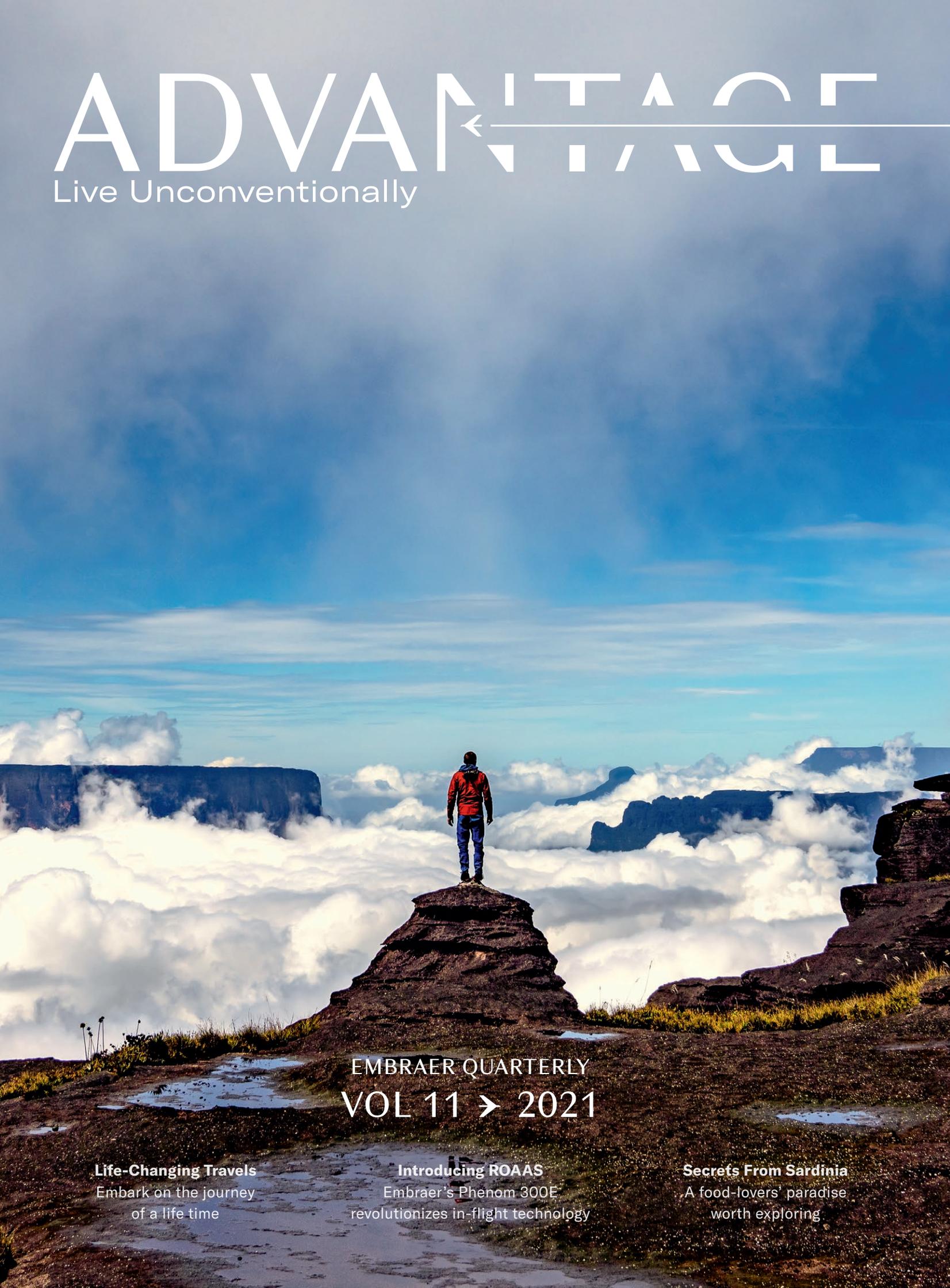


# ADVANTAGE

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# AN ARCTIC ADVENTURE

*Breathtaking moss-covered lava fields, thundering waterfalls, spewing geysers and melancholic black-sand beaches, Iceland's wild and untamed mythical landscape is like nothing you've ever experienced*

With its spectacular, otherworldly landscape, Iceland is one of those fascinating destinations that top many bucket lists. Marooned just outside of the Arctic Circle, in the frosty waters of the north Atlantic Ocean, the island is quite literally in the making. Its constantly evolving landscape results from rumbling snow-covered volcanoes, bubbling hot springs, exploding geysers and shifting tectonic plates.

The most sparsely populated country in Europe, its interior unfurls dramatically over a largely uninhabitable medley of moss-swathed lava fields and glacier-sliced mountains that climax towards breathtaking fjord-fractured coastlines, framed by abrupt cliffs and moody black-sand beaches.

Along the southwestern fringe of the country, Reykjavik, Iceland's compact capital city, is the best spot from which to begin your journey. Perched on a picturesque bay, against the snowy peaks of Mount Esjan, the capital is defined by its quaint jumble of colorful buildings, punctuated by the austere spike of Hallgrímskirkja church, one of the city's tallest and most famous landmarks. No more than a town by international standards, Reykjavik is surprisingly cosmopolitan for its size, known for its edgy art, cool design-led lifestyle brands, dynamic culinary scene and stylish boutique hotels, such as 101—the city's original boutique hotel—and Kvosin, a cool Nordic bolthole dressed in understated, modernist furnishings within a century-old building.

The downtown Reykjavik hotels are a short stroll from cultural sites such as the National Gallery, the Reykjavik Art Museum and Laugavegur, the city's oldest street. Laugavegur—which means “wash road” as it used to lead to the hot springs—is the main shopping and entertainment drag, where hip designer stores such as Hríml, a high-



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The Highlands of Iceland are a sparsely inhabited plateau that covers most of the island's interior.

end homeware offering, jostle for space among some of the innovative restaurants leading the city's burgeoning culinary scene. These include notable offerings such as Eiriksson Brasserie—a modern European restaurant with a comforting menu of elevated classics like truffle gnocchi with parmesan and fresh truffles—and long-standing establishments like Dill, the city's first Michelin-starred restaurant that serves up New Nordic fare inspired by the Icelandic landscape and dedicated to fresh ingredients, foraging and sustainability.

A scenic four-and-a-half-hour drive from Reykjavik, in the far northern reaches of Iceland, is Deplar Farm. The former 18<sup>th</sup>-century sheep farm lies within a remote valley, surrounded by soaring snow-dusted mountains, slotting right into the region's bucolic landscape, with its black timber cladding and grass-covered roof. The 13-room property is an adventure destination that, in winter, makes the most of the area's high snowfall with skiing and snowboarding activities, and come summer offers invigorating outdoor experiences from salmon fishing to mountain biking. At the property, days can be whiled away at the spa—indulging in massage therapies or meditating in the saltwater floatation tank—in the media and games room, or in the restaurant, where meals are a three-course affair, featuring a changing menu of freshly sourced, locally caught ingredients. Following a postprandial tittle, sink into the heated outdoor pool to take in the midnight sun or the elusive northern lights.



**Left page**  
Located on a converted sheep farm, Deplar Farm is designed to get guests out to explore the surrounding landscapes

**Above**  
In winter, Deplar Farm makes the most of the area's high snowfall with skiing and snowboarding activities

**Right page**  
Founded in 2009, Dill restaurant delivers a unique and memorable experience of Iceland serving New Nordic fare

IMAGES (left page and above) © Eleven Experience, (right page) © Dill restaurant

*Stretching east from the Reykjanes Peninsula, the country's south coast offers the best of Iceland's landscape in one diverse and compact region of dramatic black-sand beaches, isolated sea stacks and thundering waterfalls.*

Back down south, Ion Adventure Hotel is an ideal base from which to explore Iceland's Golden Circle, located an hour's drive from Reykjavik, right in the middle of Thingvellir National Park—a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Originally an inn for workers at a nearby geothermal power plant, this overhauled, remote hotel now features a new wing, dramatically jutting out from the side of a mountain with spectacular views of the sprawling moss-covered lava fields. Here, experiences take in the surrounding landscape to include horseback riding, caving and hiking. For the adventure seeker, take a snorkeling tour to discover the cold, yet crystal waters of Silfra Fissure, rated in the top 10 diving sites worldwide. Be sure to book a day tour of the Golden Circle, a 185-mile route that includes the country's three most popular attractions: the Geysir Geothermal Area, Gullfoss Waterfall and Thingvellir National Park.

Stretching east from the Reykjanes Peninsula, the country's south coast offers the best of Iceland's landscape in one diverse and compact region of dramatic black-sand beaches, isolated sea stacks and thundering waterfalls. While a leisurely self-drive tour is one of the best ways to experience this region, local tour company, Buubble, adds an extra dose of adventure with an overnight tour that takes in sights from the majestic Seljalandsfoss and Skógafoss waterfalls to the black volcanic sands of Reynisfjara Beach and Dyrhólaey—known as the arch with the hole—before spending the night in a secluded, transparent bubble, where, with luck, the dancing aurora borealis will appear for your very own private show.



**Left page**

The country's south coast offers the best of Iceland's landscape in one diverse and compact region including dramatic black-sand beaches

**Right page (top)**

With the isolation that comes with living on an island, the Icelandic sheep is one of the purest breeds of sheep in the world

**Right page (bottom)**

Iceland has a huge variety of exhilarating experiences to get the heart of even the most fearless explorer pumping



**AUTHENTIC LUXURY TRAVEL WITH NINE WORLDS**

When it comes to seeing the best that Iceland has to offer, Nine Worlds is one of the top travel companies in the country. Creating luxury, private, tailor-made tours of Iceland—as well as Greenland and the Faroe Islands—the brand exceeds expectations with mind blowing experiences and wonderfully curated itineraries. From reaching the summit of Hvannadalshnúkur, the highest peak in Iceland at a towering 2,100-metres, to a helicopter tour over glacier-sliced mountains, thundering waterfalls and steaming geothermal hotspots, a romantic getaway to the Blue Lagoon, or a gastronomic tour of Reykjavik, Nine Worlds has a wide collection of expertly crafted itineraries. With their personal services available 24 hours a day, the team works with you from the beginning to ensure that your dream trip has been customized to your needs and that you experience the land of ice and fire in only the best way possible. [nineworlds.is](http://nineworlds.is)

Jutting out from the country's southeastern coast, the wild and untamed Reykjanes Peninsula, home to Keflavík International Airport, is one of the country's more densely populated areas. Just 40 minutes from Reykjavik, you'll find the warm, milky waters of The Blue Lagoon. Fringed by magnificent snow-dusted black lava fields, it's easy to see why the steaming, mystical spa—a man-made lagoon filled with mineral-rich water from a nearby geothermal power plant—is Iceland's most visited spot. Even more so, since the opening of The Retreat, a luxury hotel that delivers a rarefied spa experience with exclusive access to a quiet, private section of the lagoon. Here, wind down an exceptional journey with days spent in the spa, wallowing in the steaming waters with a glass of champagne or indulging in a unique in-water massage. Take afternoon tea in the lobby with floor-to-ceiling windows that frame the enchanting views of the lagoon. Follow with a slow dinner at Moss, the hotel's fine dining restaurant, which serves a modern New Nordic menu using fresh, local and seasonal ingredients—smoked arctic char tartare with caviar, lemon and romaine—against sweeping vistas of the wondrous Icelandic landscape. ◀



**EMBRAER TIP**

Experience best-in-class range and cabin altitude in the **Praetor 500**. It's only a six-hour flight from New York City to Reykjavik in the fastest midsize jet available today.

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