

ICELAND TRIP REPORT BY JAN FERRELL

Iceland—what a trip! I'd like to think of it as a great dinner at a lovely restaurant. We had an appetizer (New York City), main course (Iceland) and an outstanding dessert (Bergen, Norway).

Let's start with the appetizer—The Big Apple.

Eight folks took advantage of the pre-trip to New York City. Ron and Roberta Rambin, Sandy Schneider, Cindy Harvey, Penny Chancey, and me, along with Frank Yu and Sue Ann Chu. Another member, Bill Brown, was in the area and hung out with us.

We stayed at the Millennium Broadway right on Times Square within walking distance of Broadway and Central Park. The weather could not have been better. Sandy and Cindy bought tickets to "Hamilton" about a year ago and thought it was terrific. Bill snagged tickets to "Chicago". For those who did, visiting the 9/11 memorial, museum and the Freedom Tower was a very personal experience. Frank found an artist in Central Park from his own village in China (can you believe that?) who sketched a picture for him. What a

small world. It was unreal how crowded Times Square got starting around 2 pm. Roberta and I could not wait to make it through to

the hotel. Whew! Roberta is an avid walker and was up early to enjoy New York without the crowds. Ron is not an early riser so slept in until she returned. Wise move.

On to the main course—Iceland.

For the New Yorkers, it was to be a short trip to the Reykjavik airport. Well, that did not happen. After boarding, Delta informed us that there was a mechanical problem so we returned to the gate. We were due to fly out at 9 pm. We left somewhere around 7 am the next morning. It's called a creeping delay. About every 30 – 40 minutes, we would get an announcement that "it will be about another 30 – 40 minutes". Sleeping on the floor at the airport is not exactly how you want to spend an evening. Ask any of the New York contingent about their experience and the food Delta provided. I personally crashed about 3 am. We finally arrived around 5 pm in Reykjavik. Those of us from NYC missed the Blue Lagoon but heard everyone really enjoyed it. Ask Ellen Eastham about the condition of her hair after a visit to the lagoon.

The core trip to Iceland left on the 21st. Thank you, Marsha Lutz, for making sure everyone was accounted for and arrived in Reykjavik





safely.

On our Iceland trip, we had members from Littleton, CO, Charlene Baca, a member from El Paso, Young Jackson, another from Maine, Betsy Kyle, and Mariette Allan from New York City along with Michelle Cowart and Darla Lemaire from Beaumont.

Members from our Houston club included Joan Waddill, Lori Albrecht, Barbara Carlson, Charlene Baca, Andy and Jenny Berg, Bill Brown, Penny Chancey, Michelle

Cowart, Darla Lemaire, Ellen Eastham and Tom Danowski, Barbara Della Longa, Bob Fried, Betty Gosse, Dave and Diane Gresko, Cindy Harvey, Sandy Schneider, Jim Hassing and Vivian Wang, Jim Hodges and Marina Wang, Vicki

Jud, Joan Korpall, Marsha Lutz, Ann Rogers, Shirley Machleit, Brian and Nancy Reagan, Nancy Richards, Beverly and Charlie Roberts, Dave and Diane Stotz and Jo Ann Zemlicka.



Dave and Diane Gresko made reservations far in advance to dine at 2 lovely restaurants in both Reykjavik and Bergen. Good planning!



The second day in Reykjavik found several of us going whale watching where we saw whales, seals and porpoises in the fjords. The weather could not have been

better for photos.

Because of the size of our group, we were able to have a bus of our own. We had a dedicated tour guide and driver for the duration of the trip. A highlight of the trip was a visit to a horse farm with a demonstration. Icelandic horses are world famous for their “fifth gait”. They look like they are floating.



We saw stunning waterfalls, geysers and a black sand beach. The Icelanders are friendly and helpful and, thank heavens, they speak excellent English, as their language is impossible.

On August 29th, many of us were to return home. Hurricane Harvey had already camped out over Houston and there was no getting in as the airports were closed. All of us were worried



about family, friends and our homes. Many hours were spent with our tour operator trying to get us back home. Most of us went to Minneapolis and then on to other locations.

Sandy Schneider was a great guide for the folks in Minneapolis. I call her my “wing man”. I am very grateful for her help. Thanks, Sandy!

Next is dessert—Bergen, Norway.

Bergen was and is very special. It's large enough to have a lot





of places to visit and outstanding restaurants, and small enough to feel the warmth of the people and the beauty and charm of the city. Pictures do not do justice to the city and its surroundings. Most of us took the Norway in a Nutshell tour. That was thanks to Ellen Eastham and her Norwegian friend, Rigmor, who brought it to our attention. We travelled by train, a hair-raising



bus ride and a boat through the fjords. Our bus driver had nerves of steel but you could tell it wasn't his first rodeo.

Strolling through the fish market, eating outside at one of the many cafes, enjoying the nightlife and shopping made our visit extraordinary. Put it on your bucket list.

Eventually it was time to return home but we carry with us great memories and photos of an exceptional trip with friends.

Thanks for being part of it--Jan

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