



RCC PILOTAGE FOUNDATION

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The Pilotage Foundation is grateful to John Lawson who was the author of all our Passage Planning routes flowing out from the South Coast of England to Iceland, The Baltic, the Atlantic Islands and the Mediterranean.

This Route was updated in 2008 by John Marchment

Route 3

English Channel to Iceland via SW Ireland

English Channel to Iceland via Irish Sea

English Channel to Iceland via Irish Sea and North Minch

Orkney and Shetland to Iceland via Faeroe

For text version, see below

For interactive Google Map version,



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General

The approximate total distances of these passages, all of which are to Reykjavik are as follows:-

From the Solent via SW Ireland	1170M
From the Solent via Irish Sea and North Channel	1400M
From the Solent via Irish Sea and North Minch	1450M
From Orkney (Stromness)	680M
From Shetland (Lerwick)	740M

The longest unsupported crossings are 850M from the SW corner of Ireland, 740M from the North Minch, 680M from Orkney and 740M from Shetland. Diversion via Faeroe will add little to the distance from Shetland, add 60M from Orkney and considerably to the other routes.

To save duplication, details of the first part of the outward passages from the UK are not included in this Route. To find details of these passages click on the Routes indicated below for each section:-

English Channel to Iceland via SW Ireland

Click Route 2 - English Channel to SW Ireland

English Channel to Iceland via Irish Sea

Click Route 1 - Irish Sea to Ardglass and North Channel.

English Channel to Iceland via Irish Sea and North Minch

Click Route 1 - Irish Sea to Stornoway.

Orkney and Shetland to Iceland via Faeroe

Click Routes 1 or 2 for passages to Orkney, Shetland and Faeroe from the south.

Weather and sea states

The weather along these routes tends to be dominated by the passage of low-pressure systems across the area during the summer months. These bring strong winds rather than gales in the summer often with much rain. Occasionally a low will be turned N up the Denmark Strait by a high to the E and linger; this produces gale force or stronger winds from the S to the S of Iceland and may persist for some days; this set of conditions should be watched for when arriving or leaving Iceland. In late summer hurricanes off the US east coast sometimes regenerate and cross the region producing gales.

Swell from the W or NW is nearly always present between the UK and Iceland.

Sea temperature varies from 8°C in Iceland in the summer to 16°C off the S coast of Ireland.

Sea ice near Iceland in the summer is occasionally found on the N coast but not elsewhere.

Fog occurs in Faeroe up to 7 days a month in the summer and 8 days along the E coast of Iceland; it is less prevalent off the W and S coasts of Iceland.

Currents

Currents generally set NE between Iceland and the UK and up to ½ knot should be allowed for in the crossing.

Tidal streams and tides

Tidal streams are strong round Faeroe although the range is small (1m); streams are weak round Iceland with a larger range (4m at Reykjavik) but can be strong at headlands and the rates are increased by the wind.

Formalities

There is no need to clear in or out of the Republic of Ireland unless it is a non-EU vessel or there are non-EU nationals on board. In these cases the Q flag should be flown and the Garda telephoned on first arrival. The Customs should be contacted and cleared on first arrival in Faeroe and Iceland and passports presented.

Courtesy flags should be flown in the Republic, Faeroe (Faeroese not Danish) and Iceland (Icelandic not Danish).

Alcohol is controlled in both Iceland and Faeroe and may not be taken ashore although a reasonable amount will be allowed for consumption on board. It is available from State controlled shops in Faeroe (*rusdrekkasolan*). It is very expensive ashore in both Faeroe and Iceland.

Search and rescue

All the routes lie in the British, Irish, Faeroese and Icelandic Search and Rescue Regions with MRCCs in the UK, Iceland and Ireland and MRSC in Faeroe. Some of the route is covered by VHF DSC, gaps between Scotland, Faeroe and Iceland are mainly in the MHF DSC network and there is a gap between SW Ireland and Iceland which is only covered by HF DSC.

The more open sea areas will be covered by air from the UK or Kevlavik in Iceland.

Faeroe has four VHF and MF Coastal Radio Stations which cover the islands.

Iceland has some 16 coastal radio stations with complete VHF and MF coverage round the coast. Mobile phone coverage is reasonable.

Iceland has a voluntary reporting system when within VHF range in which foreign yachts are invited to participate.

Navtex and weather forecasts

The route is covered by Navtex stations at Valentia(W), Portpatrick(O), Malin Head(Q), Rogaland(Norway)(L) and Reykjavik (R and X). Local forecasts can be obtained in English off Iceland by request from the Coastal Radio stations.

Details of all the many other weather forecasts available may be found in ALRS Vol 3 NP 283 and RYA Weather Forecasts G5/04.

Fuel and domestic gas

Diesel tends to become cheaper further north although marina outlets remain expensive. In Ireland and Scotland always buy red diesel from fishing boat sources especially if a reasonable amount can be taken. Calor Gas (Butane) is available in Scotland and Northern Ireland and Camping Gas available generally. It is

worth taking enough Calor to Iceland and Faeroe to last the trip; Propane cylinders and adaptors are readily available in Iceland and Faeroe; Kosangas (Propane or Butane) is available in Ireland.

Timing of passage

The best time is the summer months for a passage to Iceland which has the further benefit of 24 hours of daylight.

Routeing recommendations

There is no preferred route from the English Channel as regards weather or natural conditions. Going via the Irish Sea and/or the Hebrides will add significantly to the total distance. The unsupported crossing by any route is in the order of 700 miles from the UK, Orkney or Shetland and it is likely that strong winds will be encountered either on the outward or inward passages of this length.

Proceeding from the North Channel or the Western Isles direct to Iceland may provide an opportunity to visit **Rockall** lying 130M W of the Outer Hebrides; it is a British possession and a few have managed to land in good weather.

The eastern part of the S coast of Iceland should always be given a good berth when passing and 100M is not too much until **Vestmannaeyar** is to the N, and the course to Reykjanes can be laid, and so to Reykjavik. Outlyers extend 40M to the SW from Reykjanes; there is a 5M gap close to the point and others further out. **Vestmannaeyar** would be a good port to await favourable weather to round Reykjanes rather than having to take a long sweep round the outlyers. The S coast has few ports of refuge, the dangers to the E of Vestmannaeyar extend several miles and wind-generated currents will augment any N drift. A good offing is essential for safety all along this coast. This warning is particularly applicable if a low-pressure system exists in the Denmark Strait (see the "Weather and Sea States" above). **Vestmannaeyjar**, however is a very safe harbour and a good port to clear in at with fuel, water and provisions.

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Distance tables

Solent to Iceland via SW Ireland

See Route 2 Distance Table for intermediate distances Solent to SW Ireland

	SOLENT	PLYMOUTH	Castletown	Reykjavik
SOLENT	***	125	337	1170
PLYMOUTH	125	***	212	1045
Castletown	337	212	***	833
Reykjavik	1170	1045	833	***

Distances are direct between any two ports in different columns. Interpolated distances between two ports in the same column will not necessarily be correct.

Solent to Iceland via Irish Sea

See Route 1 Distance Table for intermediate distances Solent to Ardglass (North Channel)

	SOLENT	PLYMOUTH	Ardglass	Reykjavik
SOLENT	***	125	505	1400
PLYMOUTH	125	***	380	1275
Ardglass	505	380	***	900
Reykjavik	1400	1275	900	***

Distances are direct between any two ports in different columns. Interpolated distances between two ports in the same column will not necessarily be correct.

Solent to Iceland via North Minch and Faeroe

See Route 1 Distance Table for intermediate distances Solent to Stornoway (North Minch)

	SOLENT	PLYMOUTH	Stornoway	Torshavn	Reykjavik
SOLENT	***	125	707	947	1447
PLYMOUTH	125	***	582	822	1322
Stornoway	707	582	***	240	740
Torshavn	947	822	240	***	520
Reykjavik	1447	1322	740	520	***

Distances are direct between any two ports in different columns. Interpolated distances between two ports in the same column will not necessarily be correct.

Orkney and Shetland to Iceland

See Routes 1 or 2 Distance Tables for intermediate routes to Orkney or Shetland

	Stromness	Lerwick	Torshavn	Reykjavik
Stromness (Orkney)	***	110	220	680
Lerwick (Shetland)	110	***	220	740
Torshavn	220	220	***	520
Reykjavik	680	740	520	***

Distances are direct between any two ports in different columns. Interpolated distance between ports in the same column will not necessarily be correct

Ports on the routes

Details of all the ports on the routes from the Solent to Iceland are shown in Routes 1 and 2 with the exception of those in Iceland whose details are below:-

Reykjavik A

A busy commercial port with few arrangements for yachts but a pontoon with at least 4m in the main harbour and some water and electricity available; Reykjavik has most of the facilities and all provisions can be obtained but at a price; diesel available from a barge or by tanker delivery which can be arranged through the Harbourmaster; international airport at Kevlavik, 1 hour by road; Reykjavik is probably the best centre to see the rest of the island.

Coming from the UK or Faeroe, there are a number of ports on the E coast where shelter, rest, refreshment and fuel can be found but few on the S coast except for Vestmannaeyjar, before Reykjavik is reached. The principal one on the E coast is **Seyðhisfjörður** which is the terminal for the car ferry to Europe. It has good facilities, fuel, water and some chandlery. The airport is 27 km by road at Egilstöir where there is a huge supermarket.

There is an isolated dangerous rock Hvalsbakkur about 50M off the E coast in position 64°36'N 13°17'W.

Route 3 Waypoint Table

THESE WAYPOINTS SHOULD BE USED FOR PLANNING ONLY AND NEVER FOR NAVIGATION

Waypoints are given to the nearest minute of latitude and longitude and are positioned off the ports or headlands.

Turning Points (TP) to avoid land or other navigational hazards are also noted in the table.

The symbol * between two points denotes that the direct route between them passes over or close to land or other navigational dangers.

See Waypoint Tables in Routes 1 and 2 for points from the south to:-

SW Ireland		
Ardglass and North Channel		
Stornoway		
Stromness		
Lerwick		
Port or point	Lat	Long
SW Ireland	51 25N	10 00W
TP Vestmannaeyjar	63 10	20 35
Reykjanes	63 45	22 50
	64 08	22 50
*		*
Reykjavik	64 10	21 50

Port or point	Lat	Long
Ardglass	54 15 N	05 36W
TP South Rock	54 2	05 19
*		*
Rathlin Island.	55 20	06 07
Vestmannaeyjar	63 10	20 35
Reykjanes	63 45	22 50
	64 08	22 50
*		*
Reykjavik	64 10	21 50
Stornoway	58 12N	06 20W
*		*
TP Tiumpan Head	58 15	06 05
Butt of Lewis	58 32	06 10
Vestmannaeyjar	63 10	20 35
Reykjanes	63 45	22 50
	64 08	22 50
*		*
Reykjavik	64 10	21 50
Stromness	58 56	03 18
*		*
Torshavn	62 00	06 44
*		*
TP Vestmannaeyjar	63 10	20 35
Reykjanes	63 45	22 50
	64 08	22 50
*		*
Reykjavik	64 10	21 50
Lerwick	60 08	01 10
*		*
Torshavn	62 00	06 44
*		*
TP Vestmannaeyjar	63 10	20 35
Reykjanes	63 45	22 50
	64 08	22 50
*		*
Reykjavik	64 10	21 50

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Admiralty West Coast of Scotland Pilot, NP 66

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