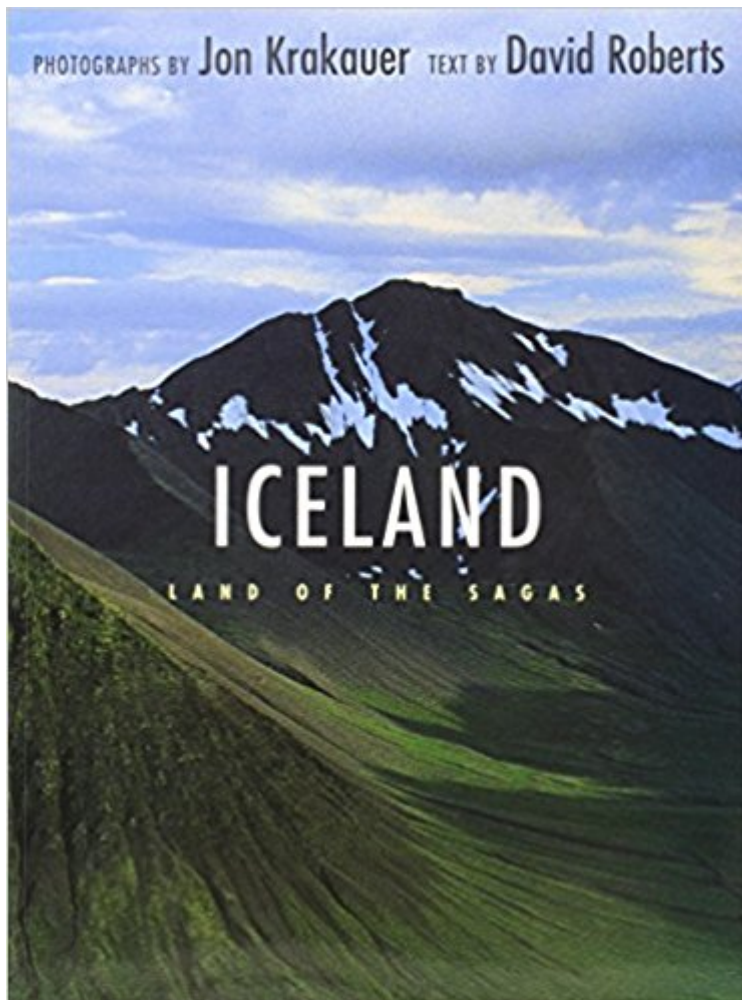


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# Iceland: Land Of The Sagas



## Synopsis

"We raised our fists and cheered. . . . With the sagas in our heads, with Iceland at its wildest beneath our boots, it would not have been impossible to see Bǫfǫrdr clumping along the summit ridge, prodding the glacier with his staff, ready to show us the way down." Iceland is a pictorial classic on one of the last "undiscovered" countries in Europe--reissued for the first time in paperback. Iceland is often thought to be covered by ice, but in fact it is gloriously green. Lush meadows, wildflower fields, and miles of rich tundra cover a landscape of remarkable variety: deep lakes, bubbling hot springs, tumbling waterfalls, snow-capped mountains. It's also a landscape amazingly alive with massive lava flows and enormous glaciers. The human story of Iceland goes back more than eleven thousand years, and its heritage is told here in a treasury of riveting sagas of real-life heroes and all manner of supernatural beings. Both the land and the people of one of Europe's most gorgeous countries come to life in this colorful account of the authors' adventures as they walk, climb, and photograph their way through Iceland and connect to the bone-chilling sagas and the unfamiliar terrain. With breathtaking photographs from critically acclaimed writer and journalist Jon Krakauer, author of the international bestsellers *Into Thin Air* and *Into the Wild*, and a penetrating narrative from *Outside* contributing editor and travel writer David Roberts, Iceland splendidly captures the spirit of this enigmatic country.

Circumnavigating Iceland in summer and winter, Krakauer and Roberts encounter tales of monks and Vikings, outlaws and adventurers, trolls and witches. While touring and photographing, they discover the myths and legends of Iceland's stirring history. Numerous other feats--including a hazardous winter climb to the summit of one of Iceland's tallest mountains--round out a fascinating introduction to this unique and beautiful land.

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## Customer Reviews

In an ingenious approach to a little-viewed land, journalist/outdoorsman Roberts and Krakauer ( *Eiger Dreams* ) examine Iceland today through its principal literary heritage. The harsh backdrop of the heroic tales featuring the fierce, beautiful Gudrun Osvifrsdottirsp ok or courageous Burnt Njal is much the same as it was in the 13th century when the sagas, blending myth, history and fiction, were written. The most volcanic land in the world, with plentiful waterfalls and hot springs ("geyser" is from the Icelandic geysir ), the country is only four degrees from the Arctic Circle, yet, warmed by the Gulf Stream, possesses deep valleys and pastures to support indigenous populations of horses and sheep, as well as a quarter of a million people. In chapters such as "Of Monks and Vikings" and "Women and Winter," Roberts deftly examines Iceland's history and culture while Krakauer's 100 arresting color photos capture the land's topographical power. Copyright 1990 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

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This book added a dimension to our trip to Iceland that was very pleasurable. It shows how the Icelandic people carry the folklore of their country very proudly. Living Icelanders can connect real places on the island with the folkloric/historic Sagas, and they have been doing this since the Sagas were first transmitted. The stories and photos in the book really give a taste of how Icelanders love their land and heritage. It is written for pleasure reading, flipping between a tour guide, anecdotes and Sagas, very nicely. And not only do the photos show the real sites of the Sagas, they are also art in themselves. This book's coupling of storytelling and photography gives a sense of Icelandic history and values. Iceland is a very unique and special place. It's uniqueness is not entirely evident until we change the cultural lens through which we view a place we visit. This book successfully does just that.

Great photos that match the story of the sags. This is a wonderful history and overview of Iceland. I bought this book to prepare for my trip to Iceland. It was a great purchase! I feel more informed about the historical significance of the places and the founders of Iceland.

Love the general information but since it was published more than 20 years ago, some of the data is not relevant. The history, lore and sagas are interesting and gives a background to the island.

I am passionate about Iceland. It is such a beautiful place and the photos of this book are beautiful but grainy. I know the book is older, but I wish the photos were clearer. The information is great, it talks about some of the most important Icelandic sagas, and the mysterious landscape of this weird, wonderful country.

Great book for a visit to iceland

The book is well written and informative, however the pictures are a bit dated, in the aspect that

many are pixelated by today's standards, at such a large size. Doesn't take away from the overall book too much, but I wound up looking up many of the places listed online for better pictures. (again, just to be clear - "better" meaning print quality, not a remark about skill of said photographer)

For those who may never venture to Iceland, the duo of Krakauer and Roberts will give you a taste of the Icelandic culture, without the salt. While Krakauer captures the scenery, including salt cod drying in the open air, Roberts fills in the text with the myths and legends. Having recently returned from Iceland, I can attest that Krakauer's sumptuous photography truly depicts Iceland. Rugged peaks, sod houses, and the realm where glaciers and clouds meet are worthy additions to the book's visual feast. However, it should be noted that the best way to see these is to make the journey, too!

First, the good. This book, both text and photo, help the sagas come to life, as well as bring them to a new relevance regarding Iceland today. It's a valuable book in this regard, but little more can be said because the pictures and text have to be experienced to have this effect. On to the bad. While less than 1% of the land is inhabited, and while Iceland as a whole has a population of the same as a smallish city in the US, nearly every picture seems to be a picture of that 1% of inhabited and cultivated land. Moreover the text does not represent current thinking regarding the Sagas and is a bit dated (sagas are treated as purely historical). On the whole, this is a book worth owning if you like sagas and have never been to Iceland. Otherwise, I am not sure I'd recommend it.

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