







Inspired by Iceland was the name chosen for a unique marketing campaign which was launched as a response to detrimental effect the volcanic eruptions in Eyjafjallajökull turned out to have on the Icelandic tourism industry - and a better name could hardly have been chosen. It has been truly inspiring to witness folk from all walks of life joining hands in an effort to prove that our island is indeed as inspiring and stimulating place to visit as it ever was.

During the campaign several noted artists, both local and international, were more than willing to lend a helping hand to the country which helped inspire their art, proving that our unique landscapes and culture leave few untouched. Icelanders with friends abroad were invited to use a common platform to recommend a vacation in Iceland to their friends abroad and

it was truly heart-warming to see the positive response from our tiny nation. As it turns out we are indeed inspired by Icaland

Now is the peak of the season and the time to be in Iceland. The small seaside-towns are full of life and in almost all of them you'll find a lively festival where you are invited to join the locals in the celebrations. The waterfalls, geysers, mountains and rivers are all sporting their finest colors and the people are in the best of spirits.

If you have already landed in Iceland we wish you a safe and pleasant journey and hope that within these pages you'll find helpful information and new ideas to make your trip more memorable. For those who are reading this outside of Iceland – stop reading, buy a ticket, bring this magazine along and prepare to be inspired.

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 ${\tt www.icelandwantstobeyourfriend.com}$













Kraum —The Fusion of Icelandic Design

In Aðalstræti downtown Reykjavík, you will find the design store Kraum that fully represents the bustling spectrum of Icelandic design, with no fewer than 200 designers represented in the store. In the bright, stylish and spacious store the lively and vibrant state of the Icelandic design scene is readily apparent.

Walking into the comfortable environment Kraum has to offer, you

will notice two recurring motifs shared by many of the design products. Firstly, many of the designers obviously seek inspiration in the old Icelandic handicraft tradition when creating their products. The Icelandic wool sweater pattern in a new context, on napkins and thermoses is a good example of that. Secondly you will witness the simplicity or purity of many of the products. One material is chosen and the ornament is moderate



Kraum is actually located in the oldest remaining house in Reykjavik, built in 1762 by Skúli Magnússon, a prominent figure in the history of Iceland as a pioneer of industrialization. By remarkable coincidence the first industrial wool production took place in the house, bearing quite a resemblance to the present activity housed there.

Kraum's selection of design products ranges from small decorative ornaments to full-sized furniture. In between, one can find clothing, glasses, bowls and hangers. "We have objects made of fish skin, which always amazes foreign travellers and hangers that look like whale teeth," says Halla Bogadóttir manager of the store. Icelandic materials are evident by looking over the store, as a matter of fact, beautiful fish skin lamps, shaped like fishes, are one of the first things you will see upon entry.

What characterizes Icelandic design, according to Halla, is a certain fusion, as cosmopolitan education and influences meet local upbringing and experience. Perhaps it is not as distinctive as Danish design, to take a well known example, but the variety is probably greater.

Some of the items instantly awaken one's curiosity, like the "Glass on foot," a ceramic chalice with a baby foot. This design both plays with well known forms, in the case of the baby foot, but in a strange context. It also plays with many of the common sayings in Icelandic connected to the word "foot".

Another item that might interest bird enthusiasts coming to Iceland is "the Birds of Iceland." It is a box containing everything you need in order to embroider your own pillow with a lovely image of some of the most distinctive Icelandic birds. The instructions are quite easy to comprehend.

It is apparent by walking through Kraum that both older and younger designers are fully aware of the ever changing weather of Iceland. A good variety of warm clothes can be found in Kraum; sweaters, gloves and caps. The young designers do not hesitate to put the materials to novel uses, which results in quite remarkable clothing.

Kraum is going from strength to strength. The store started with about 60 designers but now there are products from more than 200 on display. Halla adds that they are really selective when selecting new products

naturally choosing only the best for their store. Apart from the store in Aðalstræti Kraum has three smaller stores situated in two of the Reykjavik









art museums, Hafnarhús and Kjarvalstaðir and one in the Design museum in Garðabær. Those stores are smaller but offer a surprisingly robust selection nonetheless. The store in Hafnarhúsið mainly features young and upcoming designers.

More information is available on www.kraum.is.

Iceland excursions GRAY LINE ICELAND



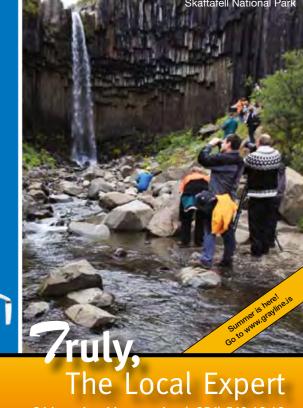
About us

We are one of the leading tour operators in Iceland and offer professional services, flexibility and safety for travellers in Iceland.

Allow us to introduce you to the variety that Iceland has to offer; from it's richness in culture and history to its breathtaking beauty in nature and daily life.

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Gestamóttakan -Your Host in Iceland

An Experienced Host in Organising Conferences and Meetings

Iceland is an increasingly popular conference destination. If you have recently attended a conference in Iceland, chances are it has been organised by Your Host in Iceland.

Since 1996, Inga Sólnes and her team at Your Host in Iceland have specialised in organising conferences, meetings and trips for foreign and Icelandic customers, institutions, organisations, companies and individuals. Your Host in Iceland provides custom. individualized services to suit the unique needs of each client. They will meet guests at the airport, book accommodations, organise leisure activities and sightseeing tours for both small and large groups.

A Boat Trip and Shellfish Dinner

Inga Sólnes has just completed a large international medical conference. which turned out very well in all respects. Following the conference, participants travelled to Snæfellsnes and were treated to a boat tour and a delicious shellfish dinner sampling the finest bounty of the Icelandic waters. The participants were very pleased with the conference - some even mentioned that this was the best conference they have ever attended.

Your Host in Iceland Has It Covered

There are many things to attend to when organising a conference, a meeting or seminar. A budget must be made, a venue must be selected and booked, equipment and technical services provided for, and all kinds of material must be designed, written

and printed - often even a website must be created. All this is taken care of by Your Host in Iceland. Your Host in Iceland even offers programmes specifically designed for the guests or spouses who may have accompanied to the conference. Not to mention that local and foreign media communication can also be arranged. Conference organizers will find working with Your Host in Iceland is like a breath of fresh air. Inga Sólnes and her company will take care of the details so that organizers can focus on the content of the conference itself. And when the conference is

over, organizers can be confident that

all accounts have been settled - Your

a breath of fresh air. Inga Sólnes and her company will take care of the details so that organizers can focus on the content of the conference itself.

Host in Iceland takes care of those important details, as well.



Your Host in Iceland has taken care of a multitude of Nordic conferences. Iceland is an especially popular conference destination in the Nordic countries, it seems people jump at the opportunity to travel to this fascinating country.

This year, and indeed the year before, the conferences Your Host in Iceland

has organised have not been any less numerous despite the Icelandic financial collapse and the following crisis. In fact, the fall of the krona of course has made it especially attractive to come to Iceland - it is less expensive than before and yet the service level remains the same, or in some cases has even bettered.

Incentive trips

Naturally, Your Host in Iceland revolves around conferences, nevertheless, they are well versed in organising a variety of related activities. For instance, for companies providing their employees with special bonuses or for those companies offering group travel to inspire the spirit of the company, Your Host in Iceland is pleased to facilitate memorable wildness adventure trips that take in the best of Iceland's natural beauty.

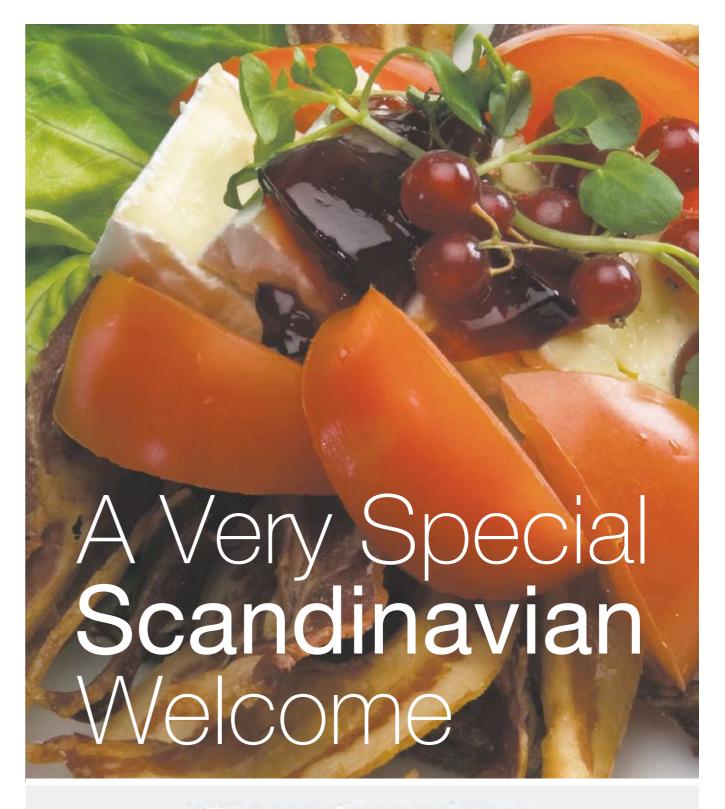
The hallmark of Your Host in Iceland is friendly, flexible, efficient and personal service based on the company's extensive contacts and goodwill within the Icelandic travel and commercial sectors. Inga Sólnes and her team look forward to serving you in Iceland.

Your Host in Iceland is located down town in Reykjavík. For more information and booking go to www. vourhost.is





The staff of Your Host. Kristjana Magnusdottir, Inga Solnes and Anna Katrin Gudmundsdottir.





Smørrebrød & brasserie ######

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The Lobster House

Made From the Finest Materials Available

The "Icelandic Lobster" is a delicacy you simply must try during your stay in Iceland and few are more experienced in preparing delicious lobster dishes than The Lobster House, situated in the heart of Reykjavík.

However, what most Icelanders call lobster is probably not what you think it is. The crustacean on offer in The Lobster House is actually a much smaller species called langoustine which is commonly found in the north-eastern Atlantic Ocean and North Sea. The langoustine is usually around 17 cm (6.7 inches) in length and weighs up to 400g, whereas the common lobster usually ranges from 8-16 inches. The history of commercial langoustine fishing in Iceland only dates back around fifty years, but since its introduction to the Icelandic cuisine it has been considered one of the top gourmet materials available.

The langoustine's smaller size however does not mean less taste - on the contrary the chefs at The Lobster House claim that it outshines the common lobster in most aspects. "Even though it is smaller than the lobster most people are used to, I have found that the giant lobster doesn't come anywhere near the langoustine when it comes to taste and texture. The langoustine is considerably softer and the taste is much more concentrated. It is one of the bests possible materials a chef can work with, making my job that much easier," says one of the Lobster House's expert chefs, Ottó Magnússon.

But appearances can be deceiving and Ottó says that it is not uncommon to see a look of surprise on the faces of customers when they receive a plate of these relatively small crustaceans, thinking a mistake has been made. "They are often sceptical at first, but after the first bite their doubts are removed instantly," says Ottó.

The most popular dish in The Lobster House is the grilled lobster with garlic, a dish most Icelanders savour on sunny summer evenings. But as the name implies the chefs at The Lobster House are experts in coming up with innovative ideas on preparing this

The Lobster House is located in one of Reykjavík's oldest houses on Amtmansstígur 1, which was originally built in 1838. If you are walking north, away from the pond

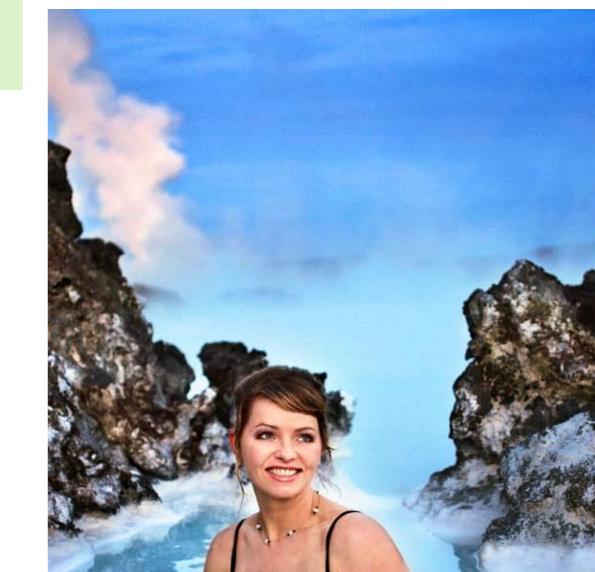






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towards the sea on the right side of Lækjargata vou should notice a cluster of old houses behind a small peculiar garden with an oversized chess board. On the most prominent building you'll see a sign with the langoustine on it and inside the feast awaits. Further information is available on www.humarhusid.is



I love the space I love the people I love the nature

> ... and I love the airport

> > Anna Wright, Boston, USA Human Resource Manager

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Keflavík International Airport, Iceland is the best airport in Europe 2009*

EXCELLENT SERVICE at a spacious and comfortable airport. Arrive early and enjoy our shopping area. We offer a wide variety of Icelandic souvenirs, brand products and much more at tax and duty free prices.

*According to ACI Airport Service Quality (ASQ) passenger survey





Vestmannaeyjar Islands

A New Ferry Service – 30 minutes from the Mainland to Vestmannaeyjar. The Revolution of 2010

Onthe21stofJuly2010arevolution will change Vestmannaeyjar islands for ever. It is on that day a new harbour will open on the otherwise harbourless south coast of Iceland. This is the harbour on Landeyjasandur. From the 21st of July ferries will cross the channel between the mainland and the islands at a regular interval, six times a day. The time of surface travel thus drops from three hours, as it is now with the trips of Heriólfur from Þorlákshöfn to Vestmannaeyjar, to 25 minutes -A revolution indeed.

Preparations

The inhabitants of Vestmannaeyjar are anticipating big changes in their lives because of this. It will be much easier for them to come ashore and drive to any destination they wish to go to on the mainland. The new harbour will be even more important for tourism in Vestmannaeyjar, as it will consequently also become much

easier to travel to Vestmannaeyjar. The islands are a beautiful and interesting tourist destination with a remarkable history, both natural and cultural, which in some cases has left dramatic marks on the town on Heimaey. Heimaey means Home Island, and it is the biggest island in the archipelago



of Vestmannaeyjar, and the only one with permanent settlement. The inhabitants have been preparing for the change for a long time and are now ready to meet the challenge of a much larger stream of tourists than ever before.

Harbour or Tunnel?

After a long debate over how to improve transport to Vestmannaeviar. it was decided to build a harbour in Landeviasandur. The road system on the mainland had improved considerably over the last 30 years or so, with metalled roads becoming the norm all over the country, tunnels were bored under Hvalfiörður and through many mountains in the west, north and east to improve transport on land, but at the same time nothing was done to improve transport to Vestmannaevjar. The islands were only served by a slow boat from Þorlákshöfn and flights from Reykjavík and Bakkaflugvöllur.

Many lobbied for a tunnel to be dug between land and islands, and the possibility of building a tunnel was explored extensively. In the end it proved too difficult, too expensive and too dangerous to build a tunnel, so the harbour option was chosen.

The Landeyjar Harbour

The harbour was built on the discernibly harbourless south coast. As there has never been a harbour there, the engineers simply cut into to shoreline and - whoa! - there's a harbour. This of course involved a very large engineering operation, piers had to be built and after the harbour opens sand must be continuously pumped out of the harbour. The ocean waves are very large and powerful there and constantly carry sand into the harbour. The piers are built of rocks from the now world famous volcano of Eyjafjallajökull. The rocks were carried by giant lorries from the mountain and dumped in the ocean to



Now a project called Pompeii of the north, called after the buried Italian town near Napoli, is under way. It involves the archaeological excavation of some of the houses buried under the ash and lava.

form the gigantic piers necessary for the protection of the new harbour.

There is of course already a very good

Preparations in Vestmannaeyjar

and safe harbour in Vestmannaeyjar (even if it very nearly disappeared some decades ago). But the inhabitants have been very busy in preparations for the revolution. They have been preparing camping sites for those who wish to sleep in tents or campers. A totally new swimming pool has been built. This is one of the largest and most modern swimming pools in the whole country, and that is saying a lot, because Icelanders put a lot of effort into their swimming pools which are almost a national treasure. New cafés and restaurants have opened, and the golf course has been very much improved.







The Vestmannaeyjar Eruption of 1973

Vestmannaeyjar's history is especially interesting and the most famous event is probably the volcanic fissure which opened right next to the town of Vestmannaeyjar on Heimaey in 1973. There were only a few hundred meters from the fissure to the houses that stood closest to it. Luckily the fissure did not open directly under the town or the causalities might have been very high. As luck would have it, all the inhabitants were able to flee the eruption in the large fishing fleet of the town. The eruption lasted

for five months, and for a while the lava threatened to close the harbour. A large cooling operation saved it and stopped the lava. The eruption increased the size of Heimaey, but it also buried 400 houses.

Pompeii of the North

Now a project called Pompeii of the north, called after the buried Italian town near Napoli, is under way. It involves the archaeological excavation of some of the houses buried under the ash and lava. The project entails creating a small village that will rise from the ashes of the disaster, giving visitors a chance to experience the effects of the awesome destructive force of a volcanic eruption. Some houses will be partially uncovered, while others will be completely uncovered and reopened for guests to visit. Already there have been put up signs next to each home, detailing its inhabitants and what the houses looked like. Even though the excavation has not yet been completed, it has been open for people to visit for some time

Fish, Fish and Fish

The three main occupations in the town Vestmannaeyjar, besides tourism, can be summed up in three words: Fish, fish and fish. From the 12th century onwards the islands have been coveted by the rich and powerful because of their location close to some of the richest fishing grounds in the world. In the 12th century the powerful bishopric of Skálholt in Southern Iceland acquired the islands, but in the 17th century they became a port belonging to the monopoly trade of Denmark, Several hundred people used to reside in the islands, living off fish and husbandry.

The Raid of the "Turks"

In 1627, an even more traumatic event than the 1973 eruption occurred. Pirates from Algeria, led by a Dutchman who had converted to Islam, attacked the islands and enslaved part of the population. They were shipped to the city of Algiers on the south coast of the Mediterranean. 28 of them eventually returned, bought back by the Danish king. For a long time after, a strong defence with cannon and guns was organised in Vestmannaeyjar, to prevent something like that happening again.

Modern Times

Now Vestmannaeyjarareexperiencing a rebirth because of the new ferry service. The islands will practically be joined to the mainland in a totally new way. The tourist season is now mainly in the period May-August, but now the area connected with Vestmannaeyjar becomes very much enlarged — it might be possible to live on the mainland and work in the islands, f.ex. Vestmannaeyjar will become part of South Iceland in a way it has never before been.

For more info: www.vestmannaeyjar. is and www.herjolfur.is



Delicious Food and Great

Handicraft in Eldstó







find a unique combination of a café and a gallery, with delicious food, drinks and beautiful handicraft. Run by an artistic husband and wife, who make the handicraft on sale, Eldstó offers a cozy environment for tired travelers.

If ceramic art is your thing, Eldstó is the perfect place to visit. Guðlaug Helga and Þór have built up a reputation in the field as excellent craftsmen. They also sell products by other artists in their recently enlarged gallery and café.

Driving the ring road east from Reykjavik, you will arrive in Hvolsvöllur in about an hour and

The food is not only delicious but also a delight for the eyes, being served in a home made china in an artful manner.

a half. It is just the time to stop for a cup of coffee, whether your going onwards or not. Eldstó offers various delicious home-baked cakes with the nice warm cup of coffee, as well as smoothies and snacks. If you are



driving through at noon, Eldstó offers you a large brunch. If you happen to be in Hvolsvöllur during dinnertime, the dish of the day should not be

The food is not only delicious but also a delight for the eyes, being served in a home made china in an artful

More information is available on

The Family Friendly Akureyri Museum

The Town by the Bay



Located in the oldest part of Akureyri you'll find the charming Akureyri Museum. There you will find interesting and elaborate exhibitions which give a good insight into the history and culture of the Eyjafjörður area throughout the centuries.

The permanent exhibitions are: Akureyri -The Town by the Bay and Eyjafjörður from the Settlement. In addition, there is one ongoing exhibition "Treasure - Twenty photographers in Akureyri and Surroundings 1858-1965". The exhibitions of the Akureyri Museum will surely provide something to interest all, from the youngest to the oldest, from families to groups travelling together.

On this beautiful, green spot in Akureyri, one can certainly find a magical world on its own. The magic is well reflected both in the museum itself and in the biggest exhibit, a small, beautiful church from the 19th century. The church is located in the museum garden, one of Iceland's oldest ornamental garden.

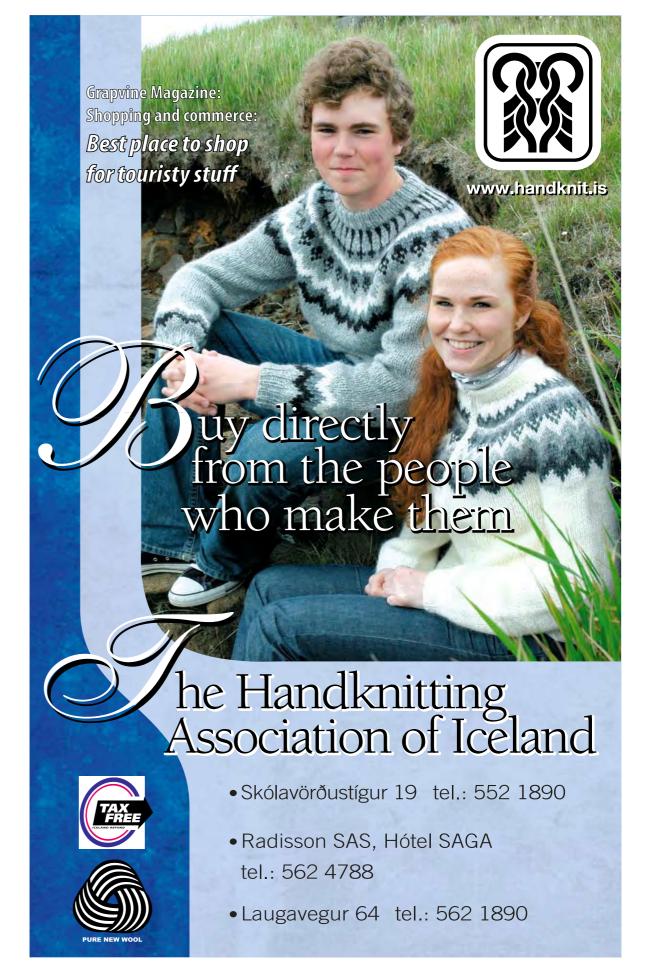


The museum store is a nice surprise, offering many fine items, for example a good variety of Icelandic craft and design items. In the same spot as Akureyri Museum you will also find the Nonni's house in the memory of one of Iceland's most beloved authors. Ión Sveinsson–Nonni. Be sure not to through Akureyri.

The Akureyri Museum is open everyday 10-17.

Further information is available on www.miniasafnid.is

The museum store is a nice surprise, offering many fine





Northern Iceland:

All kinds of Delights – Natural and Cultural

The northern part of Iceland, with its mountains, waterfalls, small streams, birdlife, volcanic areas, islands, green valleys and vast deserts, is certainly worth a visit. It also offers a variety of cultural experiences, scenic fishing villages, a beautiful cultural landscape of farming, museums, events, and endless opportunities for memorable experiences such as whale watching, rafting and horse back riding.



Gems of Nature

Northern Iceland has almost every kind of nature imaginable. Mountains dominate the landscape in many parts of the area, and they come in all shapes and sizes. The highest mountains are in the centre of the area, in the magnificent mountain ridges of Tröllaskagi around Eyjafjörður, but on the highland plain single mountains of volcanic origin rise from the plain here and there, like Herðubreið.

In the valleys the rivers cascade towards the sea with incredible speed and sometimes fury, where they turn into massive waterfalls. The most powerful waterfall in Europe is to be found in Northern Iceland, in the river of Jökulsá á Fjöllum. This is Dettifoss. Other famous waterfalls are in the

river of Skjálfandafljót a bit further west, the magical Aldeyjarfoss at the edge of the highlands, and Goðafoss, right on highway 1, easily visited and a great sight.

Lake Mývatn Area

Lake Mývatn is the natural gem above others in Northern Iceland (and even Iceland in general), a breathtaking



The mountains rimming the lake are many and varied in form, some of them gigantic lava craters, and close by there are some of the most famous natural wonders of Iceland, like Dimmuborgir

area with astonishing variety. The lake itself is a wonder apart, with rich bird life, incredible lava formations and beautiful islands. The mountains rimming the lake are many and varied in form, some of them gigantic lava craters, and close by there are some of the most famous natural wonders of Iceland, like Dimmuborgir (the name means dark castles, in this case castles of lava, which gives an indication of the nature of the area), and the hot springs of Námaskarð.



All over Northern Iceland nature surprises and offers all kinds of experiences. The island of Drangey in the middle of Skagafjörður rises steeply from the sea with sea bird cliffs. The islands of Hrísev and Grímsev offer other kinds of experiences, as they are both inhabited with scenic fishing villages. Langanes in the extreme northeast is famous for its bird life, and Vatnsnes in the extreme northwest for its seals. In Vatnsnes the rock Hvítserkur stands close by the shore. Ásbyrgi and the gorges of Jökulsá á Fjöllum below Dettifoss are very special places like the landscape of a fantasy movie come alive.

Town and Country

Northern Iceland contains some of the most scenic and beautiful towns in Iceland. Akureyri, Siglufjörður, Hofsós, Húsavík, Hjalteyri and many other villages all lie in wonderful settings, many with old quarters of beautiful wooden houses from the 18th, 19th and early 20th century. Siglufjörður is home to the Herring Museum, celebrating its golden age of herring fisheries in the 20th century. Akureyri, the biggest town, houses many and varied museums



and collections, and it is truly a lively cultural center of the north. In all these towns there are possibilities for playing golf, swimming, visiting museums, eating good food, hiking and going on a boat trip. The old

capital of Northern Iceland, the bishopric of Hólar in Hjaltadalur, with its 18th century cathedral and 19th century agricultural college, lies in Skagafjörður. Skagafjörður teems with historical places, old battlegrounds and forgotten manors, as does Eyjafjörður and in fact the whole area. The area is also an agricultural area with fields of hay and grain, horses, sheep and cows walking the meadows.





Every Town has its own Festival

The town of Dalvík is famous for the Fish Day, a day when everyone can have several free meals made from local fish recipes. Several tens of thousands of people show up every year in the second weekend of August for this great festival of food and fun, not least the numerous diaspora of Dalvík and Svarfaðardalur. All summer long you'll find an ongoing festival somewhere in the area; Swedish days in Húsavík in late July, festival of country & western music in mid-august in Skagaströnd and so on. An organisation of local food is active in the area. It is called the Northland Food Cluster and consists of the local food organisation in Eyjafjörður, Matarkistan (Food Chest) in Skagafjörður and Þingeyska matarbúrið in Þingeyjarsýslur.

All kinds of hotels, hostels, bed and breakfast is available, both in the towns and in the countryside, and the possibilities for eating out are many and varied.

Information on all this can be found at www.nordurland.is

15



Hestasport is Iceland's oldest licensed riding tour operator with over 30 years experience. Located in Varmahliö, North Iceland, on the Skagafjörður fjord, the company offers a wide variety of tours to suit anyone from fanatical horse enthusiasts to first-time riders. For those who want to combine nature with activities, Hestasport offers a variety of adventures



River rafting is ideal for families. You might even get the chance of jumping from a cliff into the river.

such as river-rafting, paintball and even abseiling in addition to their riding tours.

been rated one of Europe's best

commercially rafted rivers. An

exhilarating rush through some of

Iceland's most spectacular whitewater,

deep in the magnificent gorges of

the East Glacial River canyon. An

action-packed adventure guaranteed

to keep your face wet and your heart

pumping!" says Katja Bröker, Activity

"For multi-day tours we recommend

a bit more riding experience and

being physically fit so that the riders

are able to enjoy the tour itself instead

of concentrating on remaining in the

saddle," she says. On these tours you

stay overnight in mountain cabins. In

one of our highland tours the riders

Tours' office manager.

highlands

Horse trekking in the

Hestasport operates 4 unique rafting trips on 3 different rivers, which range widely in difficulty to suit everyone from seasoned rafters to first timers. The youngest participant has been 4 years old and the oldest 86!

The Blanda River provides the ideal setting for an easy float trip down the calm and pristine waters of the Blandadalur valley and is geared towards families with young children or those with special needs.

Join us for a trip down the West Glacial River, where easy-to-moderate difficulty whitewater and stunning scenery combine to provide and unforgettable adventure for anyone from the novice rafter to the whole family.

The East Glacial River

"This is our most intense and most challenging day trip, on what has





You can chose between longer or shorter horse riding tours in the beautiful nature of northern Iceland.

might even find themselves in a comfy made up bed after a hot shower and an excellent 3-course dinner.

Hestasport-Activity Tours can organize all kinds of activities according to your wishes. Abseiling can be arranged for groups upon request and is great fun too. "The rappelling is 10-15 metres down the cliff and you get a complete adrenaline kick," Katja says.

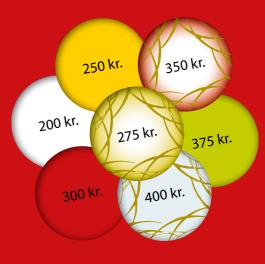
After an adventurous day in Skagafjörður you are welcome to spend a night or more in one of our cosy Hestasport Cottages. With magnificent views overlooking the vast plains and distant mountains of this valley, these chalet-style retreats make for the perfect getaway at any time of year.

Our cottages are nestled together up on the hill a short walking distance from the centre of Varmahlið and less than 1km from our horse riding and rafting base. We have different styles of cottages, each equipped with a full self-catering kitchen, dining facilities, a bathroom and shower, beds and linen, and a simply furnished living area. Cottages range in size from studio-style bungalows to spacious multi-room retreats.

More information on www.riding.is and www.activitytours.is Phone: +354 453 8383.







PICK YOUR FAVORITE PLATE

ÓSUSHI, 2. hæð í Iðuhúsinu, Lækjargötu 2a og Borgartúni 29 sími 561 0562 / www.osushi.is

Mývatn Tours

The Askia Caldera in Northeast Iceland is, without a doubt, one of the most amazing places in the country. The area is of great geological interest and is very remote. Mývatn Tours offers you a day tour around this magnificent area, starting by the beautiful Lake Mývatn.

Askja, the huge caldera, is centrally located in the Dyngjufjöll mountain and is an active centre of a volcanic system. In the crater of this majestic volcano lies Lake Öskjuvatn, a relatively small lake, and yet the second deepest in Iceland, reaching a depth 220 meters. It formed within a few years of a series of volcanic eruptions in the system, that culminated in a very powerful eruption that took place in 1874-

On the north east shore of Öskjuvatn, you will find Víti or "hell" in English, measuring approximately 150 metres diameter. It contains a geothermal lake of mineral-rich, sulfurous, opaque blue water, which has a comfortable temperature for

On the way to Askja is yet another magnificent mountain called Herðubreið, an old subglacial, which is 1682 meters high. Herðubreið provides a breathtaking background to the wilderness oasis Herðubreiðalindir. With beautiful vegetation and a fine camp ground, Herðubreðalindir is the perfect place for shorter or longer stopovers.

The tour itself is 11-12 hours long and starts at 8 am at the information center in Reykjahlíð, Mývatn. From there you will drive through the wondrous Mývatnsöræfi, onwards

to this largest, untouched area of Iceland with its notoriously weird and wonderful landscape. The mountain road is surprisingly comfortable compared to many others. What a rare privilege it is to stop and sip the clear water of the spring-fed rivers that you have just forded in this remote Highland paradise.

Various interesting stops are made on the way. For example a beautiful, small waterfall called Gáski and the cozy Herðubreiðarlindir, where the remains of Fialla-Evvindur's hut will be visited. This is the "home" of the most famous outlaw in Iceland of the 18th century. You will traverse lunar landscapes where US astronauts trained before they ventured to the moon in 1969, as well as stopping at the slope of the crater that formed in the latest eruption in Askja in 1961. An easy 30-minute walk leads you to the explosion crater Víti (Hell) at the rim of Lake Öskiuvatn, where the otherworldly experience of Askja is complete after a nice dip in the milky warm waters of the Víti crater. You will make a final stop at Herðurbreiðarlindir and the impressive Drekagil Canyon (Canyon of Dragons) before you return to Lake Mývatn.

For those who come to Iceland seeking remote wilderness, there is hardly any better place to visit than the Northeast Highlands. Mývatn Tours offers you a convenient way to visit this pristine and unspoiled landscape.

Further information is available at askjatours.is

















-Take the Seal Route in Húnaþing Vestra in Northwest Iceland

Iceland's Friendliest Neighbours and **Phenomenal Natural Beauty**

The quiet and peaceful community of Húnaþing vestra in Northwest is truly a hidden pearl when it comes to destinations for tourists seeking excitement, culture, majestic natural phenomena and a chance to get up close and personal to Iceland's friendliest neighbours - the seals.

In Húnaþing vestra you'll find such splendid rock formation such as the 15 meter high cliff, Hvítsterkur, which protrudes proudly out of the sea near in the Vatnsnes area. Through centuries of pummelling waves the sea has carved holes through its foundations and sculpted it in its unique shape which has led some to believe the rock is actually a petrified monster. Other notable phenomena are the ever impressive volcanic plug Borgarvirki, a natural basalt fortress which was utilized to great success in ancient battles, according to the Icelandic Sagas. Be sure not to miss the beautiful Kolugljúfur canyon where the ancient troll lady Kola is said to have resided and finally been laid to rest.

Friendly Neighbours

The curious and friendly looking seals that frequent the shores of Iceland are undoubtedly one of the most rewarding nature-watching expeditions you'll come across during your stay. The Icelandic Seal Center in Hvammstangi is dedicated entirely to these friendly neighbours and offers you the chance to visit the best seal watching sites in Iceland.

Seals have played an integral part in the history of Iceland since its settlement and the Seal Center has collected a wide array of items and source materials throughout history connected to sealery, seal products and seal related farming. Ever since the late 800's seals have provided Icelanders with sustenance, warmth

and light. Seal-skin was used to make protective clothing, their fat was used as an illuminant and their meat was considered a delicacy.

The Seal Center will can give you information on how to reach the Vantsnes Peninsula, where a large number of harbour seals can be found in a relatively small area, making it an optimal area for seal watching. The Seal Center, locals and The Icelandic Tourist Board have joined hands in making seal colonies in Vatnsnes safe and accessible for guests, giving



you the ultimate seal watching experience.



The people of Húnaþing vestra make their livelihood primarily of agriculture and fishery and are known for their hospitable nature. Be sure to check out various galleries in the area orthe farmers market in the tiny town of Laugarbakki where the locals gather regularly to present their home made products - which can be exciting food products which you're not likely to find anywhere else and creative craft designs.

Activities in Húnabing vestra are abundant - you can go horse -back riding with experienced riders and docile horses through unforgettable landscapes, go swimming in the traditional Icelandic swimming pools, you can try your luck in fishing in the local rivers, dine out in the quality restaurants found in the area or simply enjoy strolling through a genuine Icelandic agriculture and fishing community.

For more information visit www. visithunathing.is or www.sealcenter. is For further information about booking and accommodation you can send an e-mail to info@selasetur.is







Whale and Puffin Watching

Adventures on Traditional Icelandic Schooners

In Húsavík, North Sailing offers visitors to northern Iceland the chance to experience the rugged beauty of the Icelandic coast aboard authentic traditional sailing ships. Owned and operated by brothers Hörður and Árni Sigurbjarnarson, North Sailing has been offering whale and puffin watching on sailing tours since 1995. Leaving the shore gives visitors a new perspective on the coastline and opportunity to see the marine life in and on the sea. These excursions are very popular with tourists and locals alike.

Combining a love of the sea with a passion for restoring old Icelandic oak boats, the Sigurbjarnarson brothers formed North Sailing. The company started out with one vessel, the Knörrinn, but as the popularity of the whale and puffin watching excusions grew, the brothers soon bought additional boats. In 2002, North Sailing introduced the Haukur,

a wooden boat originally built in 1973 that the Sigurbjarnarson brothers had coverted into a schooner. The Haukur was renovated in the spirit of the old shark schooners that were fishing off the northern coast of Iceland in the 18th century and has been fitted with traditional schooner equipment. "We have the coastal culture as our

guiding light and try to connect it to tourism in Iceland," says Birna Lind Björnsdóttir, Sales and Marketing Manager of North Sailing.

This year North Sailing has been able to add two unique boats to the fleet: the Garðar, the oldest oak boat still sailing in Iceland and the schooner Hildur, which is being renovated in Denmark and will arrive in Iceland in late June. These are the only traditional Icelandic sailing ships still in operation today, according to Birna Lind, and North Sailing is already looking to future restoration projects. Although the old sailing traditions of Iceland have been disappearing in recent



decades, Iceland remains widely respected as a seafaring nation With careful restoration of these beautiful vessels, North Sailing is contributing to the preservation of this important aspect of Icelandic cultural heritage and offering tourists the opportunity to experience it first hand.

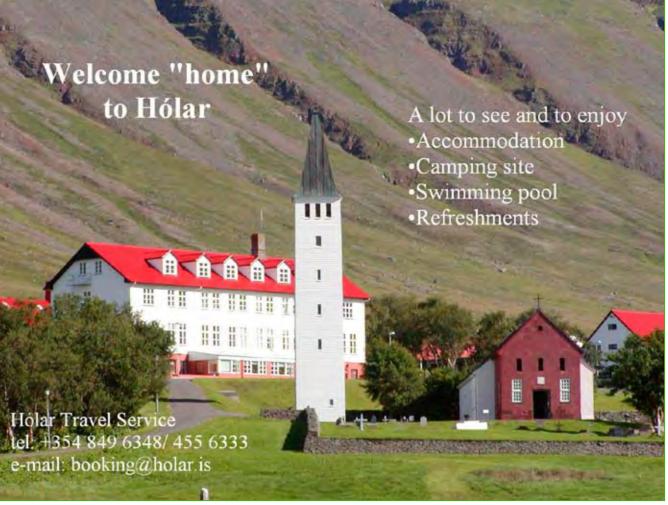
North Sailing offers guests 3 or 4 hours tours. For those whose time is limited, a three-hour tour provides ample opportunity to enjoy the lovely northern coastline and catch a glimpse of the wildlife of the sea. There are also longer day whale and puffin watching tours during which guests aboard one of North Sailing's schooners may even have a chance to participate in the actual sailing of the vessel. Visitors





and an opportunity to experience the seafaring culture that is such a part of Icelandic tradition. The meticulously restored ships of the North Sailing company are suitable for both small and large groups and are family friendly. A sailing tour aboard one of these fine craft is an experience not to be missed! For more informations please visit www.northsailing.is





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The famous Golden Circle mainly consists of the three sites; bingvellir, Geysir and Gullfoss. What these places have in common is a great historical and geological importance for Iceland, but what is maybe the most important fact is that that they are extremely beautiful and magnificent. Tour provider Reykjavik Excursions offer good guidance through the sites and the region, as well as excellent options for experiencing these must-sees of Iceland.

Reykjavík Excursions is one of the largest and most experienced tour

operators in Iceland. They offer a grand selection of exciting options for those who want to see the best of Iceland. They operate an extensive list of day tours from Reykjavik all year around, including: South Shore Adventure, Take a Walk on the Ice Side and A sense of Reykjavik in addition to the five varieties of the Golden Circle. The tours are guided by professional guides in English, German, French, Spanish or Scandinavian.

The Golden Circle is the name given to a 240 km circular route which encompasses many of Iceland's most famous landmarks. During the tour you can walk around the worldfamous Geysir geothermal area, the historic site of Þingvellir National Park and be inspired by the queen of Icelandic waterfalls. Gullfoss.

The standard tour lasts from 9 am to 5 pm, which gives you enough time for thorough guidance on all the sites as well as plenty of time for your own enjoyment. If you want to sleep in, you also have the option of taking the slightly shorter tour Gullfoss-Geysir Direct, starting at noon. It still goes to all three sites and provides thorough and informative guidance. If you want to see these places in a different light, the evening sun can be spectacular in Iceland; another Gullfoss-Geysir Direct departs from the capital at 5pm. Besides these options, you can also combine the Golden Circle with some snorkelling in the crystal clear Silfra in Þingvellir or a snow-mobile tour at Langjökull glacier.

Þingvellir - Magnificent Site with Historic Value

Pingvellir derives its importance largely from the parliament having been founded there in 930, where it remained until 1789 when it moved to Reykjavík. Pingvellir has played a central role in the history of the country, being the original site of the oldest existing parliament in the

world, the Althing. Pingvellir National Park was then founded in 1930 to protect the remains of the parliament site and was later expanded to protect the natural phenomena in the surrounding area, many of which are of great geological interest.

The Þingvellir region was chosen for the parliament mainly because of its accessibility from the most populous regions of the North, South and West. The first parliamentary proceedings in the summer of 930 surely laid the ground for the common cultural heritage and national identity of the Icelandic nation.

Pingvellir used to be the center of Icelandic culture and an important social center, at least in the time of the Icelandic Commonwealth (before going under Norwegian and then Danish rule). Every year, people would flock to Pingvellir from all over the country, sometimes numbering in the thousands. Over a period of two weeks an assembly was held, news were exchanged, business made and marriages decided.

These first centuries of a new society laid the foundation for a distinctive language and literature, playing a large role in the identity of the Icelandic nation.

In addition to the cultural and historic

importance, the special tectonic and volcanic environment of Þingvellir is a magnificent sight. Walking down Almannagjá canyon is amazing, as you are walking down a fissure caused by the continental drift between the North American and Eurasian Plates. Pingvellir, which is a designated UNESCO World Heritage Site. is situated on the northern site of Iceland's biggest lake Þingvallavatn. Some of the rifts there are full of surprisingly clear water, especially one called Silfra, which is a popular diving- and snorkelling spot. By taking the Gullfoss-Gevsir Direct at noon you can snorkel at one of the clearest diving spots in the world.

Gullfoss and Geysir

Icelanders always refer to those two remarkable places together, as they are good neighbours and nearly always visited together.

The English word geyser derives its meaning from the one and only Geysir. Geysir has unfortunately been somewhat shy in recent decades, but always becomes more active after big earthquakes. But when Geysir does perform, once or twice a year, it lives up to its name, spewing a jet of steaming water 60 meters skyward.

Far more reliable is the nearby Strokkur, which spouts an 18-30 meters jet about once every five minutes. The geyser area is also rich in walking paths that lead past steaming vents and colourful, mineral-rich mud formations. Around thirty much smaller geysers are also located in this geothermal area, including Little Geysir.

During the classical nine to five Golden Circle, Reykjavik Excursions' customers also visit the Geyser – Multimedia Show Museum, which gives a visual presentation on the geology, history and nature of Iceland.



Gullfoss is an aesthetical experience of its own, hard to put into words but always referred to as Iceland's most beautiful waterfall. It is located in the Hvítá glacial river which rushes southward, forming the waterfall in two stages, which fall into a deep crevice. As one first approaches the falls, the crevice is obscured from view, so it appears that the mighty river simply vanishes into the earth. A wondrous sight forms on sunlit days, as the mist clouds surrounding the falls are filled with dozens of rainbows, providing a unique spectacle of colour and motion. In winter, ice around the edges of the falls freezes to form magical shapes of ice and snow.

If you want some extra excitement during your Golden Circle tour,

one hour on a snow mobile on the neighbouring Langjökull glacier is an ideal addition. It does mean a long day of sightseeing and activities, but driving a snowmobile over a phenomenal glacier will without doubt give you an extra energy boost.

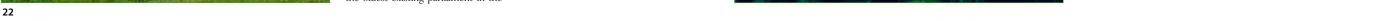


It is also worthwhile to mention an interesting new tour, which Reykjavik Excursions offers for the first time this summer. A Sense of Reykjavik is a nice addition to the fine Reykjavik tours the company provides its customers with, this one concentrating on the downtown area and westwards towards Seltjarnarnes peninsula. It is a three hour evening tour lasting from 6pm to 9pm, four evenings per week. Many interesting sites are visited: the beautiful lighthouse at Grótta at the peak of the Seltjarnarnes peninsula, the coast of Ægisíða, the university area and various sights in the downtown area. Three gourmet stops are also included, where people get the chance to taste real, fine, Icelandic ingredients.

Travelling with Reykjavik Excursions is a good way of seeing many of the wonderful sites to be seen in Iceland. With its vast experience, the company offers you professional guidance to some of Iceland's most important places, like the three magnificent ones on the Golden Circle.

Further information is available on www.re.is





Purveyors of Angelica Seek Promoters Abroad Take 2 decades of scientific investigation and 1100 years of history.

Mix it in with pure Icelandic angelica, clinical research and innovative marketing.

Voilà: SagaMedica.

SagaMedica has been selling popular natural products for almost a decade. It was founded by academics from the University of Iceland and has grown steadily through the years. The company is beginning to export products to North America and launched an online store a year ago, shipping SagaMedica's products all around the world. Now their online store is being beefed up with a new "Promoter Network" that will make it possible for individuals to earn commissions by promoting Icelandic natural products abroad.

Kristinn Leifsson is SagaMedica's online marketing wizard and proud father of the Promoter Network.

IT: What kind of products does SagaMedica sell?

KL: We sell natural products from Icelandic medicinal herbs, especially angelica. Our top product is called SagaPro. It helps people who have to make frequent bathroom trips at night. It's currently going through a clinical study, which is a very important step for us. We also have other products, such as Voxis lozenges and SagaVita for cold and flu, and we're working on a tablet version of SagaMemo, which will then be added to our online selection. SagaMemo's used to keep healthy memory. On top of that, we're collaborating with other Icelandic companies to make a wider selection of Icelandic natural products available through our network.

IT: So, what's the deal with this new network?

KL: Well, we've been selling our products online for a year now. The new network is linked to our online store, but it reaches people outside the internet and channels them to our store with the help of independent promoters. Our network will give people all over the world a chance to earn commissions by promoting SagaMedica's products.

IT: How does it work?

KL: It's really quite simple. We give you a code which you hand out to those you think might be interested in





According to Kristinn, the angelica herb used to be an important export item for Iceland during the middle ages. Seems like history might be starting to repeat itself...

Icelandic natural products. When they sign up with that code in our online store, they get a better price and you are automatically linked to them and their future purchases. When they buy, you get a commission. The products are purchased directly from our online store and we ship them to the buyer, so the promoter can focus on promoting, as opposed to going around delivering products. It couldn't really be easier for the promoter, and that was our goal from the beginning.

IT: And can anyone join?

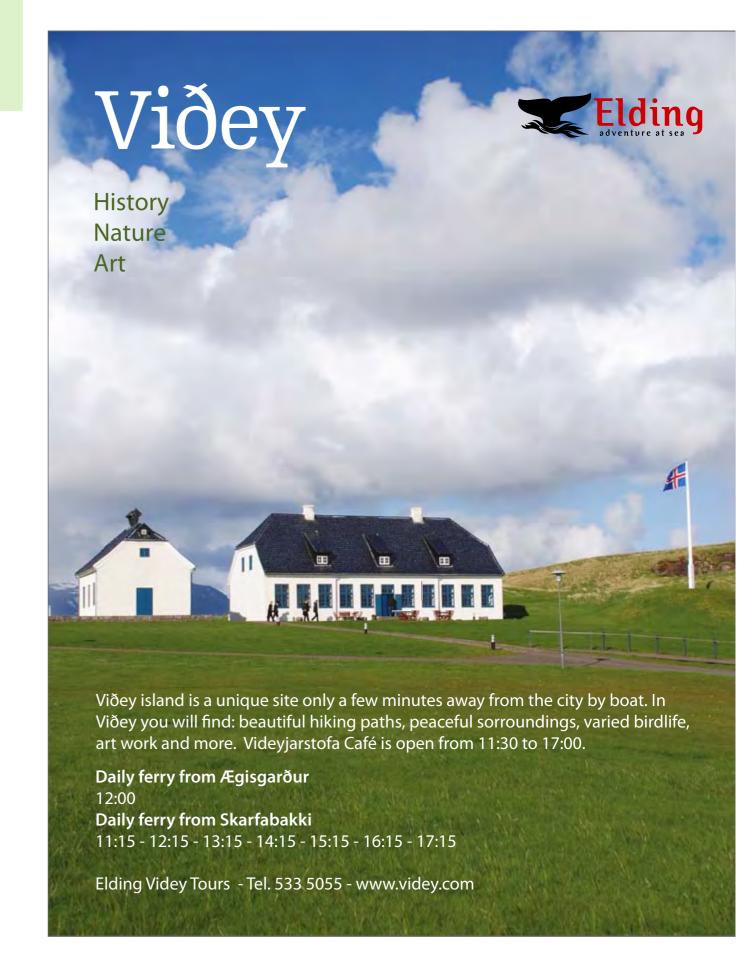
KL: Yes, absolutely. We're hoping to have at least hundreds of promoters in the future. We're especially aiming for health practitioners, homeopaths, herbalists and others. But anyone interested can join. We're even targeting urologists in some countries because SagaPro can reduce frequency of urination. And they don't even need to carry any products themselves, just tell people about us and give them a code with information. We'd also love to see Icelanders living abroad joining us.

IT: Let's say our readers are interested. What would be the first step toward ioining?

KL: It's best to check it out on our www.sagamedica.com. There's information on our network right there, and people can contact us if they're interested.

According to Kristinn, the angelica herb used to be an important export item for Iceland during the middle ages. Seems like history might be starting to repeat itself...

More information is available on www.sagamedica.com





Borgarfjörður eystri -

Capital of Elves, Puffins and Hiking

The East of Iceland has a hidden treasure called Borgarfjörður eystri. With a total of 130 inhabitants, the area has plenty to offer, including some of the most populated elfin settlements in Iceland and a tremendous variety of hiking routes. In addition, the harbor has the best access to puffins in Iceland, where you can observe the birds at a distance of two meters.

Not only does the area boast of a spectacular landscape, a dream for every outdoor enthusiast, but also of a good range of accommodation and services in the small town of Bakkagerði. Borgarfjörður Eystri, which is the northernmost of Iceland's East fjords, is located at the end of a road, an hour away from highway nr. 1. There is great natural beauty in the area, as it is still untouched by mass tourism.

Going to Borgarfjörður eystri will also offer you a chance to experience

a genuine Icelandic fishing village with a small boat fishery, which is quite different to large-scale fisheries the latter being more prominent in Iceland. In addition, you will be in contact with a close community of people renowned for their hospitality. Their local cuisine consists of high quality ingredients from the region, like the fresh fish brought in every day. The local folklore is interesting and there are, at last count 172 folk stories dealing with elves that take place in the region.

Alfheimar is one of the options for accommodation in Bakkagerði, a guesthouse of 18 rooms with a cozy restaurant. Alfheimar also serves as a travel agency, with an emphasis on hiking trips; both customized tours for individuals and families and also multi-day hiking that covers some of the main attractions of the Northeast of Iceland. Alfheimar aims at offering high quality service in the field of hiking with local guides that know every nook and cranny in the region.

Seeing the Best of Northeast Iceland

If you are looking for a good hike but haven't got much time to spend, "In the footsteps of Elves" is an ideal trip for you. On this trip you will have the chance to see some of the most spectacular sites in Northeast Iceland along with various interesting hiking routes. You might even see an elf or two, but only if you really believe they exist

The trip takes eight days in total, five of which are dedicated to hiking along the so-called Víknaslóðir or





the "Deserted Inlets" in and near Borgarfjörður eystri. After these five days in the East, the lake Mývatn is visited, then the still steaming lava field of Leirhnjúkur and finally the trip ends in the capital of the North, Akureyri.

The trip can be said to begin at Reykjavik domestic airport as the flights from and to Reykjavik are included in the whole package. In fact, everything is taken care of for you over those eight days; accommodation, guidance, transport, food, the only thing you need to bring with you is good outdoor clothing, hiking boots and a camera!

The level of difficulty of the walk is around medium, which means it is suitable for all those who can walk for 5-7 hours per day with a 300-600 m degree of elevation. Most likely the beauty of the surroundings will offset your fatigue, however. Imposing and colourful mountains meet the ocean, creating deep, intriguing fjords, that is the landscape that awaits you. Doing smaller exercise hikes before a trip like this is always recommended, both to get used to your shoes and to enjoy the long hike to the fullest.

During the hike you will be accommodated in the little fishing village Bakkagerði, choosing from hotel, guesthouse or hostel accommodation. The starting point of the hikes is therefore always in the village, from where the hikers go off in different round tours everyday.

To list a few amazing sights on the trek, first mention must go to East Iceland's best kept secret, Stórurð (Boulder Hollow). It is an expanse of enormous rocks intersected by a small river. Calm turquoise-coloured basins of icy water lie hidden among the huge boulders, often with flat banks of short, tender, green grass. It is certainly a mysterious and enchanting place, and you will be hard-pressed to leave.

In fact, the trip covers most of the amazing sights of the area: vast black beaches, rhyolite landscape with an incredible range of pastel colors and great mountains like the Door mountains and Álfaborg. You will also get to know the charming village of Bakkagerði and everything it has to offer.

If you are travelling on your own in the East of Iceland and want to take a smaller hike from the Bakkagerði village, you can always contact the elftours owner Arngrímur Viðar and ask him to organise it for you. There is no lack of hiking options, with about 27 day-routes on offer. But let's have a closer look on the two other charming elements of Borgafjörður eystri, namely our friends the elves and the puffins.

The Hidden People of Iceland

Borgarfjörður eystri is home to very large population of elves, according to the regional folklore. Elves are often called the "hidden people" because of how difficult it is to see them. Nowadays you might find Icelanders, who distinguish between hidden people and elves, but in 19th century folklore these two terms are synonymous.

from the residency of the Icelandic elf-queen. Álfaborg (Elf Rock, Elf Hill) is a rocky hill right next to Bakkagerði. An easy path leads to the top, which has a panoramic viewpoint. Álfaborg is a reserved area, and an interesting place to visit, especially if you believe in the hidden people. They don't mind bypassers as long as one respects their residency, the rocks.

In the folklore, the elves are often described as similar to humans, but

taller, fairer and more beautiful. Their residency (inside the rocks) are similar to those of 19th century Iceland, just a bit nicer. They often help humans out, especially those bullied by their fellow humans.

Borgarfjörður has numerous places other than Álfaborg connected to elves. One example is the church of elves, Kirkjusteinn, which is a huge rock in Kækjudalur valley. The elfin bishop lives in the beautiful Blábjörg, on the other hand. Christening of the hidden people is prominent motif in the folklore. A couple of folk tales relating to trolls also take place in the

The stories about the elves are fascinating, especially for the younger ones. It is ideal for families to take an elfin-walk around the village or visit their local Fairytale house

(ævintýraland) and try to get in contact with the enigmatic hidden people.

To Observe the Little Strange Bird

The Atlantic Puffin has been called many names as its appearance and special walk often seem funny or resemblant of certain human characteristics. In Icelandic it has often been called "Priest" because of its stately plumage. In other languages it has been called names like the "clown of the air" or "seaparrot."

The reason for the parrot comparison is probably its colorful beak, which is one of the most striking characteristic of the Puffin. The beak has blue, yellow and red stripes but otherewise the Puffin is a stocky bird black above, white below and grey cheeks.



It is a small bird and commonly makes holes in the turf, in and above cliffs. Therefore, it can be really hard to catch a good sight of the bird.

In Borgarfjörður eystri there is a blue flag harbour near Hafnarhólmi. This harbor is only used for small boats as conditions in the fjord and the local fisherman's go only for daytours fishing. Hafnarhólmi is connected to a small islet, with bustling birdlife, especially puffins. A nice observation platform is just beside the islet, which means that you basically see the Puffin within a range of two meters.

About 10.000 pairs of puffins nest every summer in Borgarfjörður, somewhere between the 20th of April till mid-August. Among other common bird species nesting there are the Fulmar, Kittiwake and the Eider duck. The islet is surely a photographer's dream, the birds seem

to love modelling for photographers and the surrounding scenery is amazing. In addition, the harbor itself is a beautiful sight, which has been taken well care of and has "the blue flag," to show for it, a certification given out for being environmentally friendly.

Unspoiled Wonderland

Iceland surely has a largely unspoiled nature and vast areas where there is not a soul in sight. But if you wish to experience untouched wilderness and a pristine landscape in the peace of the deserted fjords and inlets, Borgarfjörður eystri is the place to visit.

Finally, one cannot discuss Borgarfjörður eystri without mentioning the well renowned music-festival "Bræðslan" which has been held for many years in the old



rendering house in Bakkagerði. Many famous bands and musicians have played there, like Belle & Sebastian, Emiliana Torrini and Damien Rice. The festival will be held the 21.- 24. of July this year with bands like Fanfarlo and KK & Ellen.

The community in Bakkagerði lives in close proxinity with nature, is mostly sustainable and lives life without hurry, which makes it the perfect

place to relax and get in touch with

Further information is available on www.borgarfjordureystri.is or www. puffins.is where you can find local contacts or contact Arngrímur Viðar Ásgeirsson at Elftours. Mob: +354 8613677 or info@elftours.is







Visiting the Villages in the Eastern Fjords of Iceland:

Getting to Know the Fishing Culture

What is more ideal than driving through the old Icelandic villages on your journey along the eastern coast of Iceland? They all have their share in the rich fishing history of Iceland - but no two villages look the same. This is your chance to get to know the culture along the seaside.

The villages in the eastern fjords are fishing communities mirroring life in

Iceland through the centuries. Life in the harbours is bustling, with ships coming and going and fishermen tending to the day's catch. Icelanders themselves have the habit of driving down to the harbour when arriving in a new village and you could follow their suit - even take a moment to chat with the fishermen.

Even though the villages all share the historical theme of fishery each has its own historical background that sets them apart.

Borgarfjörður eystri

Borgarfjörður eystri is a paradise for nature lovers and hikers. This is one of the most beautiful places in Iceland with trails and interesting nature formations. Furthermore Borgarfjörður eystri is reputed to be the abode of the Icelandic Fairy Oueen! And the local harbour offers the unique chance of almost reaching out and touching the puffins on a close-by island.

Seyðisfjörður

Sevðisfjörður is a point of arrival for those who come to Iceland on the ferry from Norway. Sevðisfjörður is widely respected for its cultural life and the renovated old centre. The





Even though the villages all share the historical theme of fishery each has its own historical background that sets them apart.

Norwegians came to Seyðisfjörður when catching herring off the shores of Iceland and Norwegian heritage is salient in the local architecture.

Eskifiörður

The society of Iceland today is the direct result of the country's history of fishing and here is your opportunity to acquaint yourself with a typical fishing village. In Eskifjörður vou can visit an authentic fisherman's hut where the fishermen and workers stayed when ashore in late 1800s. This background is further emphasised by a highly interesting Maritime Museum.

Norðfjörður

Neskaupstaður is the village of Norðfjörður bay. It is the ideal place for close encounters with Iceland's sizzling fishing industry because this is the home turf of one of Iceland's biggest fishing industries. Neskaupstaður boasts of several art exhibitions and museums and ceaseless opportunities for hiking and experiencing the nature. Neskaupstaður is also the scene of one of the most ambitious annual rock festivals in Iceland. (July 8th-10th).

Reyðarfjörður

The British occupied Reyðarfjörður during World War II and their



Fáskrúðsfiörður

Fáskrúðsfjörður used to be a service centre for French fishermen in the late 19th and early 20th century. Thus, the village had a French hospital for the benefit of incoming French fishermen. Fáskrúðsfjörður still

enjoys close connections with France through cultural cooperation.

Stöðvarfjörður

This is an ideal place for enjoying nature, savouring the waterfalls, cliffs, rocks and mountains. Here you have the option of visiting a well-known collection of rocks and stones. You can even go on a sailing tour and place yourself in the shoes of Icelandic fishermen going after their catch. Djúpivogur

Djúpivogur is an old trading centre where you have a rare chance to visit wooden buildings from the latter part of the 18th century, including Langabúð, a museum and cultural centre with art exhibitions. This village is blessed with imposing natural surroundings and is ideally situated by the sea.









presence left its mark in the village scenery. This is heightened by the presence of the local WWII museum. Reyðarfjörður largely relies on the aluminium industry for wherewithal, due to the presence of a new aluminium smelter.



Traversing Vatnajökull Glacier on Jeeps, Skidoos and Skis

Biarni Biarnason has been running the Ice and Adventure touring service since 1994 and has been involved in the tourism industry since 1990. So he has a lot of experience, which is extremely important and trustworthy when you are dealing with Vatnajökull glacier, which is the largest glacier in Europe, a gigantic sheet of ice, with the most unpredictable weather in Iceland. "Old man Vatnajökull" should be taken very seriously.

Driving on the Glacier

The Ice and Adventure service operates out of Suðursveit in South-Eastern Iceland. The company's most popular tour takes the tourist on an excursion on a 4x4 super jeep. The jeeps leave the ring road (nr. 1) in the lowlands at road F 985, at 9:30 and 14:00 every day. The F 985 s the road to Jöklasel on Skálafellsjökull. Jöklasel is an amazing mountain hotel at an altitude of 840 meters, which is the first destination of the tour. The tour then takes you



This service operates from Jöklasel,

in various directions. Finally there

is the possibility to go skiing on the

glacier. The tour is once again taken to

Brókarbotnstindur, the jeep leaves the

travellers behind and they walk back to

Jöklasel on skis. Once back to Jöklasel,

Visiting Jöklasel is a unique experience

in itself. It is the highest restaurant in

Iceland, with a magnificent view of

mountains, plains and ocean. Jöklasel

is only 16 km from the main road, but

refreshments await the traveller.

Jöklasel

towards Brokárbotnstindar, 9 km along the glacier. Along the way there is a magnificent view of deep valleys like Kálfafellsdalur, tall mountains like Þverártindsegg and Öræfajökull, and of course the great Vatnajökull itself. Ice and Adventure offers tours to many other destinations on the glacier, for instance Grímsvötn, Kverkfjöll, Snæfell, Breiðamerkurjökull, Öræfajökull and

Ski and Skidoo Tours

There is also the possibility to tour the glacier on the skidoo or snowmobile.

the last 6 km of the road can only be traversed by vehicles with four wheel drive. The Jöklasel restaurant offers seafood buffet at lunch and a midday buffet with all sorts of cakes and coffee.

Ice and adventure tours depart daily from the crossroads on the road to Jöklasel at 9:30 and 14:00. For further info visit www.glacierjeeps.is







Dogsledding in Iceland

The Langiökull Glacier

The dogsleds are operated on the Langjökull glacier in the western part of the central Icelandic highlands. Currently the company offers tours during the summer from June to August/ September, but there are plans for longer tours in winter 2011. After a 3 hour drive to the glacier from Reykjavík, you will be transported to the glacier itself by either 4x4 or by snow mobile. The tour lasts 45 to 60 minutes depending on the weight of the sled and the condition of the snow.

Dog trolley – sledding without a sled! In the autumn when there isn't enough snow in the highlands and the glaciers are not safe for sledding, the company offers another kind of



sledding experience. This is the "dog trolley, a specially built trolley that the dogs can pull like the sled. On these tours passengers are given the opportunity to have a nice break in the middle of the tour, and then there is plenty of time for photography and

dog petting.

You might even get the chance to drive the trolley yourself!

Dogsledding was introduced in Iceland in 1998 and the company has been operating since 2007. Originally starting with 16 Greenland sled dogs, they now have 28 dogs and another 6 puppies who await training in the spring of 2011.

How to Get there

From Reykjavik: take the Ring Road west through Mosfellsbær to road 36 which takes you all the way to Thingvellir. At Thingvellir take road no. 52 and then take the F550, which is a mountain road called Kaldidalur. From there make a right turn onto road F551 that will take you all the way to the basecamp, Jaki.

Alternate route from Borgarnes: Heading west out of Reykjavík, through Mosfellsbær to Borgarnes,. Before the bridge at Borgarnes, take

On these tours passengers are given the opportunity to have a nice break in the middle of the tour, and then there is plenty of time for photography and dog petting.

the road to Reykholt. From Reykholt, take road 517 to Husafell and then road 550, the Kaldidalur mountain road. Drive 10 km before making a left turn onto road

F 551 which will take you to the basecamp Jaki.

The company recommends booking in advance.

For further information go to www.



Need Help in Deciding What to See and Do in Iceland?

With over 25 years of experience, Iceland Excursions - Grayline is truly the "local expert." Taking great pride in offering it's customers guides with a genuine knowledge of Iceland's history, nature and culture and over 50 tours around the country, you will be sure to find something that suits every budget and itinerary. Whether it's a tour from Reykjavik to Jökulsárlón in the east, or to the bay of Breiðafjörður in the west, or a tailor made combination of tours, the possibilities for variety are endless.

Some tourist attractions in Iceland are simply must-sees. Although the Blue Lagoon and the Golden Circle tour might seem to some a cliché, going to Iceland without seeing those places is like going to Paris without seeing the Eiffel-tower, to Athens without seeing the Acropolis or to Pisa without catching a glimpse of the Leaning

The question therefore, is not if you should tour the Golden Circle; the question is whether to combine your visit with the Blue Lagoon, whale watching, horseback riding, sightseeing in Reykjavík, diving, snorkeling or visiting historical places. You even have a choice of going by night, in the afternoon or even by super jeep. Iceland Excursions – Gray Line Iceland offers you all of these options and many more. The choice

The Platinum Circle Tour

One example of such a mix is the Platinum Circle which gets you in close contact with one of Iceland's

glaciers, shows you some of the history of the island in addition to the Golden Circle in the beautiful evening sun. The Platinum Circle tour visits a great number of interesting locations, starting along the shores of Hvalfjörður (Whale fjord) west of Reykjavik. You will see attractions such as the inspiring Settlement Center in Borgarnes, the geothermal area of Deildartunguhver and the magnificent Langjökull glacier.

If you are feeling adventurous, a snorkel or a dive in Silfra or cave exploring might be your way of experiencing Iceland. The trip "Iceland From Below" takes you to Iceland's most spectacular lava tube caves and craters. There you will enter through the cave entrance in a lava field and find it reveals extraordinary scenery of colors and lava formations. The crystal clear Silfra fissure is one of the clearest diving spots in the world, resulting in an extremely good visibility, even while snorkeling.

The various South Coast tours are also exciting options, especially now, right after the eruption in Eyjafjallajökull glacier. The South coast boasts of beautiful waterfalls as well as magnificent black beaches. If you are up for a longer day of sightseeing, going all the way to Jökulsárlón Glacial Lagoon is recommended; seeing the









waterfalls on the way as well as one of the most beautiful spots in Iceland, Skaftafell National Park.

Iceland Excursions offers exceptional service and security, as well as a comfortable and well equipped fleet of buses. The company has a strong environmental policy, putting great emphasis on responsible driving and using the most eco-friendly vehicles available

More information is available on www.grayline.is as well as at their central location by Lækjartorg Square in downtown Reykjavík.









THE VIKING: INFO

Laugavegur 1 • Reykjavík • 581 1250 Hafnarstræti 3 • Reykjavík • 551 1250 Hafnarstræti 104 • Akureyri • 4615551 Aðalstræti 27 • Ísafjörður Eden • Hveragerði

email: theviking@simnet.is



One of Iceland's Leading Bus Companies

Sterna (formerly Bílar og fólk) is one of Iceland's leading scheduled bus companies. Running bus routes to almost all corners of the country, Sterna also owns and operates the popular Bus PassPorts, an easy and affordable way to experience Iceland. This summer the company is introducing a new service, Day Tours, with all the best Iceland that has to offer.

Day Tours - Sterna's latest addition!

If time is at a premium, yet you still have so much more you want to see, Sterna's Day Tours offer the perfect

These affordable excursions take you to some of Iceland's best loved and beautiful locations including the Golden Circle,

Snæfellsnes Peninsula, Jökullsárlón and the Westmen Islands. Each trip lasts roughly 12 hours.

Bus Passports

What exactly is a Bus Passport and why is it so popular? Similar to the InterRail Pass used in Europe, the Bus Passport allows you to see Iceland at your own pace. You may choose between several tours, taking the Ring Road around the country in either a clockwise or counterclockwise direction, hopping off at any point along the way, and hopping on again whenever you choose. You may also add side trips onto your Circle Tour for even more sightseeing possibilities.

The Passports come in many shapes and sizes and offer several possibilities of travel, including:

1. Full-Circle Passport, The Full-



Skaftafell National Park. As always



Circle Passport is valid for one trip around Iceland on Circular road number one. 2. Full-Circle Passport Including the West Fjords. Leaves the Circular road at

Borgarnes to enter it again at Bru in Hrutafjordur - or vice versa. 3. The Snaefellsnes Peninsula & National Park Passport. This also covers the route through the Snaefell national park. 4. The West Iceland & the West Fjords Passport. This passport includes the sea passage from Snaefellsnes across Breidafjordur and Flatev island to the mountainous fjord landscapes of the North-West peninsula. 5. Gullfoss - Geysir Passport. This passport also takes you to the not so far away from Reykjavík Þingvellir National Park and then on to Laugarvatn, Geysir & Gullfoss. Other possible stops on the way back include agricultural town Selfoss and Hveragerði greenhouse village. 6. Landmannalaugar in the Fjallabak Nature Reserve and

this passport allows you travel either clock- or anticlockwise around the chosen route. Whichever way you go, both the South Coast near sea level and the Southern Highlands a few hundred meters higher up are abundant in charming attractions. 7. East Circle via Kiölur. Basically the same as the Full Circle passport, except in stead of the #1 Circular Ring Road bit between Reykjavík & the valley of river Blanda in the North, we take the Kjölur moutain route from Revkjavík & Gullfoss in the South to Blanda in the North. This stretch opens up the panorama of the central highlands between the glaciers Langjökulland Hofsjökull. 8. The Westman Islands. Named after Irish slaves, full of life and exciting nature - the Westman Islands are unique. This passports provides you with transportation from Reykjavík to Bakkafjara, across with the ferryboat and a tour around the Islands you will never forget. Surely one of the most exciting things you can do in Iceland. We will then take you back the same way and hopefully you will keep on coming back.

For further details, please see their website at www.sterna.is or phone 354 551 1166

Ticket Desk BSI BusTerminal - 101 Revkjavík

Main Office - Krókháls, 12 - 101 Revkiavík



Fjalakötturinn:

Nordic Cuisine at its best

the name of Iceland's first movie theater, which opened in 1906.

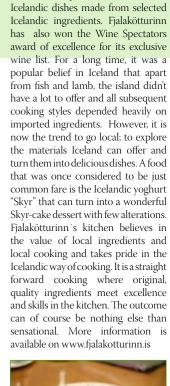


The theater has also been used for other purposes besides film screenings over the years, and was in fact the meeting place for the Icelandic Communist Party in the 1930s. Despite having been one of Reykjavik's most famous multipurpose buildings throughout the 20th century, it was finally torn down in 1985; and it's demolition has been extremely controversial. The original Fjalaköttur building is still mourned by locals today.

However in 2005, it was decided to restore Aðalstræti to its former glory with the new houses being built in the style of bygone days. A restaurant was opened in the house where the old Fjalakötturinn theater used to be and of course it was named

Fjalaköturinn. Although not a movie theater or a meeting place for the former communist party, it feels nice to have Fjalakötturinn back in town.

Fjalakötturinn's kitchen offers a



variety of food from the new Nordic

cuisine. and specializes in traditional









National Museum of Iceland

The Making of a Nation

The national museum plays a central role in the history of Icelandic museums and cultural heritage preservation. The building itself, however, looks quite humble from the outside, compared to the great museums of other European capitals. But the National museum reaches far beyond the stone walls of Sudurgta. The museum is the center for research and preservation of Icelandic cultural heritage as well as archaeological artifacts. What can be seen inside is merely the tip of the iceberg, a selection of artifacts, photos and information, carefully chosen to represent or build up an insight

The permanent exhibition, Making of a Nation, follows Icelandic history

into Icelandic culture and history.

since settlement right up to the present day. Is a very ambitious exhibition that was especially made for the museum's reopening in 2004.

The National Museum is also a good place for kids. It provides hands-on experiences such as puzzles and games to boost interest in Iceland's history and cultural heritage. The museum's usage of multi-media also makes it more visual and more exciting for kids of all ages.

The national museum cannot be mentioned without mentioning the



classic photo books. There are also tasteful design souvenirs, not the usual mass-produced stuff you can find elsewhere.



small but great

selection of

books and one

of Reykjavik's

best selection

translations -

the old sagas,

m o d e r n

cook books

and loads of

English

For further information, opening hours and prices visit www.natmus.is



A Great Way to Remember Iceland by

SNERRA is Iceland's leading calendar publishing company founded in 1983. It has a long tradition of developing high quality calendars, books and booklets. What better way to remember your visit to Iceland than with an all-Icelandic calendar, so that every time you check the date you're greeted with majestic landscapes, the peculiar puffin or the graceful Icelandic horse?



DIENSEA RESTANTUANANO

The Calendars

Snerra publishing house has printed such calendars for over 25 years now and is renowned for its quality photos and professional workmanship. Snerra has now printed a new line of calendars for the year 2011. The calendars come in various shapes and sizes and with different themes; including landscapes in all seasons, birdlife, horses and one is dedicated entirely to the puffin. The calendars

come with text in Icelandic, English, German and French and some have official Icelandic holidays marked. That way you won't forget to celebrate the 17th of June in 2011 or the first day of Icelandic summer.

Calendars are also a nice way to share your experiences from the Iceland tour with those who stayed at home. Calendars from Iceland are in fact a beautiful present on any occasion. It is a useful present which is of use throughout the year!

The Icelandic Puzzle

The Icelandic puzzle is a new product from Snerra. It is a game, played with 40 cards. The objective of the game, which is for 2-4 players aged 8 and older, is to create a map of Iceland. To prepare the game the cards are shuffled and each player is dealt 5 cards. The remaining cards are placed in a stack. The top card is turned over and placed in the middle of the playing area and counts as the Start Card.

The youngest player starts and must



try to place one or more of his cards around the Start Card. If the player does not have a suitable card then he must take one from the stack and the play moves on clockwise to the next player. The player first to play all of his cards is the winner.

All this can be viewed at www.snerra.is

Choose Between Seven Different Swimming Pools in Reykjavík!

Travelers coming to Iceland are often enchanted by the swimming pools, some even to the degree that they decide to settle in the country. Others spend their time visiting as many swimming pools as possible. The selection is surely not lacking as in Reykjavík alone you will find seven swimming pools in addition to a cozy, heated beach. Probably the cheapest way to spend your leisure hours, with the entrance fee at less than 2€.

Many locals go to the swimming pools to spend quality time with friends and family or to have a chat with their fellow citizens. Some even visit the swimming pools every day, if time permits, many going at 7 in the morning. It is often claimed that the cheap warm water makes up for the somewhat cold weather.

Iceland's geothermal energy thus offers everybody living in Iceland the advantage of plenty of warm swimming pools that have a wide variety of hot tubs and saunas.

Socializing is a huge part of the swimming pool culture. It is the place in Iceland where people are the most open to strangers, as it is generally accepted to chat to the next fellow in the hot tub. Many a

Socializing is a huge part of the swimming pool culture. It is the place in Iceland where people are the most open to strangers, as it is generally accepted to chat to the next fellow in the hot tub.

discussion about politics and culture has its origins in this very pool!

While you're at it, don't be afraid to ask for tips on where the best restaurants or hidden natural attractions in the vicinity are found. People are generally quite happy to share this information with you. Sundhöllin, the oldest pool in Reykjavík, has an indoor swimming pool with hot tubs out on the



balcony and is ideally situated for those staying in the downtown area. Designed by Guðjón Samúelson, one of Iceland's greatest architects, combine culture with a relaxing swim in the special environment of Sundhöllin.

Within easy walking distance of the city center is the outdoor swimming pool Vesturbæjarlaug; another great place for lively discussions about life, the universe and everything else! On warm days, check out the heated beach at Nauthólsvík, near Perlan. There you will find a great outdoor area by the coast, in a nice cycling distance from the center. It is free of charge, and lockers are available for 200kr. The water temperature of the lagoon is usually between 18° - 20°C and there is an oversized hot tub right on the beach as well.

The new swimming facilities in the Grafarvogur suburb is also good option, with its spacious swimming pool. A bit nearer to the center is Laugardagslaug, Iceland's biggest swimming pool, located in the valley Laugardalur, one of Reyjavik's biggest green areas. There you can choose between more than five different hot tubs to relax in, two or three saunas, a tall water slide for the kids as well as several shallow pools for toddlers.

So if you want to go local in Reykjavik, visit the pools!



 $\mathbf{88}$

Where Mysterious Landscapes and Icelandic Fishing Traditions Meet



When landing for the first time at Keflavik airport, many travelers feel like they have just landed on the moon – that's how alien the first impression of the landscape of Reykjanes can be. On a closer look, the area reveals many magnificent wonders in both geological terms and aesthetical ones. In addition Reykjanes is one of the best regions in Iceland to get to know the Icelandic fishing industry and the history connected to it.

A Convenient Hot Spring to Drown a Ghost

The Blue Lagoon is without doubt the most famous attraction of the Reykjanes Peninsula. Not only do the warm healing water and the accompanying white mud make people feel reborn, but so do the strange combinations of colors. When the amazingly pure and lucid blue color meets the ancient green of the moss you'll be fully aware of your senses.

The Blue Lagoon is far from being the only geological wonder of the peninsula. There you will find an abundance of hot springs, lava fields, volcanic craters and other related phenomena. Reykjanes is where the mid-Atlantic ridge rises above the ocean's surface and the peninsula's unique geological phenomena stem from the fact that it is positioned on the rift between the Eurasian and the North American tectonic plates.

The Reykjanes Peninsula is easily accessible to those interested in its many wonders. A good example of that is the amazing hot spring Gunnuhver, which is located on the

southwest point of the peninsula.

Gunnuhver, and the area around it, is a spectacular sight, a heaven for all those who love strange colors and forms in nature. Not only is the site beautiful but there is also a curious tale connected to the hot spring. Legend has it that long ago a ghost named Guðrún caused a great disturbance in the area, until a priest set a trap for her which ultimately led to her falling into the hot spring. Until this day Gunna (her nickname) is supposed to be stuck down under in the hot spring. So if you want to get rid of a ghost, Gunnuhver might be the perfect solution.

Gunnuhver has become quite accessible after recent improvements to the walkways surrounding it. One can enter the site from two directions. From there one follows paths through the geothermal site to a large viewing platform. The view across Gunnuhver vividly shows how the earth's energy bursts through the earth's crust in the form of bubbling mud, boiling water or vapor.

This spectacle is ideal if the aim is to capture something great on a camera, as the wide variety of unique colors along with interesting formations will not disappoint the photographer.

Abundance of Interesting Sights

The area around Gunnuhver is an interesting one as you will both witness a unique and dramatic natural beauty and how people capture the natural forces in a sustainable way to produce power. Reykjanesvirkjun is the power plant that harnesses some of the abundant geothermal energy

Photo: Oddgeir Karlsson
in Reykjanes. The power plant also
has considerable educational value,
as it houses the museum "Earth,
powerplant," which is very informative
regarding the Earth, the Universe,
its creation and different methods of
producing power.

You will also find a historical Icelandic lighthouse close to Gunnuhver, which not only seems to be keeping a watchful eye out to sea but also the land, as it rises over this amazing geothermal area. It is one of the oldest lighthouses in Iceland. Going towards the sea from the lighthouse you will find the amazing cliff of Valahnjúkar, a great example of Iceland's dramatic nature. There you will witness a rich birdlife and connect with the natural forces by sitting down, watching

the strong waves and staring at the majestic, steep island of Eldey, which rises from sea near the coastline.

AshortdistancefromReykjanesgarður you'll find many interesting places. For instance the bridge between two continents – a symbolic place where you literally stand between the two tectonic plates. Hafnaberg is also worth a visit, with its wide array of birdlife. It is located right next to the Sandvík coast, where you can witness with your own eyes the force of the ocean as it crashes ashore.

Rich Fishing Life

Reykjanes is one of the primary locations for the fishing industry in Iceland. In former times a large part of the population would travel out Reykjanes has 11 lighthouse scattered around the peninsula to signal the distance to land to sailors. The lighthouses come in many shapes and sizes

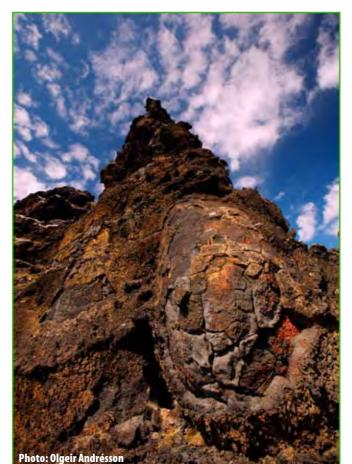
to the peninsula and bring fish back to their homes. A good example of this is the fact that the population of Grindavík used to increase tenfold during the fishing season, going from 200 to 2000. On the peninsula you will find a multitude of sites where local fishermen would push their boats out to sea and then drag them back ashore full of fish. You can even see the indentations in the rocks where the boats were dragged back and forth on land.

Although Icelanders often say that the sea beckons them, showing what an important element it is for the Icelandic psyche, it has taken its toll through the centuries. On the west coast of the peninsula there are a couple of former fishery locations that used to play a great role in this important industry. But tragedies at sea were frequent as the surf was strong and plenty of sharp and unforgiving reefs just off the coast. In 1928 Iceland's first trawler Jón forsteti was shipwrecked by the town of Sandgerði. As a result the first rescue team in Iceland was founded, but nowadays Iceland has a world-class association of rescue teams.

Reykjanes has 11 lighthouse scattered around the peninsula to signal the distance to land to sailors. The lighthouses come in many shapes and sizes, the biggest ones being Reykjanesviti and the lighthouse in the town of Garður. Then there are a few smaller ones, often of a strange but an attractive yellow color, some of which are square shaped. These lighthouses might be interesting sights to see along with the beautiful coastline that they guard.

A wide array of museums can be found in Reykjanes with exhibitions connected to the area, its history and especially the fishing tradition.





One of those is the Viking Worlds in Reykjanesbær where you can see a genuine Icelandic Viking ship called Íslendingur.

The natural museum in Sandgerði, Fræðasetrið, offers an exciting exhibition on the arctic explorer Jean-Babtiste Charco, whose ship the Pourqui Pas sunk off the shore of Iceland in 1936. The docks in Sandgerði are also an interesting sight, where you can observe the small fishing boats bring in the catch of the day. In Grindavík you can visit the Salt Fish Museum, which retells an important part of Iceland's history, as salted fish was once one of Iceland's main exports.

Finally we must mention the amount of outdoor activities available in Reykjanes, especially for bird enthusiasts and hikers. Birdwatcher are in luck as Krisuvíkurberg is home to one of Iceland's largest bird populations. Hafnarberg is also a beautiful bird watching site. Walking paths around the area are numerous, often ancient walking routes from the time before automobiles. The geology of the area will certainly open up for you during these walks through the various lava fields, caves and colorful, outlandish formations.

More information is available on www.reykjanes.is



Enter the Spine Chilling Ghost-Maze

Much has been said and written about Icelandic folklore of recent and many have been surprised to hear a developed nation such as Iceland still believe in elves and hidden people. But Icelandic folklore also has a much darker and scarier side - as The Ghost Centre in Stokkseyri will tell you all about. In the same building vou'll also find a museum devoted to the world of trolls, elves and the northern lights.

Explore Iceland's Scariest

Ever since settlement Iceland has been plagued by various malevolent spirits and ghosts which either battled men directly, led them to their deaths or tormented them to no end. The Icelandic Saga's are filled with descriptions of mysterious apparitions and this scary legacy lasts up until this day.

The Ghost Centre in Stokkseyri is devoted to the tales of Iceland's most famous ghosts. Through an audio guided commentary visitors will walk through a spine-chilling 1000 square



meter ghost-maze on the third floor of the house, where they will experience the stories in the environment where the ghastly tales actually happened. The stories can be listened to in English, German, French, Spanish, Scandinavian, Chinese, Japanese, Russian and Icelandic.

The tales are as varied as they are plentiful. You'll hear tales of drowned seafarers seeking revenge on hapless

itself and sets the mood for what is to come. For the truly brave and fearless staying the night at The Ghost Centre is also available. Other activities in Stokkseyri are plentiful - right next to the museum you'll find one of the most esteemed lobster restaurants in Iceland called Fjöruborðið, as well as an impressive art gallery, you can go kayaking and visit a local petting zoo to name a few. On the first floor of the same building

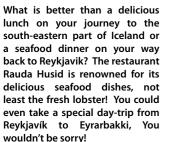
decorated in the style of the museum

that houses the Ghost Center you'll find the Icelandic Wonders - a museumencompassingapproximately 1200 square meters that are dedicated to elves, trolls and Northern Lights. There you can experience the world of Icelandic elves and trolls and look at the Northern Lights surrounded by snow and ice. Inside the museum is also a souvenir shop where you will find a good range of Icelandic homemade goods, books and things associated to elves, trolls, ghosts and Northern Lights.

For more information visit www. draugasetrid.is

Rauda Husid in Eyrarbakki

A Paradise for Seafood Lovers



Iceland is a paradise for seafood lovers and the restaurant Rauda Husid is the Mecca of delicious fresh seafood dishes. Lobster soup with a hint of Cognac topped with coriander cream, Souféed scallop served with basil sauce, Seafood trio with herb polenta and citrus sauce or you might even like to taste oven roasted cod with slowly roasted tomatoes and hollandaise sauce - does that sound good? You can find all these and more on the menu



The restaurant is located in a beautiful red house in the lobster village of Evrarbakki on the south coast of Iceland. Eyrarbakki used to be the most important trading center in Iceland in the old days with the ships

coming into harbour during spring. The restaurant is located in an almost 100 years old house in the centre of the village. It is a house with a history - you'll notice the age from the old wooden floorboards and the interior

landlubbers, mischievous spectres

who lead unsuspecting travellers

astray, female ghosts haunting their

male tormentors and ghost horse

For the faint of heart a stop at The

Ghost Bar might be advisable before

entering the museum itself. It is

stampedes, to name a few.

Ghost

Drink with the Alcohol



style. It is a genuinely cosy place to sit down and imagine how life in Iceland used to be in the beginning of the 19th

In the middle of August there will be a special festival to honour life in the beginning of the 19th century. The whole village will look the same way as it did 100 years ago. Rauda husid will of course participate in these festivities and the staff will dress in clothes from this period.

Rauda husid, Búðarstíg 4, Evrarbakki. Tel. 483 3330. www.raudahusid.is; raudahusid@raudahusid.is

Mosskógar:

Ecological Vegetables and Kazakh Tents



Mosskógar in Mosfellsdalur is a ecological vegetable farm which also produces and sells trees, and has some surprises: There is a tent hotel, with among other things a four man tent from Khazakhstan which people can rent.





Vegetable market

Every Saturday a vegetable market is open at Mosskógar from 12:00 to 16:00. All kinds of outdoor vegetables are for sale, all ecologically grown, carrots, salad, cabbage, onions etc. There is also the tree plants, all kinds of them. The market has been open since 10th of July this summer and it is open on Saturdays for the rest of the summer.

Camping

Besides the vegetable market, Jón, the owner, has organised camping on the premises of Mosskógar. The camping site is in a grove of trees, sheltered from the wind so there is windstill on the site. There is water and toilets at the camping site. Close by there is all kinds of tourist service, people can go horse riding, go to see the Halldór Laxness museum at Gljúfrasteinn and there is a golf course open to the public. The camper also can go to the swimming pool in Mosfellsbær for a swim and a lie in the ever popular hot tubs by the pool.

The Kazakh tent

Also there is a tent hotel. People can rent two kinds of tents, one four person Kazakh tent, a vurt, and then a conventional Icelandic one. This must certainly be something of a rarity in Iceland. Mosskógar is easily found, 4 km. from Mosfellsbær on the way to Þingvellir, clearly marked with a sign on the road to Pingvellir. Mosskogar, Mosfellsdal. Tel: 566

every two hours from 10:00 - 18:00.



www.atvtours.is







Argentina Steakhouse

Class and Comfort

center come and go, but some and are going nowhere. Argentína

Restaurants in Reykjavik's city have been there for a long time





Steakhouse is one of those places - an all time classic stake house located on Barónsstígur.

Argentina Steakhouse opened 1989 and has ever since been one of the most popular restaurants in Iceland and with good reason, Argentina was selected restaurant of the year in 2000 the same year that Reykjavík was designated as one of the nine European cities of culture.

The restaurant is located on Baronsstigur, a few meters down the main shopping and restaurant area of 101 Reykjavik, a quiet place and one would perhaps not expect to find one of the city's finest restaurants located there. Argentína's entrance, a small wooden panelled passage lit by torches sets the mood for the evening to come. The entrance is dark and rustic, but once you get inside, there is no doubt about that the restaurant is of top quality. Visitors are greeted in the lobby by a fireplace, leather sofas and other dark and rustic decorations provide style and comfort.

Already underlying in the name is the South American spirit of the place and the prime focus is on South American style steaks. Meat and fish, grilled Argentinean style, is the restaurants main fare and the outstanding skill and creativity of the chefs emerge in their



presentation as well as in the wide selection of starters and desserts.

Argentína was the first Icelandic restaurant to offer steaks by weight and the main courses on the menu have been unchanged from the beginning. Icelandic ingredients prevail and only Icelandic beef of superior quality is on

The Icelandic ox has remained unchanged since the time of the settlers. over 1000 years ago. It is smaller than elsewhere and renowned for its quality as the body develops slowly, making the meat more stable and the muscles finer so that there is more time for fat to build up. Fat is absolutely necessary for the meat to grill perfectly and for the steak to turn out succulent and tender.

On the menu, you can also find wide selection of seafood and the very tender Icelandic lamb. The soothing and comfortable atmosphere and the excellent food allow for an exceptional dining experience. The impressing selection of cognac, whiskey, port and liqueurs provide the finishing touch to a night of where fire meets with ice.

The dining experience at Argentína Steakhouse is superb. It is a smooth mixture of old fashion class and comfort as well as up to day cooking, style and atmosphere. Over the years, Argentína steakhouse has become an ultimate sign for class and comfort in the minds of the locals of Reykjavik. More information is available on www. argentina.is Argentína - Barónsstíg 11 101 Reykjavík Phone: (+354)551 9555 salur@argentina.is







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Kópavogur in the Reykjavík Area

A Charming Town Rich in Culture

While driving towards the capital area from Keflavík airport, vou will drive over a small hill just before entering Reykjavik. This hill marks the center of Kópavogur, Iceland's second largest town. Kópavogur is right in the midst of the capital area, being one of the five indepentent towns there. On this hill, often called the culture hill of Kópavogur, you can find several interesting museums and places of cultural interest in a beautiful environment. There is also one of the best swimming pools in the capital area. In addition you will find various good walking paths in and around this charming town.

The Cultural Life of Kópavogur

Kópavogur boasts of a good cultural life, which mostly takes place in the same spot on the hill in question. Gerðarsafn is Kópavogur's art museum, dedicated to the memory of one of Iceland's finest sculptress Gerður Helgadóttir. It is a progressive art museum, which focuses mainly on contemporary art. Since its inception

Gerðarsafn has undoubtedly built an esteemed reputation in Iceland.

Gerðarsafn has two ongoing exhibitions, one dedicated to the pieces of art Gerður made under spiritual influences; the other one consists of artworks by Iceland's most famous painter, Jóhannes Kjarval, called *Lífshlaupið* or the *Course of Life*. Gerðasafn houses an interesting museum store as well, with many design products made in the spirit of

The museum house itself is also of interest, a modern design which creates a certain balance with another interesting modern building standing next to it. By looking at the building one can clearly notice a spectacular use of Icelandic building materials; driftwood from isolated parts of the country and prefabricated concrete tiles. It is also worth mentioning that stones from the building's foundations were crushed to make the floor in the lobby and hallways.



Salurinn, Kópavogur Concert Hall is located in this beautiful building. Salurinn plays an important role in Icelandic music life being the first specially designed concert hall in Iceland. It has been highly praised by performers and guests alike for its exceptional acoustics. A variety of concerts are held in Salurinn each year, covering all kinds of music from renaissance to modern, in the form of solo concerts, recitals and groups performing music genre like jazz, chamber, and electronic. Celebrated Icelandic performers, as well as visiting international musicians, can be heard at Salurinn.

In the same building you'll also find the only museum of natural history which is open at the moment in the capital area. *The Natural History Museum of Kópavogur* is ideal for those wanting to understand better the fauna and the minerals found in Iceland. It also has examples of all the types of rocks in Iceland and connects it with the geological history of the country. Many strange animals are on display in the museum, for example a strange black deep sea fish called

Kópavogur is a charming town, interesting to visit for those wanting to see a bit more of the capital area than just downtown Reykjavik. Whether it is the beautiful coastline or the green valleys, Kópavogur is an especially nice place for a walk.

Lucifer. The museum has also a beautiful snowy owl and an ongoing exhibition of amazing butterflies. Not far from this cluster of knowledge and culture, you will find a spectacular, modern-designed church, in a beautiful environment of rocks and bushes. On the hill, there is also a fine youth center, with a vibrant culture and art program for the youth and a

nice café.

If you have leisure hours to spend in the capital, a visit to this cultural hill of Kópavogur is an ideal and cheap visit as all the museums are free of charge. After the cultural boost, you could take a stroll by the coastline of the Kársnes point, through the green and cosy older part of Kópavogur. The perfect end to your little trip is the swimming pool in Kópavogur, which is only in five minutes walking distance from the culture hill. You would only spend about three, four Euros on such a day for bus 1 from downtown Reykjavik and an entrance fee for the swimming pool.

Walking in and around Kópavogur

The possibilities of walk and swimming pool combinations are quite diverse in Kópavogur. The town not only boasts of the swimming pool near the culture hill, but also a newer one in the east side of town.

The culture hill is located between two beautiful green valleys with a lot of outdoor areas used considerably by the locals. Both of them possess huge green areas with a lot of vegetation and big trees (at least on Icelandic standard.)

The valley south of the hill is called the

Kópavogur-valley. A stroll through the valley is a marvellous experience. You have two good possibilities for such a walk; either taking a long, narrow circle around the whole valley, about 5,5 kilometres walk or a shorter one by the sea, about 2,6 kilometres. It is ideal to start by the church of Digranes for both those circles. The area west of the church is especially nice, as you walk along the valley's stream. There are also nice groves there, planted by the first settlers of Kópavogur.

The valley north of the cultural hill is called Fossvogsdalur, but half of it belongs to Reykjavik and the other half to Kópavogur. This is one of the most peaceful sites in the capital area, although you will find plenty of life in the valley. Fossvogsdalur is rich of flora and fauna, with various flower and tree nurseries, kitchen gardens and a forestry. In addition, over 100



bird species has been seen in the valley, some quite foreign to Iceland, like the Finch.

Another really nice walk would be by the Elliðavatn lake, which is in the land of Kópavogur but a bit further





inland than the town itself. It is really cosy to walk by the lake and along the old lava fields near to the lake, filled with ancient moss.

After a good walk by Elliðavatn lake, it is ideal to go for a swim in the Versalir swimming pool, which is not far off from the lake. It is a nice, new swimming pool with a nice water slide for the children, splendid to visit for those wanting to unwind in the warm water of an Icelandic swimming pool. Kópavogur is a charming town,

interesting to visit for those wanting to see a bit more of the capital area than just downtown Reykjavik. Whether it is the beautiful coastline or the green valleys, Kópavogur is an especially nice place for a walk. One can surely say that Kópavogur offers a nice mixture of places of cultural interest and great outdoor areas within the limits of the capital area.

Further information is available on www.kopavogur.is.



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Puffin Express

Whales and Puffins in their Natural Environment

Have you ever dreamed of seeing whales swimming in the ocean or the colourful puffin flying around you? Then take a stroll down to the Reykjavik harbor and buy a ticket to one of Puffin Express' tours.

Whale Watching

Puffin Express offers both puffin watching tours and whale watching tours from Reykjavik's old harbour. In the whale watching tours you'll see the

whales in their natural environment, quite up close and personal. The friendly guides will point out where to spot the whales on the surface of the sea and give you interesting information about the different kinds of whales you can expect to see.

The whales are not so shy, so they quite often surface quite close to the boat. When Icelandic Times joined Puffin Express' whale watching tour we saw minke whales several times

on different locations and once one of the minke whales went so high up it was almost like it was "jumping" out of the sea.

The whale watching tours only take 2-2,5 hours. They are shorter than most other whale watching tours because Rósin, the main whale watching boat of Puffin Express, is quite a fast cruiser. The boat was designed specially for the company and equipped with all necessities. It has a heated accommodation and comfortable seats for up to 70 people. It can get quite cold on the sea and on the way out and back you can sit down in the heat downstairs with some warm coffee in your hands, which comes free of charge.

Puffin Watching

The small islands outside Reykjavik are great for puffin watching with thousands of puffins nesting there every summer. Puffin Express offers tours especially designed for seeing the puffins. The boat takes you quite close to one of the puffin islands where you take a break and you can observe the colorful bird-life, both puffins on the island or sitting on the sea. This tour takes only one hour, you sail to the island and around it with several breaks in between. On the Puffin Express tours you can also see all kinds of sea birds.



The boat takes you quite close to one of the puffin islands where you take a break and you can observe the colorful bird-life, both puffins on the island or sitting on the sea.

The Whales You See Around Iceland

Harbour Porpoise. A rather small whale, dark gray or dark brown on the back with a white belly. A dark stripe extends from its dark flippers to the eyes. Feeds on herring, cod and nonspiny fishes.

White-beaked dolphin. Up to 3 metres long whale weighing up to 350kg. Loves to bow ride. Feeds on sand eels and herring to cod, whiting and haddock.

Minke whale. A counter-shadedblack to dark gray coloured whale on the back with a white belly. Feeds on small schooling fish, e.g. cod.

Humpback whale. Black upper side and mottled black and white belly. Feeds on krill and various kinds of small fish.

For further information visit www. puffinexpress.is





Natural Baths in Iceland

Hidden Pearls and Environmental Travelling

Scattered throughout the country you'll find amazing hidden pools of water where you can swim and relax in hot water surrounded by beautiful landscapes, far from the bustle of city life. The problem is that many of them are indeed "hidden" and are often hard to reach - or are they? A duo of industrious young travelers has decided to attempt to reach some of these pools using only a book, an ingenuous web-site and their thumbs! The whole endeavor will be documented on film, which places special emphasis on responsible and environmental travel options in Iceland.

This innovative enterprise was inspired by the acclaimed photobook Heitar Laugar á Íslandi (Natural Pools in Iceland) by Jón G. Snæland and Þóra Sveinbjörnsdóttir. When friends Helga Sveinsdóttir and Harpa Fönn Sigurjónsdóttir read the book they were instantly inspired to seek out these hidden pearls using only economic travelling.

During the summer they will be hitchhiking to these remote pools



anywhere from the South, the East and to the barren highlands– proving that not everyone needs a 4x4 to enjoy these pearls of Iceland. They will also be utilizing the travel website www.samferda. net where car-owners with empty seats and travelers without vehicles can find each other and save the environment considerable air pollution by carpooling to shared destinations.

to shared destinations. You can follow the girls' adventure on http://heitarlaugar.blogspot.com and if you're looking for a travelling companion take a look at www.samferda. net The book Heitar Laugar á Íslandi can be found in most major book stores.



This innovative enterprise was inspired by the acclaimed photobook Heitar Laugar á Íslandi (Natural Pools in Iceland) by Jón G. Snæland and Þóra Sveinbjörnsdóttir.













Visit our souvenir shop Hafnarstræti 4 Reykjavík and our museum in Stokkseyri.

Conserving the Wool Tradition

Every Icelander knows the name Álafoss and connects it immediately with wool. It could be said that the Icelandic wool industry was born in Kvosin in Mosfellsbær when Álafoss was established at the end of the 19th century.

Named after a waterfall in the river Varmá, Álafoss is now a spacious store that concentrates on products made from Icelandic sheep wool while preserving the traditions related to Icelandic wool. If you seek to buy an authentic hand-knit Icelandic wool sweater and want to be sure to get the best quality, for a reasonable price, a visit to this spectacular area in Mosfellsbær, right outside of Reykjavik, is worth the visit.

When Álafoss was founded in 1896, it was true beginning of Iceland's wool industry. A visionary farmer, named Björn Porláksson, who imported machinery for processing wool, built a factory a short distance below the waterfall Álafoss in the Varmá River. Throughout the 20th century Álafoss played a major role in establishing Mosfellsbær as a town as well as its growth. Álafoss helped change the surrounding community of scattered farmsteads into the beautiful town Mosfellsbær.

Today, in the era of global mobility of the productional side of goods like woollens, Álafoss as a wool-handling factory is history, but in the original factory house by the waterfall, you will find a store that treats this traditional material of Iceland with due respect. Here you can find almost any wool product you can think of as well as experience this important side of Iceland's industrial history in the form of the factory building and its machinery.

The Álafoss wool store offers all sorts of wool products, ranging from traditional wool sweaters, whole sheepskins, wool caps and mittens to high-end wool designs.

This warm sweater is close to being the national uniform of Iceland. You can often spot Icelanders in other countries, wearing their Icelandic



wool sweater proudly. According to Guðmundur Jónsson, owner of Álafoss, this Icelandic trademark is well known to other North-Europeans but often comes as great surprise to those coming from further away. "Nowadays we also have wool vests with Icelandic patterns, which have gained in popularity with visitors, especially with the women of Japan. The Álafoss store offers its visitors handmade sweaters from hard-working knitters from all over the country and is probably one of the most popular products in the

"Although tradition is important, one cannot forget that people are also making something new and creative out of the Icelandic wool today. We are selling products from AS design, which have been quite popular. You can only buy those products in two places, here and in the Blue Lagoon, and the better price is here

of course," says Guðmundur. Among the products of AS design are coats, sweaters, hats and shawls.

"As we are located on the outskirts of the Reykjavik area, our prices are much more reasonable and the





variety wider than you would find in a store in downtown Reykjavik," says Guðmundur. Kvosin in Mosfellsbær, where the Álafoss store is situated, is north of Reykjavik, which makes it ideal to stop by on your way to and from the North, or even when you are visiting Þingvellir, the old parliamental residence of Iceland as one needs to go through Mosfellsbær on the way to Þingvellir.

The Icelandic wool is somewhat different from the wool of foreign sheep. It has two distinct fibres, each with its own special properties. The inner fibre is fine, soft and highly insulating while the outer fibres are long, glossy and water repellent. Therefore products made of Icelandic woolarelight in weight, water repellent and breathable, which means that they provide the perfect protection from the Icelandic elements. The wool has without a doubt been crucial for the survival of the Icelandic nation. over centuries of trying weather and primitive circumstances. Although perhaps such durable material might not offer the most sensitive texture vou could find and for some can be a bit coarse and itchy, this appears to only add to the romance connected with wearing the traditional Icelandic wool sweater.

The Álafoss store puts great emphasis on preserving its history. Whilst visiting the store you will see the old machinery and equipment once used in making clothes for the nation for over the last hundred years There are also many old photographs showing the life of the factory over the decades. You will also have the chance to visit a unique society in Iceland as Kvosin is a creative environment where various artists and creative people live together. For example the world-famous band Sigurrós has its studio here in the old swimming pool that used to belong to Álafoss. You will also find Palli the knife maker there, a local legend, who designs and makes his knives right next to the Álafoss factory outlet and Ásgarður, a workshop where disabled people make some extraordinary toys, furniture and other wood crafts.

Further information is available at www.alafoss.is and www.asdesign.is





Gljúfrasteinn – the Writer's House

Activities and Events During the Summer

Gliúfrasteinn is a museum dedicated to the memory of the Nobel prize writer Halldór Laxness. The house, which has been converted into the museum,



Gudny Dora Gestsdottir Museum director

was his home during the later vears of his life. It contains the some of the furniture, books and art Laxness and his wife. Authur. surrounded themselves and their children with.

Gljúfrasteinn is not only a museum worth visiting to see the home of one of the most famous Icelandic writers. but there are often delightful activities organised by the museum and its partners for visitors to enjoy.

Pen and paper

Genuine Icelandic Leather Designs

www.arkart.is

Pen and Paper is an exciting childrens' adventure. Together with nine other participants, Gljúfrasteinn

Handcrafted

Handbags,

Necklaces

Earrings

National Gallery

of Iceland and

Café Loki, Lokastíg 28

For sale at

Leather

and

has organised a mystery scavenger hunt across Western Iceland. As the children visit each of the ten cites. they will collect a piece of the puzzle until finally ending up with a thrilling story and the solution to the mystery.





Walking Paths

Halldór Laxness was an ardent outdoorsman and often walked about the beautiful vicinity of Gliúfrasteinn. Those who visit Gliúfrasteinn are encouraged follow in his footsteps and enjoy the numerous walking paths surrounding the muesum. The house stands at the river Kaldakvísl and is on the land of the Laxness Farm, where Laxness grew up (and took his family name from). The garden surrounding the house is open to the public and good walking paths can be found from there. Guests may wander upstream along the river to the deserted farm of Bringur or downstream along Kaldakvíst towards Guddulaug (Gudda's Spring). Laxness tells of Gudda's Spring in one of his books and considered the water especially wholesome. The ice cold water of the spring is indeed a delight.

Concerts

For the sixth year in a row. Gliúfrasteinn is hosting a weekly concert series. These concerts have become very popular and it is indeed in the spirit of the house to have live music played every week. These concerts take place on tuesdays and feature well-known Icelandic musicians and artists.

The museum is open from 9 am to 5 pm daily throughout the summer. For more information go to www. gljufrasteinn.is



Hotel Glymur in Hvalfjordur Bay

Your Home Away From Home

If you are looking for top quality accommodation close to the capital, you need to look no further than Hotel Glymur. Located in the truly magical Hvalfjörður Bay (just 45 minutes from Reykjavík) Hótel Glymur quarantees a stay you won't forget. Hotel Glymur places special emphasis on customer satisfaction which has resulted in it being the highest reviewed Icelandic hotel on the acclaimed travel website www.tripadvisor.

You'll find that Hotel Glymur's services and accommodation are all of top notch quality - the main hotel building was completely renovated in 2006 and their unique luxury villas were opened this summer. All the rooms are decorated with specially designed furniture and artwork and come equipped with wireless internet, flat screen TV's, telephones, mini-bars and coffee makers. The villas each have their own theme and are equipped accordingly -Villa Elegance come with the finest art and design, Villa Creativity is designed for creative workshops and meetings, Villa Couture comes equipped with the finest culinary equipment, Villa Family is ideal for quality family time, Villa Nature is the perfect nature relaxation resort and Villa Romance is for all the lovers out there.

Customer Satisfaction

But according to Hansina B. Einarsdóttir, co-owner of Hotel Glymur, they are proudest of the comments and kind words from satisfied customers. Hansina says that comments customers left on www.tripadvisor.com such as "The moment you step foot in Hotel Glymur you are at home" and "Staying at Hotel Glymur was a joy. The staff was extremely friendly and we were treated like family" are really what motivates her at the end of the day.

Extraordinary Dining Experience

The restaurant in Hotel Glymur is equally renowned by its customers and comments on www.tripadvisor.com such as "the food is amazing" and "the dining experience was extraordinary. Hotel Glymur's restaurant is run by a second-generation Scandinavian master chef," should speak for themselves.





Hotel Glymur is equally renowned by its customers and comments on www. tripadvisor.com such as "the food is amazing" and "the dining experience was extraordinary.

Views From Another Planet

Glymur's immediate surroundings are as one customer put it "like something from another planet - God's work at its best." As ancient folklore has it the Hotel is located on the crossroads of the lands of elves and hidden people, so don't be surprised to see some benevolent creatures in the rocks. You can even find a special walking path which points out specific locations connected to these mysterious beings. And if you are wondering where Hotel Glymur's name comes from - it is named after one of Europe's highest waterfalls, the majestic Glymur, which can be easily reached from the hotel. For further information and booking visit www.hotelglymur.is 003544303100

Boat Tours around Faxaflói and Hvalfjördur

For an upclose and personal nature experience, a Bassi tour is the way to go. Bassi is a family-owned and operated company providing uniquely personal tours both in the waters around Reykjavík, as well as in the Icelandic highlands.

Visitors who chose one of Bassi's popular seas tour will sail out in one of Bassi's 17-foot, ribbed inflatable boats. Each boat can carry up to 7 passengers and have been selected for uncompromising safety and comfort. Bassi also supplies every passenger with safety suits, boots and gloves. Guests are invited to take part in all activities on board including operating the boats, under the guidance of one of Bassi's skilled guides. The company's founder, Erlingur Einarsson has gone to great lengths to provide guests with a first-hand encounter with the best of Iceland's breath-taking natural beauty. "All those who have been on our tours agree that this is the ultimate nature experience. By taking an active part in a tour of this small scale clients say they've felt truly one with nature," says Einarsson.

A Pleasant Afternoon in Faxaflói Bay If you are looking for a pleasant afternoon on the waters around Revkjavík, the four-hour tour of Faxaflói Bay is the tour for you. The tour starts with a pick-up from your accomodations and departs from Reykjavík Harbour. You'll tour the city from the sea before sailing around the islands in the bay, where you'll get up close and personal with its inhabitants - the birds, including the colourful puffin! For those in the mood for fishing, Bassi's Icelandic Fishing Adventure offers you the chance to go sea angling in the bay - quality fishing rods and bait are, of course, included.

Bay of Whales

Hvalfjörthur Bay was once one of Iceland's primary whaling centres. Einarsson has lived by the bay for over three decades and used to work there as a whale cutter. Einarsson's enthusaism will captivate you as he shares a lifetime of local knowledge. In an unforgettable tour, Einarsson will guide you along-side Iceland's iconic whaling boats as they come into the bay, where you might even be able to



see the whalers make the first cut into a freshly caught whale. An evening tour of Hvalfjörthur Bay under the midnight sun is an opportunity not to be missed - you're sure to enjoy the company of the birds and seals that live in the bay. And don't forget, Einarsson knows the freshwater fishing opporunities in Hvalfjörthur like the back of his hand and will be pleased to arrange for such trips.

Highland Adventures

Smaller groups looking for the ultimate fishing experience should ask Einarsson about freshwater fishing in the highlands of Iceland. You will enjoy spending a couple of days, or longer, fishing some of the most remote lakes around. Bassi provides accommodation in a camper trailer and supplies meals and equipment - all you have to do is show up and have fun. Bassi can also arrange custom tours to fit your own personal requests. The Bassi motto is to give the customer as much flexibility as possible. So just call or send an email and arrange the vacation of a lifetime. To contact Bassi you can go to the website: www.icefa.is

Bassi ehf – boat tours around Faxaflói and Hvalfiordur

For an up close and personal nature experience Bassi ehf is the way to go. Bassi is a family-owned company which provides unique personal boattoursbotharound Reykjavíkandlonger trips up on the Icelandic highlands.

Bassi sails out on 17 feet long ribbed inflatable boats with 25 horsepower motors. Each boat carries up to seven persons. Of the smaller boats available, according to Erlingur Einarsson, the founder of Bassi, they are the safest kind. The boats are very wide and spacious and thus will not capsize. All the passengers are supplied with a safety suit, boots and gloves. Passengers are invited to take part in all the activities - including operating the boats under supervision. Erlingur claims that by using this type of boat you'll get a much closer look at Iceland's best. "All those who have been on our tours agree that this is the ultimate nature experience. By taking an active part in a tour of this small scale they say they've truly felt one with nature," says Erlingur.



Pleasant Afternoon in Faxaflói Bay Bassi's tours are of a varied nature. If you're looking for a pleasant afternoon of nature watching, the four hour tour of Faxaflói Bay is the tour for you. The tour starts with a pickup at your hotel or residence and departs from Reykjavík harbour. You'll tour the city from the sea before sailing around the islands in the bay, where you'll get up close and personal to its inhabitants – the birds, including the colourful puffin. For those in the mood for fishing Icefa offers you the chance to go sea angling in the bay quality fishing rods and bait are of course included.

Bay of Whales

Hvalfjörður Bay was once one of Iceland's primary whaling centres. Erlingur has lived in the bay for over three decades and used to work there as a whale cutter. Erlingur utilizes his experience of the area to the fullest in the various tours he offers in Hvalfjörður Bay. In an unforgettable tour Erlingur will follow the whaling boats as they come into the bay and all the way into the bay, where you might be able to see the whalers make the first cut into the freshly caught whale. Also check out the Hvalfjörður evening, where you'll watch birds and seals under the midnight sun. Erlingur also knows the freshwater fishing opportunities in Hvalfjörður like the back of his hand and can easily arrange for such

Highland Adventures

Smaller groups looking for the ultimate fishing experience should ask Erlingur about freshwater fishing in the highlands of Iceland. It is at least a two day trip which will take you to some of the most remote fishing lakes around. Bassi provides accommodation in a camper trailer and supplies food and all equipment needed - all you have to do is show up and have fun. Bassi can also arrange tours to fit your request - in fact their motto is to give the customer as much flexibility as possible. So just call or send an email and arrange the vacation of a lifetime.

To contact Bassi you can go to the website, www.icefa.is.



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The World of Puppets

This summer the town of Borgarnes, in the West of Iceland, will be able to boast of yet another cultural treasure when husband-and-wife team Bernd Ogrodnik and Hildur Jónsdóttir invite you to take a peek into The World of Puppets a museum dedicated entirely to

The museum opened on May 20th in the oldest part of Borgarnes in a historical building with splendid ocean views. The center contains a various exhibition rooms, a cozy café, and a puppet theater, where guests can see performances both for children and adults and a reception with a gallery.

Interactive Exhibition

Bernd and Hildur are both experienced puppeteers and have collectively designed a seemingly uncountable number of puppets over the years.

The idea for The World of Puppets actually sprang from the increased interest people had been showing their legacy of puppets. "We have been making puppets and doing shows in Iceland for ten years and Bernd has been working in puppetry for 25 years now. During this time we have created hundreds of puppets in different shapes and sizes - for theater, film and television and recently all kinds of groups started visiting our workshop to see these puppets. We then realized that it would be ideal to start a center where everyone who wanted could experience this amazing world that puppets somehow bring to life," says

However they did not let it suffice to simply display the bulk of their work and instead opted for interactive exhibitions where people are invited into the magical world of puppetry.





The Puppets Come to Life

Bernd Ogrodnik is a German-born artist who soon decided to dedicate his life to the art of puppetry. Most of the puppets which Bernd makes are wooden and his puppets are thought to exhibit a very personal style.

His biggest work to date was as a Chief Puppeteer in the renowned Danish film Strings, which went on to win several awards

Bernd has also made various characters from children literature and fairvtales into puppets. For example he made the Ugly Duckling and the Little Match Girl for the anniversary of H.C. Andersen in the national Theater of Iceland. "In a grand spectacle The Ugly Duckling changed into a swan on the stage, right in front of the audience. The neck lengthened, the wings spread out and the swan took off," says Hildur. "Bernd says that he got his biggest compliment after that show when a five year old boy, who saw him walk past with the life-size Little Match Girl puppet, asked his mother: "Why is the man holding the girl?" He believed she was alive."

Bernd and Hildur have also recently done a puppet show based on the Alfie Atkins books (Einar Áskell in Icelandic) by Gunnilla Bergström. "Bergström had seen a TV show about Bernd in Sweden

and contacted him to ask whether he could do something with Alfie Atkins. So now we have already done a puppet show and we might even produce a TV show about this little fellow in the near future," says Hildur.



Giftware Gallery

The World of Puppets will be open this summer, every day from 10-22, both the exhibition and the café. A detailed information guide on the art of puppetry will be available at the

The café has a proper coffee & cakes menu as well as some smaller dishes and soups. There is also a reception which also functions as a gallery with giftware, which has been created in Bernd studio.

More information is available on bruduheimar.is

Exploring Breiðafjörður bay with Seatours

Seatours run out of Stykkishólmur and offers a variety of sailing trips in Breiðafjörður bay. Breiðafjörður is famous for its innumerable islands, many of which were inhabited in former times. Now only a few remain settled, among them Flatey, where the 19th century ambience has been preserved unchanged like nowhere else in Iceland (not a car in sight).



Unique Adventure Tour

The most popular tour is the tour called Unique Adventure Tour. It is a sort of an introduction to Breiðafjörður. "You'll get the opportunity to see some of the most interesting islands on Breiðafjörður, which have multi-faceted bird-life and beautiful columnar cliffs, " says Nadine Walter from Seatours. "For example, if you are lucky you will get a chance to see an eagle on this trip as

we try to spot their nests beforehand and as we have a special permit to approach its areas. There is also a great variety of other birds, like the ever colourful puffin," says Nadine. This trip runs twice every day during the summertime, at 11:00 and 14.30 and lasts for just over two hours "On this trip we also fish for some scallops and sea urchins and give people a chance to taste this strange and beautiful sea food."

Sea Angling

"But if you really want to do the fishing yourself, I would definitely recommend the Sea Angling trip, says Nadine. "You will get your own fishing pole and it won't take long until a fish bites, most often the fish that has fed Icelanders throughout the centuries - the cod. Seatours have made an agreement with the local restaurants in Stykkishólmur to cook the fish you and your family catch. It is certainly a special feeling to eat something that you have caught yourself, especially for the kids. This tour runs twice a day, at 10:00 and 13:00 during the summertime.

Seatours also run the ferry Baldur. which goes from Stykkishólmur to the Westfjords. Baldur stops at Flatey with its 19th century village. Seatours offer vou to take the ferry to see Flatey and then take whichever ferry you want back. There are also several other tours, so take a look at www.seatours. is to see the possibilities.

-Eiderdown Duvets and Pillows

Nature's Best Insulation Material

The people of Breiðafiörður Bav have been collecting eiderdown in Hrappsey Island since the 15th century and continue to do so today. Family company Eiderdown still collects, processes and sells quality duvets and pillows made out of nature's finest insulation material.

Eiderdown collecting in Hrappsev is entirely sustainable and done without any harm to the birds or their offspring. On the contrary, the people of Eiderdown provide the

birds with shelter which provides protection from predatory birds and harsh weather conditions.

To insulate their nests the Eider Bird (Somateria mollissima) remove their own feathers and line their nests with them. With hundreds of years of experience the people of Breiðafjörður have found a way to harvest the down manually while the birds go in search for food and replace it with appropriate

A man named Jón Pétursson, born in 1584, discovered a successful way of cleaning the eiderdown and today his descentant's in Eiderdown are still producing eiderdown based on his techniques.

As soon as the down is collected it is heated in an oven up to 130° and afterwards put in special machines which process it to give



it full volume and softness. It is then cleaned manually and given to the down inspector for approval. Finally it is stuffed into duvets and pillows and washed with a special technique which ensures that the down does not decrease in levels of

The final products are guaranteed to keep you warm and comfortable during cold winter nights.

For further information and shopping visit: www.eiderdown.is

-Fossatún in Borgarfjörður Bay

Camp Out in the Land of Trolls

Throughout the centuries enigmatic rock formations in Iceland have spawned numerous tales of trolls who failed to reach their home before sunrise for various reasons and were turned to stone. Fossatún in Borgarfjörður Bay celebrates this folklore tradition and has created a Troll adventure land where you can get to know these fearsome giants up close and personal. There you'll be invited to take an informative Troll hike, participate in Troll inspired games and see some very impressive statues of the local trolls.

Fossatún is just an hour's drive from Reykjavík and there you'll find a five star campsite, a family run quality restaurant, beautiful scenery, and incredible outdoors games for the entire family '- not just the kids.

The Face in the Rocks

The restaurant in Fossatún overlooks the magical Troll Falls. The owner and creator of Fossatún, Steinar Berg, had previously tried to inquire about the origin of the name of the beautiful waterfalls, but had eventually failed as the origin had long since been forgotten. But during a traditional Christmas buffet he wanted to brighten up his visitors' day by using floodlights to light up the waterfalls in the cold and dark winter evening and it was then that he saw the troll's face in the rocks!

That very winter Steinar claims to have spent countless nights conversing with the trolls and the following spring he emerged with the stories of the trolls in Fossatún, which were later published with illustrations by noted artist Brian Pilkington.

Tales of the Trolls in Fossatún

The stories were a success and people started showing up in Fossatún wanting to see the setting of the tales and now a few years later Steinar has created a truly magical adventure land where the trolls reign as kings. Among attractions are some very innovative troll inspired family games, where all family members can participate. You'll find the head of Bölmóður, the troll who couldn't contain himself and sank to the ground. The finishing piece this summer will be a seven foot







statue of Grýla, a predominant female troll in Steinar's tales, sitting down holding an immense cauldron.

Among attractions in the ever popular troll-hike is a rock formation where troll related locations are marked with very informative and entertaining signs in Icelandic, English, Norwegian, German and French. One such



location is a rock formation which a troubled troll woman released all her worries and troubles into, with the help of a local troll witch doctor. Her hand imprint can still be seen in the rock and rumor has it that the magic still works! So you can place your hand in the imprint, recite a magical verse and all your troubles will be infused into the rock.

The hike then ends in Troll Falls. where you can see the troll head which inspired this wonderland of Trolls.

For more information visit www. fossatun.is





Sailing Trips from Grundarfjörður

Birds, Fish and Romance

The village of Grundarfjörður is situated at the center of the Snæfellsnes area, within short distance from all the sights, of which the Snæfellsiökull glacier is the most spectacular. However, the Snæfellsnes area offers many and varied delights, large and small. One of them is the bay of Breiðafiörður with its innumerable islands and varied wildlife of birds. fish, seals and whales.

Láki SH 55

This summer tourists who visit Grundarfjörður or other places close by will be offered a unique opportunity to take a tour on Láki SH 55, a 30-ton fishing boat made of oak, which has been refurbished for the purpose of sightseeing. In addition to scheduled trips it is also possible to book the boat for groups of any size and shape, up to 40 people.

Whales, Birds and Fish

The scheduled trips depart three per day. At ten o'clock in the morning the first trip of the day begins. This tour offers a mixture of general nature appreciation, bird-watching and fish-catching. The tour takes three and a half hours. The boat sails

to catch some fish of their own.

Fish and Romance

On the second trip of the day the boat

north from Grundarfiörður, out of the Grundarfiörður bay towards the island of Melrakkaev. Melrakkaev is a bird-protectorate because of its very varied and flourishing bird life. Many puffins and cormorants nest on the island, as well as fulmars, black-backed gulls, kittiwake, goose and sandpipers. Sometimes the phalarope also nests there. On the way back from the island passengers are given a chance

Other Possibilities for Leisure in Snæfellsnes

dusk falls earlier and earlier.

Opportunities for leisure are many and varied in the vicinity of

This summer tourists who visit Grundarfjörður or other places close by will be offered a unique opportunity to take a tour on Láki SH 55, a 30-ton fishing boat made of oak, which has been refurbished for the purpose of sightseeing.

leaves the harbour at 14.00. This is a

special fishing tour, solely for those

who want to catch fish - and lots

of fish. Cod, haddock, halibut, sole

and various other tasty fish can be

caught on the rich fishing grounds of

The third and last sailing of the day

is a romantic tour of Grundarfjörður

and surroundings. At 20.00 hours

the Láki leaves the harbour for a

sailing tour around the bay and out to

watching the birds on Melrakkaey and

perhaps a whale or two can be seen

along the way. Light food and drinks

can be enjoyed on the trip during

the evening. This of course gets even

more romantic in late summer when

Grundarfjörður bay.

and eider. Where to Book a Trip The trips on Láki can be booked at

the Hótel Framnes in Grundarfiörður. Tel: 438 6893, at the Tourist Information (Eyrbyggja Sögumiðstöð) Grundarfjörður (Tel: 438 1881) and Grundarfjördur Hostel (Tel: 895 6533). The company organising the tours is Laki Tours, Grundarfiörður.

Grundarfjörður. The Snæfellsjökull

National Park is only 25 km away

with its spectacular vistas of lava fields, calderas and craters, pebbled

beaches and lava plugs. Remains of medieval fisheries can be seen at

Hellissandur and the old "verstöðvar"

(fishing stations), such as Dritvík,

which was populated by farmers and

farmhands from all over Iceland in

winter, can be explored. Glacier trips,

hiking, bird watching, horse riding or

just chilling out in the magnificent

nature are among the possibilities.

The Snæfellsnes Peninsula is also a

haven for migratory birds making

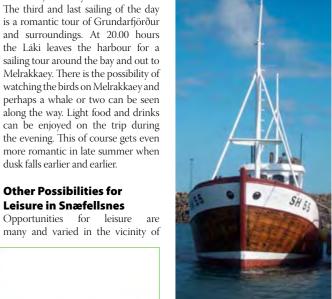
it a birdwatchers paradise. Many

species have been spotted in and

around Grundarfjörður, among them

the arctic tern, white-tailed eagle,

guillemot, Slavonian grebe, fulmar









Alternative Ways of Getting to Know Reykjavik

It's all too easy to become just another herded tourist, even in Reykjavík. Tyrfingur Tyrfingsson, or Chef Tyffi, offers you various options to see the city and get to know the locals. Whether it is a guided tour on electric bikes, or a gourmet tour with the chef himself, you won't be disappointed with your alternative experience of Reykjavik.

Getting some Help from God

Nearly everyone living in Reykjavik has a mountain bike. The reason being that sometimes a cycle trip across town feels more like serious exercise than just the daily commute. But if you prefer to see the city in a more relaxed manner, an electric bike might be just right for you.

"It is like God himself/herself/itself is pushing you along!" explains Tyffi. You can either rent a bike and explore the city yourself, or take a guided tour. If you choose to rent a bike, you can even leave it at your hotel where it will be picked up by the rental service.

"We started these guided bicycle tours last spring and our customers have been really happy," says Tyffi. The tour itself is three hours long and leaves from the Old Harbour at 10:15 am, 13:30 pm and 20:15 pm. There are quite a few stops along

the way for sightseeing and some interesting theories on the real story behind the settlement of Iceland are up for discussion. (Hint: it has to do with elephants and the land of Jesus instead of the land of ice.)

Setting out from the Old Harbor, you will cycle along the coast to Arnarhóll, where the story of the first settler Ingólfur Árnarsson is told. That story is then put to question, and an alternative history of Reykjavik is posited; a version that has not made it into history books

You will also visit Perlan with its superb panoramic views across Reykjavík and Öskjuhlið, the wooded hills surrounding it. Then head back

downtown for more sightseeing! For longer tours around Revkjavik, a

scooter tour is also on offer. Starting at the Old Harbor this tour is ideal for seeing the suburbs where most of the general population reside. Alternatively, you can also rent a scooter to explore the city on your

Learn about the Locals

Another way to experience the less conventional side of Reykjavík is the amazing Reykjavík - Modern Icelanders Food and Saga Tour. Tyffi himself will be both your guide and chef during an unforgettable afternoon in Reykjavík. You will be picked up right at your hotel doorstep in a comfortable minibus at 3:00 pm in the afternoon and will tour Reykjavík to learn the history of its development and growth, This

The tour concludes with an invitation to dine in Chef Tvffi's own home, in the lively suburb of Kópavogur. Using the groceries bought over the course of the day, Chef Tyffi will prepare a gorgeous meal while entertaining you with stories about how Icelanders lived off the land, developing timeless recipes from ocean delicacies and mountain lamb. Tyffi will offer several samples of traditional Icelandic cuisine and who knows? he might even offer you a shot of the infamous Icelandic Brennivín vodka as an appetizer. After a delightful evening of fine food and lively conversation, Tyffi will then drive you back to your hotel. For more information and booking

is a unique opportunity to catch a

While learning about Reykjavík and

its inhabitants you'll be making several

stops along the way to prepare for the

ultimate gourmet food experience.

There's a stop at a cheese shop; a

gourmet butcher's shop, where Tyffi

will find the perfect steaks for the

evening meal; plus a stop at a genuine

Icelandic fish monger, where the catch

of the day will have just arrived. A

stop at the wine shop is also included,

but you'll have to purchase your own

glimpse of the real Iceland.

www.reykjavik-cuisine.net seasontours.is

Varma –

Stay Warm in and out of Iceland!

The wool of the Icelandic sheep has kept Icelanders warm over centuries of harsh weather conditions. Now, in the time of warm houses and automobiles, the label Varma- Warmth of Iceland, honours the age long importance of the Icelandic wool and maintains the old and important tradition of knitting. Varma has an amazingly wide variety of knitwear, available in every proper souvenir-store in Iceland.

Varma is indeed entirely an Icelandic production, as every single step of the process is done in Iceland. None of the steps of the production are made on the other side of the planet, like so often in the clothing industry nowadays. Thus, one can surely say that Varma is both a sustainable and eco-friendly production.

Varma's main aim is to keep people warm and comfortable, both Icelanders and visitors. Varma is produced by Glófi, one of the leading manufacturer and distributer of Icelandic woollen goods both within Iceland and abroad.

Varma's style range from styles and patterns based on the Icelandic tradition to the latest fashion trends. As an example of that, Varma has just released a new designer knitwear collection Blik, designed by knitwear designer Laufev Jónasdóttir.

The Varmabrand offers you everything from socks to sweaters, including items like mittens, hats, headbands, gloves, scarves and shawls, as well as a fine selection of various sweaters. cardigans and capes made from high quality Icelandic wool.



In addition to the knitwear, Varma also offers traditional sheepskin products, like exceptionally warm children's hats, slippers and mittens. Soft and comfortably socks of Angora-wool is yet another item Varma offers you to keep vourself warm.

Varma's shawls and scarves are especially attractive, both the material and the knitting pattern, clearly under





influence of the Icelandic knitwear tradition. At the same time they are both elegant and stylish, making you feel cosy and fabulous at the same time. The same can be said about many of the products, like the beautiful sweaters and jackets.

The new design line, Blik, also boasts of beautiful and stylish products, simple in form, often having unique patterns made by the designer. You will probably notice this line in the store by its distinctive logo, which is some sort of a jig or an anchor, with a clear Icelandic reference. More items where the old Icelandic patterns and motives are used are the mittens and gloves with rose patterns, so commonly made by Icelandic grandparents.

In addition to the knitwear, Varma also

offers traditional sheepskin products, like exceptionally warm children's hats, slippers and mittens. Soft and comfortably socks of Angora-wool is yet another item Varma offers you to keep yourself warm.

If you seek the perfect protection from the Icelandic weather Varma's products are ideal for you. The Icelandic wool has marked the survival of Icelanders through the centuries, being light, water repellent and breathable. To use this material, whether in traditional ways or original, or maybe even both, most definitely shows the respect Varma has for the tradition.

Further information is available on www.varma.is

The Blue Lagoon City Spa:

The Ultimate Relaxation

When staying in Reykjavík there is no need to miss out on the relaxing effects of the Blue Lagoon. In the heart of Reykjavík, near the city's outdoor area named Laugardalur, you'll find the Blue Lagoon City Spa. A visit to the spa is therefore an ideal part of the visit to the capital.

The Blue Lagoon spa menu consists of treatments based on Blue Lagoon active elements minerals, silica and algae and creative use of selected Icelandic elements including lava dust from the lava field surrounding the Blue Lagoon. The treatments are developed in-house exclusively for the Blue Lagoon company by its team of spa and skin care professionals.

Signature Treatments

The signature treatments are: silica wrap treatment combined with body and face massage, nourishing and relaxing algae treatment, lava deluxe exfoliation, silica massage and special deluxe Blue Lagoon massage. This unique massage is designed by Blue Lagoon's specialists who have selected the strokes that work most effectively

with the special Blue Lagoon products to provide maximum effects. All general beauty treatments are also

Blue Lagoon Skin Care products are an important part of each treatment. The skin care line is a true naturceutical product line based on the Blue Lagoon geothermal seawater and its active ingredients; minerals, silica and algae and represent a perfect harmony between nature and science. The Blue Lagoon active ingredients are sustainably sourced and production methods are green and environmentally friendly.

For those looking for the ultimate relaxation the floating treatment is an ideal solution. A deep meditation treatment floating in a strong salt solution with natural Blue Lagoon minerals. It is an unusual experience for both body and mind and the rejuvenating effect has been shown to be the equivalent of eight hours of

Relaxing Environment

A visit to the spa is a perfect choice for smaller groups looking for relaxation



The Blue Lagoon spa experience is founded the Blue Lagoon geothermal seawater, which is known for its healing powers.



in a unique setting. Light refreshments can be ordered to enjoy in the spa. Guests can unwind in the warm and comfortable relaxation area with access to steam baths and saunas indoor and outdoor and hot tubs with both fresh thermal water and salt water. Guests at the Spa have access to Hreyfing Health Club offering modern facilities, the newest equipments and a selection of variety of group fitness classes.

Blue Lagoon spa experience is founded on a unique natural source - the Blue Lagoon geothermal seawater known for its healing power and active elements: minerals, silica and algae that cleanse, boost and nourish skin. The treatments are developed on the site by Blue Lagoon's experienced team of

The original massage and treatments take place in the lagoon itself under the open air. Use of Blue Lagoon skin care based on the active elements and the pure white Silica mud mask is the foundation of these extraordinary

visit www.bluelagoonspa.is

Farm Opens the Door to the Past A Replica of a Medieval Farm in Thjórsárdalur

the mountain of SámsstadamúliinThjórsárdalurin SouthernIcelandliesthemedieval farm, Thjódveldisbærinn. It is a reconstruction of the houses at the nearby 12th-century farm of Stöng. The farm was constructed as a replica of Stöng farm as a part of the celebrations for the 1100th anniversary of the settlement of Iceland, celebrated in 1974. Thjódveldisbærinn is a historical venue exhibiting examples of medieval Icelandic handicrafts and technology. Thjódveldisbærinn is open to visitors throughout the summer from June to September.

Rising Out of Volcanic Ash The Stöng farm was excavated

in 1939 by a team of Nordic archeologists. Stöng farm revealed much about the construction of the structures and buildings on medieval farms in Iceland. However, iust when and why the farm was deserted is something of a mystery. The Hekla volcano violently erupted in the year 1104, spewing ash and lava, and it is thought that on this occasion Thjórsárdalur with its 20 farms was deserted. However, some doubt has recently been cast on this chronology, with new evidence coming to light that seems to point to the Stöng farm and others continuing to be in operation after this event. Therefore it cannot be excluded that the next eruptions in Hekla in 1158 or even in 1300, may have led to the desertion of Thjórsárdalur.



Anniversary of Icelandic Settlement

During the preparations for the anniversary of the 1100-year settlement of Iceland, well-known architect Hördur Ágústsson, the foremost expert on premodern housing in Iceland, was commissioned to reconstruct a full-scale replica of the Stöng farm. Ágústsson agreed and construction began during the year of celebrations, 1974 and was completed in 1977. Thjódveldisbærinn was built to demonstrate that the medieval settlers in Iceland did not inhabit dirty hovels but lived in carefully built and stately buildings. The project was sponsored in part by the prime ministry, the state power company and by the local municipality, Gnúpverjahreppur.

Celebrating 1100-Year

Skeljastadir, Another Medieval Farm

Thiódveldisbærinn is close to another long-abandoned medieval farm, Skeljastadir. Skeljastadir presents a classic example of medieval

room, likely used as a pantry; a small chamber (probably sleeping room for the master and mistress of the farm) and a toilet room. Two of these rooms form the hub of activity on the farm, the skali and the living room. Although it was also used as sleeping quarters, the skáli was important as all manner of tasks were conducted there. The living room was also a multi-purpose space, where the women weaved, cared for the children and served the meals.



Visitors to Thjódveldisbærinn can also visit the turf church, the most recently reconstructed building on the farm. Erected to celebrate the 1000 year anniversary of christianity in Iceland. The design of the church was based on a church which was found during archeological research in Stöng in 1986-1998. Remains of several other medieval churches were also used to design the replica. It was ordained in the year 2000.

More information (only in Icelandic, but with pictures and maps) can be foundathttp://www.thjodveldisbaer.



Icelandic architecture. The main building has six rooms: the entrance; For more information and reservations a sleeping and working room, called the skáli; the living room; the storage



ICEWEAR clothes and products are available at the following stores:

REYKJAVÍK:

Handprjónasambandið, Laugavegur 64 The Viking, Hafnarstræti 3 The Viking, Laugavegur 1 Islandia, Kringlan Icefin, Nóatún 17 Ull og Gjafavörur, Hótel Saga Ísey, Laugavegur 23 Hitt hornið, Laugavegur 100 Álafoss, Mosfellsbær OTHER LOCATIONS:

The Viking, Hafnarstræti 104, Akureyri Sport og útivist, Á stéttinni, Húsavík Selið, Mývatn Mývatnsmarkaður, Mývatn Gullfosskaffi, Gullfoss Geysir Shop, Haukadal Byggðasafnið, Skógar Víkwool, Vík í Mýrdal

Drífa ehf, Suðurhraun 12 C, 210 Garðabær, Sími 555 7400, Fax. 555 7401, icewear@icewear.is, www.icewear.is