

BACKCOUNTRY SKI EXPEDITION · NORTHEAST ICELAND

Three peaks, one weekend

Herðubreið · Kverkfjöll · Snæfell: a realistic plan for the highlands in winter

Herðubreið	**Kverkfjöll**	**Snæfell**
1,682 m	≈ 1,933 m	1,833 m

Based at Fjalladýrð, Möðrudalur, and guided by Fjalladýrð (Villi's team; Villi's wife guiding). Trip plan with route map, peak notes, itinerary, lodging, gear and safety. Compiled 28 November 2026 from public sources (see the end of the document). Dates to be set; planned around the late-winter/spring ski season.

Cover photo: Herðubreið, Holger Uwe Schmitt, CC BY-SA 4.0 (Wikimedia Commons). Map data © OpenStreetMap contributors.

Overview

Three of north-east Iceland's great highland mountains: **Herðubreið** (the "Queen of Icelandic mountains"), **Kverkfjöll** on the edge of Vatnajökull, and **Snæfell**, the highest mountain in Iceland outside the big ice caps. They sit roughly 55–60 km from each other in a straight line, with no winter roads between them.

This weekend is based entirely at **Fjalladýrð, Möðrudalur á Fjöllum** (all nights), and is **guided by Fjalladýrð (Villi's team; Villi's wife guiding)**. Villi owns Fjalladýrð and the jeeps; Baldur will arrange the trip with Villi directly.

At a glance

Peak	Height	From Möðrudalur	Ski character	Weekend verdict
Herðubreið	1,682 m [1]	Fjalladýrð's published summer 4WD is about **2 hours to the western foot** [53]. Winter access: **snowcat or helicopter, to be decided with Villi**.	Steep tuya; ≈250 m of ~40° near the top [9]	Day 1 (Fri)
Kverkfjöll	≈ 1,933 m (heights vary, see below) [2]	Fjalladýrð's published summer 4WD is **2½ hours** to the Vatnajökull / Kverkjökull edge [54]. Winter time to confirm with Villi.	Large glacier terrain, crevasses, geothermal ground [14][16][17]	Day 2 (Sat)
Snæfell	1,833 m [3]	Not a Fjalladýrð-listed tour. Road via Egilsstaðir: about 95–110 km to town [66][67], then 93 km to the hut [12] — roughly 190–200 km one way, plus the winter approach.	Ice-capped volcano; glacier near the summit [13]	Drop for this base, or a custom trip to confirm with Villi

Dates are not fixed. This plan is written for the late-winter/spring ski season (roughly March to mid-April): mid-March gives about 11.6 h of daylight and mid-April about 15 h at Akureyri and Egilsstaðir, against about 3.1 h on 21 December [20]. A forum poster reports the access tracks closed to driving during the spring thaw, late April to mid-June (unofficial, check with Vegagerðin/the park) [10].

Route-area map

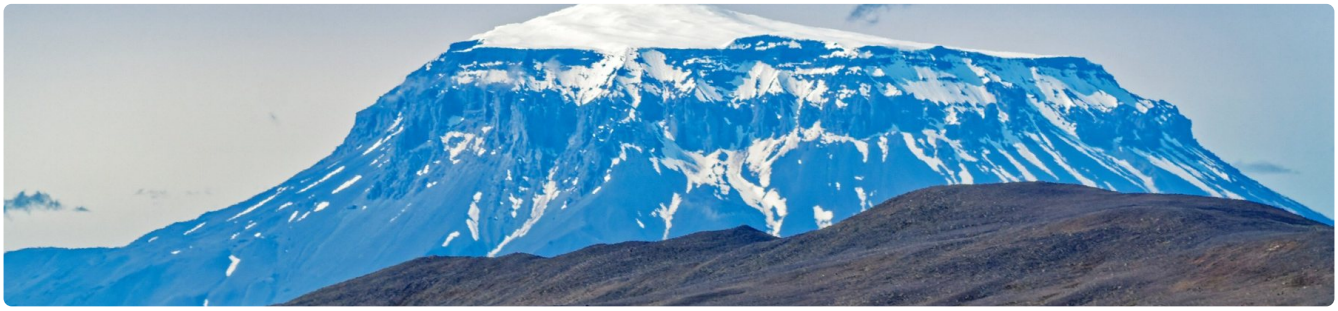


Map: OpenStreetMap contributors (openstreetmap.org/copyright). Peak and hut positions are plotted from published coordinates ([2][3][7][8][11][31] and Wikipedia for Herðubreið). Roads and tracks are as drawn by OpenStreetMap; the F-roads shown are closed in winter [5].

Key distances from the Möðrudalur base

Leg	Distance / time	Source
Möðrudalur, off the Ring Road	About 7–8 km on Route 901	[21][51]
Mývatn area → Möðrudalur	About 65–80 km	[66][67]
Möðrudalur → Egilsstaðir	About 95 km (~1 h 15 min) to 110 km	[66][67]
Akureyri → Reykjahlíð (Mývatn)	≈ 99 km	[25]
Akureyri → Egilsstaðir	≈ 265 km (≈ 3.5 h summer)	[25]
Möðrudalur → western foot of Herðubreið	About 2 hours by 4WD in Fjalladýrð's published summer tour; winter snowcat/jeep time to confirm with Villi	[53]
Möðrudalur → Kverkjökull edge	2½ hours by 4WD in Fjalladýrð's published summer tour; winter time to confirm with Villi	[54]
Möðrudalur → Herðubreið (straight-line)	≈ 30 km	computed from coordinates
Egilsstaðir → Snæfellsskáli (shortest route)	93 km, ≈ 80 km paved	[12]
Möðrudalur → Snæfellsskáli (via Egilsstaðir, road)	Roughly 190–200 km one way, plus the winter approach	[12][66][67]
Herðubreið ↔ Kverkfjöll ↔ Snæfell (straight-line)	61 / 57 / 56 km	computed from coordinates

Herðubreið 1,682 m



Herðubreið from the plain. Photo: Holger Uwe Schmitt, CC BY-SA 4.0, Wikimedia Commons.

Elevation	1,682 m (Smithsonian GVP via Wikipedia) [1]
Type	Tuya (table mountain): formed under the last ice-age ice sheet; considered inactive [1]
Location	Ódáðahraun desert, in the north of Vatnajökull National Park (part of the park since 2019), near Askja [1]
Nearest hut	Þorsteinsskáli, Herðubreiðarlindir (480 m), ≈ 4 km east of the mountain [7] — backup only; the group sleeps at Fjalladýrð
From Möðrudalur	About 2 hours by 4WD to the western foot, on Fjalladýrð's published (summer) day tour [53]
First ascent	First definite ascent 1908 (Hans Reck and Sigurður Sumarliðason) [1]

Access

Summer access is via F88 (Öskjuleið) from the Ring Road, with two fords on the way into Herðubreiðarlindir; the larger, over Lindaá, needs special care [7]. F88 is closed in winter [5]. Fjalladýrð's published day tour (listed under "Tours – Summer") leaves Möðrudalur in the morning, drives about **2 hours to the western foot**, allows 3½–4 hours for the climb and about 2½ hours for the descent, stops at Herðubreiðarlindir, and is expected to take about 12 hours in all; a minimum of four people is needed to confirm a departure [53][56].

For this winter weekend, access is still open, by **snowcat or helicopter — to be decided with Villi**. The comparison is in the itinerary. The climb itself is guided by Fjalladýrð (Villi's team; Villi's wife guiding).

Ski character, line and aspects

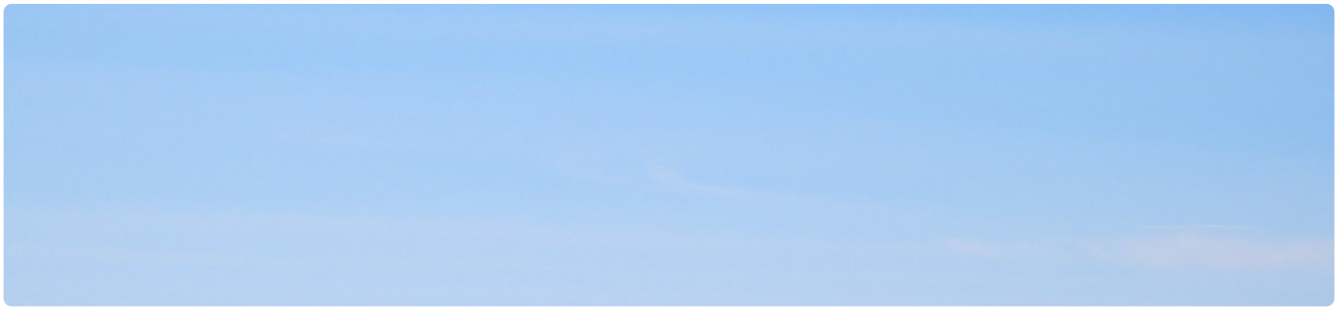
Herðubreið has been climbed in winter from the north and skied in spring [10]. The only detailed ski report found is a single user-recorded track from June 2014 on Wikiloc (one report, not a guidebook): roughly 1,190 m of ascent (3,891 ft), "Difficult" (AD for ski mountaineering), with at least 250 m at around 40° topping out near 40° below the plateau edge, ski crampons and a helmet recommended, and a slip there "would possibly be fatal", with a fall of at least 400 m [9]. A local climber describes the normal route as a ski slope that snowmobiles have been driven up and down [10]. Ice routes exist on the south face in late winter but are not reliable [10].

Best line/aspect: the normal route; the Wikiloc track refers to an entry point for the "west ascent" [9]. Confirm the line with your guide on the day. Choose the entry to the descent line in advance and mark it (GPS waypoint), as the upper face and plateau edge are easily lost in cloud [9].

Hazards

- Sustained ~40° slope to the plateau edge with a long runout [9]
- Rockfall released by thaw and wind (helmet) [9]
- Hard/icy snow in late winter and spring: ski crampons and boot crampons [9][10]
- Highland weather, whiteout and navigation on the plateau
- Unbridged river crossings on the way in (Lindaá) [7]

Kverkfjöll ≈ 1,933 m



Kverkfjöll seen across the ice from Langihnjúkur (distant view). Photo: Rémih, CC BY-SA 4.0, Wikimedia Commons.

Elevation	Highest point Skarphéðinstindur, 1,933 m (2019 official source cited by Wikipedia). Other sources give 1,810 m (PeakVisor), 1,920 m, 1,930 m or 1,936 m: "multiple heights exist" [2][19]
Type	Potentially active central volcano on the northern border of Vatnajökull, in Vatnajökull National Park [2]
Nearest hut	Sigurðarskáli (900 m), ≈ 12 km from the massif in a straight line; JÖRFÍ's Kverkfjallaskáli at ≈ 1,718 m on the ridge above the geothermal valley [8][16]
First ascent	Trautz, 1910 (per skimountaineer.com) [15]

Access

Summer access to Sigurðarskáli is by 4×4 on F902 (Kverkfjallaleið), with F910 and F905 from the north; one guide puts the hut roughly 100 km south of the Ring Road via Möðrudalur, with unbridged rivers [16]. F902 and F910 are closed in winter, opening on average about 25 June and 15 July [4][6]. Sigurðarskáli is **closed and locked in winter** [8], so this is a day trip back to Fjalladýrð, not a hut night.

Fjalladýrð's published Kverkfjöll day tour (listed under "Tours – Summer") departs at 7 a.m., takes a 4WD **2½ hours** to the Vatnajökull / Kverkjökull edge, visits the ice cave at the Volga (see the park warning below), walks over Kverkjökull and Langafönn to the Hveradalur geothermal area at about 1,800 m (about 8 hours on foot), stops at Hvannalindir, and is back at Möðrudalur between 8 and 9 p.m.; a minimum of four people is needed to confirm a departure [54][56]. A winter ski version of this day, and the exact transfer time, are *to confirm with Villi*. The day is guided by Fjalladýrð (Villi's team; Villi's wife guiding).

Ski character, line and aspects

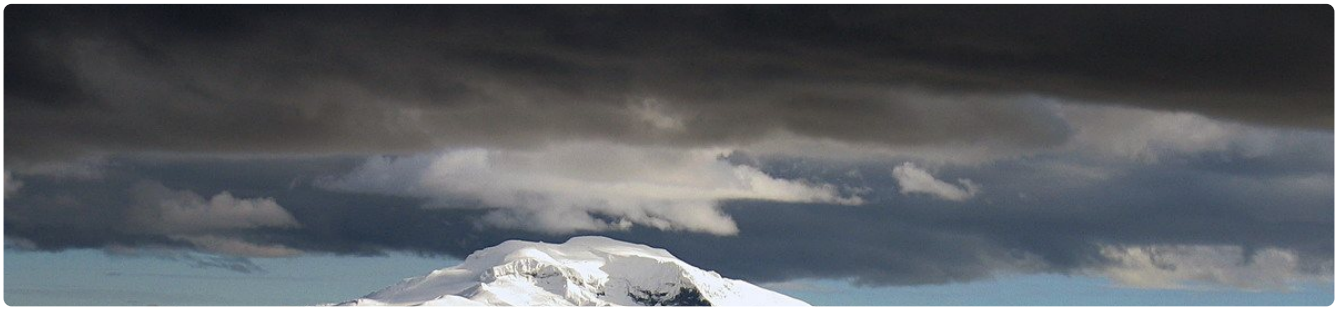
Kverkfjöll is serious glacier terrain. A 2019 Cambridge expedition report says all routes up Kverkfjöll from the east involve "quite heavy crevasses and steep glaciers (e.g. Skarphéðinsjökull), or loose and crumbly basalt", and that it suits experienced mixed and winter mountaineers [14]. skimountaineer.com lists up to about 1,200 m of skiable vertical locally and leaves the first ski descent blank [15]. The standard summer outing from Sigurðarskáli crosses the Kverkjökull glacier past crevasses, up the long slope Langafönn and through the Hveratagl gully to the Glaciological Society hut at ~1,700 m, about 18 km and 1,000 m of ascent in around 12 hours with a guide [16][17].

For this weekend: this is the Saturday objective, as a roped glacier / ski day with Fjalladýrð, not as a night in the locked hut. A full summit of Skarphéðinstindur may or may not be realistic in the available daylight — that call is the guide's. The published summer outing is already a long day (depart 7 a.m., back 8–9 p.m.) [54].

Hazards

- Crevasses, hidden by snow cover; rope, harness and rescue skills required [14][16][17]
- Geothermal ground and hot springs under snow in Hveradalur [16][17]
- Jökulhlaups: the Gengissig lake drained in 1985, 1987, 1993, 1997, 2002 and 2013, with hydrothermal explosions in 2013 [2][16]
- Kverkjökull ice cave: Vatnajökull NP urges visitors not to enter (ice fall, poisonous gas) [18]
- Remote: ≈ 12 km from the nearest (locked) hut, no shops or fuel [8][22]

Snæfell 1,833 m



Snæfell, seen from Kárahnjúkar. Photo: Oliagust (is.wikipedia), CC BY-SA 3.0, Wikimedia Commons.

Elevation	1,833 m; the highest mountain in Iceland outside the major glaciers [3][13]
Type	Ice-capped stratovolcano, dormant; summit ice cap with outlet glaciers (Sveinsjökull, Axlarjökull, Grjótárjökull and others) [3]
Hut	Snæfellsskáli (≈ 790 m) run by Vatnajökull National Park, 45 places [11][45]
Summer route (S1)	6.2 km one way, ≈ 1,100 m of ascent, 4–7 h, marked with posts to the glacier edge [13]

Access

Shortest road route from Egilsstaðir to the hut is 93 km, almost all paved (≈ 80 km) [12]. The last stretch is F909 (Snæfellsleið), which usually opens only in early July; in winter the hut is reached on skis or by snowmobile when snow lies on the ground [11][12]. From the weekend base at Möðrudalur the road is longer: about 95–110 km to Egilsstaðir [66][67] plus the 93 km to the hut, so roughly 190–200 km one way, before the winter approach and the climb, and the same again back to Fjalladýrð. Fjalladýrð does not list a Snæfell tour [52][56]. A same-day return is not realistic; any custom trip would need to be decided with Villi.

Ski character, line and aspects

Snæfell is a feasible ski-touring objective. A guided ski tour departing from Egilsstaðir is advertised, starting on the east side of Eyjabakkar, ascending the north ridge and descending a glacier outlet, running March–July depending on conditions (operator listing seen in a search snippet; the page itself was not readable, so treat the route detail as unconfirmed) [23]. The park's own summer description: marked trail from the hut up the west side, crampons advisable, a GPS required when the summit is above cloud, and "the hike crosses glacier terrain: special equipment and skills are required" [13].

Best line/aspect: west flank from the hut (park trail S1) for ascent; north ridge and a glacier-outlet descent per the operator listing. Final choice depends on snow and visibility on the day.

Hazards

- Summit often in cloud: navigation and GPS essential [13]
- Glacier terrain near the summit; crampons and rope as per guide [13]
- Very exposed and remote; one hut report says mobile coverage at the hut is excellent, which says nothing about the mountain, so confirm locally [45]
- Long winter approach on snow (cleared-road end varies)
- Short days in early season (see daylight)

Weekend itinerary

Dates to be set. All nights at Fjalladýrð, Möðrudalur. Guided by Fjalladýrð (Villi's team; Villi's wife guiding). Times depend on snow and on the snowcat-or-helicopter decision with Villi.

THURSDAY EVENING

Arrive and settle at Fjalladýrð, Möðrudalur

- Fly or drive to Akureyri (or Egilsstaðir). Akureyri to Reykjahlíð (Mývatn) is about 99 km; the Ring Road from there towards Egilsstaðir is about 166 km and is the highest, most exposed part of Route 1, the stretch that closes first in winter [25][26]. Möðrudalur sits just off that road on Route 901 (about 7–8 km from the Ring Road [21][51]).
- Third-party driving figures put Möðrudalur about 95 km (around 1 h 15 min) to 110 km from Egilsstaðir, and roughly 65–80 km from the Mývatn area [66][67]. Add time on packed or drifting winter roads [26]. Fjalladýrð asks winter arrivals to come in via **western Route 901** and to check road.is [51].
- All nights are at **Fjalladýrð** (see Lodging). Breakfast in winter should be arranged in advance [50]. For dinner, groups of four or more are asked to reserve a table [49]. Baldur is arranging the stay and the guiding with Villi; no separate enquiry is needed from this plan.
- Submit the safetravel.is travel plan [29]. Brief with Fjalladýrð (Villi's team; Villi's wife guiding). Decide Friday's Herðubreið access — snowcat or helicopter — with Villi (see the comparison below). Check Friday and Saturday forecasts, and Sunday road conditions for the drive home.

FRIDAY

Herðubreið — guided by Fjalladýrð (Villi's team; Villi's wife guiding)

- Dark or early start from the farm, timed with daylight and the chosen transfer.
- **Access, to be decided with Villi:** snowcat or helicopter to the western foot of Herðubreið (comparison below). Fjalladýrð's published summer 4WD to that foot is about 2 hours [53]; winter ground time is not published and is likely longer (one operator quotes 3–8 hours from Möðrudalur to Dreki/Askja, depending on snow [65]).
- Ski ascent of the normal / west route (about 1,190 m of ascent in the one track found [9]); turn-around time agreed in advance so the party is down before dusk. The published summer climb is 3½–4 hours up and about 2½ hours down, with a stop at Herðubreiðarlindir, about 12 hours for the whole outing [53].
- Return to **Fjalladýrð** for the night (dinner reserved if needed).

SATURDAY

Kverkfjöll — guided by Fjalladýrð (Villi's team; Villi's wife guiding)

- Early start from the farm. Fjalladýrð's published summer tour leaves at 7 a.m. and is back between 8 and 9 p.m. [54]. A winter ski version, and whether a 2½-hour transfer still holds, are *to confirm with Villi*.
- Glacier / ski day at Kverkjökull–Hveradalur, roped as the guide requires. Do not enter the Kverkjökull ice cave (park warning: ice fall and poisonous gas) [18].
- Weather alternative, also on Fjalladýrð's tour list: Askja / Drekagil / Herðubreiðarlindir (published summer day 7:30 a.m.–6 p.m.) [55].
- Return to **Fjalladýrð** for the night (dinner reserved if needed).

SUNDAY

Drive back home

- No skiing. Drive out to Akureyri or Egilsstaðir as daylight and the road allow. Akureyri–Egilsstaðir is about 265 km, about 3.5 h in summer [25].

Decision rules: what to drop

1. **Drop Snæfell first, for this Möðrudalur-based weekend.** It is not on Fjalladýrð's published tour list [52][56], and a same-day return would add roughly 190–200 km each way via Egilsstaðir [12][66][67] on top of the winter approach and the climb.
2. **If Friday's weather or transfer (snowcat / helicopter) does not allow Herðubreið,** keep Saturday for Kverkfjöll, or swap the two days if that gives a better weather window. A single good summit beats two marginal ones.
3. **If Saturday is poor at Kverkfjöll,** use Fjalladýrð's Askja day as the alternative [55], or end the trip after Herðubreið and travel out on Sunday.
4. **If the avalanche or snow situation is bad on both days,** do not force a summit; stay at the farm and let the guide choose a lower-angle day, or wait.

Herðubreið access: snowcat or helicopter — to be decided with Villi

Baldur's brief is that access to Herðubreið is still open, by snowcat or by helicopter, that the choice is still open, and that it should stay affordable. Nothing below is a booking; it is a comparison of what is published, so the decision with Villi has numbers next to it. Fjalladýrð's own site does not list a winter snowcat or a helicopter drop at Herðubreið.

	Snowcat (beltaþjarki)	Helicopter
Who operates it in this area	No public snowcat (beltaþjarki) operator or price list was found for a drop at Herðubreið from Möðrudalur. Winter ground access in this highland is generally advertised as modified super-jeep (for example Geo Travel, departing Möðrudalur [65]). Whether Villi has or can arrange a snowcat is *to be decided with him*.	Volcano Heli lists departures from Möðrudalur as well as Reykjavík [64], and a national tourist listing calls Fjalladýrð a home base of Volcano Heli [57]. They offer sightseeing tours and custom private charters in R66 turbine helicopters, up to four passengers per aircraft [61][64]. A travel guide also mentions Glacier Heli flying from Möðrudalur [68]; that was not confirmed on Glacier Heli's own tour list.
Time	Fjalladýrð's published summer 4WD to the western foot of Herðubreið is about **2 hours** [53]. Winter ground time is not published. As a neighbouring-area comparison only: one operator says the Möðrudalur–Dreki/Askja drive can take **3–8 hours**, depending on snow [65].	A published flight time for a Möðrudalur–Herðubreið drop (with landing) was not found. The farm-to-mountain distance is about 30 km in a straight line, so a transfer flight would be much shorter than a ground transfer. Volcano Heli's local Möðrudalur sightseeing flight ("Nature's Wonders") is 35 minutes with **no stopover**, and only "sometimes" shows Herðubreið in the distance [58].
Published prices (reference only)	No public tariff for a Herðubreið snowcat transfer was found. Do not treat jeep-tour prices as a snowcat quote.	Volcano Heli's published north-east tours (June–September and upon request, 1–4 passengers) [58][59][60]: **Nature's Wonders** — 35 min, no landing — 135,600 ISK per tour (33,900 ISK per person); **Fire & Ice** — 2.5–3 hours, 1–2 stopovers, includes Kverkfjöll and Askja — 679,600 ISK per tour (169,900 ISK per person); **Northern Treasures** — 3–3.5 hours, 2 stopovers — 799,600 ISK per tour (199,900 ISK per person). A custom winter drop-and-collect at Herðubreið is **not priced** on their site. Their separate winter ice-cave private

		expedition (October–April, a different product) is 1,595,000 ISK for 1–3 passengers [63]. Charters: +354 547 3500, info@volcanoheli.is [61].
Weather	Snow, drift, whiteout and wind can slow or stop a ground machine, but it is usually less sensitive to cloud ceiling than a flight. Times can stretch a long way, as the 3–8 hour Askja comparison shows [65].	Highly weather-dependent. Volcano Heli says safety comes first: they may change the route, delay the flight by a few hours, reschedule, or cancel; if they cancel for weather and cannot reschedule, they refund 100% [62]. Low cloud, wind and icing are the usual limits. A ski drop needs a landable window at the mountain, not only at the farm.
Practical limits	A snowcat can usually move a small group and ski bags in one go, but capacity and cost for this trip are unconfirmed.	One R66 carries up to four passengers [61]. A larger party would need two aircraft or a shuttle. Ski-bag weight and a later pickup flight also have to be agreed. On the published figures, helicopters are the faster and typically dearer option.

Mýflug Air also flies sightseeing routes from Mývatn that pass Herðubreið and Askja (for example a 1-hour circuit at 58,000 ISK per person, May–September, minimum two passengers), but those are fixed-wing sightseeing flights, not a ski-day landing [69]. They are not an access option for this ascent.

The choice — and the price, so it stays affordable — is **to be decided with Villi**.

Base: Fjalladýrð, Möðrudalur

The weekend is based at **Fjalladýrð, Möðrudalur á Fjöllum**, every night. Fjalladýrð is also the guide and transport operator: **guided by Fjalladýrð (Villi's team; Villi's wife guiding)**. Villi owns the farm service and the jeeps. Baldur will arrange the stay and the days with Villi directly (this plan does not ask anyone else to contact them).

Möðrudalur is the highest inhabited farm in Iceland, at 469 m, on the edge of the highlands north of Vatnajökull [21]. Address: Möðrudal, 660 Mývatn. Contacts on their site: **+354 894 8181**, **info@fjalladyrd.is**, fjalladyrd.is (Icelandic home: fjalladyrd.is/is/heim/) [21][47].

Rooms and capacity

- **Bakki / standard rooms:** the Icelandic lodging page says they have opened **13 two- and three-person rooms with private bathrooms** and a shared lounge; the English page describes "brand new Bakki rooms" with private bathrooms, views, and a communal lounge with a fireplace [47][48]. Breakfast is included in the Bakki room price [50].
- **Family rooms, traditional turf houses (baðstofa):** up to five people on the English page, 3–5 on the Icelandic page; bathroom and an optional kitchenette; two floors, two beds on the ground floor, curtained single beds (lokrekkjur) on the upper floor [47][48].
- **Economy rooms:** dressed beds, shared bathrooms, a spacious kitchen and living room; singles, doubles and triples in former farmhouses [47][48].
- **Sleeping-bag rooms:** single to four-person (quatro), shared facilities [47].
- **Hostel:** bunk rooms with linen and duvets, kitchen and dining area, a common room with a fireplace, and a sauna; also single rooms with a private bathroom [47].
- **Two campground turf huts:** each with a double bed, for guests with their own sleeping bags; camp toilets, showers and cooking nearby [47]. The main campsite and kitchen are **closed 1 December–31 March**; camping (parking, bathrooms, showers, electricity) is offered 1 April–30 November. 2026 camping prices: 2,190 ISK per person, 400 ISK lodging tax per unit, 1,500 ISK for electricity [51].

A national listing (Ferdalag.is) says Fjalladýrð is **open all year** and can accommodate **up to 70 people** in rooms with dressed beds and private or shared facilities [57]. Some details on that listing (older phone numbers, a different email, and a different campsite season) do not match the farm's own site, so treat 70 and "open all year" as a third-party figure and confirm the actual rooms with Villi for the chosen dates. The farm's own breakfast page asks guests to **contact them in advance in the winter season** [50], which is consistent with winter operation, with notice.

Restaurant — Fjallakaffi

Fjallakaffi is the café, restaurant and shop [49]. The restaurant page says an à-la-carte dinner is offered every day from 6:30 p.m., and a breakfast buffet from 6:30 a.m. [49]. The dedicated breakfast page (season 2026) is more specific: breakfast 7:30–10:00 on weekdays and 7:00–10:00 at weekends, 3,490 ISK per person (half-price for children 6–12, free under 6), included for Bakki rooms; in winter, arrange it beforehand [50]. Groups of four or more should reserve a dinner table [49]. The menu features homemade cakes and kleinur, lamb soup (kjötsúpa), and evening dishes of farm lamb, smoked meats and local trout; the about page also mentions Arctic char, and seasonal reindeer and goose [21][49]. Meeting space for up to 50 people is advertised [49].

A second café, **Beitarhúsið**, stands about 7 km from the farm by the Ring Road [21]. Opening hours shown on the English home page (Fjallakaffi 07:30–22:00, Beitarhúsið 08:30–20:00) appear as a live widget and may be seasonal [70].

Tours Fjalladýrð actually lists

The recreation page says they offer 4WD and hiking trips into the highlands north of Vatnajökull, with local guides, to Askja, the glacier and hot springs of Kverkfjöll, Drekagil (Dragon Canyon), Herðubreiðarlindir, waterfalls and rivers, and Hafrahvammagljúfur, and that they can arrange **customized trips** [52]. The about page says guests can take a day tour themselves or "take a seat in one of our super jeeps," and that local guides are specialised in super-jeep driving, geology and history [21]. The three written day-tour pages sit under the heading **"Tours – Summer"** [56]:

- **Herðubreið hike (1,682 m):** about 2 hours' drive to the western foot, 3½–4 hours up, 2½ hours down, Herðubreiðarlindir on the way back, about 12 hours in all [53].
- **Kverkfjöll:** depart 7 a.m., 2½ hours' 4WD, about 8 hours on the glacier to Hveradalur, Hvannalindir on the way back, return 8–9 p.m. [54].
- **Askja:** depart 7:30 a.m., Drekagil, walk to Öskjuvatn and Víti, Herðubreiðarlindir, back around 6 p.m. [55].

All three published tours need a minimum of four people to confirm a departure [53][54][55]. None of those pages describes a winter ski, snowcat or helicopter day. A winter version of any of them is *to be decided with Villi*. Snæfell is not on the list.

Backup: mountain huts as emergency shelter

> **Not planned nights**
>
> The group sleeps at Fjalladýrð. The highland huts below are listed only as backup or emergency shelter. Most are **locked in winter**. Items marked *unconfirmed* could not be verified from public sources.

Þorsteinsskáli (Herðubreiðarlindir)

Ferðafélag Akureyrar (FFA)

Beds	25 [7]
Position	480 m, about 4 km east of Herðubreið
Winter status	FFA says its huts at Drekagil, Herðubreiðarlindir and Laugafell are **locked in the winter months** [27].
Booking / contact	ffa@ffa.is, +354 462 2720; out-of-hours keyholder +354 822 5193 [27].
Typical access	Only as a pre-arranged emergency or weather shelter, if a key is agreed in advance — not a planned night.

Dreki / Askja (Drekagil)

Ferðafélag Akureyrar (FFA)

Beds	55 (40 in “Askja”, 15 in “Dreki”) [31]
Position	780 m
Winter status	Open about 20 June–15 September; **locked in winter** [31][27].
Booking / contact	ffa@ffa.is, +354 462 2720; hut +354 822 5190.
Typical access	Backup only. One commercial winter expedition has used it by arrangement [32].

Sigurðarskáli (Kverkfjöll)

Ferðafélag Fljótsdalshéraðs and Ferðafélag Húsavíkur

Beds	75 [8]
Position	900 m
Winter status	**Closed and locked in winter** [8][35].
Booking / contact	ferdaf@ferdaf.is, +354 863 5813.
Typical access	Backup only. The Saturday plan is a day trip back to Fjalladýrð, not a night here.

Snæfellsskáli

Vatnajökull National Park

Beds	About 45 (one listing says 40) [11][28]
Position	About 790 m
Winter status	Park: may be used year-round, dry toilet only in winter [11]. A regional listing says locked in winter [28]. Confirm if ever needed.
Booking / contact	+354 842 4367, snaefellsstofa@nattura.is.
Typical access	Not on this weekend’s route unless Villi agrees a custom Snæfell day.

Egilssel, Geldingafell, Bræðrafell and the small JÖRFÍ hut high on Kverkfjöll are too far, locked, or both, to be useful as planned beds for this weekend. Icelandic mountain huts are sleeping-bag only: bring a bag if a hut is used in an emergency [31].

Gear checklist

Ski touring kit

- [ ] Touring skis, skins, ski crampons (harscheisen); recommended on Herðubreið [9]
- [ ] Touring boots that take boot crampons; boot crampons
- [ ] Ice axe (hard snow in late winter [10])
- [ ] Helmet: rockfall on Herðubreið [9]
- [ ] Poles with big baskets, goggles, spare skin/glue, repair kit (tape, strap, binding screws)
- [ ] Headlamp + spare batteries: winter days are short

Avalanche kit

- [ ] Transceiver, probe, shovel for every person; practised before the trip
- [ ] Slope-angle card / inclinometer; notebook for snowpack observations
- [ ] Note: there is **no** official vedur.is avalanche forecast for the highlands (see Safety) [40]

Glacier kit (Kverkfjöll or any glacier approach)

- [ ] Harness, 30–50 m rope per rope team, prusiks, 2–3 locking carabiners
- [ ] Ice screws, pulley, snow anchor (picket), crevasse-rescue training
- [ ] Crampons and a glacier-experienced guide (not optional) [14][16][17]

Navigation and communications

- [ ] GPS with the routes loaded + spare batteries; mandatory on Snæfell above cloud [13]
- [ ] Map and compass; paper map in a waterproof sleeve
- [ ] Satellite messenger (Garmin inReach/SPOT): your safetravel emergency contact monitors it on longer trips [29]
- [ ] Phone with the 112 Iceland app (its Emergency button sends your position to the 112 centre) [46]; coverage is patchy in the highlands
- [ ] Safetravel.is travel plan submitted before leaving [29]

Shelter, clothing and food

- [ ] Group shelter or bivvy bag, foam mat, stove + fuel, insulated drinks flask
- [ ] Layering for −20 °C wind chill: shell, insulation, spare gloves and mittens, balaclava, spare dry layer
- [ ] Sleeping bag (huts: sleeping-bag accommodation only), pillow, all food [31]
- [ ] First-aid kit, blister kit, emergency blanket
- [ ] Wallet/cash, personal insurance (cover for off-piste/glacier travel)

Safety notes for winter highland travel

Plan and check, every day

- **Roads:** road.is / umferdin.is and Vegagerðin's service line **1777** for road status [6][42]. As of the 28 Nov 2026 data, none of the 42 F-roads were open [5]. Never drive past a closure [43].
- **Weather:** vedur.is forecasts, checked the evening before and at departure [43]. Highland weather changes fast; fog and whiteout are common [43].
- **Safetravel.is:** submit a travel plan with an emergency contact who is not on the trip [29].

Avalanche and snow

- Vedur.is issues avalanche forecasts only for five regions (south-west, northern Westfjords, western Tröllaskagi, inner Eyjafjörður and the Eastfjords) and **the highlands are not a forecast region** [40]. You must assess the snowpack yourself, with the guide.
- Herðubreið's upper face is ~40°; Kverkfjöll and Snæfell involve glaciated slopes. Decide turn-around times in advance.

Daylight

- Daylight on 21 Dec 2026: 3.1 h at Akureyri, 3.4 h at Egilsstaðir [20]. Not suitable for these objectives.
- Mid-March ≈ 11.6 h and mid-April ≈ 15.2 h at both towns [20]. Plan start in the dark and be down before dusk.

Rivers, roads and vehicles

- F-roads are closed in winter; most are accessible to highland vehicles only after official opening [5][6].
- Super-jeeps can make highland journeys all year, but only with experienced operators; a snow-tyre car is not an exception [43][44].
- River crossings (e.g. Lindaá on F88 [7]) can be impassable or dangerous; ice can mask them in winter.
- Off-road driving is illegal in Iceland [24]; rely on an operator who knows what is permitted where.

Guides and rescue

- Use an experienced guide (IFMGA/Icelandic mountain guide) with super-jeep or snowmobile support. This route is not for unguided parties.
- Emergency: **112**. Landsbjörg (ICE-SAR) coordinates mountain rescue [46]; your safetravel plan gives them what they need to start a search [29].
- Glacier and ice-cave warnings from Vatnajökull NP (Kverkjökull): do not enter the unstable ice cave [18].

> **Important**
>
> This is a planning document compiled from public sources; it is not guiding advice. Conditions in the Icelandic highlands in winter change daily. Use a qualified local guide, confirm every hut and road detail with the operator, and check road.is, vedur.is and safetravel.is before leaving.

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