

ICELANDIC TIMES

A large reindeer with impressive antlers is the central focus of the cover. It is positioned in the lower half, looking towards the left. The antlers are dark brown and covered in velvet. The background is a lush green field with some yellow wildflowers, slightly out of focus.

Tourism, Culture and Business

Issue 5, Oct 2010 www.icelandictimes.com

**A whole section on
eastern Iceland**

**The Reindeer Centre
and Guesthouse of
East Iceland**

**Among the deep
eastern fjords**

**A Microcosmos at the
Edge of the Arctic**

**The Land of
Reindeer, Deep Fjords
and Rich Culture**

**Enchanting East
Iceland**

LAND
& SAGA



Autumn in Uthlið



Valley near Ólafsfjörður



Frozen waterfall
Öxaráfoss

Iceland's Coat of Many Colors

Iceland's Coat of Many Colors

As the colors of summer fade and Iceland slips into her winter coat, a page is turned and a new chapter on the landscape begins. Each season in Iceland has its own unique attributes and the winter season will no doubt have a few pleasant surprises in store for us this year as well.

The summer was truly memorable as we watched temperatures rise to very pleasant highs in the 20'sC (80's F) throughout the country for days on end, much to our delight as well as the delight of our many visitors. Eyafjallajökull which roared to life earlier in the year and made headlines around the world, shrank back considerably just in time for summer and has barely made a peep since that time.

It has been an exciting year so far on many fronts in Iceland, and more excitement is expected with the possible dawning of a new "Age of Auroras" which has been predicted for 2010-2014. We have already witnessed quite a few rather magnificent Northern

Lights displays in the past few weeks.....so who knows what the future holds?

This issue of Icelandic Times pays particular attention to the East of Iceland, with its deep fjords, majestic mountains and fertile inland. The East has a countless number of interesting sites to visit, invigorating routes to walk, and cultural wonders to visit. Especially during the winter festival Days of Darkness, when everything connected to the term darkness is celebrated, whether its ghost stories, "dark drinks" or a romantic candle light dinners. The quiet towns in the East are especially among the most therapeutic and relaxing places you could ever hope to experience.

If you have already landed in Iceland, we wish you a safe and pleasant journey and hope that within these pages you'll find new ideas and helpful information to make your trip more memorable. For those pondering where to go over the holidays or over the New Year- make it special, make it memorable-experience Iceland in her winter coat.

The next issue of Icelandic Times will be published in November/December 2010. The opinions expressed in Icelandic Times do not necessarily reflect those of the editor, publishers or their agents. Though the content of this issue have been meticulously prepared, no warranty is made about the accuracy and completeness of its content.

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Tourism, Culture and Business

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Reindeer in East-Iceland Tim Vollmer

**LAND
& SAGA**

ICELANDIC DESIGN



ANTIBIOTICS FOR COLD

Type: Underwear - Gunnar - Hallgerður - Langbrók	
Colors: Dark grey	
Material: Merino wool. Light and comfy	
Weight: 190g.	Sizes: XS-XXL



www.cintamani.is



Cool and Trendy Knitting Iceland

Iceland has a long tradition of knitting. From the 16th century and well into the 20th, home knitting was a vital part of survival, and was done by men as well as women. Knitting provided warm clothing in the cold climate, and the surplus could be sold abroad. But a lot has changed since Icelanders lived in turf houses, where their entire economy was based on fish and lived under the Danish crown. In the latter part of the 20th century knitting became more of a hobby and was even for a period of time considered outdated and old fashioned.

However, knitting in Iceland has undergone many changes in the last decade or so. More and more people have started to knit and homemade woolen goods can be seen everywhere; sweaters, mittens, hats, shawls, you name it, it's out there again. Suddenly at the beginning of the 21st century, knitting has become trendy and hip again. Young people wear woolen sweaters under their jackets when going out on a Saturday night, and a homemade hat or mittens is just as fashionable an accessory as the latest trend from Calvin Klein. Designers from all over Iceland, both men and women, are now experimenting with

wool and knitting which means there is a whole lot of variety available, from modern versions of the traditional classic woolen sweater to obscure combinations of color, patterns and methods that look more like a piece from Salvador Dali, than something one might actually wear.

Knitting is one of the most popular crafts in Iceland and because of its popularity, everyone has their own opinion about it. Knitting magazines and books abound and big and small craft shows are held regularly around the country, where knitters of all ages come together to share their work with others and exchange ideas. The general interest and widespread popularity of knitting creates a vibrant knitting culture (some might even call it knitting mania, since it is claimed to be highly addictive; once you finish your first pair of mittens, you are hooked!) Iceland truly is a great place to be a knitter.

When the World Wide Web invaded our lives, knitting went online. In 2009, two knitting addicts came together and established the website Knitting Iceland, an online magazine where you can buy knitting patterns by independent designers and knitting kits or you can even book one of the company's knitting tours!

The homepage clear cut, easy to use and tastefully designed. The main focus of Knitting Iceland, aside from selling patterns, is to offer knitting tours to Iceland where knitters get a unique opportunity to delve into the rich local knitting scene. The knitting tours combine sightseeing, hiking and museum visits with knitting as well as classes where participants learn techniques embedded deep in the Icelandic knitting tradition. In addition, Knitting Iceland takes you to see local knitters and yarnies, and of course provides experienced teachers and guides. This perfect combination of craft, nature and culture provides a superb and inspiring choice for knitting enthusiasts who want to combine their love of yarn and needles with traveling and culture.

The first tours took place in 2010 and were an instant success, so the schedule for the upcoming tours in winter 2010 and in 2011 is now ready. The tour will include, for example, a luxurious spa tour; two hiking tours, a retreat for knitters and their kids, and a tour that goes all the way to the Faroe Islands. Each tour features a renowned guest teacher, some of whom are even superstars in the knitting world. So there is a lot to choose from for all knitting enthusiasts who are planning

to go to Iceland next summer. Knitting Iceland also offers a walking tour in Reykjavik's city center where participants are taken deep into the buzzing world of Icelandic knitting, going from shop to shop to meet designers and get a taste of the Icelandic knitting culture in a nutshell. Tour participants are welcome to keep up with the latest trends in Icelandic knitting by dropping in on the Knitting Iceland homepage every now and then.

The web zine has a good variety of patterns for sweaters, shawls, doll outfits and mittens. The aim of the 'zine' is to publish patterns by independent designers, from Iceland and elsewhere, thus bringing the Icelandic influence to knitters all over the world. All patterns are sold for moderate prices as PDF downloads. Every pattern features an interesting background story that is in some way or another related to Iceland. Good directions as well as a handful of lovely photos are provided. The site is available in Icelandic, English and French and can be recommended to anyone interested in the noble art of knitting. So, knit away everyone...

More info can be found on www.knittingiceland.com



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Elding Tours

Imagine Peace in Viðey Island

From October onwards a giant beam of light will tower above the Reykjavik skyline serving as a reminder that peace on earth is a goal we must never lose sight of. The tower is the conceptualization of renowned artist Yoko Ono and is dedicated to her late husband John Lennon, one of the most beloved musicians of all time and an eternal advocate for world peace. The tower will be lit on John Lennon's birthday, October 9th, and will remain lit until the date of his death, December 8th. The Tower consists of 15 searchlights with prisms that act as mirrors, reflecting the column of light vertically into the sky from a huge "wishing well," which has the words "Imagine Peace" inscribed on it in 24 languages.

At the tower's unveiling Ono remarked that she hoped that the tower „will give light to the strong wishes of World Peace from all corners of the planet and give

encouragement, inspiration and a sense of solidarity in a world now filled with fear and confusion." Elding Reykjavik Whale Watching now offers you the unique chance to visit the tower and the beautiful island

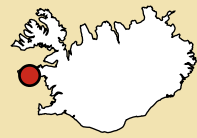
On which it is located. Viðey is less than two square kilometers in size, but makes up for its small size with rich history and beautiful scenery. In the Videyjarstofa restaurant you'll have a chance to experience the island's historic atmosphere while you enjoy the refreshments there is on offer. Elding offers daily guided tours to the Peace Tower in Videy, where you'll visit the tower's base and enjoy stories about its creation, concept and inner workings, a unique chance to visit one of the most ambitious art pieces in the world first hand. For those who want to get the full John Lennon experience is sure to ask about the Lennon tribute in Viðey on selected dates in October through December – A truly unforgettable evening

where Lennon's music and culinary preferences are united into one spectacular show. Some of Iceland's finest musicians will perform some of Lennon's most beloved hits while you enjoy unique dishes prepared with Lennon's favorite ingredients based on his lyrics and lifestyle. The night will be completed with a journey through the life of Lennon and Ono and their continuing

campaign for world peace. Elding also offers you the unique chance to visit some of the earth largest mammals just a few minutes sail from downtown Reykjavik. Don't let the cold weather deter you – the whales are worth it, and besides Elding will provide you with warm overalls. For further information and booking visit www.elding.is Tel: +354 555 3565



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The hotel's immediate surroundings are quite remarkable and it is well worth exploring the historical background of the site, which once housed a prominent trading centre.

Hotel Budir in Snæfellsnes peninsula

An Unforgettable Stay Underneath a Glacier

The exceptionally warm summer will soon come to an end giving visitors the chance to experience the "true" Iceland. There is really no feeling that beats staying under a towering glacier with the northern lights dancing above while enjoying some genuine Icelandic delicacies.

Hótel Búðir on the Snæfellsnes peninsula gives guests the chance to do exactly that – it is positioned close to the majestic and inspiring Snæfellsjökull glacier and is known to be one of the best sites in Iceland

to gaze at the often elusive northern lights. The hotel's immediate surroundings are quite remarkable and it is well worth exploring the historical background of the site, which once housed a prominent trading centre.

Hotel Budir is renowned for its top quality restaurant. When possible, the restaurant uses only local materials, be it fish from the local markets or salad dressings made from local flowers. During the autumn and winter months, be sure to try the seasonal wild game dishes.



The hotel can accommodate both individuals and groups of all sizes and is ideal for workshops or company meetings. Hotel Budir is only a two hour drive from Reykjavik, offering the peace and quiet of the country, while not too far away from main transport hubs and cultural intrigue. For business travel, the hotel can accommodate up to workshops for 100 people and has a fully equipped 40 person conference room. For smaller meetings there are several smaller rooms around the hotel suited for that purpose (be sure to enquire about the cartography room.) All technical equipment is

supplied on location.

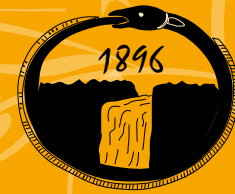
Whether on a business trip or relaxing holiday, the Snæfellsnes peninsula itself offers abundant activities and attractions such as hiking, glacier snowmobiling, fishing and many more.

The rooms are very comfortable and come in various sizes. Every room comes with a TV, DVD, telephone, clock wireless net and a hairdryer. Breakfast is included.

For more information and booking go to www.hotelbudir.is



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–Dill Restaurant

Vibrant originality with Nordic ingredients

Not far south of the pond in downtown Reykjavik, an extraordinary building, the Nordic House, designed by the famous Finnish architect Alvar Aalto, is now home to one of the premier restaurants in Iceland, Dill. For its innovative creations that please the eye and tantalize the palette, award-winning Dill has been highly praised as a world-class restaurant.

The owners of Dill, Gunnar Karl and Ólafur are pioneers in the New Nordic Kitchen, a culinary movement that puts emphasis on presenting classic Nordic ingredients in a new and exciting way. In 2008 the pair fulfilled their dreams by opening the restaurant in the best possible location for a Nordic restaurant. Even the most minute detail in the Nordic House was designed by Alvar Aalto himself, right down to the tiles on the floor. Furthermore, the view from Dill is breathtaking, extending over a quiet bird sanctuary towards the old town and up to the hilltop Hallgrímskirkja.

The chefs at Dill have elevated simple local ingredients to a work of art and is experience in itself. Guests should plan on an entire evening to sample local dishes at their seasonal best. Nearly all the ingredients come from Iceland, and if not, then from the other Nordic countries. According to Ólafur, it is more or less only the oil which has to be imported from outside of Scandinavia.

Limiting their ecological footprint as much as possible is important to Dill, as well as using mostly organic products. The menu is seasonal; each week the owners arrange a new seven-course tasting menu complete with a wine list to match each course. In autumn, Icelandic game such as reindeer, geese and duck, feature prominently on the menu. Dill even has its own hunters to ensure absolute freshness and the highest possible quality. Other examples of tempting treats include: salted salmon and capelin roe in mayonnaise, smoked with hay, skyr and sól, or the lamb fillet with onions, pickled onions, creamed kale and sorrel sauce. Even this brief, mouth-watering list demonstrates the emphasis on traditional cooking methods, such as smoking, used

in new and exciting ways. It also displays the experimental side of Dill, "burning" the ingredients to create new flavours.

Ólafur mentions that the winter season certainly challenges Dill as the chefs concentrate on using only Icelandic ingredients. But during the short growing season, the staff at Dill gather berries, herbs and seaweed, afterwards conserving them for the wintertime. "We also pick mushrooms that we dry and then we use plenty of root vegetables during the winter," says Ólafur.

Lunch guests have a chance to sample the Dill in a more rustic style; traditional Icelandic dishes, such as "plokkið", are infused with a New Nordic energy, served in clay pots at



the tables. For the evening, the staff takes out the best silverware and puts on their best clothes to create a very special dining experience. Even so, the atmosphere retains the intimate yet informal vibe for which Dill is famous, as the restaurant is rather small, seating only 30 guests.

The purpose of the New Nordic Kitchen is, among other things, to promote the understanding of the many culinary possibilities of the Nordic ingredients, as their quality and variety are unknown to most. Thus, the excellent service at Dill includes a thorough explanation about each dish, its origins and its preparation.

Dining at Dill, guests fully experience local dishes in a new context. The experimental and original thinking Dill Restaurant has, without doubt, gained a unique position, garnering for itself a famed reputation, both at home and abroad.

Dill restaurant | Norraena húsinu | Sturlugötu 5 | 101 Reykjavík | Tel. 552 1522 | dillrestaurant@dillrestaurant.is | www.dillrestaurant.is



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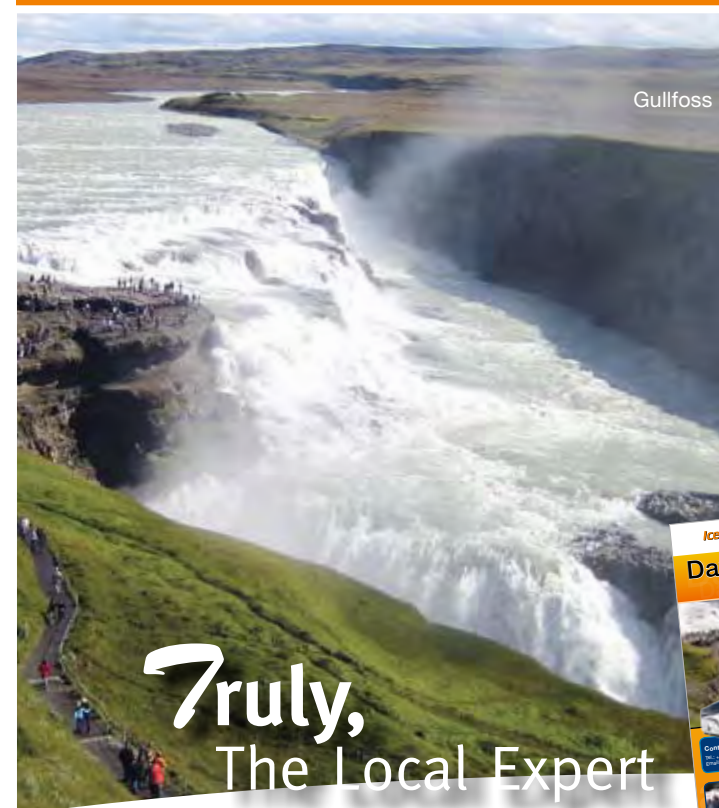
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Taste the Saga



Westman Islands



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Fjorubordid in Stokkseyri

A Feast Fit for Kings



There are several „must-sees“ when it comes to tourist attractions in Iceland – The Blue Lagoon, Gullfoss and Geysir, Pingvellir and a cosy seaside lobster restaurant in the quiet town of Stokkseyri.

For over 15 years Fjorubordid has been satisfying customers from all over the world to great acclaim. It is customary when Iceland receives

prominent visitors to take them on a tour of Iceland's most interesting locations and it is not uncommon that such tours end in Fjorubordid. Whether it be famous rock stars and actors, respected politicians and world leaders or members of royalty Fjorubordid has served them all. The restaurant is located on the ocean shore (in fact the name roughly translates as the seaside) giving a splendid view to set the mood. The restaurant's interiors and surroundings are quite humble and modest, but can accommodate groups of all sizes.

The main attractions however are the lobster dishes, which Fjorubordid is famous for. The staple Village Lobster is a perennial favourite which is grilled in garlic butter, served with bread and various sauces. The lobster soup is to die for! – as Fjorubordid's proprietors claim that many Icelanders and visitors risk travelling from the capital during hail storms and risky weather just for a taste of the soup. The lobster feast is a dining experience you won't soon forget. With up to 400 grams

of lobster, lobster soup and some homemade pastries are sure to leave you satisfied, just be sure to bring your appetite.

The town of Stokkseyri is definitely worth a visit in itself – a tranquil former fishing and trading centre where the people are friendly and the food is good. Stokkseyri now houses one of the scariest museums you'll ever come across – The Ghost

Centre, as well as a Wildlife Museum where you can see a large number of Icelandic mammals and birds as well as mammals from Africa and Greenland, including a shoulder mount of musk ox, full mount polar bear, giraffe as well as full mount lions, male and a female.

For more information visit www.fjorubordid.is



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– Glymur Resort

“The Perfect Balance of Luxury and Comfort, a True Gem”



These are the words from an appreciative customer of Glymur Resort recommending the hotel to other tripadvisor.com users, where the resort scores top ratings. The resort is a comfortable 40-minute drive from the capital and open all year round.

The highest waterfall in Iceland, Glymur, is situated at the innermost point of Hvalfjörður – the Fjord of Whales. Glymur is a hidden treasure of sorts, as it is not accessible by car. The resort derives its name from the nearby waterfall.

Great care has been taken in making the Glymur's interior both uniquely beautiful and refreshingly comfortable. As one of the customers on tripadvisor wrote: All too often on arrival Hotels fail to live up to their promotional photographs and literature, however Glymur was everything I had hoped and more. The views from the floor to ceiling windows are stunning and the furnishings and decor throughout were of a high quality and very thoughtfully put together.

Glymur resort consists of a boutique hotel and 6 luxury villas. Set on a mountainside overlooking the beautiful Hvalfjörður, Glymur resort offers a truly unique experience that will impress even the most seasoned traveller. The hotel has 22 gallery suites and 3 junior suites. Amenities include a gourmet restaurant, cafe, outdoor spa area, massage room and outdoor hot tubs. The resort's professional conference facilities cater to intimate gatherings and large groups alike.

The Glymur resort pays attention to detail. The views over the tranquil fjord are breathtaking. Interior spaces throughout the Glymur resort have been tastefully appointed and meticulously crafted to merge with this beautiful scenery. Each of its 6 luxury villas are individually designed and self-catering or full serviced can be arranged to meet the needs of each individual clients. There are both 1 and 2 bedroom villas, and each has its own



theme and is designed accordingly. All villas have a large indoor living space, private balcony, patio and hot tub.

There is no disputing the popularity of summer as Iceland's tourism high season. Nevertheless, the Glymur Resort offers guests spectacular hospitality year round. The autumn colors are spectacular in Hvalfjörður, the heath full of berries and the coast full of mussels. It's also the time to see the Northern Lights as the days grow shorter and shorter. Glymur Resort offers various packages to enjoy this season of fantastical autumn splendor.

The resort also offers a variety of winter packages. Over Christmas, Glymur Resort indulges guests with a lavish package full of holiday delights: decadent food, bubbly hot tubs, plush robes and slippers – everything you need to unwind, relax and enjoy the holiday season. Throughout the Christmas holiday season, the resort's gourmet restaurant also prepares a special buffet that attracts Icelanders from all over the country.

The Glymur Resort will not disappoint

even the most discerning of guests. This fabulous retreat pairs superior services with natural grandeur. The staff at the Glymur Resort take pride in providing guests with fine Icelandic hospitality. It is truly one of Iceland's hidden gems and ought to be on every visitor's itinerary.

For further information and booking visit www.hotelglymur.is tel. 003544303100

The Glymur Resort will not disappoint even the most discerning of guests.





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Iceland Excursions

Taste the Saga and Visit the Pompei of the North

One of the most experienced tour companies in the country – Iceland Excursions – is always on the lookout for new and exciting adventures to make your stay in Iceland more memorable. The latest additions to the company's already extensive array of exciting tours are a visit to the Pompei of the North in the Vestmen Islands and a tour through Iceland's oldest brewery in Taste the Saga tour.

Taste the Saga

Icelandic drinking habits have become quite famous in recent times and more and more people visit Iceland just to explore the wild nightlife in downtown Reykjavik. Iceland Excursions now offers you a chance to explore Iceland's heritage of drinking in a tour through Iceland's oldest brewery – Ölgerðin. While exploring the brewery you will be entertained by stories about Iceland's quirky drinking culture – both as it was in the past and as it is

today. You'll have a chance to drink modern day favourite beer brands, the famous Malt and Appelsin mix and a shot of the infamous Brennivín liquoir, which is produced in Ölgerðin's distillery.

Pompei of the North

One doesn't often get a chance to explore the awesome power of mother nature first hand, but you really can't get much closer to it than in the Westmen Islands. As a result of volcanic eruptions from below the ocean surface the islands were formed at various points in time – the oldest island over 40 thousand years ago



and the youngest celebrated its 40th anniversary in 2003. The Pompei of the North tour includes a bus ride to the Bakkafjara pier and a ferry across to the islands. There you will take a bus tour around the largest island of Heimaey, where amongst other things you will meet the colourful puffins at Cape Storhofdi and take a walk up to a volcanic crater which erupted only a few years ago. The volcanic eruption of 1963 was



a devastating event for the locals of Vestmanneyjar as over 400 houses were covered by the eruption, forcing all of the island's inhabitants to evacuate their homes and belongings. Much like in the famous ruins of Pompei a new excavation project gives visitors a chance to see how the homes of Vestmannaeyjar were covered in lava and ash over 40 years ago. By digging into the mounds of ash archaeologists have discovered that some of the homes were left in surprisingly good condition after being covered in ash all this time. The houses have been marked with informative signposts where you can learn how the awesome power of mother nature affected the lives of the hardworking people of Vestmen Islands.

Wide Variety of Day Tours

Iceland Excursions offers a wide variety of day tours all year long covering all of Iceland's most exciting locations and activities. Whether you want to relax in the Blue Lagoon, snowmobile across glaciers, chase the northern lights or combine staple attractions with exciting activities Iceland Excursions is guaranteed to satisfy.

Iceland Excursions place great emphasis on providing its customers with optimal safety and comfort by providing up to date vehicles and technology. In 2004 Iceland Excursions was given the formal Grayline Worldwide Franchise in Iceland. Grayline is the world leader in sightseeing, ground transportation services and unique tours at over 150 destinations around the world. For more information and booking visit www.greyline.is

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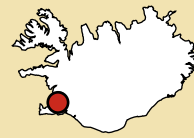
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The Lobster House

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 Reykjavik.

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 delicacy.

The Lobster House is located in one of Reykjavik's oldest houses on Amtmansstigur 1, which was originally built in 1838. If you are walking north, away from the pond towards the sea on the right side of Lækjargata you 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

The most popular dish in The Lobster House is the grilled lobster with garlic, a dish most Icelanders savour on sunny summer evenings.



Right in the Heart of Reykjavik

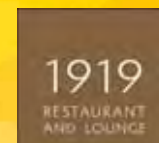
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Capturing Iceland

-the fine-art nature photography of Tim Vollmer and Markéta Kalvachová

Iceland, being the photographer's paradise that it is, does not lack for camera toting enthusiasts of every hue and genre, but the works of photographers Tim Vollmer and Markéta Kalvachová are nothing short of awe-inspiring.

Tim arrived from Germany in 2005 and Markéta from the Czech Republic in 2006. They met in the summer of 2006 and soon established a common bond, sharing the same love for Iceland, which is clearly portayed in their photography. "Trying to capture the stillness of the mountains, the purity and crispness of the air, or the haunting isolation of a remote fjord is not easy," Tim explains.

At the moment they are in the process of preparing to launch a 5 day winter photography workshop which will span the south coast of the country from Reykjavik to

Jökulsarlón, with stops at all the most photogenic locations along the way including the thermal area of Hveragerði, the 19th century houses of Eyrbakkí, Seljalandsfoss Skogarfoss, Dyrholaey, Vík and the Jökulsarlón glacial lagoon amongst others. Summer tours of the south coast which will include Thingvellir, Gullfoss and Geysir, the famed "Golden Circle" of Iceland are

also being planned.

Tim is a man with an eye for details. "My mother was always working with textures in her various collages, and I love to capture texture in my photography," he says. He especially loves the challenge of capturing the textures of the lava fields...the lichen, the moss and the curious lava formations found

throughout Iceland. For her part, Markéta specialises in panoramic views with her favorite area to photograph being the Hengill Volcanic System with its eerie yet enchanting stillness.

In 2006, Tim travelled to East Greenland to document a joint project by the Chess Club of Iceland and the University of Iceland and



Panorama from Morsárdalur

Markéta Kalvachová



Markéta & Tim

whose aim was to teach chess to native Inuit children. "I loved the idea that the chess club wanted to help the children learn to play chess. The kids learned quickly and had so much fun. They even organised a tournament with the winners getting a chance to come to Iceland to learn how to swim. It was especially memorable for me to capture the joy in the faces of these Inuit children as they learned a new skill. One of my dreams is to be able to do more of this kind of work, because sponsors need to be able to see just how thankful and appreciative needy children are when they receive charity of any kind....it's priceless"

"There is so much potential in Iceland and it is our hope to be able to use our talents to help local business and social projects move forward" says Markéta.

See more of Tim and Markéta's photography at the following Websites:

Flickr.com
fineartamerica.com
timvollmer.de
marketakalvachova.com

in Facebook:
Tim-Vollmer-Photography
Marketa-Kalvachova-Photography



Geysir "Strokkur"



Detail of Lava



Blowing hot steam in Hveravellir



Puffin with nest materials in beak



Happy icelandic foal



Floating icebergs in Jökulsarlón



story, and often their own curious topographical names. Fishing and trading have been important for the region up until this day, which is apparent if one visits the fishing villages. If you want to visit an authentic fisherman's hut, where the fishermen and workers stayed when ashore in the late 1800's go to Randulf's Sea House in the lovely town of Eskifjörður. This background is further emphasized by a highly interesting Maritime Museum located there.

Norwegian influence can be seen in the picturesque town of Seyðisfjörður, which is widely respected for its cultural life and renovated old centre. Norwegians came there for the herring off the shores of Iceland and their heritage is salient in the local architecture. Another town of architectural interest is Djúpvogur; 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, not to forget the wonderful birdwatching at this arrival point of both early settlers and migrant birds (www.birds.is).

If you are more of an anglophile, a to Reyðarfjörður is a must. The British occupied Reyðarfjörður during World War II and their presence left its mark on the village scenery, well visible in the local WWII museum. The isolated Neskaupsstaður is a thriving fishing village, also known

for a lively music scene, including Iceland's only pure rock festival. French influence is strong in Fáskrúðsfjörður, which 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.

If you are coming to Iceland out of geological interest, Stöðvarfjörður has a well-known collection of rocks and minerals at Petra's. Or visit the galleries of the many artists in the village. In the nearby village of Breiðdalsvík in a renovated house is the Breiðdalssetur, explaining east Iceland's interesting geology and beautiful semi-precious stones. There you will also find an excellent mineral museum, the Steinasafn.

In Iceland's largest forest is the world's northernmost Arboretum (tree collection) and hidden in the trees is Hallormsstaður, the only village in a woodland, with good tourist services.

In the land of the hidden people is the sustainable village of Bakkagerði in Borgarfjörður, the true capital of hiking in Iceland. The area offers over 160 km of marked paths and some of the most impressive day hikes such as Dyrfjöll – Stóruð. Last but not least is remote Vopnafjörður, the birth place of one of Iceland's best jazz composers Jón Múli, the music museum Múlastofa and the East Iceland emigration centre. Nearby is possibly the country's best preserved turf farm, the Bustarfell Heritage Museum.

The Days of Darkness

The time of the year when the days get shorter and shorter is most often considered negative. Surely these can be hard times, when daylight is limited to a gray four or five hours. But it also has a positive side, it's the season when people rest, share memories, tell stories and create handicraft. The dark days only precede the re-occurrence of the sun, when days can only get brighter.

There is probably never a more appropriate time to have a good festival than during these long

nights and short days. The people of the East are well aware of this fact and therefore celebrate The Days of Darkness for two weeks in November. This festival takes place anywhere and everywhere in East Iceland, in every town and village, whether it be at the kindergarten, the bakery, the swimming pool or in the community centre.

The events are connected to the darkness in one way or another. The children exploring shadow and light in the kindergarten; dimmed lights at the library or the heritage centre while listening to dark criminal and ghost stories; a special concert at the swimming pool for those in the hut tub, a medieval banquet of sheep heads and legs in a Turf farm – everything you can connect with this theme of darkness. The days of darkness can also be cozy and romantic, even slightly erotic. Many restaurants and hotels offer romantic evenings of candlelight, special menus and discounted prices during those darkest of days. The days of darkness can also be quite cozy and romantic. Many restaurants and hotels offer romantic evenings of candlelight and discounted prices on dark drinks. Sometimes there are even special offers for those who wear a black tie or dark sunglasses.

The street lights might be turned off in some towns for a special ghost parade. If you are not lucky enough to run into a ghost, you can probably find a place or two where ghost tales from the East are narrated. If you seek a faint gleam of light to have at your home, an introduction to homemade candle-making might be the ideal thing for you. Cultural events, like concerts and art exhibitions are also prominent all around the region.

Extreme winter adventures

Winter and early spring is a wonderful time, when you can visit the magnificent Icecaves of Eyjabakkajökull or enjoy the once-in-a-lifetime extreme adventure of bathing in the warm waters of the Kverkfjöll Ice-caves in the Vatnajökull National Park. In the east you can enjoy the lifetime



Mjoeyri, Eskifjörður



Seyðisfjörður

experience of northern lights while soaking in a warm natural bath at the edge of Europe's largest glacier or Europe's most remote swimming pool the Selárdalslaug. Tours are available from that make this a breathtaking experience.

Travelling towards the coast, the East

Fjords reveal a magnificent landscape of long, narrow fjords, steep mountains and jagged peaks. The area is brilliant for wintersports, snowmobile riders favour the highlands and skiers gather from around Iceland to enjoy the slopes at Oddskard in the Fjords. More information is available on east.is



Fljótshálsfjörður-Vopnafjörður

– The East

The Land of Reindeer, Deep Fjords and Rich Culture

The East of Iceland is a region of many wonders; spanning from Europe's largest national park, Vatnajökull National Park; to the easternmost point of Iceland, Gerpir, only reachable on foot. In between you'll find wonderful fishing villages and one inland town that boasts of a vibrant scene of art and culture. Every season has its charm, but the autumn brings about beautiful colours and plenty of freshly caught game as the locals prepare for the coming winter.

The Fjords, the Inland, the Highlands and the trails

The East differs in many ways from other parts of Iceland, both culturally and in terms of nature. Firstly the inhabited area can roughly be divided in two; the colourful coast, with many traditional fishing villages; and the fertile agricultural inland. While the coastline contains beautiful, deep fjords with high and incredibly sheer mountains, the inland consists of long green valleys, the longest one being Fljótshálsdalur through which the lake

Lagarfljót runs. This vast area is called Fljótshálsdalur and is home to the region's capital, Egilsstaðir with its international airport, as well as Iceland's biggest forest, Hallormsstaður forest.

It can be undeniably said that one gets a little bit of both in the East, the sight of the deep fjords surrounded by magnificent mountains as well as the more fertile inland area. In addition to that, you'll find some of the most striking areas of Iceland's highlands in the East: the ice-covered volcanic mountain range Kverkfjöll with its steaming hot springs and ice caves; Snæfellsöræfi, the home of great wild Reindeer herds, where Iceland's second highest mountain, Snæfell reigns and the beginning of one of the best trek routes in Iceland, untouched by mass-tourism, along the edge of Vatnajökull to the south.

Fish and Foreign Influence

Another distinctive feature of the East, is the foreign influence found in many of the fishing villages. The East is, of course, that part of Iceland that is the nearest to the rest of Europe, which has resulted in

the majority of passing foreign ships visiting this part of the country, even during the years of the Danish monopoly. French, Norwegian and Dutch influences were particularly felt and have made a strong impression on the villages.

The history alone makes the East worth visiting. Every little village, in fact every little bay has its own



Eyjabakkajökull

–Borgarfjörður Eystri and the Deserted Inlets

Legendary Untouched Natural Splendor

Among Icelanders, the vicinity of Borgarfjörður is known for its spectacular natural beauty. This is a hidden gem of a place that has been left undisturbed by mass-tourism. In Bakkagerði, a village in Borgarfjörður, the locals, who total around 130, live in close proximity with nature. In the idyllic country setting, life continues calm and sustainable, free from the hustle and bustle of hectic urban life. It is the perfect place to relax and get in touch with nature. The area has plenty to offer - in particular, a tremendous variety of hiking routes through the lands of elfin legends.

Borgarfjörður Eystri, the northernmost of Iceland's eastern fjords, lies at the end of a lovely road – the perfect place to stopover. Only an hour's drive off Highway 1, travelling to Borgarfjörður eystri will offer visitors the rare opportunity to experience a genuine Icelandic fishing village that

still maintains its seaside lifestyle of the small family fisheries. This closeknit community of people is renowned for warm, friendly hospitality. The local cuisine consists of the high quality ingredients of the region, like the fresh fish brought in every day.

There is no lack of hiking options around Borgarfjörður, with about 27 day-routes nearby. A multitude of these hiking routes lie in an area commonly called Víknaslóðir, or the Trail of the Deserted Inlets, that encompasses the various inlets that lie between Loðmundarfjörður and around Borgarfjörður. The area has a dense net of well marked hiking routes as well as some exemplary facilities for hikers.

Hiking in Víknaslóðir is a unique experience. The mountains come in all shapes and sizes and the variety of colours is stunning; everything from the black sands of the beaches to the pinkish orange hues of the



A puffin couple in love in Hafnarhólma

mountain ridges. The trails wind themselves between isolated coves and fjords over colourful hills and through green valleys all the way down to the coast. Abandoned houses and ruins of ancient farms put their mark on the surroundings.

With a little luck, reindeer herds can be seen, not to mention the local birds that are abundant and the arctic flora characterized by its large flowers and vivacious colours.

In total, there are around 150 km

of trails with countless possibilities, whether they be long or short, through unearthly landscapes. Dyrfjöll, Breiðavík, Brúnavík, Hvítserkur, Urðarhólar, and Loðmundarfjörður are just a few of the places not to be missed. This is the land of legends. The local folklore is fascinating and at last count 172 folk stories dealing with elves take place in the region. Even a short jaunt along one of the spellbindingly beautiful paths will captivate the imagination.

The most dramatic mountains of east Iceland are Dyrfjöll (1136m) at the entrance to the wonderful Borgarfjörður region. This gigantic breach, hundreds of feet across, splits its main ridge and dominates the skyline with vertical black walls.

One of Iceland's best-kept secrets, Stóruð (Boulder Hollow), lies at the heart of Dyrfjöll. It is a mysterious and unearthly place, a labyrinth of enormous rocks through which a little river winds its way and calm turquoise ponds of icy water lie hidden among the huge boulders, lined by flat banks of short green grass. An expanse of enormous rocks intersected by a small river. It is certainly a mysterious and enchanting place, and you will be hard-pressed to leave.

While hiking towards Stóruð, you'll be able to enjoy an amazing view south towards Fljótsdalur. On a clear day, one can see all the way to the highest mountain of the East, Snæfell. Meanwhile, Breiðavík and Brúnavík, two inlets south of Borgarfjörður, contain vast, black beaches with Siberian driftwood. The way to Breiðavík from Borgarfjörður is a tapestry of pastel coloured hillsides. The incredible colour comes from the presence of rhyolite in the mountains.

The valley of Borgarfjörður has also plenty to offer. The sheep trails winding their way up to Dimmidalur (the Dark Valley) and Jökuldalur (Glacier Valley) offer a rugged but beautiful landscape, right under Dyrfjöll. This route goes through the elf community of Lobbuhraun. According to local folklore, the elves make their home in Dimmidalur valley, but Borgarfjörður is considered to be a central province of the elves in Iceland. Elves are often called the "hidden people" because of how difficult it is to see them. Nowadays there are Icelanders who distinguish between hidden people and elves, but in 19th century folklore these two terms are synonymous.

The fjord actually derives its name



Bakkagerði in Borgarfjörður. Svartfell in the back.

from the residency of the Icelandic elf-queen. Álfaborg (Elf Rock, Elf Hill) is a rocky outcropping 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.

In Icelandic folklore, the elves are

often described as similar to humans, but taller, fairer and more beautiful. Their residency (inside the rocks) is similar to that of 19th century Iceland, although a bit more refined. Elves are often said to help humans out, especially those bullied by their fellow humans.

In Bakkagerði, there is a blue flag harbour, which is only used for small boats as the local fishermen only sail out for day fishing and return to the village each night.

The harbour is located near to Hafnarhólmi, which is connected to a small islet, with bustling birdlife, especially puffins. The Puffin is a small bird that commonly makes holes in the turf, in and above cliffs. Therefore, it can generally be hard to catch a good sight of the bird. But not here in the harbour, a nice observation platform is just beside the islet, allowing people to view the birds within a range of two meters. About 10.000 pairs of puffins nest every summer in Borgarfjörður, from the latter part of April until mid-August. Among other common bird species nesting there are the Fulmar, Kittiwake and the Eider duck.



In Víknaslóðum. Dyrfjöll in the background.



An elveswoman strolling.

Iceland has a largely unspoiled nature and vast areas where there is not a soul in sight. Trekking around Borgarfjörður Eystri is one way to experience this unspoiled nature to the fullest. The "Trail of the Deserted Inlets" takes visitors from one of this country's great natural monuments, Stóruð, through mountains ablaze in resplendent colours, along one of the country's most magnificent coastlines. For an experience of untouched wilderness and pristine landscape in the peace of the deserted fjords and inlets, Borgarfjörður eystri is the place to visit.

More information is available on puffins.is and borgarfjordureystri.is



Vopnafjörður:

A Microcosmos at the Edge of the Arctic

There is talk of an oil venture, whispers of great wealth hidden at the bottom of the sea, in the north of Iceland in the so-called Dragon area, and Vopnafjörður is ideally located to service this possible upcoming venture. Maybe we will see great oil rigs in the Vopnafjörður fjord in the future, preparing to drill for oil in the cold Arctic Ocean, but nothing has been decided as of yet.

Meanwhile the village and valleys of Vopnafjörður lie as they have done for hundreds of years, open to the polar winds from the north – but also not infrequently warmed by southerly

winds, producing some of the best weather in the country in the summer months.

The Valleys of Vopnafjörður

No one knows when the settlement period came to an end, but certainly the area has been the scene of a great fluctuation in population over the ages to an unusual degree. In the 19th century the number of the farms in the valleys grew from 47 in 1801 to 137 in 1860 with a great rise in population. Before that, in the 17th century, similar growth in the population occurred, so in a sense there have been several periods of re-settlement in Vopnafjörður. Now there are only a few dozen farms left in the valleys, run by determined farmers who refuse to leave. An example of the tenacity of the farmers here is the development of tourism at Sireksstaðir, described elsewhere on this page.

The Village

The settlement of the village began in the late 19th century and soon there were several hundred people living in the village. The main occupation was fishing and fish processing, as it still is. Nowadays there is every kind of modern amenity-, the great nordic



Kaupvangur

Among the things worth seeing in Vopnafjörður is the cultural center of Kaupvangur which is located in a large, old wooden house down by the harbour. A museum commemorating the brothers Jón Múli Árnason and Jónas Árnason is also to be found. They were born here, but then moved to Reykjavik and in the fifties and sixties they wrote several musicals which have become classics of Icelandic popular culture. They were also very active in politics, being opposed to the US bases then positioned in Iceland and fighting against them at every opportunity. In this house there is also a museum commemorating the great emigration from the East of Iceland to America in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Burstafell Turf Farm

Another sight of interest is the farm of Burstafell which is now a museum. The large turf farmhouse was built in the style of Icelandic farms that were typical until the late 19th century. Few farmhouses of this kind are preserved today but the Burstafell farms is a prime example and a must see in Vopnafjörður. A new tourist attraction is in the works as well: the community is developing a program based on the Vopnfirðinga saga, the great saga about the area.

To find out more about Vopnafjörður, see www.vopnafjardarhreppur.is.



Síreksstaðir:

A Modern Farm with a Long History

Like most other farms in the country, Síreksstaðir in Vopnafjörður can trace its history back to ancient times. It is mentioned in one saga, Vopnfirðinga saga, written in the middle ages, and there are documents from the 14th century that mention its name.

Now it is a modern farm, with modern farming and modern facilities for accommodating tourists who want to visit Vopnafjörður. The proprietors and owners are Halldór Georgsson and Sigríður Bragadóttir. Halldór's family has lived here since the beginning of the 20th century.

The cottages

Síreksstaðir lies in a valley on the east side of Vopnafjörður, 20 km. from the village. At the farm there are two very comfortable cottages for hire and then there is the Hvammur Guesthouse, with seven rooms with double beds. The cottages can accommodate six persons each, with all mod cons like refrigerator, microwave, cooker, TV, DVD player etc. Each cottage has a hot tub to melt into and a gas barbecue to produce the appropriate barbecue steaks. There is also accommodation for the young- swings, a slide and a sandbox, or „róló“ (meaning



playground) as it is called in children's Icelandic. By the way, those who want to try local delicacies should try the cabin smoked beef tongue and duck eggs for sale at Síreksstaðir. This can be tasted with some wine in the hot tub!

The Hvammur Guesthouse

The guesthouse has wash basins in every room and shared bathrooms and cooking facilities in the middle of the house. There is also a living room with television. Those who wish for a made up bed can have such service but sleeping bag accommodation is also available at a considerably cheaper price.

Recreation

Having slept the night through in the comfortable beds at Síreksstaðir, it is time to get up and plan the activities for the day. The valley of Sunnudalur, where Síreksstaðir lies, offers a variety of interesting sights, like the farm of Hraunfell, an abandoned farm an hour's walk from Síreksstaðir. There are several other abandoned farms in the valley, and a hike to the mountaintop is always refreshing and rewarded with a great view at the top. There is the possibility of trout fishing in the Hofsa river, the river

running through the center of the main Vopnafjörður valley, and various other recreational possibilities in the Vopnafjörður area.

The surrounding area boasts of several excellent hiking trails, and there is also a museum and a coffee house. On the farm, our guests will have „front row seats“ during haymaking and other seasonal farm activities. In the wintertime it is possible to watch the magnificent northern lights glittering across the sky and also observe the wild reindeer when they approach the farm in the December through April period.

Hof and a bit of history

Síreksstaðir was the home of a famous doctor in the saga period (930-1030), according to Vopnfirðinga saga. There is also a connection with the old manor house of Hof. In the charter of this church from 1397 Síreksstaðir is mentioned along with several other farms as belonging to the manor of Hof. In the 13th century Hof was the seat of one of the great chieftains of the Sturlungarera, Þorvarður Þórarinnsson. There is a pretty church at Hof today which is well worth visiting. To find out more about Síreksstaðir, see www.sireksstadir.is



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Seyðisfjörður

The Charming Natural Pearl of East Iceland

The road to Seyðisfjörður crosses Fjarðarheiði, a mountain range which has over the centuries presented a huge obstacle to travel, but is now reduced to a mere 30 minutes. Commanding views from Fjarðarheiði and the road leading down to the fjord is one of Iceland's most spectacular.

The small but charming village of around 700 inhabitants, is distinguished by its collection of well preserved and colourful timber houses from the early 20th century. Seyðisfjörður is considered by many to be one of the most picturesque towns in Iceland, also known for its thriving art scene. In the center of town rises the pretty "Blue Church", which serves as the local centre for music, while the Skaftfell Art Center is dedicated to the visual arts, with its focus on contemporary arts. Artists, art lovers and visitors from all over Iceland and abroad convene at the annual LungA art festival in July. Mostly aimed at the upcoming generation of young artists, the festival has become one of the main art events of the year in Iceland.



Seyðisfjörður also has its own historical museum with lively exhibitions that seek to recreate the atmosphere of the times they portray; from 1880

to 1950 technical innovations in areas such as mechanics, electricity, communications, telephony, commerce and architecture changed forever the dynamics of the Icelandic way of life, bringing it swiftly into the modern era. It was here that the first telephone line linking Iceland to the outside world was built. Other historical links include the Norræna ferry, a north Atlantic ferry that connects Iceland to the Faroe Island and Denmark, which docks at Seyðisfjörður, making it the only place in Iceland where you can travel abroad with a car. Recreational highlights include midnight kayaking on the fjord (in summer only), attempting the challenging "Seven Peaks Hike",

mountain biking, sea angling and bird watching at Skalnès. Guided tours of historic Seyðisfjörður can also be arranged.

A fun fact

In the latter part of the 19th century, Iceland still didn't have a proper capital. The intellectual elite were aware of the problem and much back and forth discussion took place before it was decided that Reykjavík would be the best spot for the capital of the future. Along with Akureyri, Seyðisfjörður was one of the candidates, since it was easier to sail to Europe from Seyðisfjörður than from any other of the towns in question. www.visitseydisfjordur.com



Fjarðarhótel Steakhouse

Icelandic dining with wild game menu 31 october and 7th november



Weekend Menu
Wild mushroom soup and freshly baked bread
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chocolate cake with berries and cream
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Deep in the Eastern Fjords



The east coast of Iceland is particularly long, twisting in an endless number of fjords, bays and inlets. Above the coastline, sheer blue mountains reign, sending down beautiful waterfalls, often through high and striking canyons.

One region, which covers a large part of these deep picturesque fjords, with no less than six beautiful towns, is called Fjarðabyggð.

The Towns in the Fjords

Each of Fjarðabyggð's six towns is located in a different fjord: Norðfjörður, Mjóifjörður, Eskifjörður, Reyðarfjörður, Fáskrúðsfjörður and Stöðvarfjörður. Although it may be off the beaten path for many visitors to Iceland, these towns of Fjarðabyggð will not disappoint, there is indeed, something for every one.

If you have come to Iceland seeking isolation, Mjóifjörður might be the place for you. Tucked in this narrow fjord is a small, cozy village of just 33 permanent residents and a lot of interesting places to see. During the winter months driving to Mjóifjörður can be an arduous endeavor, leaving sailing as the only practical means of transport. Nevertheless, Mjóifjörður's



The popular historic sea-house **Randulf's Sjóhús**.

brehtaking waterfalls and canyons make the journey worth the effort. Norðfjörður is the largest town in the region, with a population of about 1400. As in most of the other towns of Fjarðabyggð, fishing and work related to fishing makes up the

town's main industry. A visit to the museums and galleries of these towns provides visitors with an appreciation for this centuries old way of life. Natural splendor and history is also prominently featured, and the Petrá's Mineral Collection in Stöðvarfjörður is not to be missed.

The fjords, the mountains, all the stunning landscapes of this area provide an awe-inspiring backdrop to the vibrant life of the communities dotting the coastline. It is only when nature dons the white cloak of winter that the majestic landscape of Iceland becomes truly imposing. It is only during the winter that you first get the feeling that you have suddenly found yourself in the middle of the famous tale of the Lord of the Rings. These are the effects that the intrigue of the Eastern fjords can have on you, but let's take a better look at some of the most interesting sites.

An Outdoor Paradise

Fjarðabyggð offers plenty of attractions which are ideal for outdoor enthusiasts. From mysterious caves, amazing mountain peaks and spectacular walking paths, there is something for every age and ability. Although summer, with its midnight sun and blossoming flora may seem like the obvious time, Fjarðabyggð is an ideal setting for year round adventure.

At the base of Nýpan, the outermost mountain in the range separating Mjóifjörður and Norðfjörður, lies the first official national park in Iceland, Fólksvangur. Fólksvangur offers marvelous outdoor recreation. There are, of course, various walking paths, but the most famous is a cave known as the Páskahellir, a vault just above sea level. The Icelandic name Páskahellir translates to 'Easter Cave' and it is said that on Easter morning the sun dances around the cave. A tour inside Páskahellir is exciting; a marked trail allows visitors to experience this cave, which was carved out by waves. Along the walls, small holes left by trees that were covered by lava about 12 million years ago are a fascinating glimpse of Iceland's volcanic history. Looking eastward out of the cave, toward the peninsula Barðsneshorn is a magnificent vista dominated by the red rhyolite glow of Rauðbjörg. Norðfjörður also boasts of a great skiing area in Oddskarð. The area is nicknamed "The Alps of the East" as peaks rise 800 meters above sea level and provide skiers with an amazing view along their descent. Between Norðfjörður and Eskifjörður lies the easternmost point of Iceland, Gerpir. The walk to Gerpir point is fairly easy and boasts spectacular views both out to sea and back towards the surrounding cliffs and mountains. The

walk makes up a part of many hiking trails in the area and is easy to include in walks around the nearby area.

On the other side of Eskifjörður, is the nature reserve, Hólmanes. This is another ideal place to enjoy a good walk either down to the sea or up to the hills. Views of birdlife and remarkable rock formations make Hólmanes a very pleasant stop along the eastern coastline.

One of the world's best-known Icelandic spar mines is at Helgustaðir in Reyðarfjörður. The mine was operated from the 17th century until the early 20th century. Most of the Icelandic spar in museums around the world was mined in Silfurbergsnámán. There is a good walking path to this interesting place, now declared a nature reserve.

Legendary Skrúður is a wonderful island in Fáskrúðsfjörður. It is a high, grassy island with cliffs rising from the sea. In Skrúður there is a large cave that was once a regular stopping point for sailors journeying southward. According to Icelandic folklore, three famous brothers, giants, lived in eastern Iceland, one of them in Skrúður, another in Streitishvarf and the last one in Papey. The brother in Skrúður went to Kolfreyjustaður, a priest's farm. He captured the young priest's daughter and took her for his wife. The stories of these giants spread by the sailors who claimed to have known them.

Sandfell is a distinctive 743 meter rhyolite mountain between Stöðvarfjörður and Fáskrúðsfjörður. The best way to approach it is from the south side of Fáskrúðsfjörður. The scenery is excellent en route, with views of Fáskrúðsfjörður and Andey and Skrúður islands, composing a round-trip of about 5 hours.

French influence is strong in Fáskrúðsfjörður, so strong that even the street signs are both in Icelandic and French. There is a French graveyard and a French hospital. The graveyard is a remnant from the times when French sailors were frequent visitors to Fáskrúðsfjörður. There are 49 known graves in the graveyard. The French Hospital is located in the former village of Hafnarnes. Originally built in 1903 as a hospital for the French sailors, the house was moved to Hafnarnes by boat in 1939.

Along the northern edge of this region lies Jafnadalur, a valley in Stöðvarfjörður, famous for its mysterious rock formations. The monolithic stone structures include Einbúinn, the Hermit, which is a huge free-standing stone. On the east side of Áltafell is an equally striking 6 meter stone

Visiting these deep fjords is worth the while in any season. Summer is certainly more popular and guests will find the hillsides dotted with glowing campfires and those cozy Icelandic sing-alongs. Nevertheless, it is during the winter that the landscape gets really majestic.



Family sailin in boat from Mjoevri boat rental in Eskifjörður.

summer, flowers are everywhere! Even the toilet facilities are painted vibrant pink colours and adorned with colourful blooms.

Visiting these deep fjords is worth the while in any season. Summer is certainly more popular and guests will find the hillsides dotted with glowing campfires and those cozy Icelandic sing-alongs. Nevertheless, it is during

the winter that the landscape gets really majestic. Stopping for coffee inside a warm café after a refreshing walk to any of the sites mentioned above, pondering that these fjords have been inhabited for centuries – and long before the advent of central heating - is a special experience indeed!

Further information is available at: fjardabyggd.is

arch. Hikers will enjoy the trail from Jafnadalur to Fáskrúðsfjörður.

A very cheap vacation!

If you are already planning your trip to Iceland and these deep fjords in the East have captivated your imagination, you'll be glad to discover that each of these fjords have very nice camping grounds, free of charge! So even on the most modest budget, travellers will find the region of Fjarðabyggð attractive!

One particuar campsite has received quite some attention. The small, cozy camping area in Stöðvarfjörður has been called the cutest in Iceland. The caretakers do their utmost to make it especially homey and quaint. In



The famous Petra's stone collection in Stöðvarfjörður



Relaxed traveller, view over Reyðarfjörður.



The old an the new lighthouse at Dalatangi in Mjóifjörður



Síldarvinnslan:

A big wheel in a small community

Síldarvinnslan is based in the town of Neskaupstaður in Eastern Iceland. This town was orginally primarily a cod fishing town, but in the fifties it started to change course, processing the abundant herring offshore. The sixties were the golden age of herring, and the company flourished.

Then the herring disappeared, but the company diversified and started fishing other kinds of fish, both pelagic fish like capelin and also demersal species like cod and haddock. Síldarvinnslan is now one of the largest companies in the Icelandic fishing industry, operating in 3 towns and handling a considerable share of the Icelandic fishing quota.

Roots

The roots of the company lie in the co-operative of the fishermen in Neskaupstaður. In 1957 there was a growing demand for a fish meal plant that could process the leftovers of salted herring. The herring industry had taken off in a big way, while the codfishing languished. Herring was salted all around Iceland, and the East fjords developed a big

herring boom. Siglufjörður was the traditional centre of the herring industry, but now other towns like Neskaupstaður joined. In the year 1952 the salting of herring commenced here after a lengthy interval. The need for a processing plant to produce oil and fishmeal grew steadily. The co-operative

finally responded by investing in a processing plant in a company open for all to invest in, which aquired the name Síldarvinnslan. The share of the co-operative was originally 60%.

The golden age of herring

The plant was opened in the summer of 1958. It received about 4.000

tonnes of herring in that year, but the peak production was reached in 1966 with 107.533 tonnes.. Already a dozen or so boats were operating out of Neskaupstaður in the herring fisheries, but in 1963 the company decided it was time to aquire its own boats. In a show of the workings of cold war politics it was decided to order the boats from shipyards in East Germany. The town council, of Neskaupstaður was at the time squarely in the hands of the Socialist Party, which was sympathetic to the East Bloc and quite powerful in Iceland. A number of boats were



In the nineties shrimp trawling was among the new directions taken by Síldarvinnslan. There were steady improvement in technology in the capelin fisheries, with technologically advanced ships like Beitir and Börkur

built in East Germany for Icelanders, not only for Síldarvinnslan. The two new ships came to Neskaupstaður in 1965. Two more boats, built in Norway, came in 1966 and 1967.

New challenges

In 1967-1968 the herring bonanza came to an end, the herring disappeared and new ways had to be found to occupy the fleet. Capelin came to the rescue, the hitherto little in-demand pelagic fish had been swimming fearlessly in Icelandic waters but because of the disappearance of herring now became the object of intense hunting efforts. The technologically very advanced herring fleet could be employed to catch this fish in immense numbers and soon the processing plants were humming again. In 1973 a new ship, Börkur NK 122, was bought and this was the largest ship used for fishing pelagic fish ever seen in Iceland. It had the capacity of catching over 1000 tons on each fishing tour.

Moreover, the interest for cod had grown. A new kind of trawler had been seen in Icelandic waters, the kind were the trawl was let out and taken in at the rear end, called stern trawlers, but no Icelanders had invested in such ships. In 1965 times were lean for cod fishing, and Síldarvinnslan took over some of the operations of the co-operative SUN. This involved Síldarvinnslan buying the freezing plant of the co-operative and a host of plants and equipment. Síldarvinnslan had now become involved in the demersal species industry. It started to produce salt



fish as well as frozen fish. In 1970 the company was the first company in Iceland to aquire a stern trawler. Most fishing companies in Iceland followed suit in the next decade.

Disaster strikes

On the 20th December 1974 disaster struck. The town of Neskaupstaður was hit by two enormous avalanches, which killed twelve people, destroyed the fish meal plant and damaged the freezing plant and much more. Seven of those killed were employed by Síldarvinnslan. This was a heavy blow to the town and almost all of the production facilities in the town were destroyed. It was four days before Christmas, in the darkest period of the year. These were dark days indeed in Neskaupstaður. Rebuilding started immediately. Until March 1975 all the fish caught was salted, but then the freezing plant resumed operations with a new fish meal plant opening almost a year later. In february 1976 the first capelin was processed and the rebuilding came to an end.

After the cod wars

In the seventies the course was set for the company, with capelin and cod the mainstays of the fishing industry. The cod wars changed the situation for the Icelandic fishing industry, obtaining exclusive rights to the fishing grounds around Iceland for Icelanders. Others were excluded, but not without resistance. The cod wars between Iceland and Britain raged intermittantly from 1971 until 1976, when the British finally threw in the towel.

In the nineties shrimp trawling was among the new directions taken by Síldarvinnslan. There were steady improvement in technology in the capelin fisheries, with technologically advanced ships like Beitir and Börkur. In the demersal fisheries the tendency was to equip the trawlers with freezing plants so the fish could be frozen directly at sea, as fresh as possible.

A giant in the east, and in every part of the country

Síldarvinnslan is now one of the largest fishing companies in Iceland. It is the biggest company in pelagic fisheries and it is leading in the



production of fish meal and fish oil. It operates in three towns in Iceland. It handles fishing quotas which are the equivalent of 20.000 cod fish tonnes. About 210 people work for the company and the turnover was 90 million US dollars in 2009. Síldarvinnslan operates a technologically advanced plant in Neskaupstaður, freezing both demersal and pelagic fish. It operates no less than three well equipped processing plants for producing fish meal and fish oil, in Neskaupstaður, Seyðisfjörður and Helgavík near Keflavík. It owns two large ships who fish pelagic species, one freezing trawler and one ice trawler. To find out more please see their website : www.svn.is.





Reindeer in front of Gunnarsson's home at Skriduklaustur

– Fljótsdalshreppur

The Home of the Reindeer in Grassy Heaths and Fertile Valleys

Despite its few inhabitants, the rural district of Fljótsdalshreppur has many things worth seeing. It is probably the place to go if your main mission in Iceland was to see reindeer, as it is the main dwelling of these gallant animals. There, you will also find places with great historic value, as well as the second highest waterfall and the highest mountain outside glaciers.

The district lies in the inmost part of the inland, often referred to as Hérað. Fljótsdalshreppur actually contains vast lands, while the number of



Mount Snæfell seen through Norðurdalur.



Ruins of the 16th century monastery at Skriduklaustur

inhabitants is not more than 83, who are spread on thirty farms as the district has no densely populated areas. The reason for the size of Fljótsdalshreppur is that a big part of it lies in the highlands, in fact all the way to Vatnajökull glacier. This is where the reindeer dwell, although it is also fairly likely, especially in the winter, that you will see a group of reindeer down in the valleys. In the highlands you will also find hiking trails and the natural hot pool at Laugafell.

Fljótsdalshreppur is also at the inmost part of Lake Lagarfljót, with its' myths of a living worm, the monstrous Lagafjotsorm. It divides into two green valleys, South Valley and North Valley, combined into the valley of Fljótsdalur. Sheep breeding used to be the main farming, but nowadays it has diminished and more people seek work out from their farms.

The highest mountain in Iceland which is not under glacier, is Snæfell, reaching 1833 m. It is located in

Fljótsdalshreppur and surmounts the green valleys beautifully. The second highest waterfall, Hengifoss 128 m. and his neighbour Litlanessfoss with beautiful surrounding of basalt pillars, is down in the valley and attracts some 30.000 visitors each summer. Fljótsdalur played a role in the middle ages and is part of the Sagas, such as Sturlunga saga and Hrafnkels saga. Valþjófsstaður with its church, is famous for a medieval door now kept at the National Museum, carved and decorated in byzantic style.

Fljótsdalur has also made history after the millenium. Next to Valþjófsstaður you will find the gigantic power station of Karahnjúkar Hydro Power Project. But you might



The waterfalls, Hengifoss and Litlanessfoss.

not notice it because it is deep down in the mountain. An info center for the project is at Végarður, where you can also find a nice camping and a new guesthouse, and you can ask for tours into the mountain in hunt for turbines and trolls.

At Skriduklaustur you'll find many interesting things. The most famous building at Skriduklaustur is quite spectacular, built by the Icelandic author Gunnar Gunnarsson in 1939 in a Bavarian style. Gunnarsson donated the building and the whole estate to the nation in 1948 and since year 2000 it has been open as a centre of culture & history with various exhibitions and activities. The local food restaurant and café Klausturkaffi is situated on the 1st floor.

At Skriduklaustur you'll also find the remains of an Augustinian monastery established in 1493. The monastery ended by the Reformation in 1550 but in 2002 an excavation started revealing the old ruins. It is one of the biggest archeological project in Iceland and has confirmed that the main purpose of the monastery was to be a hospice for the sick and poor and the monks did run a hospital there. The remains of the monastery are accessible to visitors and guided tours available.

This summer, a new information center for Vatnajökull Glacier Park, opened at Skriduklaustur. Snæfellsstofa is located in a brand new building, the first one in Iceland to get an ecological certification from BREEAM, a British measurement rating for green buildings.

Vatnajökull National Park is no less magnificent from the East side than from the South side. Plus, it has become more accessible from the East in recent years, with a new paved road up to the highlands from Fljótsdalur. Snæfellsstofa, contains a great bulk of information for this interesting area in addition to a permanent exhibition which shows, through multimedia representation, all the wonders of the park

Fljótsdalshreppur is a great area to visit for those seeking nice environment of historical interest that could surprise them with a flock of reindeers.



Mjoeyri Guest House and Travel Service

Tucked away in the folds of the tranquil eastern fjords, lies the village of Eskifjörður, one of six towns in the Fjarbyggð region of East Iceland.

Holmatindur Peak, Eskifjörður's pride and joy, towers over the town, standing guard and it is within this magnificent setting that you will find the Mjoeyri Guest House and Travel Service.

Explore and discover a less often travelled side of Iceland

The list of things to do in the area is almost endless and Mjoeyri Travel Service would be delighted to help you plan your stay. Recreational activities offered in the region include fishing, boating, skiing, golf, ice climbing, hiking, bird watching, cave tours, nature observation, horse riding, diving, northern light

watching, kayaking and more! With a plethora of museums and swimming pools in every town, there is simply something for everyone. The Mjoeyri Guest House is ideal to use as a base for exploring the area and offers the possibility of breakfast and dinner to start and end your day.

Autumn in the East

East Iceland is also home to a herd of some 5000 reindeer which come down from the highlands in the fall to begin the mating season lasting from



If getting away from the cares of life is high on your list of priorities, then you have come to the right place.

approximately September 20th till the end of October- autumn being one of the best times of year to catch a glimpse of these noble creatures with the stags sporting their lofty antlers in all their glory.

Mountain Therapy

Long walks in the crisp mountain air, skiing on the high peaks of the "eastern alps" or just chilling out in a "hot pot" at the local pool, winter in the Eastern Fjords is therapeutic and will leave you refreshed and renewed.

A quote from the Mjoeyri Travel Service website says it best:

"The mountains of Fjarbyggð region give this part of Iceland it's distinctive character, and have a huge influence on the lives of the people who live here. Just to live in these fjords, surrounded by beautiful mountains, is a source of great inspiration and solace for all the inhabitants. To us, it is almost as if the mountains reach out and embrace us as we arrive, bid us welcome, and give us feelings of belonging and well-being."

If getting away from the cares of life is high on your list of priorities, then you have come to the right place. The serenity, the peace, and the gentle flow of life in the Eastern Fjords will be like nothing you have ever experienced.

For directions and further information see their website: <http://mjoeyri.is/aensku.htm>

The Broad Valley of the East

Driving east on highway No.1, you'll come across Breiðdalur, or "the Broad Valley." In this beautiful valley, surrounded by lofty peaks and sheer cliffs, lies the village of Breiðdalsvík; whose broad and fertile area offer visitors many great outdoor activities, and it's village, a vibrant cultural life.

Autumn is especially fascinating in this area of the country; while on a walk in search of berries, you'll undoubtedly witness the many shades of brown and moss-green. Breiðdalur is said to be one of the most genial areas of Iceland, known for the colorful rhyolite mountains which surround it, rising to a height of some 1,100-1,200 meters.

A good variety of marked trails can be found around Breiðdalsvík, both for longer and shorter tours. In Breiðdalur you will find three of Iceland's most beautiful fishing rivers, Breiðdalsá, Tinnudalsá and Norðurdalsá. Walking along Breiðdalsá don't miss Beljandi, the most beautiful waterfall in the area. Autumn is the ideal time for hunting for geese, ptarmigan and even reindeer while fishing for brown trout is possible throughout the year. The village of Breiðdalsvík, has many interesting things to see such as its oldest house known as "Gamla Kaupfélagið" or "the Old Co-op," and Breiðdalssetur, a cultural centre that deals especially with geology, linguistics and history. Many of the cultural events of the region take place in Gamla Kaupfélagshúsið, such as art exhibitions, events during the Days of Darkness festival and more. This year, special emphasis is on the work of the geologist Dr. George P. L. Walker, who was one of the first to study the geology of the East, especially the Breiðdalseldstöð, an ancient volcano, which has not been active during historic times. Walker studied the geology of the East of Iceland with great enthusiasm, spending many summers in the area, often along with his wife Hazel and some of his students.



Tinna and Norðurdalsá Rivers meet.



The old Co-op, Breiðdalssetur. Research and heritage centre and tourist information centre.

Walker was especially conspicuous in the fifties and sixties; many of the older folks of the area still remember him driving around in his Land Rover and camping out the whole summer with his wife. The work and the stories of this extraordinary character can be seen in an ongoing exhibition at Gamla Kaupfélagshúsið. Breiðdalsvík has another collection connected to geology; a well organised and informative mineral collection for those interested in the many wonders of the ground beneath us. Travel related services are ever-growing in this broad, beautiful valley, whether it's for accommodation, dining, activities or relaxation, making it the ideal choice for your vacation.

More information is available on breiddalur.is



Sea carved caves at Streiti.



Hazel Walker on a feald trip.



Tinnudalsá



Hotel Bláfell:

Between Sheer Mountains and the Blue Sea

Hotel Bláfell is the perfect romantic getaway; a charming, wooden building, located in the village of Breiðdalsvík in eastern Iceland.

Surrounded by high, steep, magnificent mountains on the one side and the majestic, rolling sea on the other, it is just the place to unwind on a cozy fireside evening. The hotel opened in 1982, when tourism hardly existed in Iceland, and as visitors began to discover the splendor of the Icelandic countryside, the hotel became a fast favorite among those in the know. Located right in the heart of Breiðdalsvík, Hotel Bláfell is run by Friðrik Arnason together with his wife Hrafnhildur Hafsteinsdóttir and it has the warm atmosphere of a family run inn. The Breiðdalur area is known for its nice weather, numerous walking paths and beautiful autumn colors; an ideal vacation spot for the autumn season. The friendly and welcoming hotel staff ensure that guests feel comfortable. Bláfell is a prominent building in the village, the dark wood on the exterior and its vibrant blue roof

make the hotel quite attractive from the outside. However, it is the inside that is particularly charming, the rustic wood interior give the nice feeling of actually being out of town in the middle of nature. Each of the 25 rooms is equipped with a private bathroom, TV and telephone. The rooms come in all shapes and sizes, ranging from single rooms to family rooms. A quaint, comfortable sitting room with an open fire is ideal for enjoying a pleasurable moment whether relaxing after a day exploring the local area, sitting with friends or



just reading a good book. To perfect the relaxation, Hotel Bláfell offers its guests a sauna to wind down in. If you are looking for a romantic weekend, a deluxe room in the log

house is ideal. For a big family with energetic children, there is enough space both inside the hotel room itself and outdoors along the vast black beach to run and play after which a nice cup of hot chocolate by the hearth will be just the thing! Indeed, the hotel has been carefully and thoughtfully designed to include something for everyone. The village of Breiðdalsvík is calm and its inhabitants friendly; guests will surely get the feeling of countryside living, yet almost every service is conveniently within walking distance. In addition the region offers plenty of activities that make the most of the beautiful, natural surroundings. Rock collecting amongst the beautiful hyalite formations in the south of the valley, or fishing in one of the three local rivers are just two of the many activities guests can enjoy. When relaxing in the sauna and rounding off the evening by the fireplace after such a day, guests might just discover what life is all about. Hotel Bláfell also has its own restaurant, proudly serving up the finest local ingredients. Bláfell takes pride in serving hearty traditional meals; the lamb, beef and vegetables are harvested from nearby farms and the seafood in brought in by local fishermen. Every bread and cake is home-baked. Even the berries used in the desserts are hand-picked by the hotel staff. Hotel Bláfell offers a variety of menus for a uniquely Icelandic culinary treat. A stay at Hotel Bláfell is a must for any journey along Iceland's east coast. Guests will be warmed by the hospitality and enthralled by the natural beauty. Friðrik, Hrafnhildur and their staff will be sure that every visit is a memorable one. Further information is available on www.hotelblafell.is



Enchanting East Iceland

- Djupivogur



As you wind your way through the fjords of Eastern Iceland, you will come to the small traditional fishing village of Djupivogur, population 454.

While small in size, the area is brimming with a diversity of natural attractions that are not to be missed. In recent years, the Djupivogur municipality has begun a project which aims to introduce and educate the public about the enormous number of bird species which migrate there every year, some of which also call Djupivogur home on an ongoing basis.

Papey Islandthe perfect puffin photo op.

Originally thought to have been the home of Irish Monks before the Viking Settlement, the island of Papey, retains the oldest and smallest wooden church in Iceland, believed to have been built in 1807. While uninhabited for the last 20 years, guided sightseeing tours of the island are possible with the ferryboat "Gisli Papey" which also offers specialised bird and seal watching tours. Seals are often seen sunning themselves on the skerries and whales are not unknown in these waters as well. With approximately 30,000 pairs of puffins nesting on the cliffs of Papey and surrounding islands, visitors are practically guaranteed an opportunity to catch sight of these popular sea birds, as well as eider ducks, guillemots, and kittywakes.

Langabúð

The oldest house in Djupivogur;



"Langabud" was built in 1790 and is one of the oldest houses in east Iceland. Now renovated, it serves as a cultural centre for Djupivogur, partly by housing a heritage museum, an exhibit on the sculptor Ríkarður Jónsson and a small salon in memory of Eysteinn Jónsson, a former minister in Iceland. At Langabúð there is also a cozy coffeehouse offering homemade cakes and other Icelandic specialities.

The Eggs of Merry Bay

Just 900 metres from the Djupivogur village centre at Gleðivík, (Merry Bay) lies undoubtedly one of the most unusual sculptures in Iceland.

Created in 2009, by Icelandic artist Sigurður Guðmundsson, it consists of 34 large scale replicas representing 34 bird species found in the area. Each one different from the other, with shades of colour, shape and nuance, is beautifully executed.

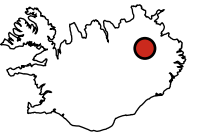
Hótel Framtíð- A family run hotel offering rooms, summerhouses and apartments.

This friendly hotel with its charming atmosphere and marvellous views over the harbour offers comfortable accommodation. The hotel's restaurant

in the main building is full of charm and character and can accommodate 40 guests but also the hotel has a new restaurant with seating for 200 persons, ideal for groups and special events. There is also a bar, and your stay is not complete until you have tasted the freshly caught fish and other seafood dishes on the menu. Hótel Framtíð also runs the camp site in Djupivogur. For further information about Djupivogur and surroundings please see the following websites: djupivogur.is hotelframtid.com birds.is



The Reindeer Centre and Guesthouse of East Iceland



Skjöldólfsstaðir in Jökuldalur, East Iceland. In a building that used to be the schoolhouse for the area, Aðalsteinn Ingi Jónsson runs a guesthouse which is dedicated to the reindeer in Iceland. Besides the guesthouse, with its various memorabilia connected to reindeer, reindeer hunting and other things reindeer, Aðalsteinn runs a small zoo where the animals can be seen close up. During hunting season the Centre becomes a veritable hunting lodge.

The Guesthouse

The walls of the guesthouse lined with antlers, skins, reindeer products, pictures and information and can accommodate up to 37 people, in either made up beds or sleeping bags. Breakfast is included and other meals are available on request. Included in the price is access to a small swimming pool and a jacuzzi. The Center's kitchen can accommodate groups of up to 120 people for special occasions, where you may of course order reindeer steak, which is a real delicacy, as well as a host of other dishes all made of reindeer meat.

Zoo and Crafts Store

At Klaustursel Farm, which is another 17 kilometers further up valley, reindeer or "hreindýr" as they are called in Icelandic, can be seen

close up. The small reindeer family consists of one buck, one doe and a year old calf. Locals say that the buck and calf are very friendly, but the female is very shy, so don't be offended if she seems aloof. On location is also a crafts store where you'll be able to purchase purses, hats and various trinkets all made out of reindeer skin, hair and horns.

The Origin of the Reindeer in Iceland

In 1771, the first group of reindeer to arrive in Iceland was from Norway and was put ashore in the Westmen Islands and on the south coast of the country. The second group came in 1777 and was put ashore on Reykjanes Peninsula, and the third in Northern Iceland in 1784. All these groups died out however, and a fourth group, which was put ashore in Vopnafjörður in 1787 survived. This is the basis of the present reindeer stock in Iceland. The stock is now around 5000 animals and efforts are made to keep that size each year. Each year hunting quotas are issued according to both areas and gender, that way it is ensured that the population is spread equally and the ration of males to females supports the breed's renewal.

For further information visit: www.ahreindyraslodum.is



Hospitality at the Harbour-

- Arctic Bed & Breakfast



Explore life in a small fishing village, watch the colourful fishing vessels come into port, take a walk along on the wharf, pamper yourself at the private spa of the magnificent Blue Lagoon or visit the fascinating Saltfish Museum and get knowledgeable about Iceland's history.....just a smattering of things to do and see in Grindavik.

Located in the historic fishing village of Grindavik, just 25 minutes from Keflavik International Airport, family run Arctic Bed & Breakfast is perfectly situated as a base from which to explore the many wonders of the Reykjanes Peninsula. With the hugely popular and inviting waters of the Blue Lagoon just 5 minutes away, Reykjavik just 50 minutes away, and mossy green lava fields just under foot, you have some of the best that Iceland has to offer at your doorstep.

Some features of Arctic B&B include:

- quiet rooms with views over the harbour
- newly renovated kitchen & living area
- all amenities of Grindavik within walking distance (restaurants, cafes, pubs, grocery store, bank, library, museum, geothermal outdoor swimming pool, post office, etc)
- traditional Icelandic breakfast
- complimentary Wi-fi in every room
- 20% discount available with a stay of 5 days or more
- open all year round

Riding Tour for 2011

An exciting new riding tour is in the works now, to be ready for the 2011 summer season. The itinerary will take you from Grindavik to the wild and windswept coast of Valahnukur, to the "Bridge Between the Continents", then on to the volcanic landscape of Eldvörp, and culminating with a refreshing swim in the Blue Lagoon. For more information please see their website listed below.



Reykjanes Peninsula beckons you....

Arriving at Keflavik Airport at the north western tip of the peninsula, you will be forgiven if your first thoughts, as you look out over the landscape, are ones of dismay and you have probably heard by now that it looks a bit like you just arrived on the moon. Fear not! There are so many hidden gems awaiting your discovery. The partial list includes: outdoor geothermal swimming pools, golf, hiking on ancient walking paths, sea-angling, trips to Eldey Island for bird watching, lava

caves, the Viking Ship Museum, the Saltfish Museum, the Gunnuhver hot springs, the Reykjanes Light House, the "Bridge Between Continents", the educational Reykjanes Power Plant, ship wreck sites, bubbling mud pools and steam vents, and of course the famous Blue Lagoon.

Innkeepers Helgi and Sunneva welcome you and will be happy to help you organise your stay in the area. For booking and directions to Arctic Bed & Breakfast please see their website: <http://www.arcticbandb.com>



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AUSTURVÖLLUR - 101 REYKJAVÍK ICELAND



ICELAND 63° 66° N:

A remarkable Filmproject about Iceland

With a thundering noise, gigantic waves come rolling onto the black lava beach, and the evening sun paints a supernatural light on the water's surface. A man's voice

is heard- "The first time, I felt so deeply touched by your beauty, your serenity.

The second time you made me feel secure, composed and in good

hands. The third time I wept with happiness to be here once more, and the thought of having to say farewell was overwhelming. You are with me... day by day. You arouse in me

joy, desire... longing. You belong in my life forever. " These words sound like a declaration of love from a man to a woman - however, they are a declaration of love to a country. To Iceland. It is the voice of Stefan Erdmann and his preliminary words of the first part of the documentary "ISLAND 63° 66° N".

30.000 km on the road, and more than 500 hours of footage

Stefan Erdmann began this project many years ago on his own initiative. He ended up criss-crossing the country by jeep 16 times, flying hundreds of kilometers with his friend Þórhallur Óskarsson in an ultralight airplane and hiking for many days in the Icelandic Highlands. More than 500 hours of footage was shot, the essence of which has been skillfully composed by the filmmaker, who succeeds in bringing the viewer very close to the action. Narrated with informative

and sensitive comments, the flowing and fascinating panoramic views are perfectly embedded into music that had been produced exclusively for the film.

Risking all for the perfect shot

2 cameras, 2 tripods, a camera crane and dolly for mobile shots, a notebook, a bunch of batteries, hard disks and more go into the production of a film project like this. Erdmann spared no trouble or expense to get the perfect panoramic shot he was aiming for. He climbed Blahnukur peak ten times with more than 30 kilos of equipment on his back, waiting patiently for the exact timing and setting to record the alpine world of Landmannalaugar the way he had been dreaming of, but to no avail. Finally, on his eleventh hike, success came: glowing rhyolite hills, light and shadow, clouds slowly moving across the hillsides, a perfect view of the central highlands. These are the moments that are worth any exertion.

„Any traveller to Iceland knows that the weather can change drastically from one moment to the next. Filming on „Laugavegur“ for instance, was especially frustrating,” Stefan recounts. “I had to do the hike in stages, going up and down several times, sometimes in the pouring rain, or in thick fog or through deep snow and always with 30 kilos of equipment

on my back.” But every rain storm, snowfall, or foggy weather eventually comes to an end and it is precisely in these moments, when the sun breaks through the clouds, that you know it has been worth all the effort. Every time it is like a revelation and can't be described in words.”

New perspectives

On his first landing approach to Iceland many years ago, Erdmann dreamt about filming the natural landscape from above. After extensive search he met the Icelandic pilot Þórhallur Óskarsson. The two have flown more than 2.000 kilometres over Iceland, taking the footage for this unique film project with a completely new perspective on the fascinating landscape of the island: the result of which is Iceland From Above “This land appears to lie under a spell and it often seems to me that Earth is holding her breath. We are floating over a great, overall work of art, hundreds of square kilometres -always re-creating and shaping itself anew, yet showing absolute perfection at any given moment.” -A quote from Stefan Erdman's latest film ICELAND FROM ABOVE..

ISLAND 63° 66° N - A declaration of love and homage to Iceland

A film that is intense, emotional and informative, Erdmann's love and passion for the country is vividly



portrayed in a way that no other film about Iceland has been able to achieve. Within the growing ranks of Iceland's fans in German speaking countries, this exceptional film has already gained cult status. Also of

note is a commentary (in Icelandic) about ISLAND 63° 66° N by Icelandic environmentalist Omar Ragnarsson can be found on his blog: The film is available throughout Iceland and at www.icelandfilm.com





Hotel Ranga

Stay in Iceland with Class



Now that Iceland is getting ready to put on its winter clothes with all the accompanying activities and natural phenomena – the days are inevitably getting shorter and the nights are getting colder. It is therefore of paramount importance to enter into a realm of warmth and luxury after a busy day of activities and sightseeing and things don't get any more luxurious than Hótel Rangá in the South of Iceland.

Hótel Rangá is a four star log-cabin styled resort, renowned for its quality accommodation, service and gourmet food and extensive wine list. The hotel has been heralded as one of the best hotels in Iceland and even all of Europe, which comes as no surprise when looking at the elaborate interiors and the personal service on offer. One of the latest additions is the World Pavilion – seven new suites

each designed and themed for each of the seven continents. For those looking for the ultimate stay in Iceland be sure to inquire about the Master Royal Suite, which has served as a temporary home to some of the most prominent people in the world.

The hotel is conveniently located close to all of the best attractions South of Iceland has to offer, including Gullfoss, Geysir, Þingvellir, Landmannalaugar, Þórsmörk and Vestmannaeyjar islands to name a few. The hotel is also located in the middle of what is now being called "The Ring of Fire," an exciting area with geothermal and volcanic activity all around. Be sure to

inquire about helicopter trips to the infamous Eyjafjallajökull.

The area surrounding the hotel is thought by many to be the most efficient site to catch sight of the elusive aurora borealis. Check their website for predictions and updates.

For more information and booking visit www.hotelranga.is



– Rauða húsið

At the Birthplace of the Icelandic Lobster Industry



A voyage to Iceland would not be complete without a visit to the birthplace of the Icelandic lobster industry. Visitors will no doubt want to indulge in a feast of the finest Icelandic seafood at the Rauða húsið restaurant, located in the picturesque seaside village of Eyrarbakki. In this beautiful red house, waits the dining experience of a lifetime, served in a charming atmosphere surrounded by a rich and well-preserved history.

Eyrarbakki, once an important trading centre in Iceland, has evolved into a tranquil village of less than 600 inhabitants. Many of the houses in were built in the early 1900s and the village has maintained a turn of the century, freewheeling charm and atmosphere. Rauða húsið takes this enchanting ambiance to new heights that will delight the palate with a taste of the bounty of the sea.

Lobster fishing in Iceland was born off the shores of Eyrarbakki in 1954. Icelanders were late to discover the



various seafood delicacies. In fact it was not till the mid 20th century that the locals discovered that not only was the small Langoustine lobster edible, it was delicious!

Guests will appreciate the care taken to maintain the sense of history within the restaurant. The red house

was originally built as a store by one of the women who pioneered in the area. The restaurant boasts beautiful original wooden floorboards and dates back to 1919. Those who arrive by at noon often choose a hearty bowl of langoustine soup or a light seafood salad in advance of venturing out for

an active day. Those who choose an evening of indulgence can savour the Catch of the day, which consists of three different seafood dishes prepared from the freshest ingredients available. Pair a bottle of fine wine with any of the menu's offerings and cap it off with one of the Rauða húsið's signature desserts. Serving a variety of delicious fish and meat dishes guests will find the restaurant's cuisine is a nice mixture of international and Icelandic cuisine, but local ingredients are certainly the feature.

Take advantage of the enjoyable experience of walking around the village of Eyrarbakki before or after a hearty meal at Rauda Husid. The walk could continue along the beautiful black beach only few minutes away from the village. What could top a relaxing stroll by the water after an exquisite dining experience?

Rauda husid, Buðarstíg 4, Eyrarbakki. Tel. 483 3330. www.raudahusid.is; raudahusid@raudahusid.is



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Kcís - Photo Steinþjall

SPECIAL HOTELS OF THE WORLD

A new take on an age old tradition



The Stakkavík Fish Factory in Grindavík, has recently diversified in an unexpected direction by offering tourists a look at how fresh fish is processed and packed for export. A unique opportunity, Stakkavík is the first company in Iceland to venture into this arena. Why has nobody thought of this before? Like many brilliant ideas, it seems so simple once it has been put into practice.

A Powerhouse of the Fishing Industry

Until about 1940 Grindavík only had a few hundred inhabitants. Then a harbour was created to shelter the fishing fleet, and the town started to grow. It is only a short sail to some of the best cod fishing grounds in the world, so growth conditions were excellent. The number of small and medium sized motor vessels multiplied and fishermen flocked to Grindavík to settle there. In the sixties the population had grown to about a thousand people, and continued to grow in the seventies and eighties. In recent years growth has slowed, but with a population of about 3000 it is nonetheless one of the powerhouses of the Icelandic fishing industry.

From Salt Fish to Fresh Fish

The company, founded in 1988, started off selling their own salted fish from a 300 square meter building. Over the years Stakkavík steadily expanded into larger and larger premises, buying fishing boats and fish quotas and finally it owned no less than thirty fishing boats all over the country. Soon the company started diversifying from salt fish to



the packing of fresh fish, which is now the mainstay of production. Today Stakkavík owns one large long-liner, 6 to 8 smaller fishing boats as well as a fishing quota to the tune of 3.100.000 cod.

Exhibiting Fish Processing to Tourists

The practice of exhibiting production processes is a widespread one and an integral part of the tourist industry almost everywhere. In Peking the enamel and jade factories that once

belonged to the emperor are still active and visitors are able to observe artisans hand painting the porcelain and carving the jade so it is only natural that the process of fish packing, so central to Icelandic economic life from about 1940 onwards, is shown to tourists.

The Viewing Platform and Restaurant

Originally the platform were tourists can view the production line was intended as an additional room for a staff dining hall. Then the company started to invite guests, business partners and others, to come and view the production from the platform. From there the idea developed to invite tourists to come and see the factory. There are already several tourist destinations in Grindavík, the Blue Lagoon, the Salt Fish Museum, the harbour, and now the added the possibility of seeing fish packing in action.

Stakkavík Fish Factory invites you to take a peek into Iceland's past, enjoy coffee and a light meal on the premises. Further information can be found at www.stakkavik.is



There are already several tourist destinations in Grindavík, the Blue Lagoon, the Salt Fish Museum, the harbour, and now the added the possibility of seeing fish packing in action.



One of the oldest houses in Reykjavík is located in Aðalstraeti 10, where design shop Kraum currently offers unique design by over 200 designers. It is very fitting that Icelandic products are being sold in this historical building since it was originally built to promote Icelandic production.

In the mid 17th century there was very little production going on in Iceland and what we now know as Reykjavík was little more than farmlands and empty fields. An entrepreneur called Skúli Fögeti wanted to change that and had several factories set up in what became Reykjavík's first street. Aðalstraeti 10 is now the only house left of Skúli's enterprise and therefore one of the oldest houses in Reykjavík. After the factory was shut down the building was changed to a residence, where some of Iceland's most prominent citizens have stayed, including Jón Sigurðsson, the leader of the 19th

century Icelandic independence movement.

The perfect fit

When a housing conservation committee gained control of the house and started renovations it was decided that it was desirable for such an historical building to house a business connected with its origin. Halla Bogadóttir, manager of Kraum, was at that time looking for a venue for an ambitious business idea. "I felt that me and many of my colleagues were too scattered across town and for



Hang your clothes on Icelandic wood and rocks.



A helpful reminder of excess and immoderation is this plate, which show you the Icelandic consumption pattern while you eat. Photos: Ingolfur Júlíusson

many operating a business was taking too much time from the design part. We wanted to find a venue in which we could present the best Icelandic designers have to offer in one place and when Aðalstraeti 10 came our way we knew it was a perfect fit. We wanted to put special emphasis on Icelandic products and products with a close connection to Iceland's culture, nature and history. What we didn't want was to sell souvenirs mass produced in different continents. So in a way we feel as if we are carrying the torch for Skúli Fögeti," says Halla.

Be Profound like Halldór Laxness

As a part of that effort Kraum started a competition where designers were invited to come up with products in the spirit of one of Iceland's most prestigious painters, known simply as Erró. "The results were incredible and we now have on offer many of the items which came about from the contest at reasonable prices," says Halla. One of these is the winning piece; a writing board in the shape of a caricature Erró made of Iceland's most beloved author Halldór Laxness. Halldór, a Nobel Prize winner, was considered extremely witty and eloquent so whatever notes you write on the speech bubble emanating from his mouth will surely automatically become profound. This year a new competition has started and this time it is the sculptor Ásmundur Sveinsson who sets the motif. "Last time we wanted to focus on more practical designs, but this time around we're expanding and calling for clothing and ornamental items as well.

We wanted to put special emphasis on Icelandic products and products with a close connection to Iceland's culture, nature and history.

We're very excited to see the results, which will be made clear on May 1st, the same day of the summer opening of Ásmundarsafn," says Halla. During the so-called DesignMarch Kraum will be especially crowded. From March 18-21 six new designers will display their works in Kraum. During this event Reykjavík is expected to be full of interesting lectures and exhibitions reflecting the diversity in Icelandic design. For more information, visit kraum.is



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