

## UPPER INTERMEDIATE UNIT 4

- 1** Work in pairs. Look at the photos and discuss.
- 1 What can you see? Which country do you think this is?
  - 2 What time of year is it in each photo? Which of the places would you like to visit the most?
  - 3 Is this your idea of a 'great getaway'?
- 2** Read the article about Iceland as a holiday destination and answer the questions.
- 1 What is the country's special association with time?
  - 2 When do people visit the country? Why?
  - 3 What activities can you do there?
- 3** Read the article again. Underline the correct alternative.
- 1 Iceland used to be *an exclusive tourist destination/ a stopping-over place.*
  - 2 The country's tourism industry will grow because of *new investment/the country is now fashionable.*
  - 3 *There is the same number of visitors all the year round./ Visitor numbers vary in summer and winter.*
  - 4 You can go whale-watching at midnight in the *summer/ winter.*
  - 5 Hot pots are recommended *after a lot of physical activity/ as a way to relax.*
  - 6 The landscapes *are very varied/ are not for everybody.*
  - 7 It's not a place to come to if you like *green landscapes/ empty places.*
  - 8 The vast landscape and small population mean it's easy to *make friends/ to feel very small.*

## An Unlikely Destination

Iceland used to be a place American tourists stopped off on their way to Europe. It was the cheapest way to cross the Atlantic, but nobody stayed for more than a day or two. Today it is one of the world's fastest-growing travel destinations. In the last five years, visitor numbers have doubled. And that rise is due to continue as new hotels are built, budget airlines open up routes and new attractions open. Here's a quick rundown of what you can expect.

### Northern Lights or endless nights

Due to its geographical position at the top of the globe, summer and winter are very different here. In June, there is virtually no nighttime, and in December virtually no day. People mostly visit in the summer because of the long days and better weather but increasingly people are coming in winter to see the breathtaking Northern Lights. Tour guides take you on snowmobiles to areas with no light pollution to increase your chance of seeing the phenomenon. But bring warm clothes, it can be freezing! In the summer, enjoy near-endless daylight – why not go whale-watching at midnight?

### Hot pots everywhere

There are 30 active volcanoes here, many of them under thick ice. There are natural hot springs

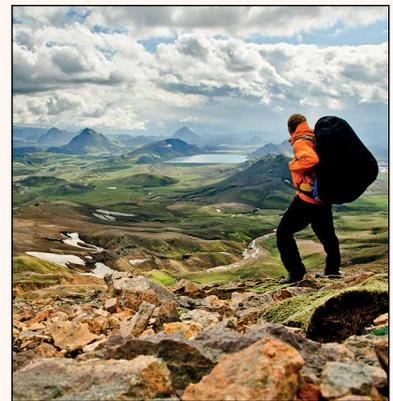


all over this geothermic kingdom. These mineral-rich waters will soothe the mind and the soul and help you unwind. The biggest (but most touristy) is the Blue Lagoon. It is a superb spot with enormous open-air pools, natural steam rooms and saunas, and white silica mud to exfoliate your skin. You won't regret a visit here, but come late to avoid the crowds.

### Other-worldly landscapes

Iceland's natural beauty is almost without equal. You'll be amazed to see icebergs, glaciers, cascading waterfalls, immense black beaches and lava fields all in one day! Wildlife includes large puffin colonies, whales, seals and the delightful arctic fox (which can be hard to spot in the wilderness). The population of Iceland is just 325,000, so it is not hard to get lost in the deserted countryside!

### A trekker's paradise



From leisurely treks to multi-day trips, there is something for everyone here. With the exception of glacier hiking, the best time to go trekking is summertime. Expect to see deserts, gorges, cliffs and, of course, waterfalls wherever you go. However, there are very few trees – only 1 per cent of the country is forested.

If you like the idea of feeling small in an immense and desolate landscape, you'll love Iceland. For me, it's more like the moon than the earth, so it's no wonder that astronauts come here to train!

**4** Read the article again. Match 1–8 with a)–h) to form sentences containing collocations from the article.

- 1 We went on a leisurely
- 2 There are budget
- 3 Just imagine sinking into an open-air
- 4 Iceland has a unique geographical
- 5 The country has a rather desolate
- 6 Iceland is now one of the most popular travel
- 7 There are plenty of active
- 8 The natural hot

- a) landscape that not everybody likes.
- b) volcanoes here, so don't get too close!
- c) trek across the valley, just an hour or so.
- d) airlines flying to Iceland in the summer.
- e) destinations in the world.
- f) springs have purifying qualities.
- g) pool looking at the Northern Lights!
- h) position which explains its strange scenery.

**5** Work in pairs or groups and discuss. What is your opinion of Iceland now? Choose one option. Explain your reasons.

- 1 I would like to go to Iceland more than before. I love the sound of all the activities!
- 2 I would hate to go! I love trees, animals and green places.
- 3 I would only like to go in the summer. In the winter it sounds too dark and cold.

**6**  **4.1** Listen to a lecturer talking about why Iceland has become such an unlikely but popular travel destination. What are the best two summaries of his talk?

- 1 It's impossible to understand why so many tourists want to go to Iceland, it's cold and far away.
- 2 The rise in visitors to Iceland suggests there are new kinds of tourists out there.
- 3 With the rise in tourism, the Icelandic people have to be careful not to destroy their beautiful landscapes.
- 4 Iceland offers the usual hotels and packages but in a unique environment.
- 5 Iceland basically appeals to outdoors people who like nature.

**7** Listen again. Are the sentences true (T) or false (F)? Correct the false sentences.

- 1 The rise in tourism has been gradual.
- 2 The place has few conventional attractions.
- 3 The key to its success is the originality of its landscapes.
- 4 Iceland attracts visitors who like organised trips.
- 5 It is badly situated to get lots of visitors.
- 6 The building of new hotels has already done some damage to the environment.

**8** The words in the box are from the recording. Complete the sentences with the correct form of the words in the box.

demand growth challenge attract addictive willing discomfort asset
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- 1 Iceland's main \_\_\_\_\_ is its pure and original landscapes.
- 2 There is an increased \_\_\_\_\_ for tourist destinations of this kind.
- 3 Trekking and other kinds of 'green tourism' have seen rapid \_\_\_\_\_ in recent years
- 4 Some tourists are not \_\_\_\_\_ to do everything themselves, they want everything to be organised for them.
- 5 Iceland \_\_\_\_\_ stereotypes about what tourists want from a holiday.
- 6 Some people find the landscapes of Iceland really \_\_\_\_\_, they want to go back there again and again.
- 7 Camping and trekking holidays often involve some kind of \_\_\_\_\_, it's not like staying in a five-star hotel.
- 8 You might be surprised to learn that destinations like Iceland \_\_\_\_\_ all kinds of people.

**9** Work in pairs or small groups and discuss.

- 1 Can you think of an original place to go on holiday? What makes it original?
- 2 Describe the place and try to persuade your partner(s) of its attractions.
- 3 Do you like the idea of an organised holiday, or do you prefer an independent trip which you design yourself? Why?