**Iceland: A Top Travel Destination (206)**

Five hours by flight from New York City, Iceland offers a refreshingly cool break from the heat of summer with a stunning landscape that beckons you to explore its glaciers, fjords, waterfalls and active volcano. Iceland is a country where creativity, culture and the arts are a valued part of their traditions and where natural wonders are around every corner.

Iceland’s capital of Reykjavik is an exciting modern city founded on a geothermal zone. Whether you love shopping, nightlife, soaking in hot springs or exploring the outdoors, the land of the midnight sun offers something for everyone.

June 2016 is an exciting time with Reykjavik hosting The Color Run on June 11, the largest event series in the world celebrating happiness, healthiness and individuality. From June 16-19, international artists join Iceland’s most celebrated performers for The Reykjavik Midsummer Music Festival, while music and the arts entertain crowds for three days of total daylight at the Secret Solstice Festival, June 17-19.

Another world-renown event in June/July is Landsmot, The National Icelandic Horse Competition, June 27-July 3, showcasing the country’s best horses and equestrians. The fun continues here all summer long and with each rainbow you see, you’ll remember this magical place.

**Top Five Summer Destinations (181)**

As summer approaches, escape the heat at these Top 5 Summer destinations:

**Amsterdam:** Summer is the best time to walk, boat or cycle Amsterdam’s 1,000s of bridges and waterways or indulge in some of the ongoing summer festivals found at this great urban destination.

**Virginia Beach, Virginia:** With its 35 miles of sandy beaches, Virginia Beach offers convenient dining, shopping and waterfront activities with accommodations at a multitude of oceanfront resorts, making it a great vacation destination for families.

**Bora Bora:** This island paradise with its turquoise waters, coral reefs and protected lagoons offers unequaled snorkeling and scuba diving opportunities, making Bora Bora a picture-perfect get-away.

**The Islands of Hawaii:** With its red, black, green and white sand beaches, visitors will experience the “Aloha Spirit” all year long at each of the six, unique islands that are a part of the Hawaiian Islands.

**Mackinac Island, Michigan**: Just a 20-minute boat ride from Michigan’s Upper or Lower Peninsula, this four square mile island has abundant parklands for walking and cycling and features an abundance of Victorian architecture.

**Top Beach in Australia (47)**

Australia’s “Whitehaven Beach,” in the Whitsunday Islands National Park, wins TripAdvisor’s 2016 Travelers’ Choice Award for “Best Beach in Australia.” With its four miles of silica white sand beach and average water temperature of 79 degrees, visitors can enjoy kayaking, ocean paddling, swimming and sunbathing all year-round.

**Featured Summer Recipe: Cuban Mojito (193)**

*Considered Cuba’s national drink, the Mojito dates back to 1586 when Francis Drake and his pirates invaded Havana for its gold.*

**Ingredients:**

* 1 tablespoon granulated sugar or 2 tablespoons Simple Syrup (see recipe below)
* 8 to 10 fresh mint leaves, washed and dried
* 1 lime, halved crosswise or 3 tablespoons freshly-squeezed lime juice
* 2 ounces white rum
* Crushed ice
* 3 ounces mineral water or soda water, chilled
* Mint sprigs for garnish

**Preparation:**

Place the mint leaves and sugar in a tall glass. Crush sugar (or simple syrup) and mint leaves with the back of a spoon for approximately 20 to 30 seconds until you can smell the mint.

Cut the lime in half, remove seeds and discard. Squeeze out the juice into the serving glass, then in drop 1/2 of the lime.

Pour in rum and stir. Add plenty of crushed ice, top off with mineral water or club soda, and garnish with a sprig of mint.

**Simple Syrup:**

* Heat equal parts sugar and water in a saucepan.
* Boil for 5 minutes without stirring; remove from heat.
* Cool before serving or refrigerate syrup overnight in a closed jar.