for children 11 years and younger, and reduced admission for senior citizens (67 years and older) and teenagers (ages 12 - 15 years).



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