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Weather-wise, this winter has been exceptionally unpredictable, and the natural elements have been overly generous in every single category. An old Icelandic joke says, "If you don't like the weather, you should just wait few minutes and it will change". Lately, it has striven especially hard to live up to its questionable reputation by pouring out samples from every class of its inventory. In a short period, Iceland has seen calm, snowy periods when an exquisite winter cloak graces the land with bright red sunrises or clear, starlit skies, so you might easily feel that you have accidentally landed in a fantasy fairy tale. Moments later, Mother Nature has been less compassionate as fierce storms and blizzards swept across the land. You could wake up one morning and find, to your surprise, that the abundance of yesterday's snow has turned into slush – or that it has disappeared entirely. This is usually the result of sudden rise in temperature, often accompanied by heavy

rains, including the notorious horizontal rain, when stormy winds join in. Given the frequent changes of the weather this winter, you can be certain of absolute uncertainty when it comes to how the weather will be during your stay. So please prepare yourself well and make the best of what you are handed!

**The Beautiful Aurora Borealis**

As the winter darkness seeps in with shortened days, the chance to observe the renowned Northern Lights increases significantly. Although this magnificent natural phenomena persists all year around, it can only be seen in the darkness of winter. This year has been magnificent for all lovers of the Northern Lights, with superb spectacles of dancing Aurora Borealis in various colours, ranging from green and red to purple. The displays can sometimes go on continuously for days and even weeks. We highly recommend that you

take the time to see the phenomena with some of Iceland's many qualified tour operators who have specialized in this field. You will not be disappointed when you catch a glimpse of these impressive light-curtains sashaying through the earth's atmosphere.

#### Extended use of Christmas lights

Other types of lights that are a common sight in Iceland are Christmas lights, both in homes, institutions and private companies. You shouldn't be surprised to see that Christmas lights stay up long past their intended season. This is simply an attempt to brighten up the lives of both locals and travellers alike during the dark winter time.

We hope that you will experience and enjoy as many of the local eccentricities that Iceland has to offer during your visit. As always, be careful and have a wonderful holiday.

- Edda Snorradóttir

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**FRONT COVER PHOTO**

Brynjólf Ágústsson

Character	Pronunciation
á	Like 'ow' in 'cow'
æ	Like the personal pronoun 'I'
ð	Like 'th' in 'that'
þ	Like 'th' in 'thing'

**Icelandic language**

Icelandic is one of the European root languages, like Latin. There is no 'c' or 'z' in modern Icelandic, except in foreign words. However, it still contains some letters not found in most other languages. This basic list provides a general idea of their sounds, using familiar words rather than phonetics.

## How to make use of QR codes



Use your QR code reader application on your smartphone or iPad to scan the QR codes. QR code reader applications can be downloaded free for all makes of smartphones



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# VOLCANO HOUSE

volcano cinema • café • geological exhibition

## CINEMA ON FIRE

Volcano House features two documentaries chronicling two of Iceland's most famous volcanic eruptions of the last 40 years

### Eyjafjallajökull 2010 Eruption

This powerful documentary made specially for Volcano House was filmed and directed by the Emmy-nominated Icelandic film maker, Jóhann Sigfusson

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English: 10:00 to 21:00 Every hour on the hour  
German: 18:00 From June 1st – September 1st





# THE GREATER REYKJAVIK AREA

*The Cosmopolitan Capital - where History and Culture meet today's world*



One of the world's smaller capitals, Reykjavik is surrounded by the towns of Seltjarnarnes, Kópavogur, Garðabær, Áftanes, where the President lives, Hafnarfjörður and the country town of Mosfellsbær, combining to make up the Greater Reykjavik area.

It is also one of Europe's youngest capitals. Founded by the first permanent Viking settler in the 900's, Ingólfur Arnarson, it has grown from a handful of houses a few centuries ago to a compact and thriving metropolis.

The National Museum holds the history of the nation, while the National Library, just opposite it, has the nation's books and records. There are many art galleries and museums throughout the area and the new concert hall complex by Reykjavík's harbour, Harpa, has a full programme each month.

Innovation and inspiration play a major role in the city's life. From here, visitors can reach the whole country. The countryside is always very close by. Activities such as tours, whale- or bird-watching, fishing, swimming, hiking, biking and horse-riding are very popular.

There's even ice skating. On weekends especially, the city is filled with nightlife that continues till morning. There are plenty of pubs and restaurants with both genuine Icelandic food and international cuisines. So you never need to go hungry. From youth hostel to guesthouses and hotels, there's accommodation for every budget.



# A TIBETAN ADVENTURE

Ramen Momo brings the cuisine of the distant mountains to Reykjavik

Ramen Momo is an Asian restaurant in downtown Reykjavik, offering Ramen and Udon noodles, Momo dumplings and Steamed bun sandwiches.

The two owners of the restaurant are both from Tibet. "Ramen is a Japanese noodle soup and Momo are typical Tibetan dumplings", says Tsering Gyalone, of the owners. "In Tibet, we had noodles for breakfast, lunch and dinner and dumplings for special occasions."

The service is quick and the soups are cooked from scratch by the owners, using only fresh ingredients.



In this tiny, yet cosy, restaurant, you can enjoy the harbour scenery outside while eating, just watch the people walking by – or take the delicious food with you, as Ramen Momo also offers takeaways. Eight people can be seated inside and during the summer, when the weather is fine, you can also sit outside the restaurant.

The small venue has a relaxed, Tibetan atmosphere, and apart from offering food, Ramen Momo has handmade incense sticks, prayer flags and organic Tibetan tea for sale.



## NORTHERN LIGHTS BY BOAT



WE GO THE EXTRA MILE!



Tripod on-board!

At the old harbour Reykjavík

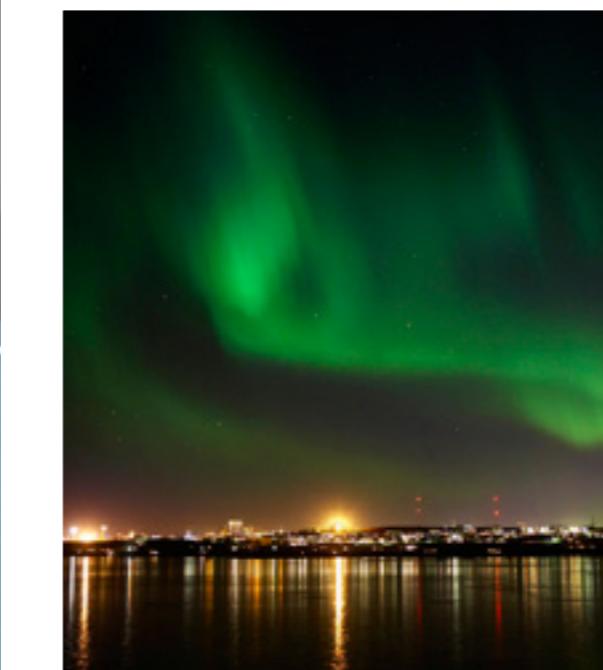


## TURNING A STOPOVER INTO A HOLIDAY

How would you like to spend a weekend in Reykjavík and enjoy a soak in the warmth of the Blue Lagoon spa along the way? Iceland's location halfway between North America and Europe is ideal for a short holiday on your way across the Atlantic.

Icelandair allows you to stop over in Iceland for up to seven days without any additional airfare. This can even reduce the cost of your ticket, because sometimes the long-haul flight tax doesn't apply when the journey across the pond is broken up into two shorter flights.

It's a perfect opportunity to visit this amazing land, and there is no need to worry



about booking hotels and guided tours. Just contact Iceland Travel, tell them what you are looking for, and the company will plan your stay from A to Z in style.

### Reykjavík to Game of Thrones

You can sample the best Iceland has to offer for a few days, ranging from the famous Reykjavík nightlife, to the waterfalls, volcanoes and glaciers found within a few hours of the city. Do you just need affordable accommodations or only the best? Would you like to take a coach from the airport, or have a 4x4 SuperJeep or a rental car waiting for you? How about a helicopter sight-seeing tour of the Bardabunga volcano eruption, a night with the Northern Lights, or a guided tour of the landmarks seen on the hit TV 'Game of Thrones' series?

### Customized tours

You may have a certain idea of what you want to experience, but lack the time to research all your options and make a plan that would work out. This is where Iceland Travel's professionalism and experience can save the day – and your vacation. The dedicated staff know what people rate as the most memorable experiences in Iceland, and these experts have the ability to put together your best options into a package that fits your schedule.

Whether you wish to be based in Reykjavík and go out on guided tours, or rent a car and explore things on your own, Iceland Travel will turn your pipe dream into reality.

- SF



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# GOLD GLITTERING IN THE SNOW

*Let Gray Line Iceland take you around a Circle of Gold this winter*

**E**ach of the four seasons is dramatically different in Iceland. Its northern latitude tends to extremes - of beauty, weather and experience.

**Experience the real Game of Thrones**  
Winter completely changes the countryside, making it like a scene from 'Game of Thrones' - a popular tour Gray Line offers where you visit the sites where the series was filmed. Today, we will be going to at least one of those sites on a circular tour that takes us up to the very edge of the forbidding Highlands - the rugged central interior of the country. It's a tour of contrasts, where no site is like the others and gives an insight into the country's diversity.

## History, Culture and Geology

Leaving Reykjavik, the coach starts to climb gently, watched nonchalantly by groups of horses, now wearing their thick winter coats. The landscape becomes more rugged until a large lake appears on the right. We are approaching one of UNESCO's famed World Heritage Sites: Pingvellir (Thingvellir). Its first visitors, Vikings in the 10<sup>th</sup> century, chose this spot to establish the world's longest running parliament: the Alþingi in the lea of the stark cliff face. They knew that this was a special location. It is here that you can see a rare sight: the earth's tectonic plates tearing

apart, leaving jagged rents in the rocks in this national park area.

## Water at its most dramatic

We drive on to the next site - totally different, and dramatic in different way. We can see mist rising from what seems to be a crack in the ground a little distance away. Walking closer, we see the powerful Gullfoss waterfall. Now, depending on the weather and temperatures, it can either be a thundering roar or an eerily silent panorama of ice. Beginning miles into the interior between two glaciers, streams flow together to form the Hvítá - the White River. If the winter is hard, the river can freeze over and the waterfall itself turns into an amazing picture of white ice. If it's warmer, you're treated to its power, with rainbows playing over it.

## Untamed Geothermal Eruptions

After lunch, we move to the geothermal Geysir area, where patches of snow mingle with steam pools and streams of hot water. While Geysir, the hot spring that gave its name to this type of phenomenon, is currently rarely active, its sibling, Strokkur more than makes up for its silence with bursts of boiling water and steam that shoot skywards as high as 40m every 4-8 minutes. Here we are surrounded by geothermal mud pools, deep

sapphire blue hot water pools and bubbling little geysers and hissing steam vents.

## History and Culture

We move on to what, for over 800 years, was one of the most important sites in the country: the ancient bishopric seat of Skálholt. The new cathedral church was built on the site between 1956 and 1963 as part of the millennial celebrations of the episcopal see and today, it is an important seminary and information centre for the Church of Iceland.

## Tapping the Earth's Power

Given favourable weather and road conditions, the final stop on the tour is at Hellisheiðarvirkjun geothermal power station, a testament to the power available from beneath the mountains just outside Reykjavik. Much of the hot water and electricity for Reykjavik comes from this area.

## Don't miss the Northern Lights

Being winter, the Northern Lights are most visible. Gray Line Iceland takes you out of the city to the spots where they are most likely to be seen - and if you have never seen them, it's an opportunity you shouldn't miss.

## New Year's Bonfire and Fireworks

If you're in Reykjavik for the New Year celebrations, one of the best ways to celebrate is to join the tour for the bonfire and fireworks. It's only available on New Year's Eve and it's one of those events you'll never forget - an experience of ancient and modern Iceland.

- ASF



# SNORKELING AND DIVING IN SILFRA

*The clearest water between two continents*

You might not immediately think of snorkelling and diving when forging out vacation plans for this island in the North Atlantic. Yet Iceland is one of the world's top five diving destinations. If you enjoy swimming and feel comfortable in water, or have a PADI licence for diving, the Land of Fire and Ice will present underwater perspectives that are unparalleled. Iceland's largest and oldest diving school DIVE.IS prides itself with knowing the best places and is keen on guiding you safely through the elements.

## Silfra - the earthly ordeal

Born from a lava-oozing rift, where the continental plates drift apart, the mid-Atlantic ridge has, in some places, risen

above sea level. One of these rare places happens to be Iceland. In the Þingvellir National Park, the continental drift can be observed, thanks to a huge chasm that started to open between the continents around the year 1798 and formed the famous Silfra underwater fissure in Lake Þingvallavatn. Not more than a 40km drive from Reykjavík, Silfra is located in a sheltered environment that is easily accessible even during the winter months.

There is hardly a spot in the world where you can get closer to the drama of the Earth's genesis in its original element, water, – and you will hardly find a spot with a view on things as clear as in Silfra.

## Pure water, pure drama

Be prepared to dive in one of the purest waters in the world. Glacial melt water, filtered through a huge lava bed proves to be a unique Icelandic phenomenon. The water's journey through the lava takes 30 to 100 years before it bubbles up from an underground source into Silfra – water that can't be purer. You can try and drink it while diving or snorkeling.

## Clearwater's Credence

The clarity of the water allows a visibility of up to 120 metres, with scenery that you won't forget. All four sections of Silfra can be explored by both snorkelling and diving. With expert guidance, this scenic dive or snorkel trip will take you through

the 'Big Crack' where, at its narrowest point, you can touch both continents at the same time. Surrounded by incredibly pristine water you will pass through the 'Hall' and finally float into the silent grandeur of the continental drift.

The fissure's awe-inspiring rock walls rise up to 20 metres, and the 'Cathedral' bears its name quite rightly. Boulders give evidence of bygone earthquakes in an area that now seems to be one of peace and eternity. Nature is lost in contemplation, fish only rarely stray into the fissure. Here and there, drifting algae float like green mermaids' hair through the stillness of the water. The charming 'Lagoon' reveals a breathtaking panorama of underwater's infinity.

## Diving with the pros

Numerous top-trained guides from DIVE.IS provide undiluted diving pleasure. The company boasts long experience and offers not only perfect equipment servicing and PADI training, but also professionally guided diving and snorkelling tours that leave nothing to be desired.

And if you are out there diving or snorkelling anyway, why not continue with the guys from DIVE.IS for your next adventure? The combo-tours make things easy. Get out of the drysuit and into outdoor jackets and safety helmets, and head for a walk into Icelandic lava caves, where impressive lava formations speak of the Earth's power. Or stay with the element of water and combine your Silfra trip with a

visit to Gullfoss and Geysir on the Golden Circle, or a relaxing bath in the Blue Lagoon.

If the weather is really unsuitable for diving, DIVE.IS comes with a cheerful alternative: The organized 'Storm hike' with a subsequent visit to the famous Icelandic rescue unit will transform a bad weather day into a real highlight.

On the company's website you will find the entire programme with comprehensive information as well as tempting photos and videos.

- DT



*Snorkler in Silfra Cathedral*





# PHOTOS, FOOD, KNITTING OR YOGA

*Esja Travel's specialist tours cater to special interest groups*

## Iceland's Unique Photography

Travelling with a experienced photographer offers an exceptional opportunity to further your skills shooting unusual sights in dramatic lighting conditions. A specialist knows the best spots for each time of day at each location – yet leaves it to you to take that perfect picture.

Flying to Höfn, in Iceland's south, gives you a glimpse of the potential. Breathtaking scenery, black sand beaches with the brilliant white of Vatnajökull glacier in the background, fantasy rock and ice formations – and the possibility of the Northern Lights at night. Jökulsárlón, the glacial lagoon provides countless unique

opportunities. Waterfalls change with the seasons, while the Geysir hot spring area offers unusual contrasts.

At Þingvellir (Thingvellir), tectonic plates are tearing the earth apart, offering outstanding views, while the Reykjanes peninsula, with brightly colored geothermal hills, lakes and mud pools, faults and fissures, dormant volcanos and lava cones and craters, and the Blue Lagoon, contrasting with pastoral scenes and fishing villages, provides an unrivalled range of opportunities.

The constantly varying lighting conditions throughout the day and the year, along with the changing seasons, means

that there is a virtually limitless variation in the kinds of photos you can take.

Then, there are tours to the North and West of Iceland, each of which is completely different again so, if you have already taken tours to the South, you will find entirely new opportunities and different conditions to exploit for that perfect shot.

## Follow that Food!

Taste the world's best lamb and fish, each cooked to perfection – and learn how to do it yourself in this culinary adventure tour.

Have fun sea angling for your lunch. The chef at a local fish store explains how to prepare and cook the fish with locally-grown herbs, spices and vegetables. A relaxing trip to the amazing Blue Lagoon spa follows.

This tour then takes you into the countryside, visiting Þingvellir (Thingvellir), the Viking site of the world's longest-running parliament, to Bjarteyjarsandur farm, a producer of gourmet lamb. The farmer shares fascinating local history and farming methods and today's ecological sustainable lifestyle. After sampling the farm food, it's back to the rooftop Grill restaurant, for a second cooking class, followed by dinner.



## From Sheep to Sweater

This knitting tour is all about visiting, experiencing and practising. It combines dyeing, spinning and knitting under the guidance of specialists in each field. Based in the beautiful, unique guesthouse by the ocean in Borgarnes, the tour delves into all the aspects of wool. You see how Icelandic plants and lichens are used to dye the yarn in a half-day workshop and then visit the Ullarselið Wool Centre.

You'll be drawn into Iceland's history at the Settlement Centre and enjoy the spectacular nature of West Iceland visiting Bjarteyjarsandur farm to learn about Icelandic wool, the Icelandic Goat Centre (with coffee and pancakes made from goats' milk) and see the finished products, handicrafts and foods at the Ljómalind farmers' market. You can relax in Borgarnes' hot Jacuzzis before dining at Edda's World and seeing craftspeople at work. Optionally, visit the Norse mythology exhibition.

With expert guidance, you will take home something woolen you made yourself – and the knowledge of how to make these beautiful garments.

## The Arctic Yoga Retreat

The powerful healing energy of the Icelandic nature provides the backdrop to an adventure in spiritual refreshment under the guidance of Eva Thorgeirsdóttir, a passionate Icelandic yogini, whose joyful and playful classes blend a mixture



of dynamic vinyasa flow and stillness. Challenging and rejuvenating, these times are permeated with deep spiritual insights.

A soothing trip to the Blue Lagoon geothermal spa after your flight with your guide and yogini begins the tour, which is based in the geothermal village of Hveragerði. You can see steam rising from hot springs around this beautiful village, nestled at the foot of the mountains.

Frequent yoga sessions are interspersed with hikes around the hot spring area then up into the valley beyond, bathing in natural, 37°C hot pools and visits to Geysir, Gullfoss waterfall, a hike on a glacier or horse riding and to Thingvellir National Park, one of Iceland's most sacred places,

set in a rift valley where the Earth's tectonic plates are steadily pulling apart.

Before returning home, there is a time to stroll around Reykjavík and pick up those souvenirs and gifts that will remind you of this special experience.

Guests on all tours are met at the airport. You can prolong your stay in Iceland after any of these tours to enjoy more of the wealth the country has to offer. Esja Travel can make all your arrangements.

- ASF



# NOURISH

## BODY AND SOUL

*Reykjavik Excursions takes you to bathe in the water and drink in the dance*



Wouldn't you like to take home stories that stretch the credibility of your listeners? Stories such as bathing in sub-zero temperatures in waters so warm you could relax for hours, all the while enjoying a light show overhead that bathes the landscape in mystical colours.

This is what Reykjavik Excursions offers. Leaving in the early evening, the tour first passes through the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Þingvellir National Park before driving over the moors, often covered in snow, to Lake Laugarvatn geothermal nature baths. Here you'll find Laugarvatn Fontana, the steam baths and hot pools that have been enjoyed by generations of Icelanders. Now, the whole facility has been completely renovated and rebuilt into a work of art. You really don't feel the cold, it's that cool!

With pools of different sizes and temperatures, you can relax and let the waters soothe you while enjoying the night sky. On many nights, it's as if an ethereal ballet company is performing in the skies above for your pleasure, as the different colours and shapes of the Northern Lights swirl and play overhead.

Unlike the day tours, you don't stop here but rather head to Efsti-Dalur where you can have dinner in the cosy farm restaurant. You'll want to eat well, as there's a lot ahead of you this evening!

The tour then heads up towards the Langjökull glacier as, all the while, the guide is regaling you with stories of the local area, the glacier and the Northern Lights. To take full advantage of the region, you meet up with a specially modified vehicle, able to handle the rigours of the rugged terrain. Naturally, it would not be wise to attempt the summit of the glacier in the dark but the tour takes you to spectacular spots in the area. Although it is totally night, there is an unearthly light from the reflections off the snow from the sky above.

### On top of the world

Another popular tour at this time of year is the Highlands Northern Lights Tour. It also travels through Þingvellir. Always interesting in daytime, at night, it is clothed with mystery and shadows, whilst bathed

in the lights from the heavens – whether moon, stars or Northern Lights.

After a walk to enjoy the beauty of the nature up here, you'll enjoy the hot drinks and local specialities all the more as you mull over your experience – and how you'll be able to explain it to your friends back home. Though they may question your sanity (while, at the same time, harbouring feelings of envy), you will have joined that elite group of people who treasure the beauty of the Icelandic mountains and glaciers.

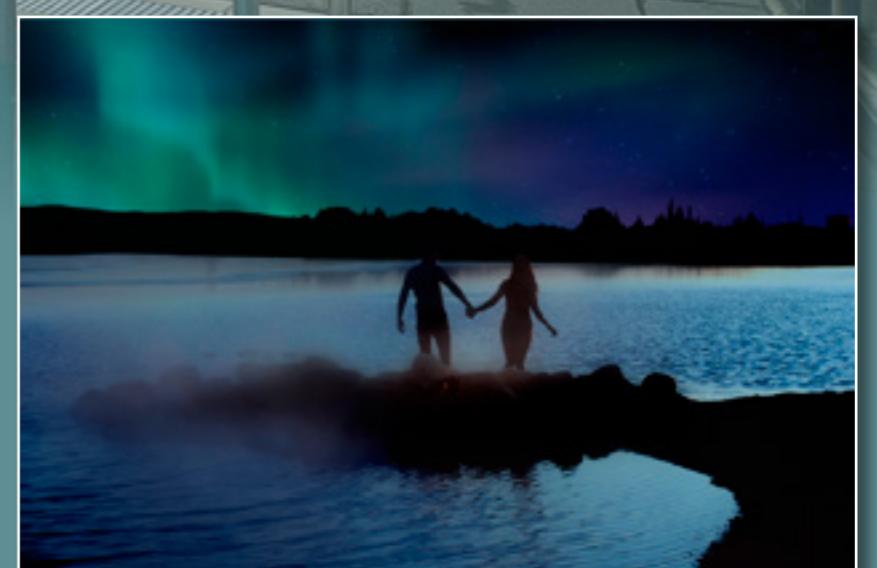
For a tour like this, good clothing and footwear are essential to get the most out of it. It is an unforgettable experience that few will ever have the opportunity to enjoy.

- ASF



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# A PARADISE FOR SALMON ANGLERS

*Salmon Angling In Iceland*

Iceland: 38,000 square miles of prime salmon-bearing real estate sitting in glorious isolation in the middle of the northern Atlantic Ocean is a haven for both the fish and discerning angler. And, unlike some rival angling destinations, it is free from mosquitoes and biting midges!

In Iceland we are very fortunate in being one of the few places left in Western Europe, if not the World, to have the luxury of a sizeable country and a small population, which gives us an enormous amount of space and freedom. This, of course, translates to the valleys that are home to our wonderful salmon rivers, which flow through wild open country, far from the intrusion of roads and free from the encroachments of villages or towns. Our pristine environment is without industrial pollution and free from commercial salmon

netting, so provides the perfect habitat for the 'king of fish'.

While being isolated far enough away from the throng of humanity in Europe and North America, we can, nonetheless, be reached within three hours every day from many European airports. Internal transport systems are very efficient, which means that visitors are usually fishing on the same day they leave home. This is one of the main reasons why a period of fishing always begins during the afternoon session.

The fishing is very well managed and the rivers are nurtured through common sense management and good husbandry in order to keep them as productive as possible. Since 1932 fisheries legislation has been applied to improve the rivers in favour of angling. It began with the banning of coastal netting and continues with the

encouragement of catch-and-release and fishing with fly only on many rivers. If a valley contains a productive salmon river it is a great boost to the local economy so the resource is managed with sustainability always at the forefront.

There are over 100 salmon bearing rivers in Iceland and these are spread throughout the country. Twenty-five of them are regarded as first class angling waters, producing average annual catches ranging from 400 to 3,000 salmon. The rivers vary in character and they offer a choice of fishing with something to suit most styles and tastes. Whether you like to poach pockets on an intimate stream with a single-hand rod using the riffle-hitch, or to quarter wide pools with a long cast from a two-hand rod on large rivers, you will find your tastes met in Iceland.



## Legal framework and salmonid management

The foundation for the management of Icelandic salmonids was laid with the Salmonid Fisheries Act in 1932. This notable legislation prohibited all salmon fisheries in Icelandic marine waters and ensured that the salmon fishing rights, being privately owned, could not be separated from the ownership of the adjacent land. The Act also introduced numerous conservation measures regarding salmonid fishing e.g. regarding permitted gear, fishing periods and angling statistics.

Since 1932 there have been four comprehensive reviews. Voluntary river

associations were introduced in the 1932 Act but mandatory establishment was enacted in 1970. The 2006 revision introduced increased responsibilities of river associations with respect to sustainable management of salmonid stocks and various legal responsibilities. Associations must submit Articles of Foundation and a Register of Dividends regarding costs and profits. The River Associations must also submit a sustainable harvest plan to be approved by the Directorate of Fisheries. The Federation of River Associations was established in 1958.

The season is a short one and each river can choose its opening and closing dates within a 90 day span, with most rivers open for fishing by 1st July. Along the west coast from the great Faxafloj bay up to the northwest peninsula are a cluster of rivers that are traditionally mainly grilse fisheries and fish best from mid-July to mid-August. The rivers around the north coast are more widely spread and renowned for good salmon to grilse ratios, and for producing the largest salmon in the country. Along the east coast the rivers are set amidst stunning surroundings and enjoy their main run a little later, with the prime time falling throughout August. There is also a good balance between salmon and grilse found in this part of the country. The south coast holds as many sea-trout rivers as it does salmon rivers, which are some of the most productive in the country.

All the top rivers offer visitors a complete package, which includes airport transfers, full board accommodation at the river lodge, and the service of a guide with a 4 wheel-drive vehicle. On some of the smaller rivers the lodges are included on a self-catering basis. When staying at a full board lodge, you are usually provided with a single en-suite room and can be assured of excellent cuisine. There is great competition amongst river managers to secure the services of the best chefs in Reykjavik for the season, which leaves the normal tourist at a bit of a disadvantage, we feel!

A unique selling point for our rivers is the way the fishing is divided and the amount of room each angler has on a beat. The number of rods allowed to fish on a river is decided by the Freshwater Fisheries Institute and based on annual average catches. The rivers are subsequently divided into rotating beats,

## Salmon catch results, average for 2004 - 2014, in numbers by rivers

Average catch 2004 - 2014

Name of river*	Open from**	Salmon per year
Elliðaár	20th June	954
Laxá í Kjós	20th June	938
Laxá í Leirársveit	24th June	957
Grímsá og Tunguá	22nd June	1,294
Pverá og Kjárrá	12th June	2,373
Norðurá	5th June	2,150
Langá	21st June	1,930
Haffjarðará	17th June	1,441
Laxá í Dólum	28th June	1,145
Miðfjarðará	20th June	2,290
Víðidalssá og Fitjá	24th June	1,112
Vatnssaldssá	24th June	1,026
Laxá á Ásum	24th June	647
Blanda / Svartá	5th June / 1st July	2,029
Laxá í Ábædal	20th June	997
Selá í Vopnafirði	22nd June	1,927
Hofsá og Sunnudalsá	24th June	1,320
Eystri Rangá	30th June	4,506
Ytri Rangá	24th June	5,959

\* Some of the rivers also offer some trout fishing

\*\* The fishing season is 90 days

and each beat is usually fished by two rods. On many rivers there is such a choice of pools per beat that there is never enough time to visit them all in one session.

A visit to fish in Iceland is an unforgettable experience and is why many anglers come back year after year. We would like you to come and see for yourself.

For further information about our rivers and fishing them, please visit:  
[www.angling.is/en/](http://www.angling.is/en/)



Federation of Icelandic River Owners

Bændahöllinni, Hagatorgi • 107 Reykjavík

+354 563 0300

[angling@angling.is](mailto:angling@angling.is)

[www.angling.is](http://www.angling.is)

# DOWNTOWN REYKJAVIK'S LAUGAVEGUR

*A street with a history and life of its own*



## Two Icelandic themed villages

Viking feasts

Souvenirs

Live entertainment most nights

"You haven't been in Iceland if you haven't been to us" Don't miss it!

Booking: [www.vikingvillage.is](http://www.vikingvillage.is) | +354 565 1213

10 minutes drive  
to the city centre



The Fisherman's village, our newest accommodation is Hild in Álfatanes only few minutes drive from the Viking Village. Like a country home by the seaside. Such an idyllic place to visit. The restaurant is open for groups in the evenings. Close to the president's residence.

**L**augavegur is one of Reykjavik's oldest and best known shopping streets. In recent years, it has also become famous for its restaurants, cafes, bars and clubs. The lively nightlife on weekends is world-renowned. Old downtown Reykjavik provides a truly unique December experience for Christmas shoppers. It puts you in an atmosphere that may remind you of the friendly Christmas settings depicted in American movies from the 50s and, with a bit of luck, you will get a truly white Christmas. Laugavegur is at the centre of the craziness that is New Year's Eve in Reykjavik. Then in January and February you will find art festivals and music events.

## The road to the pools

Laugavegur has very humble beginnings. The construction of the road (vegur) began in 1886. The prefix, 'laugar' means pools, which refers to the fact that it was the way from the town centre to the hot springs in nearby Laugardalur (Pool Valley), where the local women used to wash their laundry in the steaming hot pools.

This new street leading from the downtown area immediately attracted new residents. Iceland's Nobel laureate poet, Halldor Laxness, was brought into this world in 1902 in a little house by Laugavegur. Businesses followed the new residents and thus the street quickly began to develop as a mixed residential area and shopping street.

*The Nobel Poet  
"Whoever doesn't live  
in poetry cannot survive  
here on earth."*

- Nobel Poet Halldor Laxness

## Reykjavik's shopping centre

The main part of Laugavegur as a shopping street starts at the Hlemmur bus terminal. The street then leads you down a gentle slope towards the old central area by Alþingi (the parliament building) and the beautiful little Tjörnin lake. These days, Laugavegur is bustling with life all year long as Reykjavik's business and leisure centre. The street contains a large number of Reykjavik's shops, cafés, bars, and restaurants. Laugavegur has everything from small shops dedicated to eccentric local artists, to large stores that specialize in internationally famous designer brands.

The plethora of restaurants offer everything from old-school Icelandic food to modern gourmet international cuisine. Whatever you are looking for, be it flea markets or souvenir and gift shops, vintage stores or the latest fashion, you will find it on Laugavegur. You can find a variety of hotels on the street, too. And the nightlife on weekends is wild!

## Heart warming festive spirit

The ambiance in December is something else entirely. The decoration of Laugavegur and the surrounding area actually starts in November with Christmas lights and ornaments. The final week prior to Christmas eve is very special as the street is full of people. The stores offer hot chocolate and other niceties for passers by. The festive atmosphere peaks on December 23<sup>rd</sup>, which is called Þorláksmessa in Iceland, or St. Þorlak's Day. Downtown Reykjavik is packed with people and the shops stay open until 11 at night. Street performers play music, the crowds get denser as the days go by and the bars start filling up as the evening approaches. Many desperate husbands are seen taking care of last minute shopping, but lots of people just show up for the unique experience, and spend the day strolling Laugavegur and stopping by some of the bars and cafés.

## New Year's Eve Madness

You will never forget why Reykjavik is known as the Party Town if you greet the new year in the city. The fireworks display alone is spectacular. The fun continues into the new year with all kinds of events throughout the winter, such as the Sónar music festival and the Winter Lights Festival in February.

Laugavegur is a truly wonderful base for a memorable winter vacation.

- SJ



# 13 MERRY JULE LADS

*Christmas is different in Iceland*

Unlike most nations who have just one Santa Claus, Father Christmas or Sinterklaas, Icelanders have 13 Yule Lads. The oldest sources date from the 16th century and back then they were a far cry from the peace-loving and generous lads children believe them to be today.



## Obey...or else!

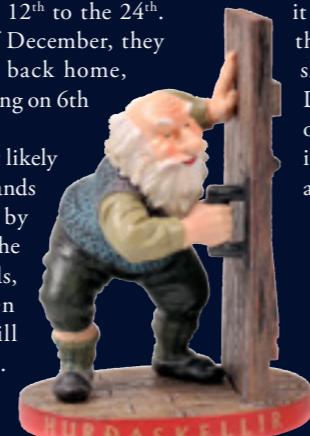
Originally they were hideous tricksters who used to scare children. In fact, children were so scared of them that in late 17<sup>th</sup> century, the government of Iceland asked parents to stop using the Yule Lads to scare their children to obey. Slowly they became more and more benevolent until they became gift-giving and loving lads.

However, it is possible to get a glimpse into their past just by looking at their names and closest family.

## A shoe on the windowsill

On the eve of 12<sup>th</sup> of December, children put a shoe on their windowsill so the Yule Lads can give them a small present. They come down one by one from their home in the mountains, each night from the 12<sup>th</sup> to the 24<sup>th</sup>. Starting on the 25<sup>th</sup> of December, they begin their journey back home, with the last one leaving on 6<sup>th</sup> of January.

This tradition most likely originated in the Netherlands and was brought back by Icelandic fishermen in the 1930s. In the Netherlands, children put a wooden clog on their window sill for Sinterklaas on St. Nicholas' Eve or 6<sup>th</sup> of December.



It is a tradition for parents to help the Yule Lads with the gifts and to begin with, only the wealthier parents could take part in this new tradition. Around 1960, when Iceland's economy improved, the tradition became generally adopted. In the early days, there were no set rules people seemed to follow and some children got a small present every day in December until

Christmas. Sometime before 1970 it became common knowledge that children should put their shoe out on the eve of 12<sup>th</sup> of December. The presents depend on the children behaving well - if they don't, they risk receiving a raw potato instead.

## Who are the Yule Lads?

Today the Yule Lads dress mostly like their American counterpart, Santa Claus, although they can sometimes be seen wearing their old, traditional Icelandic clothes.



Pottaskefill or Pot-Scraper is the fifth. He steals leftovers from pots.

Askaskleikir og Bowl-Licker is the sixth. He hid underneath beds, waiting for people to put down their askur (an eating bowl with a lid), for their animals to lick out. But he licked it instead.

Hurðaskellir or Door-Slammer is the seventh. He loves to slam doors, especially during the night.

Skyrgálmur or Skyr-Gobbler is the eighth. He has a great affinity for Skyr, the uniquely Icelandic dairy product. He has very stiff legs.

Giljagáur or Gully Gawk is the ninth. He hides in gullies waiting for an opportunity to sneak into the cowshed to steal milk.

Stúfur or Stubby is the third. He uses his small stature to his advantage and sneak into people's houses. There he waits for an opportunity to steal the frying pan to eat the crusts left on it.

Pvörusleikir or Spoon-licker is the fourth. He steals pvörur (a ladle with a long handle) to lick. He's extremely thin due to malnutrition.

Ketkrókur or Meat-Hook is the twelfth. He uses a hook to steal meat.

Kertasníkir or Candle-Stealer is the thirteenth. He follows children around to steal their candles. In the olden days they were made of tallow and were thus edible. Today he probably has a hard time finding something to eat.

Gryla is the Yule Lads' mother. She eats children who are naughty! It is said she has died from hunger because children stopped being naughty but that has not been confirmed.

Leppalúði is the Yule Lads' father and a bit of a loser. He is often said to be a bit slow and dim.

Finally, in addition, there is Jólakötturin or the Yule Cat, a ferocious beast that eats everyone, especially children, who don't receive new clothes for Christmas.

If you want to take some of those outlandish characters home with you as a souvenir, you can find those amusing statues in number of gift shops in the Reykjavík centre such as The Little Christmas shop on Laugavegur, Björk the tobacco store, bookshops, Rammagerðin and Iða to name just few.

- HDB



# 365 DAYS OF CHRISTMAS

*The wonderland that keeps the Christmas spirit alive all the year*

On Laugavegur, which is Reykjavik's main shopping street, The Little Christmas Shop is in holiday spirits all year round. The owner, Anne Helen, happily makes sure she keeps that Christmas spirit alive; come rain or shine.



## An obsession for Christmas

Anne Helen admits that she has an incurable obsession for Christmas as well as a genuine passion for things of beauty in general. Her pride and passion lies in searching for various Christmas things of quality and she is always on the lookout for items of unique beauty.

She imports products from all over Europe but her main ambition is to specialize in Icelandic handiwork and ornaments. The Little Christmas Shop has a large selection, mostly made exclusively for Anne Helen by a number of craftsmen, who each have a distinctive approach, working with materials such as glass, clay and wool.

In addition to customary Christmas ornaments, she offers Icelandic folklore figurines, such as the thirteen Yule Lads and the notorious Christmas Cat. Tourists enjoy visiting the store and partaking of Anne Helen's well known hospitality, where the shop's friendly atmosphere makes them feel more than welcome. It is almost impossible to leave this winter wonderland empty handed! It is just too tempting to invest



in an Icelandic Yule Lad for your Christmas tree back home and it is a warm, lovely way to remember your visit to Iceland.

## Crazy about Christmas

Anne Helen has always been crazy about Christmas and the sparkling atmosphere surrounding the holidays, so to run her own shop, devoted exclusively to the Christmas season, is a dream come true.

Before the Little Christmas Shop became a reality, Anne Helen sold decorations and Christmas-inspired articles from her garage, which attracted curious guests to her home at all hours every day. Being a very sociable person, she encouraged people to relax and enjoy their visit. She moved her treasure trove to her new shop on Laugavegur, in the heart of Reykjavik's bustling shopping area, which was only 3 streets away from her garage.

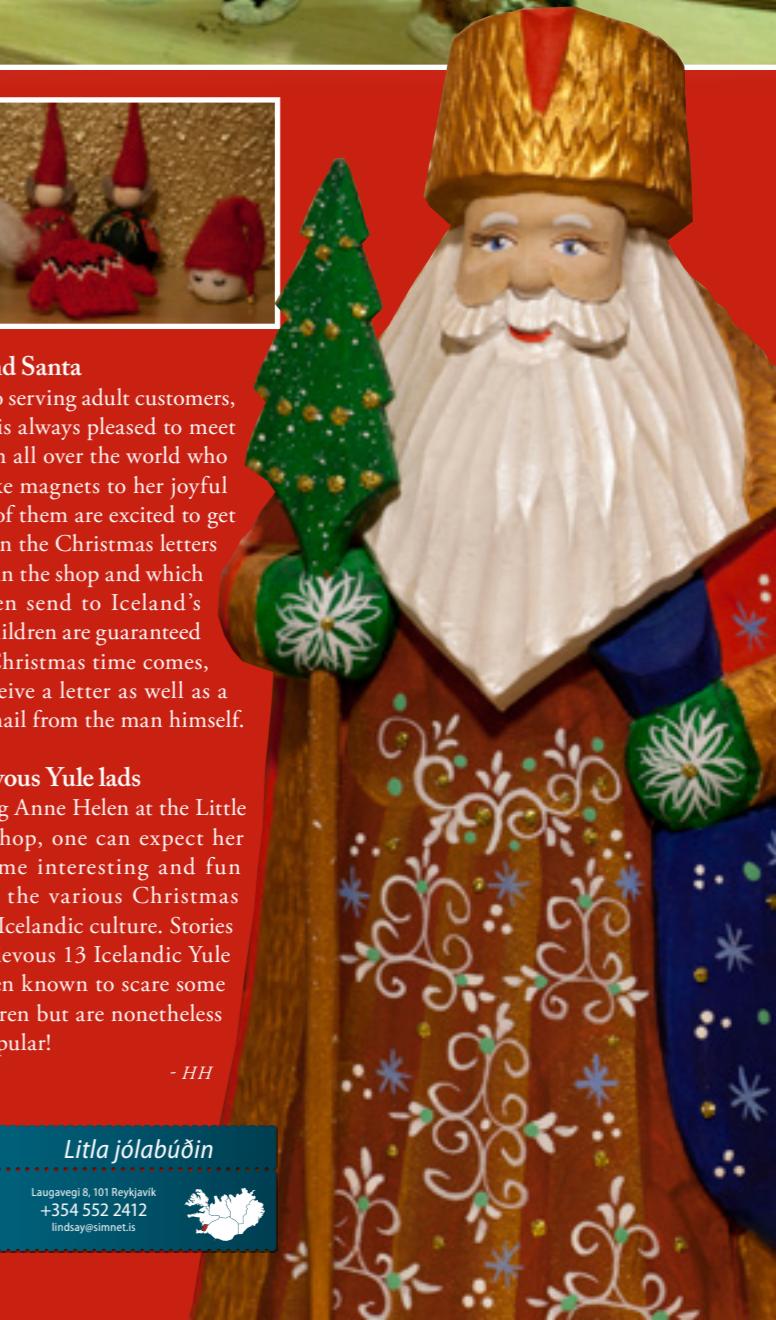
The beautiful shop devoted to Christmas has become an integral part of the businesses in the neighbourhood as The Little Christmas Shop is open seven days a week; all year round.

During the summer months of July and August, about 70% of Anne Helen's business is selling Icelandic handmade Christmas products to foreign visitors, who are especially fascinated by the uniqueness of her merchandise.



*Litla jólabúðin*

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## FROM HUNTERS TO HOME

Palli now makes knives and forks for the kitchen and dining room

Long known for his beautifully crafted hunting knives of various sizes, each with its own handmade handle, Palli is now creating works of art for the kitchen—and soon for the dining room—that any cook or hostess will be proud to own.

### Made with rare materials

Ornately engraved knives and forks—including kitchen and carving knives are now receiving Palli's unique craftsmanship. What makes his knives special is that he diligently sources his materials, researches the best methods for making long-lasting handles that are comfortable and safe to use—often from rare materials sourced from all over the world. Frequently, he blends different materials such as reindeer antler, goat horn, a hippo's tooth or a horse's hoof with wood such as ebony, elm or even fossilized wood that has been carefully dried over a period of years to harden it for a handle.



just a 15 minute drive from the centre of Reykjavik. He is open from 9am to 6pm. His knives can also be found at the Brynja hardware store at Laugavegur 29, on the main shopping street in downtown Reykjavik or ordered online.

### Now for cooks and diners

Recently, Palli worked with one of the best Damascus steel blade makers to bring their crafts first to the kitchen and soon, also to the dining room.

With typical care and research, he is producing a range of, initially, 4 kitchen knives, to be followed by a full dining cutlery set, using his 66 year-old dentist drill that he brought out of retirement for carving the handles and creating both individual pieces and sets that will be a conversation piece in dining rooms around the world.

You can look closer at the variety Palli has to offer on his website, [www.knifemaker.is](http://www.knifemaker.is). Furthermore, you may not know it but Palli's wife is also a skilled knifemaker herself. Her selection can be observed at [www.kitchenknives.is](http://www.kitchenknives.is). - ASF

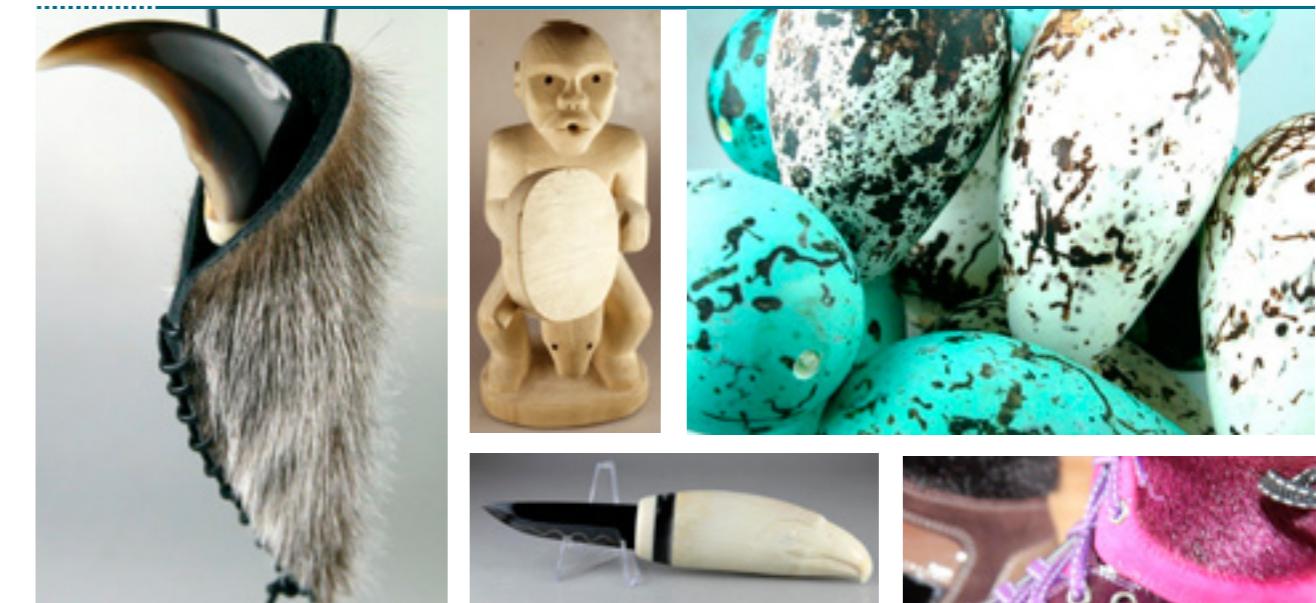
### Created for Connoisseurs

As a result of his passion for excellence and enthusiasm for creating a work of art from a tempered steel blade and these different handles, his knives are now to be found in over 85 countries, in use by hunters who appreciate these qualities.

### Inspired by a waterfall

When he creates a special knife, there is often a lot of bidding for it on the internet, such is the demand for them.

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## GREENLAND CHARMS

*Mystic Gifts From the Wild*

In the middle of busy Laugavegur, in the heart of Reykjavik, you'll find a door to another world. The Ravens' shop door is always open; the atmospheric sounds coming from within invite passers-by to come closer, to bury their hands in the silky reindeer skins at the entrance and to get in touch with Greenland. Ravens is not only a specialist shop for jackets and waistcoats made from quality arctic fur, it is probably the only place in Iceland where you can purchase sealskin that can be used for your own designs and also one of the very few places to find horsehide leather.

artists, solely men, transform natural materials into unique masterpieces—traditional items like carved amulets, rings and backscratchers. The selection of aesthetically carved knives comes with high quality blades from the famous Danish knife maker Poul Strande. Chefs, cooks and knife aficionados will surely not leave the store empty handed once they see



### Guardian Spirits

The knives match perfectly with the carved tupilaks made from horn. No doubt, the grimaces of these traditional shamanic ghosts will provide inviolable powers for those who decide to give them a new home. Tupilaks are Greenland's charms and are well known among art collectors.

### Spirit Charms

As the Icelandic twilight casts its spell on Laugavegur, the last rays of light turn amulets, hanging from a reindeer antler, golden-claws and teeth from Greenland's wild animals, carefully polished and threaded onto thin leather cords. A guillemot and a huge black raven, both stuffed, sit silently nearby keeping watch over the shop. Greenland's wild spirit is inherent in its fauna and will charm you at Ravens.

- DT



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# THE ALL-ICELANDIC Wool Shop

*The Icelandic Handknitting Assn. sells Icelandic wool and products*

**S**heep came to Iceland with the Viking settlers and quickly proved their value, not only for their meat but also their wool and skins. Living conditions were very basic and especially tough in the cold and dark winter months. Sheep helped keep the settlers alive.

These Icelandic sheep have two types of fleece—an outer, weather and water repellent layer and a soft, warm fleece close to the skin. Combined, they have provided warm clothing for farmers and seamen, adults, children and babies for centuries. Making sweaters became a tradition in farmhouses, cottages and houses around the country.

the production that was—and still is, an important supplement to many family incomes. Shortly thereafter, they opened a shop to sell their members' woollen goods at Skólavörðustígur 19, the main shopping street that descends from Hallgrímskirkja, the cathedral overlooking the city.

## Find the real thing

In today's globalised society, it is increasingly difficult to be sure you are getting a genuine article, rather than one made thousands of miles away, with wool that lacks the characteristics that has made Icelandic wool so special for hundreds of years.

The Handknitting Assn.'s shop only stocks genuine Icelandic wool and clothing made by professional Icelandic knitters, so you can be certain you are getting the true, well-made product. Look for the logo to be sure.

Their motto from the outset has been, 'Buy directly from the people who make them'. Walking into the shop, one cannot help but be amazed at the skill and productivity of these ladies—and some men, too, from all walks of life, living in all parts of the country. Every item has that sense of individual uniqueness that only handmade items carry.

## Traditional and modern styles

The world of knitting has changed dramatically since the association began. A

few decades ago, the designs took the form of the 'lopapeysa' or sweater, with its distinctive scalloped pattern, which has become so popular worldwide, but numerous young Icelandic designers have also turned their attention to wool as a medium of choice for their fashion designs, resulting in new products, styles and colours.

Today, there is a wide range of sweaters, gloves, hats, scarves, socks, bags and many other items in sizes to suit everyone from a Viking warrior (or farmer) to a pretty fashion model to a newborn baby.

The store is a centre, not only for selling the finished products, but also for supplying the wool and all the accessories required to make woollen items. If knitting is your hobby, there is a world of warm designs just waiting for you.

Icelandic wool wears very well and it is not uncommon for people to wear sweaters many years and for them to still look fresh.

Visitors can have their purchases shipped to them and they can also order from the website. That includes the patterns, wool, needles and accessories, not just the clothing. - ASF



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# THE WORLD'S MOST EXCLUSIVE WATCHMAKER

*They sell to the stars but are known only to the few*

**I**t is probably the world's smallest watchmaker, located in a very small shop in one of the world's smallest countries and yet they produce the most exquisitely crafted and sought-after hand made watches.

In this era of electronic, battery-powered watches, you might expect that automatic mechanical watches had passed into history. Nothing could be further from the truth. There is a greater demand for high quality timepieces that will outlast the temporary electronic watch phenomenon.

## The choice of connoisseurs

You can be defined by your choices. There are watches for the mass market and there are those watches that are individualised, personalised collectors' items, works of art that are cherished for generations. These are investments - especially those limited editions. Yet, they have a key place in the lives of the wearers.

Kings, princesses, international leaders from East and West, film stars, rock idols - all have made their way to the small shop on Laugavegur, Reykjavík's main shopping street, to select their own watch, have it assembled and personalised just for them, a testament to their discernment of true quality.

While I was visiting the shop, it's wall filled with photos of well-known personalities who are now wearing their watches, I couldn't help but wonder if it was only the rich and famous who could afford such time pieces. My answer came as I was standing there. A beautiful young woman came to pick up a watch she had ordered and two tourists selected watches for themselves. They would return later in the day after their selections had been



assembled specifically for them in the tiny studio at the back of the shop.

Others, wanting something even more personal, have their watches engraved on the inner rotor with special messages.

## Relying on reliability

Pilots and the Icelandic coastguard have to be able to trust their watches. Lives could depend on them. The coastguard are issued with the "Sif" watch, designed especially for them. The only watch in the range without a transparent back, it has a 4mm Sapphire non-reflective glass and can be used to a depth of at least 1,000m. It is also available to the general public, along with pilots' watches, likewise known for their dependability and absolute reliability.

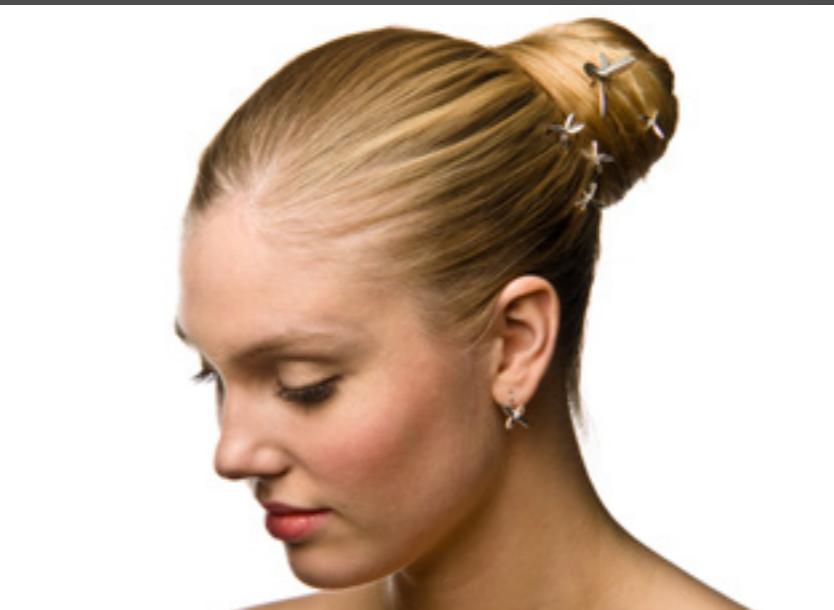
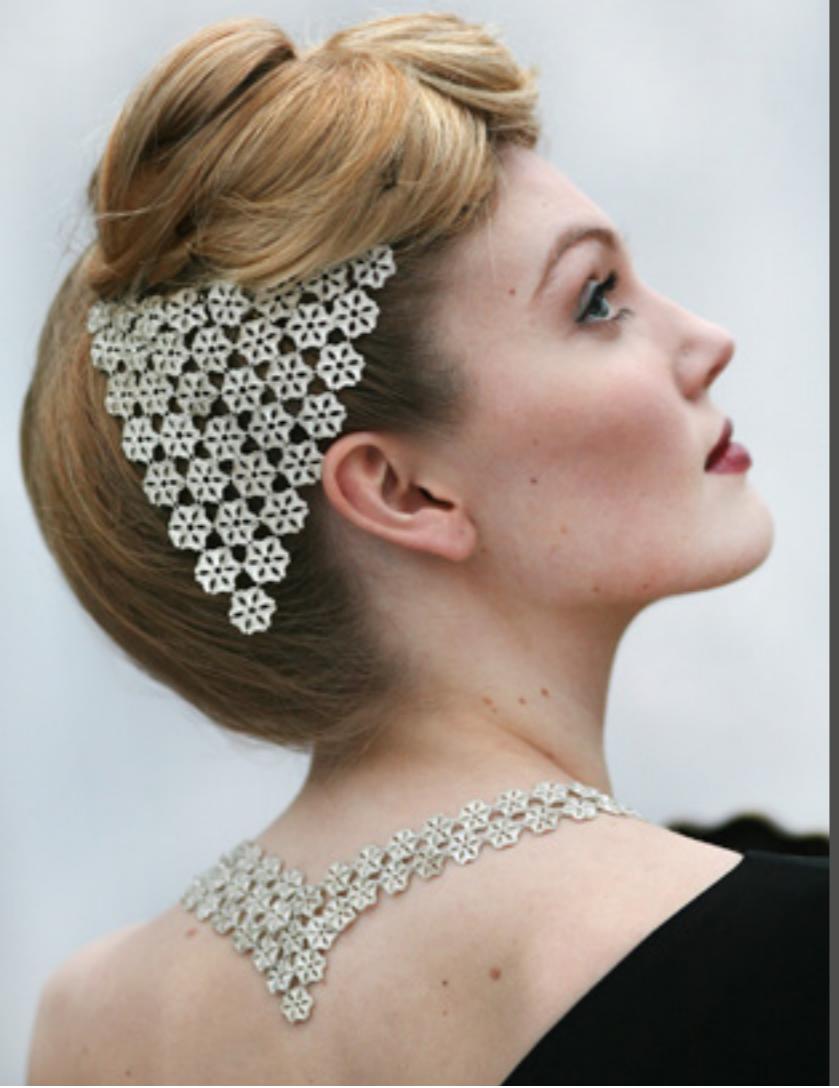


## Wear the volcano

Iceland used to be known as "Europe's Best Kept Secret" but it was thrust into the limelight in 2010 with the Eyjafallajökull volcanic eruption. The fine ash that brought Europe's air traffic to a halt now coats the face of the most sought-after watch, the Goð. Ornate Viking engravings on the case make this watch stand out - especially as some of the engraving can be personalised to make it totally unique. - ASF



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# DELICATE AND PRECIOUS

*Aurum's award-winning Icelandic jewellery designs in downtown Reykjavík*

Bankastræti 4 in central Reykjavík is one of the best spots in town. It houses a unique shop: Aurum. Its windows are filled with beautiful jewellery designed by award winning designer, Guðbjörg Kristín Ingvarsdóttir, along with colourful and interesting articles from all over the world.

#### Like a breath of fresh air

Aurum's jewellery pieces are notable for their fine details and delicate nuances, giving a feminine touch but, at the same time, a light and modern appearance. When Guðbjörg introduced her jewellery to the market, it was like a breath of fresh air. These pieces were something new and different but yet very Icelandic, as the

inspiration and motifs are taken from Icelandic nature.

#### The mountains, flowers and the glacier

Guðbjörg comes from Ísafjörður, a fishing town in northwest Iceland. The high mountains, the long and narrow fjord, glittering in the moonlight or sunshine,

the dark winters and the tiny flowers next to a cold glacial shield, are reflected in her delicate but yet strong and powerful jewellery.

She trained as a goldsmith and jewellery designer at the Institute for Precious Metals in Copenhagen. While she was studying, she visited her home town in summer and climbed the Drangajökull glacier. The

tiny flowers there, fighting for their lives, had a great impact on her and became the inspiration for her first flower line. These designs have become like Aurum's logo.

After three years abroad running a cooperative design shop, she came home to Iceland in 1999. She founded Aurum with her husband, Karl Jóhann Johannsson.

Guðbjörg has taken part in many international design exhibitions both as a solo designer and as a part of a group. She was awarded first prize in the jewellery competition 'Spirit of the North' in St. Petersburg in 2000, received the DV Cultural Award in Reykjavík for Art Design 2002 and the Visual Arts Award in 2008. In 2011, Aurum received the Njarðarskjöldur

award for Best Tourist Shop of the year. Articles about Guðbjörg and Aurum have appeared in many different international magazines and very recently, in the Swedish magazine, Elle Interiör.

#### New nature motifs every year

Guðbjörg is very productive and launches 2–5 new lines every year, now adding up to over thirty altogether.

She is an enthusiastic angler and this year, she introduced her salmon jewellery and the ray, which used to be typical food in her home town. Recently three birds were presented: the swan, the raven and the falcon.

She is now working on a new and different line in cooperation with a reindeer farmer in Greenland. She is making a necklace and bracelet range from silver and reindeer hooves. These pieces will first be shown in a special exhibition in Reykjavík and then launched in the Design March festival in Reykjavík in 2015.

#### Porcelain and international design

The Aurum jewellery shop is like fairytale world. Showcases full of fine, delicate and detailed silver objects are so inspiring and beautiful that it is hard to resist buying one. But, in the next room is a colourful, different and exciting design shop run by Guðbjörg and her husband. There one can buy interesting Icelandic design items as well as various things from countries all over the world. Special socks from Japan, perfume from France and porcelain decorated by Guðbjörg in cooperation with the Finnish design studio, Elinno. There are also candles designed by Guðbjörg in cooperation with Popup Paris. In three of the candles are hidden 0.15 carat diamonds. Only one of them has been found as yet.





Feldur workshop

# THE WARMTH OF NORDIC FUR

*Feldur Workshop specializes in the design and production of high quality fur products*

**F**eldur Workshop is an Icelandic company, situated at Snorrabraut 56 in downtown Reykjavik. They offer products from fox, mink, reindeer and sheep, to name just few, for wear or for home decoration.

The groundfloor is newly renovated in a stylish and practical manner to best accommodate the various fur products designed and handmade on site. One of Iceland's most respected interior designers, Leifur Welding, created an open space plan to grace the classical, yet modern product designs offered in the shop. The highlight for most visitors will surely be the opportunity to observe the master furrier himself at work in the midst of the workshop, where he

meticulously patterns coats, hats, gloves, collars, vests, jackets and headbands from different furs.

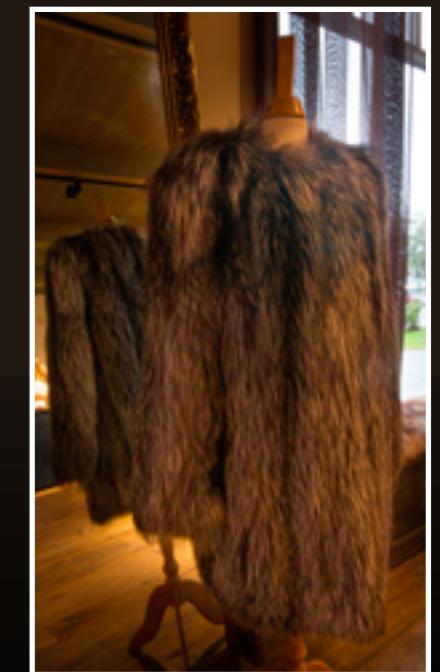
Heiðar Sigurðsson studied in Sweden for four years and has since worked as a furrier for about 30 years. He opened Feldur Workshop in 2006. "We specialize in accessories like hats, gloves, collars, vests and headbands though I also design fur coats and jackets", he says.

In Feldur Workshop, you can also buy designs made from sealskin, which Mr. Sigurðsson gets from Greenland, such as shoes, collars, jackets, coats and handbags which can be used as both fashionable garments or heart-warming souvenirs.

## Inspired by nature and people

Feldur Workshop prides itself in offering only high quality items in their collection. When asked where he gets his inspiration from, Mr. Sigurðsson tells us that the Icelandic nature and extreme weather have been his main sources of inspiration, as fur and wool have kept the cold north winds at bay for centuries.

He also stresses that he puts great emphasis on his customers' happiness. In addition to seeking inspiration from nature's elements, he also says that his customers give him a great deal of inspiration, as well. That's not hard to imagine, given that he works in the middle of the open space and has a good chance to seek information about



his customers' desires. This is also a way for the furrier to stay in close, personal contact with his clients.

It's worth mentioning that he also provides skillful repairs to furs, free of charge, when a Feldur Workshop product is brought in.

## Accessories for your home

Then there are the accessories for your home - made from first class fur and skin. Mr. Sigurðsson produces decorative natural skin products such as lamb hides or reindeer skins to cover your sofa or hang on your wall, or more processed items such pillows from lambskin. Could you imagine a piece of Nordic nature beautifying your own

home such as a skillfully made accessory from high quality material?

## A selection of shops

If you are interested in buying Feldur Workshop's products, we recommend you try to take the time to visit the workshop on Snorrabraut 56, to enhance your buying experience.

Alternatively, there are a number of stores in Reykjavik that keep his designs in their collections. Among these located in the centre of Reykjavik are Rammagerðin, Geysir, Mýrin and Ravens. Some stores in Kringslan and Smáralind shopping centres also carry his products, as does the Duty Free shop in Keflavik airport. Some hotels

also carry a selection of items, such as Grand Hotel, Hilton Hotel and Natura Hotel.

You can also view the Feldur collection on their website. Mr. Sigurðsson says he plans to build a web shop so people can order online in the future. His designs are available in some shops in Scandinavia as well.

Yes, fur is 'in'-whether it's to wear or as something to decorate your home with.

- SJ



Feldur Workshop

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www.feldur.is





# EVER-CHANGING INSIGHTS

*The world of art is a social commentary and personal perspective*

Reykjavik Art Museum is a must see when visiting the city. There's a lot to see and the museum is in three different and distinct locations: Hafnarhúsið, Kjarvalsstaðir and Ásmundarsafn. The entrance fee covers admission to all three museums on the same day.

#### Hafnarhúsið:

The gallery is located downtown and is the museum's institute of modern art. It is open daily and on Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve from 10:00–14:00 and on New Year's Day from 13:00–17:00. Viewing some of the exhibits makes a lovely day out.



*Hulda Hákon: Höfði and the Midgard Serpent, 1987, in Ásmundarsafn.*

**Worlds and Ways by Gunter Damisch**  
On display are graphic works Damisch has given to the Reykjavik Art Museum, along with some of his other works. They are highly individual in iconography and mythology, and oscillate between figuration and abstraction.

**Flatland by Sirra Sigrún Sigurðardóttir**  
The title is a reference to a book published in 1884. It is a satirical portrayal of the social hierarchy using mathematics and geometry. Both exhibitions are open until 25<sup>th</sup> of January.

On 2<sup>nd</sup> of February, an exhibition showing the works by 85 different Icelandic contemporary artists will open in both Hafnarhúsið and Kjarvalsstaðir. The aim is to give insight into the art of painting as it appears today.

#### Kjarvalsstaðir:

This house was built specifically to host the museum and it is mostly devoted to paintings and sculptures by well established Icelandic and international artists. 'Roundabouts', an exhibition of the works of Andreas Ericson, is on display until the 4<sup>th</sup> of January, 2015. It is shown alongside the 'Topside' exhibition,

which shows works by Johannes Kjarval, a major artistic inspiration for Ericson. He is one of Sweden's most acclaimed artists of his generation.

The 17<sup>th</sup> of January marks the opening of two exhibitions: A retrospective exhibition spanning Einar Hákonarson's career called, 'Pulse of Time', which is also a title of one of the paintings, and the 'Kjarval: Key Works' exhibit.

#### Ásmundarsafn:

The house was built by the sculptor Ásmundur Sveinsson to host his works. Both the house and its sculptures are a part of the current exhibition, which runs until 1<sup>st</sup> February. It is called, 'A Posterior' and shows a selection of artworks by 8 different artists. These artworks reference buildings or houses which were created either from existing or fabricated architecture or are constructed impressions of memories. The house itself is a feature in the exhibition.

- HDB



*Listasafn Reykjavíkur*

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www.listasafnreykjavikur.is



## CATCH THE NORTHERN LIGHTS ALL YEAR AROUND

*Aurora Reykjavík's Northern Lights Center lets you see the Lights all year*

There is perhaps nothing more magical and unforgettable than witnessing the beauty of a Northern Lights display in one's lifetime. It's the dream of many who come to Iceland, but alas, those unpredictable, frenetic lights tend to have a mind of their own and don't always show up on cue. So it is with great joy that we welcome one of Iceland's most recent additions—Aurora Reykjavík's Northern Lights Center, where the Northern Lights are always on display.

stories and legends from around the world, learn something about the science behind this amazing phenomenon and gaze at spectacular Northern Lights photography from top Icelandic photographers. There is even a specially equipped 'photo booth' where you can learn how to adjust your camera's settings should you want to try your hand at capturing an auroral display yourself.

#### Soothing Sights and Sounds

However, Aurora Reykjavík's real pull and ace up its sleeve is its fantastic HD time-lapse film of recent auroral activity. Projected onto a 7 metre wide screen, you can sit back and enjoy this 13 minute film that features a dazzling display of auroral activity, accompanied by relaxing music. Therapeutic and restful are two words that come to mind to describe this zen-like experience.



#### Hot coffee and choice gifts

Before leaving, be sure to grab a free cup of coffee in the Northern Lights Center gift shop and check out the impressive display of clothing, glassware, paintings and woollen knitwear by some of Iceland's most creative designers. The theme? You guessed it. —EMV

#### Setting the record straight

While in Iceland, you might be told that the outside air temperature needs to be around 0°C or below in order to see the Northern Lights. The oft quoted but erroneous assumption is that the Northern Lights only appear at these temperatures. We would just like to set the record straight that while it is true that the Northern Lights do happen to be visible more often when the air is cold and the sky is clear, their appearance has nothing to do with actual temperature of the air.



*Aurora Reykjavík*

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# THE WORLD'S LARGEST MAMMAL ON DISPLAY

## *The Icelandic Museum of Natural History Gets its Crowning Jewel*

When an Icelander has a bit of good luck and finds or discovers something by chance that benefits him greatly, you'll often hear the word 'hvalreki' —which literally means 'beached whale'.

In 2014, the museum will be relocated to the grand Perlan building, a revolving mirrored dome on top of five giant water tanks, offering views over the whole capital area.

When a 24-metre (80 foot) long blue whale was found beached in the North of Iceland in 2010, it turned out to be a 'hvalreki' in both meanings of the word, as such a large and intact specimen has not

been previously found in Iceland and will undoubtedly be one of the most popular items of Icelandic Museum of Natural History.

weighed around 120 tons and, to give you an idea of the creature's immensity: its tongue weighed about the same as a full-grown elephant and its heart about the size of a small car.

Dr. Hilmar J. Malmquist, manager of Icelandic Museum of Natural History, says that he sees the blue whale as the crowning jewel in the museum's future. "It is extremely rare to discover an intact skeleton of this size, as only ten or so beached blue whales have been found here during the past century. Then the carcasses are rarely intact. Some of the bones are, in fact, quite fragile

and need to be preserved according to exact specifications which also contributes to the fact that very few whole blue whale skeletons exist around the world," says Hilmar.

The blue whale is also becoming increasingly rare in the world's oceans, Hilmar explains, as the populations have gone down from maybe two to three hundred thousand a century ago to ten to twelve thousand today. About one thousand blue whales inhabit Icelandic waters for part of the year.

Even though the Museum's exhibitions have not been fully designed yet, Hilmar says

the Perlan building is perfect for such a large piece. The Perlan building is open from the basement to the glass dome at its peak. The whale's head could possibly be positioned on the lowest floor in the open space between the water tanks and the skeleton could reach diagonally up some 10–15 metres, almost to the top where the glass dome is. Visitors could thus examine the skeleton on the different platforms on the way to the top.

**A 124 Year Old Dream Comes True**  
The Icelandic Museum of Natural History hasn't really found a permanent home till now.

The Icelandic Natural History Society was founded in 1889 with one of its primary goals being the establishment of a suitable home for such a museum in the capital area.

Although the natural sciences and nature preservation have been diligently carried out through other institutions, it isn't until now that the museum has found a fitting venue.

There, visitors will be provided with a detailed and informative insight into Iceland's nature, while education for all levels and scientific research will be undertaken at the centre.

- VAG Image by © Þorvaldur Þórsson



# SPREADING THE TASTE

You Can Enjoy Authentic Thai Food In Reykjavík or Akureyri

The discovery of the wonderful flavours in genuine Thai food only reached Iceland in 2001 when, down by the Old Harbour in a cosy, small white building, Krua Thai first started the taste revolution. For hundreds of

years, Icelanders had grown accustomed to a rather bland diet, so the introduction of Thai cuisine had a major impact.

Icelanders have a reputation for pioneering and they plunged into this new taste sensation with gusto. A second restaurant opened in Bærarlind, near the Smáralind shopping centre, also providing home deliveries. Take away also gained great popularity and now you can find the same delicious menu in Krua Siam in Akureyri, close to the harbour. With prices set so that a whole family can eat for less than a single person would pay in fancy restaurant, you can understand its popularity.



Krua Thai's cuisine is unique as it blends authentic Thai cooking, with all its special spices and ingredients imported directly from Thailand, with Icelandic meats and vegetables.

As the food is prepared to order, it reaches you with all the flavour as fresh as possible. It has proven a popular spot for visiting Thai tourists for good reason. The Thai-Icelandic blend is truly a delicious experience and one that any Thai food aficionado should savour while here.

- ASF



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# TURNING ON TOP OF THE WORLD

*The Pearl, a five star revolving restaurant with a remarkable view of the city.*



On top of the hillside of Öskjuhlíð, one of the city's most popular green areas, stands The Pearl, an unusual building consisting of a huge glass dome placed upon six hot water tanks. Due to its height and geographical position, it provides its visitors with a breathtaking 360° view of Reykjavík and its surroundings.

## A moveable feast

Under the impressive glass dome revolves one of the country's finest restaurants, recently rated as one of the world's ten best revolving restaurants. The floor turns constantly, but slowly—so slowly actually that, if it wasn't for the changing view, guests probably wouldn't notice it. Over your starter you might be admiring Mount Esja to the north but once your dessert arrives you may be gazing at the ocean to the south!

The Pearl prides itself in a team of chefs second to none and a menu best described as

an inventive cross between an international cuisine and Icelandic ingredients. The menu changes with the seasons. In autumn, the summer's à la carte is replaced with a buffet of wild game that continues into the Christmas season, when traditional dishes are added. The new year always kicks off with a menu created specially to bring food lovers culinary excellence at the best price in town! The only thing that stays on the menu throughout the year is the signature lobster soup originated by the legendary Belgian chef Pierre Romeyer who, after a friendly encounter with the Pearl's head chefs, simply gave them all his recipes!

The Pearl's status as a first class restaurant is a result of the ambition and passion of its owners and staff who relentlessly try to refine their cooking, bringing in chefs from all over the world and travelling regularly to learn from the best and gather new ideas. Therefore it's no surprise that this year, head chef Stefán Elí won the esteemed 'Taste of

France' award for creating an outstanding fusion of French and Icelandic cooking.

## I'll have a gelato ... with a view

But pots and pans also sizzle during the day in The Pearl's Cafeteria, from where you can walk directly out onto the viewing deck to enjoy your cup of coffee. At The Pearl, authenticity is not a word to be taken lightly. Everything is made from scratch: soups, crêpes and a wide selection of breads and pastries. They even brought in a pastry chef from France and went all the way to Italy to learn how to make the perfect gelato—and perfect it is!

However you look at it, The Pearl is a unique spot in the capital, a place bound to satisfy your appetite for both delicious food and jaw dropping panoramas—a revolving world of delight.

- HB  
Photos: Óskar Pál Eiríksson



39



# THE ICELANDIC HOUSE OF SPECIALITIES

*Skólabrú Gourmet Restaurant feeds connoisseurs of good food*

**S**kólabrú is one of the most respected restaurants in Iceland. It is located in one of downtown Reykjavík's most iconic older buildings. The nearly 120 year old house delivers a very relaxed and elegant setting, right next to the Pond and the nearly 220 year old Reykjavík Cathedral, Dómkirkjan.

## A perfect service for the world's clientele

Skólabrú caters to international clients who love gourmet food and wine and awesome service, but still expect reasonable prices. The restaurant is known for handling parties and meetings for very demanding clients, including the local foreign embassies and the large crews that accompany the foreign

film productions that Iceland has attracted in recent years. The restaurant has also handled some very unusual requests, such as setting up a dedicated mobile restaurant in order to keep film crews well fed when they are on location somewhere far away from Reykjavík and civilization in general.

## Different strokes for different folks

Skólabrú can easily handle 150 people, and the second floor can accommodate up to 80 people in a private setting. The main floor has a small separate room which can accommodate up to 14 people. This room has a wall mounted large screen TV and is perfect for a private meeting or a small seminar. The second floor is a spacious venue with a high ceiling, and it can be set up with

Skólabrú is the perfect restaurant for people who love gourmet food in a nice setting, and the service provided to groups is unparalleled. - SF



a large projector screen and all the equipment necessary to host a professional conference or a large private meeting. It is also frequently modified and decorated to handle special requests, including private parties for companies, weddings and birthdays. A free pick up service is available for groups. Both floors are internet connected.

## Nothing but the best

New owners took over the business in 2009, but the restaurant has operated since 1992, so it has an established network of suppliers that guarantees the very best quality raw materials are available at any time. The chefs deliver magnificent meals that range from modern takes on traditional fish and meat dishes to gourmet vegetarian dishes, and the various more exotic specialities that the restaurant is famous for.

## A full menu

Skólabrú is well known for its traditional rack of lamb and salted cod (bacalao). For those looking for more exotic meals, the chefs offer exquisite specialities such as seawolf (Atlantic Wolffish,) and wild goose carpaccio. The dessert menu is mouth watering and the wine list has the perfect red, white, and sparkling wines to complement your meal and dessert. An assortment of beers and strong drinks is also available.

# GHOSTS, GHOUls AND HOT COCOA!

**A**re you up for something different? You came to Iceland and have been seeing the sights but, tonight, you will enjoy an authentic Icelandic countryside evening.

You will be picked up from your hotel or straight from the restaurant, and we'll head out into the Kjós countryside, not more than half an hour from the city centre.

First stop is at the quaint museum at Kiðafell, where you can also visit the local farm, and perhaps sample the farmer's own traditionally smoked leg of mutton.

Taking advantage of the darkness away from the city, we will go hunting for the Northern Lights.

As we wait for them to appear, we will pass the time in the same fashion that Icelanders have done since time immemorial: telling ghost stories during the long winter nights.

After the Northern Lights' hunt, Isafold Travel's local guide will make up for scaring you by offering you some hot cocoa, and perhaps something stronger, at a cosy location in the area.

*After dinner entertainment with a twist*



A fun, relaxing evening, with good company, hot drinks and delicious snacks – that's an authentic Icelandic countryside evening. - ASF



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# GET YOUR DRIVING 'ON TRACK'

*Learn 4x4 driving with the experts*

**W**e all know that driving city streets has very little in common with icy mountain tracks or the pot-holed muddy gravel roads of Iceland's interior. Fording rivers in the city is unheard of, but commonplace when travelling upcountry in Iceland.

Do you want the challenge of driving through the awesome beauty of Iceland's highlands but feel you would like to learn more before trying?

ISAK has created short half- to 2-day courses specifically to train drivers in



techniques and skills needed when driving off the tarmac roads and facing the Highlands' unique demands.

## What's it like?

"It was absolutely amazing to take part... The hotels were very good and the food great. We learned a lot... driving in difficult conditions (like sand, rivers, snow and steep hills) and all you have to know when you want to go "off-road"... This with a lot of fun in the wonderful landscape of Iceland...We will surely come back... But



after this course it will be much safer and even more enjoyable to do this!"

After taking an Iceland Off-Road Academy course, you will also be ready to enjoy the Highlands either renting your own ISAK Land Rover Defender or touring with one of their groups.

- ASF



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The Wool Factory Shop

# KIDKA



Our products are sold in various outlets in Reykjavík and Akureyri. But you are also more than welcome to visit us at The Wool Factory Shop in Hvammstangi, where you can buy directly from the people who make traditional natural Icelandic wool products and ornaments in original colours.

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## THE BRAVE GET THE BEST

*The Sea Baron's Fish Meals attract visitors from all over the world*

Iceland has many 'different' foods which have their roots in seafaring history. The Vikings came up with many novel ways of preserving their foods and their traditions continue to this day. Some of these foods sound unappealing, to say the least, and it takes the adventurous soul to step out and try them. Iceland is for the adventurous and they reap the benefits of the brave. The timid stick to burgers!

### The Sea Baron himself

A former fisherman and Coast Guard chef, Kjartan Halldórrsson, also known as the Sea Baron, is the master of unusual fish dishes. His lobster soup, for example, has gained fame around the world, earning it the title of 'the world's greatest lobster soup'. While he doesn't reveal the secrets of his recipe, that doesn't stop his restaurant from being filled every day with aficionados.

He entered the restaurant business by chance. One day, when standing by his boxes of fish, some foreign visitors asked if he could prepare some fish for them. Spotting an opportunity, he ran to the nearest hardware store to buy a grill—and was in business! His visitors were invited to dine in his shop in this improbable restaurant. Word quickly spread and soon he was shifting his boxes out to make room for tables and chairs. He took the unusual and created delicious meals that no one else had thought of. He took old recipes, some of which sounded revolting, and made meals that have established his reputation around the world.

Kjartan, the true Sea Baron, recently retired and passed his mantle to Elísabet Jean Skúladóttir, an energetic and vibrant young woman who bought the restaurant three years ago at the Sea Baron's request. Kjartan wanted to make sure his place would be well taken care of in the years to come. Kjartan jokes that, not only did Elísabet make a great investment by purchasing the restaurant, but he was included in the deal himself. Karan's spirit is palpable as visitors will not only feel his energy but he is there to greet them in the form of a wax sculpture!



### In true spirit

Kjartan, the true Sea Baron, recently retired and passed his mantle to Elísabet Jean Skúladóttir, an energetic and vibrant young woman who bought the restaurant three years ago at the Sea Baron's request. Kjartan wanted to make sure his place would be well taken care of in the years to come. Kjartan jokes that, not only did Elísabet make a great investment by purchasing the restaurant, but he was included in the deal himself. Karan's spirit is palpable as visitors will not only feel his energy but he is there to greet them in the form of a wax sculpture!



### Dining as a Seafaring Experience

Kjartan's restaurant is popular with the fishermen who sailed for many years from Reykjavik. It is filled with memorabilia donated by old sea captains and their families that fill it with a character all its own. Handmade model sailing boats, pictures of ships of the past and stuffed birds fill the second floor's walls, where groups of up to 35 can celebrate together.

Eating at the polished tables, sitting on cushioned fish barrels, surrounded by paraphernalia of the sea, it is an experience that will leave you with both good memories, a satisfied appetite—and perhaps, a rather shocked mind that you would actually have eaten fermented fish and that it tasted so, so good. Moby dick on a stick (minke whale on a spear) for example, is a play on words with great impact, delicious and stirring—as are the great variety of other fish spears with a mix of cod, blue ling, salmon, trout, lobster and giant shrimp, to name a few. Also worth mentioning is an Icelandic specialty dish, available at noon on Thursdays, a combination of fermented fish. On the first Saturday of the month they offer skate with heaps of hamsatólg (fried fat), potatoes and rye bread with butter. This delicacy is only available from 1<sup>st</sup> September – 30<sup>th</sup> April. For dessert, as a true Icelander, one should enjoy grjónagrætur—or rice pudding of sorts, often served with raisins and cinnamon flavoured sugar.

-ASF



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## THE BLACK PEARL OF REYKJAVIK

*The downtown luxury Apartment-Hotel for the discerning*

The Black Pearl apartment-hotel is proud to provide discerning customers with a unique luxury setting in Reykjavik's charming downtown area. For the price of a high-end hotel suite, you get your own spacious luxury apartment along with the best hotel service. The extensive list of amenities is too numerous to fully outline here, but it includes breakfast service, catering service, 24/7 concierge service, childcare, gift service, laundry service, a private air shuttle, and a heated car garage in case you have rented a car.

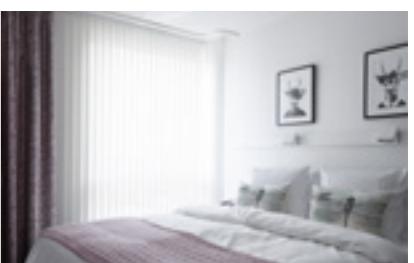
### Individual and group accommodation

The Black Pearl apartment complex is a relatively small property in a carefully selected location, so it offers a very quiet and relaxed haven in the heart of the bustling old town centre, even though it is only a

few steps away from all the shops and bars, not to mention the renowned nightlife. This is a family oriented setting with its own professional childcare amenities. It can accommodate the needs of groups, whether it is the extended family or friends coming together for a joyous event, or an important business gathering. A small conference room is available in case you need a private area for dining or a business meeting, and it has all the modern technological equipment required to make your business event a resounding success.

### The apartments

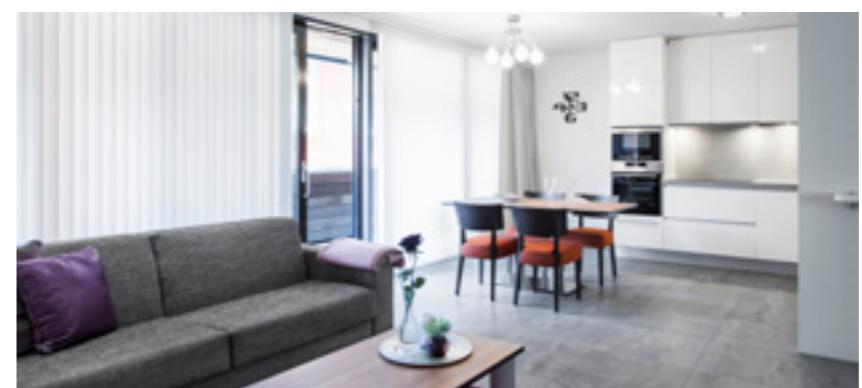
The standard apartments are 76m<sup>2</sup> one bedroom suites that accommodate up to 4 people. The suites are very nicely furnished, soundproof, and equipped with black-out curtains, heated marble floors, and free,



high speed WiFi. They can be set up with king size beds or twin beds, and they have a spacious living room with a sofa bed, dining area and a terrace. The suites also have a fully-equipped kitchen with complimentary Nespresso coffee and tea. The bedrooms and living rooms have free satellite TV with a selection of international channels. You also get your own in-room safe and a mini-bar.

One night stays are possible among other available options. A Deluxe Suite offers 115m<sup>2</sup> and the Penthouse unit provides 2 Deluxe Suites in 145 square metres of lavish space. These apartments come with private lift access.

The staff share the owner's passion for the highest quality luxury service so you can be sure that you will feel welcome and at home. They will be happy to share their knowledge of Reykjavik and Iceland to make sure that your visit exceeds your expectations. - SF



*The Black Pearl*

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# LANDSVIRKJUN – RENEWABLE ENERGY

*Iceland is the ideal location for Data Centers*

Landsvirkjun offers a long-term competitive advantage through power security. In an increasingly competitive global environment, companies need to work hard to build long-term competitive advantage.

In Iceland, Landsvirkjun—the National Power Company of Iceland—offers the most competitive power contracts in Europe. Multi-year fixed price contracts enable power intensive companies to compete successfully on a global scale while offering a product produced using 100% renewable energy.

#### Price security

The global energy markets are and will continue to be volatile. In contrast, Iceland offers low and stable prices on a long-term basis. As companies seek to manage costs, Iceland can offer long-term price visibility based on its unique mix of renewable power generation. The predictable and stable cost of electricity provides a clear competitive advantage because these factors simplify long-term planning and financing, while mitigating risk.

#### Carbon security

According to Rikardur Rikardsson, Director of Sales and Business Development at the National Power Company of Iceland, major companies are now focusing on sustainability and carbon management to remain competitive. This is an important practice because they must remain in tune with the sentiment of the global customer, the reality of increasing global taxation on fossil fuel use, and increased regulations against business practices that harm the environment. Landsvirkjun's renewable power generation is not only an effective hedge against carbon tax regimes,

but also the basis for a clear competitive advantage in today's environmentally conscious global market.

#### The ideal location for data centers

Data centers are among the most power-intensive operations today and data center operations are a rapidly growing industry in Iceland. Iceland is an ideal location for data centers because as it provides a clear competitive advantage through its strategic location between major markets, solid infrastructure, consistent low energy prices, reliable power transmission, and company branding opportunities due to the impeccable green-energy credentials. In addition, Iceland's cool and stable climate allows for 24/7/365 free air cooling of data centers.

Landsvirkjun is committed to its vision of establishing Iceland as the ideal location for data centers.

- SF





# THE POWER OF IMAGES

*A photographer in the footsteps of the Vikings*

P eir Flosi riðu vestur á sand - Flosi and his men rode over the sand to the west. Behind this brief line from chapter 126 of the Njáls saga hides a drama that began with manslaughter and ends with a vendetta approved by the Althing, or parliament, almost 1000 years ago.

"It is very exciting saga material and a challenge to any image creator", says

Brynjar Ágústsson, photographer in Reykjavík, and he starts to describe this scene of men on horseback, who came from Mount Svínafell, and rode round the back side of Eyjafjallajökull into the harsh valley of Markarfljót, in order to set fire to Njál's house.

## Stories like pictures

Transferring the Icelandic sagas into images – that is Brynjar's objective. He has already earned a reputation with his impressive Viking period portraits: men's faces – speaking of drama, passion and steely determination; or the end of a fight – eerie funeral scenes in twilight, scared women in a shady hut. Pictures like these directly grab the viewer's attention in a way that no line of text could ever do.

## Moments of emotion

Brynjar, a renowned landscape photographer, is a former member of the Rimmugýr Icelandic Viking Community

from Hafnarfjördur. During his active years, he discovered his passion for the historic scene portrait. He has captured stunning moments on screen – moments with a whole story behind them that, with a fitting caption added, can unfold within the viewer's mind without letting him go.

Was Flosi, from the Njáls saga mentioned above, a murderous incendiary or a man of honour? A photo could say more than many words. What kind of expression would we find on the face of a man like Gunnar, whose wife consciously sent him to death, when she refused to give some hair to fix his longbow? The saga remains silent about Gunnar's feelings. A picture of the scene could present the drama in an overwhelming way and touch much more than Hallgerdur's simple remark: "Then I'll remind you of your slap now."

## Life stage for the photographer

Brynjar has already carried out several projects, for example, Silfur Egils, the





historical exhibition about Mosfellsdalur during the Viking Age.

After shooting, he works on his material with a professional image-editing program and creates a special nuance of fantasy by deliberately alienating the pictures in order to drag the viewer's eye deeper into the scene.

#### Pictures are our language

"The photos tell entire stories", says Brynjar, "Today's world consists almost entirely of pictures. We have grown into it and the young generation especially is able to deal with the forcefulness of pictures rather than words." From his point of view, at historical sites such as the old parliament at Thingvellir, or Borgarfjörður, where Egil's saga takes place, visitors would be much better off with information boards that display large scale photos in the style he offers, subtitled by thrilling short texts, than with endless readings. "Pictures speak our language, in any language", he says. His Egil's saga pictures show famous scenes from the story, for example, when Egill secretly buries his silver treasure and when he, himself, is buried. There are also amazing panorama pictures that show everyday life in the time of the Sagas.

Brynjar works on different Icelandic sagas' scenes for shooting and provides professional Viking models who use authentic costumes and props. The scene is compiled and the setting is professionally

edited by the photographer. The saga settings are all over Iceland. He might travel to the highlands and shoot exciting scenes at raging glacial rivers or in the endless volcanic desert, for example – a feast for any creative artist.

Brynjar's pictures are characterised by their own handwriting. His landscape photography is overwhelming and almost unsettling in its blend of outstanding clarity and soft focus lens. The extremely bright light in Iceland challenges every photographer. Brynjar's pictures show Iceland the way it is really like behind the light. They show the mighty power of colours and the dynamics of the landscape. Visit his website [www.panorama.is](http://www.panorama.is) and get inspired!

- DT







# WEST ICELAND

AND THE WESTFJORDS

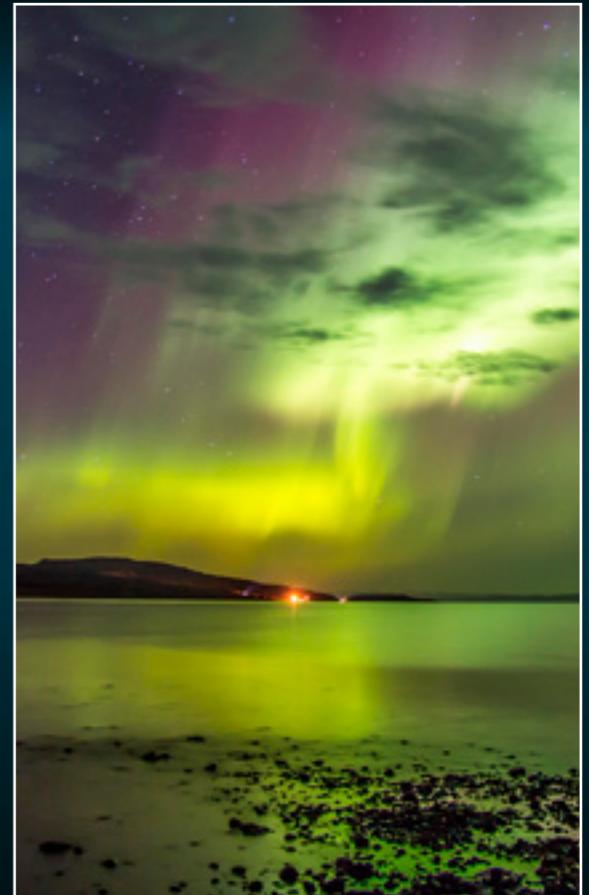


The beauty and variety of Icelandic nature is everywhere in the West of Iceland. Magnificent views overlooking mountains and glaciers, fertile regions, colourful birdlife, abundant rivers and lakes, fjords and bays, along with gushing geothermal activity. Land and history form an unbroken whole as the setting for sagas like Sturlunga, Egil's Saga, Eyrbyggja and Laxdaela, not to mention the rich folklore and tales of adventure. Tours bring history to life as museums and historical sites abound.

## Westfjords

The 'Lonely Planet' guide put Westfjords on its list of the top 10 regions of the world to visit in 2011 and the area won a 'European Destination of Excellence' (EDEN) award. A very sparsely populated region of Iceland, it is home to the Arctic fox, a dizzying variety of birdlife and a nature that is simply breathtaking. With precipitous cliffs that plunge almost vertically to the deep blue seas below, its multitude of beautiful fjords, its hot springs, pure streams and waterfalls, it's a place for the nature-lover to be awed by its silence and tranquility, pierced only by the birds. The mystical Breiðafjörður bay, with its countless islands is home to all kinds of sea life and tours out into the bay will visit islands covered in birds, with some offering sea fishing.

The tourist information office in Borgarnes provides a wealth of helpful material.



Photographs complimentary of the Marketing office of West Iceland and the Marketing office of the Westfjords.

# THE SPELL OF SOLITUDE

*Hotel Búðir is the place where your heart feels at home*

There are moments in life that simply need champagne—served in antique glasses on a tablecloth made of old lace, on a lonely beach at the foot of the majestic Snæfells glacier in the heart of the Snæfellsnes Peninsula National Park. The feeling of freedom and space, the essence of Icelandic solitude is like no other. Above, you have the skies, with the wind constantly creating new artworks with the clouds.

If you have ever wanted to know what it would be like to be the only person on this planet, you should visit the secluded and home-like Hotel Búðir.

This might just be the place where you can finally find the inner peace that, perhaps, you have been looking for all your life.

These special moments in life make it worthwhile to drive 180km from the capital to get to a place that you have always been looking for. This countryside hotel not only provides the laced tablecloth and champagne glasses for special occasions; here people seem to be able to read your mind and know how to make dreams come true.

Since it opened in 1946, Hotel Búðir has been a very special place in Iceland and not just because it is one of the most remote hotels in the country. As if in a dream of the days long past, the snow-white building with the adjacent chapel is situated on the cliffs of a lovely bay, safely protected from northerly winds by the flanks of the mighty Snæfells glacier. The hotel and chapel are all that remain of a historic settlement place.

You will hardly find anything more unique. Peace, serenity, tranquility, grandeur; Búðir is a special break from the mundane of everyday life, designed for life changing occasions we want to celebrate in a manner that will preserve the memory forever.

## Tradition for the exceptional

In Hotel Búðir, the staff maintain a tradition for the exceptional and for hospitality. Whether in the tasteful décor of items from days gone by, inserted into a modern setting or through their very special sense for hospitality, the hotel's management strives to provide a unique setting, characterized by their own set of ground rules. This strategy has proven its worth and the hotel was awarded the place

on a list of the best hotels in the North Europe, according to the Condé Nast Traveler's Readers' Choice.

"Hotel Búðir is an idealistic hotel, and has always been throughout its long history," says hotelier Jóhannes Arason. "We strive to be more than just a hotel. The clientele appreciates this vision and our main form of promotion is via reputation. Many of the guests are coming back year after year to this hidden jewel in order to find peace and recreation in their busy lives, and to enjoy the hotel's exceptional services".

Whether you are planning horseback riding tours, hiking trips in the surrounding area, golfing or angling trips, whether you need some photo-ideas, a special time with your romantic partner or just to enjoy some smiling friendliness, the staff at Hotel Búðir will put their whole heart into making it happen.

## Extraordinary cuisine open to all

In the tradition of Icelandic hospitality, the restaurant is open all year round from noon.

There is always a hot soup on the stove to warm hotel guests as well as weary travellers passing by. Freshly baked cakes sweeten up a rainy afternoon and could form the prelude to a romantic candlelight dinner.

The chef greatly emphasizes the use of only exquisite tasting, local products to create unforgettable delicacies like fresh veal tart, smoked tongue or Icelandic game. You can be sure that the blueberries or hand-picked herbs refining your dish, or the homemade Mojito originate from places nearby the hotel. The restaurant is the hotel's greatest pride and plays a major role in its popularity.

## Ideal for your event

For a wedding dream come true, Hotel Búðir might just be the right place as it has been described as one of the most romantic places in the world! Its 28 well-equipped rooms and tastefully decorated premises with large windows provide the ideal setting for life's most memorable day. A wedding ceremony in the open air,



on the beach or within the bizarre lava formations; a champagne reception on the old pier; a brisk horseback riding trip into the Icelandic sunset – there are no limits for ideas.

## Spell of solitude

Iceland enchants the traveller in any season, but the magic of a winter night with dancing Northern Lights and golden moon light floating on the waves can only be captured in places where nothing disturbs the senses, and where the heart is at home.

Rediscover memories on the endless beach of Djúpalónssandur with pebbles that are said to have magical energy. Roam through caves, whisper a fervent wish on the summit of mount Helgafell, and pamper body and soul in the evenings at Hotel Búðir's restaurant, before a relaxing sleep to give you strength for a new morning's adventure.

This is the special recipe from Hotel Búðir at the end of the world.

- DT



Hotel Búðir

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## GOATS AND ROSES

*Saved from Extinction, Goats breed in Borgarbyggð*

The Icelandic goats at Háfell in Borgarbyggð are the oldest and purest goat stock found in Europe today. Their arrival dates back to the Settlement in Iceland, around 930 AD. For centuries, they were the main source of food for the islanders but, due to a long climate cooling period during the Middle Ages, they were replaced by sheep with their coarse wool being better suited for long periods of freezing cold weather. Since then, the

emphasis has been on the sheep, resulting in the goats becoming nearly extinct in Iceland. Today there are only 800 in the country, so they are still an endangered species.

The farmers at Háfell, Jóhanna and Þorbjörn, were running a traditional Icelandic farm with cows and sheep until 2000 when they decided to focus solely on goat farming, after working to increase their goat herd for eleven years. In 1999 they had



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all the tourism-related services available in the region.

West Tours' clients can choose between many services. If you plan a day trip, a weekend or a longer trip in the Westfjords during summer or winter, West Tours will be happy to make it an unforgettable experience.

- Boat Schedules
- Hiking
- Boat Tours
- Kayaking
- Horseback Riding
- Excursions
- Whale Watching
- Bird Watching
- Local Food Tasting
- Cultural Walks
- Packages
- Workshops
- Bike Tours
- Car Rental
- Accommodation
- Hornstrandir Nature Reserve
- Sea Angling

### Activities offered in 2014:

Their newest activities are sea angling tours and sunset sail on a Viking longship from Þingeyri, but just take a look at all the categories on their website, where you will find a lot of different tours listed. They look forward to seeing you in the Westfjords!



travellers with their travel plans to and around the region.



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adopted the last four goats without horns left in Iceland, which contributed to their decision.

"The goats are very likeable, playful and more like pets than livestock," says Jóhanna. From her stock, she makes ointments, soaps and fine cashmere wool; from the skin, inner soles, hats and cases for cognac flasks. Then, in the autumn, she sells the goat meat—which is as rich of protein as beef and has as little fat as chicken.

Another attraction at Háfell is Jóhanna's Rose Garden. With 180 types of roses—which is no mean achievement in the harsh Icelandic climate, along with lavender, violets and herbs and grasses from the moor—she makes bath-salts and scrubs. Her little homestead shop is both interesting and original.

- SS

## A SETTING FOR EVERY MOOD

*Gamla Kaupfélagið Extends its Selection*

On a tranquil peninsula in Akranes you'll be pleasantly surprised to find Gamla Kaupfélagið, a high quality restaurant, well-known for its menu's wide range and popular with the locals and visitors alike.

### Indian in Akranes

Gamla Kaupfélagið has recently added a tandoori oven to its repertoire, offering a variety of exciting Indian dishes. Gísli Sigurjón Práinsson, restaurant manager, says that the Indian addition is another reflection of Gamla Kaupfélagið's ambition to satisfy every customer. "We're always



looking for something new and exciting to keep things interesting and our customers seem to appreciate that," says Gísli.

### Catering to all customers

Gamla Kaupfélagið can cater to almost all of their customers' tastes, whether it be road-weary travellers looking for a quick snack, gourmands looking for something fresh and inspiring, romantic couples looking for a cozy night out or larger families looking for a complete package. "The pizzas and pastas are always popular, as well as our plentiful salads, for those who know they want those. But for those looking for a more unique culinary experience, our lobster dishes never fail to satisfy," says Gísli.



Gamla Kaupfélagið is located in a spacious house that was formerly a general store, providing each customer with an experience to suit their personal taste. After 10 o'clock on the weekends, the restaurant changes to a bar, where the friendly locals tend to gather after the working week.

- VAG



Gamla Kaupfélagið

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www.gamla kaupfelaðis.is



Rafn Sig.-

## WEST TOURS FOR THE WESTFJORDS

*The expert on travel in the entire Westfjords peninsula*

The Westfjords are an amazing peninsula characterized by steep, flat and also peaked mountains between deep blue fjords, beautiful colourful beaches with residents who make travellers feel warmly welcome.

West Tours' office is based in Ísafjörður in the Cultural House of Ísafjörður town, Edinborgarhúsið. West Tours' objective is the presentation, marketing and selling of



travellers with their travel plans to and around the region.



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# STAY IN PRISTINE NATURE

*A new hotel, Hótel Húsafell, is opening in West Iceland*

A new hotel is being built in the protected Húsafellskógur wood, a natural birch wood in Borgarbyggð Saga Geopark. Therefore efforts are being made to interweave the new hotel and its activities into the surrounding nature. This area is very centrally located in the Borgarbyggð Saga Geopark.

## Popular self sufficient activity centre and family estate

Húsafell is a favourite activity centre for holidaying Icelanders and a fantastic place for a couple of days of hiking and sightseeing. The new hotel will be a good addition to the services in the area and the

guests will take advantage of the existing facilities and developments. All the Húsafell buildings have their own electric power plant, with hot and cold water supplies coming from nearby wells. There is also a swimming pool, which has a sauna, hot tubs and a slide. A golf course is laid out next to beautiful rivers and there's an airport.

The families living in Húsafell running the activity centre, and building and managing the hotel are descendants of a well-known priest, who lived there in 17<sup>th</sup> century. He was famous for his poetry and white sorcery. It is said that he beat 81 ghosts sent to him from his enemies in the West Fjords. He was exceptionally strong.



Close to the farm is a 180kg stone which he lifted and carried around a little sheep pen for his exercise.

## Powerful glaciers and beautiful sights

"This area in West Iceland has lot of potential", says Þórður Kristleifsson, manager of the hotel building. "It has a lot of different and interesting sights and activities to offer. The new hotel will be designed as an outdoor activity centre for the Borgarbyggð area.

The land of Húsafell reaches up to the Eiríksjökull and Langjökull glaciers and stands in the middle of the Hallmundarhraun which was formed in an eruption in 930. The place is sheltered and often enjoys good, mild weather. The unusual Hraunfossar waterfall, with pristine, clear water flowing from the lava into the Hvítá river and the powerful Barnafossar falls are close by. There are interesting lava tubes in the lava which can be visited and many good walking paths in the area. Some are marked on a map in the service centre. A short distance away is the centre for glacier activity in Langjökull.



Soon, an ice cave now under construction will open there. The artist Páll Guðmundsson lives and works on the premises. He has carved many faces on rocks in the gorge behind the farm and visitors are welcome to walk there and visit him and his gallery. In the hinterland is Arnarvatnsheiði, an area with abundant good fishing lakes and the remote Kaldidalur valley connecting Húsafell to Þingvellir National Park.

## Opening on the National Day 17<sup>th</sup> June, 2015

The centre of the hotel will be a two-storey building dug into the lava. There on the second floor will be a restaurant for 100



guests with a view over the area. On the ground floor will be facilities for the walkers and other involved with activities such as caving, angling and glacier tours. There will also be a room well suited for meetings and shows.

The building will be connected to a square which opens to the swimming pool, the golf course and the service centre which will specialize in outdoor activities. On either side of the centre will be two buildings with 36 spacious rooms, including 6 suites, each with living room, grand bathroom, a shower, double sink and bath tub. There will also be good facilities for walkers, such as a place to dry clothes

and shoes. The hot water, which is very healthy, is obtained from a hot spring in a beautiful gorge nearby.

"Around twenty men will be working winter and summer to finish the building in time as we are determined to open the 17<sup>th</sup> of June 2015", says Þórður Kristleifsson, who looks forwards to welcome guests from all over the world to this new and beautiful hotel on his family estate.

- SH

**Hotel Húsafell**

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# SAGA GEOPARK PROJECT

*A unique combination of geology and saga amidst beautiful landscape*

Borgarbyggð, in West Iceland, has a magnificent diversity of geology, where fire and ice are still shaping the area. There are many geological and aesthetic sites, lava caves, beautiful waterfalls, glaciers, hot springs, wetlands, rock formations, ravines and the Northern Lights.

## A New Geopark in Iceland

Geoparks – unified areas with geological heritage of international significance – are spreading throughout the world, mainly in Europe and China due to a global nature

park system promoted by UNESCO. There are now 111 Geoparks in the world.

Saga Geopark project in Borgarbyggð in West Iceland, having all the prerequisites for such a park, aims to become the 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> Geopark in the country. In South Iceland, Katla Geopark was approved 2011 and Reykjanes peninsula will also soon become an official Geopark.

The Saga Geopark project in Borgarbyggð was established in March 2013 as a grassroots community, supported by many scientific advisors in geodiversity, heritage

museums and institutions in the area. The Saga Geopark will apply to UNESCO in October 2015 to become a member of the European Geopark network.

## Interesting land and geology of ice and fire.

“Regarding the geology in our park,” says Edda Arinbjarnar, the project leader, “the interplay between ice and fire are key factors. There were many volcanic eruptions under the ice during the Ice Age, as well as eruptions in ice free land in the area throughout the centuries. In the Borgarbyggð Geopark area, it is not only easy to learn about the building of the land due to eruptions, it is also possible to see how the land has been carved into valleys and fjords during the glacial periods. A side product of all this is the geothermal activity and many big rivers due to melting from the glacier edges. The biggest low temperature area in the country is in the Borgarbyggð Saga Geopark, and many of the mountains

are built up from lava layers from the many different volcanic eruptions that have taken place over a long time.”

## History and saga are important

“A Geopark always has a unique nature and geology but the life of man in the realm of nature now and historically is also important and is part of the park’s image. The history and the saga are very much alive in Borgarbyggð. It is important to weave the historical and geological factors together”, says Edda, “and therefore it was decided to call the project ‘Saga Geopark’.

“Many of the famous Icelandic sagas took place in the area, including Gunnlaugssaga Ormtungu, which is one of the most romantic of the sagas.

Snorri Sturluson lived in Reykholt in the 12<sup>th</sup> century. He was one of the most notable writers in the Middle Ages. For example, he wrote the history of the Norwegian kings. He was also a politician and took part in a civil war between the ruling families of the country that resulted in the loss of independence and the fall of the Commonwealth, which had been founded in 930AD, with establishment of a parliament in Þingvellir.

“There has always been a rich storytelling heritage in the area, which has fostered many writers and poets. Every farm has its own unique story. All this will be taken into account in the Geopark”, says Edda.

## Boiling water, unusual waterfalls, incredible lava tubes

Some of the most interesting places in the Borgarbyggð Geopark area are of great beauty and have attracted many visitors. One of the most noteworthy, Hraunfossar – ‘Lava Falls’ stand at the edge of Hallmundarhraun. There, clear, cold springs of subterranean water seep through the lava and run as tiny waterfalls and rapids into the Hvítá River.

Another special spot is Deildartunguhver, the hot spring in Reykholtsdalur with the highest flow in Europe at 180 liters/sec and 97 °C. The pioneers in using the hot water to heat houses at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century lived around the area. In Hallmundarhraun, which flowed in 930AD, are many lava tubes, some of which are accessible to people. The longest is Surtshellir at 1,970m.

Over the last few years, a new and interesting manmade cave has been carved in the glacier shield of the country’s second biggest glacier, Langjökull, 953km<sup>2</sup> in size and up to 580m thick. These are just a few of the natural pearls in the Saga Geopark, to be, in Borgarbyggð.

- SH



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# NORTH ICELAND



Summer in the North is characterised by the midnight sun. You can play golf, go seal and whale watching, horse riding, hiking, swimming, fishing, river rafting, bird-watching, camping or simply enjoy the disparate forms of nature. The region wears a different coat in winter, when you can ride horses on the frozen lakes in Mývatn under the Northern Lights or ski the slopes just minutes from Akureyri town centre. Northern Iceland is probably Iceland's most diverse region—in every sphere.

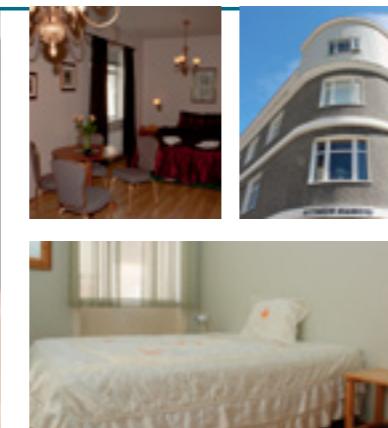
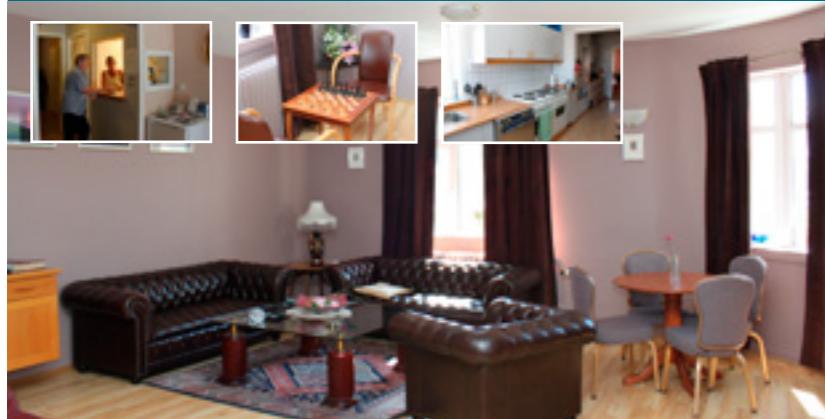
Nature varies from the mystical area around Mývatn Lake, a birdwatching paradise, to the awesome horse-shoe canyon of Ásbyrgi, the thunderous waterfalls at Goðafoss and Dettifoss, Askja's calderas and volcanoes, or islands like

Drangey, to name a few. The region is bursting with vibrant history, just waiting to be enjoyed. Museums are found in almost every town, with fascinating insights into fields such as the seals at Selasetur in Hvammstangi or the Whale Museum in Húsavík to the turf house of Glaumbær farm in Skagafjörður.

Then Skagaströnd, home to the Museum of Prophecies is known as the country music capital of Iceland. In Hjaltadal valley in Skagafjörður is Hólar, formerly the episcopal see and site of the first printing press. Siglufjörður hosts the Folk Music and Herring museums. Blönduós has several museums, as does Akureyri, the largest town of the north, along with its art galleries and rich culture.



Photographs complimentary of the Marketing office of North Iceland, [www.visitnorth.is](http://www.visitnorth.is)



## TREASURE AT THE WORLD'S END

*Sigrufjörður Hostel provides great accommodation for travellers*

One of the most glamorous hotels in Iceland in the hey-day of the herring bonanza in the 1930s, Hvanneyri guesthouse and hostel is still the place to stay when you are in far north of Iceland in Sigrufjörður on the Troll peninsula.

Today, it is a family-owned and run hostel and it has that feeling of staying in a warm, comfortable family home with helpful family members who take an interest in you.

Whether you are travelling alone, with a family or in a group, you will find a friendly welcome and comfortable stay for budget-conscious travellers with all the facilities one expects in a modern guesthouse and hostel. That includes free Wi-Fi, parking, a barbecue grill, a guest kitchen—and free coffee, too.

This has been an international centre ever since it was built. Its reputation has





**Hannes Boy and Kaffi Rauðka**  
Among the top restaurants in the north of Iceland offer traditional specialities.  
Relax by the harbourside  
Rauðka restaurant—food—live music

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**Allinn**  
Allinn restaurant specialises in Icelandic home cooking and pizzas. It is situated in a beautifully restored house overlooking Siglufjörður's main square. It is reasonably priced and suits people of all ages.

Aðalgata 30 • 580 Siglufjörður | +354 467 1111

## THE NORTH EATS THAI

*The Popular Krua Siam Restaurant Feeds Folk in Akureyri*

What inspired experienced Thai cooks and kitchen assistants to leave the exotic lands of South East Asia to venture to the Land of the Vikings, I cannot imagine. But I'm very glad they did. After opening the Reykjavik food scene to their unique blend of Thai ingredients and Icelandic meats and vegetables, the intrepid cooks continued north to Akureyri.

Established in 2007 and now under the same management as Reykjavik's Krua Thai, it is easy to find Krua Siam opposite the famous Hof concert hall by the harbour.

### Set Apart

Besides the experienced Thai staff, what sets these restaurants apart is that all the spices, rice and noodles that are uniquely Thai are brought in directly from Thailand. However, the meat and vegetables are pure Icelandic and this is what contributes to the delicious flavour

in every meal. Each meal is freshly prepared and cooked to order on the spot to get the most flavour.

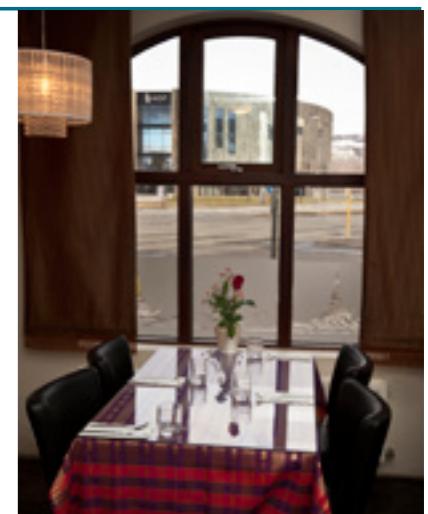
### Eat What You Like for Less

Both Krua Siam and Krua Thai are known for their reasonable prices. In addition, Krua Siam offers a full five course lunch buffet every day between 11:30 and 13:30. Here, you can eat all you like for the same good price.

With a large range of dishes to choose from, you can eat like a Thai—taking a piece from a number of different dishes. It's a great way to eat as a family or a group of friends.

### Drinks to go with the meal

A number of wines and spirits go well with Thai food, so Krua Siam



has a bar and stocks alcoholic beverages—along with juices and soft drinks.

### Catering to the Need

The restaurant also provides Take Away and Home Delivery options, but to get the most flavour, eat it right away.

-ASF



Rafn Sig.-



# EAST ICELAND



Tiny, tight-knit communities extend a warm welcome here. A well-developed infrastructure, with regular flights from Reykjavik to Egilsstaðir, the main hub of the area, enable visitors to enjoy the beauty of the region. The ferry from Europe docks at the 19<sup>th</sup> century town of Seyðisfjörður, making the East a good starting point for a holiday. Tours of all types take visitors to Europe's largest glacier, stark highland mountains and sweet-smelling heathlands and, for fishing and kayaking, to mirror-smooth fjords. The hiking nature-lover can discover countless spectacular routes, with frequent waterfalls and reindeer sightings. The beauty of this area has drawn artists and designers to the little towns, which have developed their own cultural flavour, many with a strong European—and especially, French or Norwegian—fluence. There is a long history of folklore here. Borgarfjörður eystrí is known as the capital of the elves. It's also an area of hiking trails and birdwatching, with puffins being especially plentiful. Brilliantly coloured semi-precious stones are found in the mountains and Petra's Stone Museum in Stöðvarfjörður holds probably the world's largest private collection. The numerous hotels, guesthouses and camping areas attest to the rising popularity of the area.





*Photographs complimentary of the Marketing office of East Iceland, www.visiteast.is*



# ON TOP OF THE WORLD

*A timid soul's approach to the mighty Vatnajökull*

*Bed down for the night in the heart of the Vatnajökull district at Vagnsstaðir Youth Hostel, just 28km east of the Jökulsárlón glacier lagoon. Sleeping bag accommodation, linen rental, well-equipped kitchen, dining and lounge areas, as well as 3 fully equipped cottages are available. There is a campground with good sanitary facilities.*

*The coast, just 1500m from Vagnsstaðir offers numerous possibilities for scenic walks and bird watching. Maps of the area are available at the hostel.*

The weather report was looking good—a full day of sunshine ahead of me and temperatures above 10°C. I was on my way to a face to face encounter with the world's third largest glacier, the mighty Vatnajökull. This trip would mark a couple of firsts for me—my first time ever to set foot on a glacier, and my first time to travel by snowmobile. Needless to say I was really excited!

I first met Kristján and Bjarney, of Glacier Jeeps, at our pre-arranged meeting place: the crossroads of Route No.1 and F985. This is the official meeting place for all Glacier Jeep summer tours. Glacier Jeeps has years of experience conducting jeep, snowmobile and hiking tours on the glacier since 1994. (Bjarney has been helping run the family business since she was 14 years old.) I parked my car and joined them in their sturdy 4WD which wound its way slowly ever upwards, following the undulating gravel road, which twisted and turned around hairpin bends, past waterfalls and deep canyons. My guides fill me in on the details of the landscape, pointing out how the glacier has crawled across the terrain, devastating everything in its path along with other interesting facts.

Thirty minutes and 830 metres above sea level later, we arrive at Jöklasel, Iceland's highest restaurant and owned by Glacier Jeeps. Jöklasel will serve as our base camp where we suit up with boots, warm overalls and helmets for the snowmobile excursion.

Now it's time to test-drive the snowmobiles. I am a little hesitant at first and Kristján shows me the ropes. It looks easy enough but I decide that I prefer to let him drive over the glacier with me sitting safely behind him on this 'skidoo for two', at least until I get a better feel for it. 'Off we go over the wild white yonder, climbing high into the sun' to paraphrase an old song, with cloudless blue skies above us and the wind in our faces. Further along we

stop and dismount, to take in the magnificent panoramic views over the glacier, the Atlantic Ocean and the town of Höfn far below in the distance. I felt like I was on top of the world and it was truly a cause for celebration!

Kristján jokes that we cannot go on unless I drive. By now I am feeling a little more sure of myself and agree to give it a try. This time we are off to inspect a massive sheer rock face that rises straight up from the glacier at an elevation of 1200 metres. Finally, our one-hour snowmobile adventure comes to an end and it is time to return to Jöklasel for a well-deserved bite to eat and a hot drink. The view out the restaurant windows is, as one would expect: magnificent.

Glacier Jeeps also offers a hiking tour of the glacier that comes with all the equipment, such as safety helmets, climbing irons and ice axe, instruction and a guide, included in the price.

In case you just don't think a strenuous hike or a thrilling snowmobile adventure is for you, then Glacier Jeeps offers an alternative to see the glacier in a comfortable, specially equipped 4WD and is available year round, weather permitting. Each tour is 3 to 4 hours in total, giving you plenty of time to do other things with your day, even though once you are up there you may not want to come down. Although it's best to book one day in advance, you can also just show up at the crossroads (F985) at either 9.30am or 2.00pm and join the tour from there.

- EMV

*Vatnajökull Glacier Jeep tours: a must for your bucket list!*



## STAY IN A WORLD OF BEAUTY

*Blábjörg Guesthouse give you access to all the East*

**S**till untouched by the large number of tourists visiting Iceland, much of the East is still pristine and a wonderful place for hikers, photographers and bird watchers – not to mention those who are interested in history, culture, nature and geology.

A region of mountains and fjords, of both highlands and valleys, waterfalls and rivers, inspiration and friendly inhabitants, those who visit it never regret it. If you're looking for relaxation and a break from the stress of a city, this will give you that and a lot

more. The terrain is rugged, diverse and dramatic, filled with deserted coves and inlets.

### Surrounded by mountains, sea & birds

Nestled in a fjord called Borgarfjörður eystri, in the northern part of the East, surrounded by birdlife and untouched wilderness is Blábjörg Guesthouse. They have transformed a fish factory so completely, you would have no idea of its previous use. It's set right by the sea's edge



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## OPEN FOR DREAMS

*Hotel Bláfell relaxes your senses*



**T**ravelling East Iceland in winter is a journey with additional flair. Summer's business has faded away; nature has changed its colours. Mountains and roads are taking a rest and silently await visitors who are looking for a unique experience, like the dancing Northern Lights on a clear winter's evening.

While walking the ancient paths, you will hear nothing but the wind between the bushes and the colourful stones, as most of the birds have left for southern climes and the cattle are by now in the cowsheds. You can hear the sound of your own breathing. The solitude creates an overwhelming tranquility, a oneness in close connection to the earth—and opens one's mind to thoughts and dreams.

### The end of a perfect day

There is nothing like ending such a perfect day in a cosy countryside hotel at the East Icelandic seaside. Nothing like lounging on soft leather sofas, enjoying delicious

hot chocolate in front of an open fire,

reading a good book from the library and later having dinner made from the best local ingredients such as lamb or fresh-caught fish.

### Tranquility and relaxation by the bay

Situated on a peaceful and broad bay in the Eastern fjords, Hotel Bláfell is both comfortable and charming. The old timber house with its eye-catching blue roof in the middle of the small fishing town of Breiðdalsvík impresses with its warm and welcoming atmosphere. The cosy wooden interior has been tastefully decorated by owners Friðrik Arnason and his wife Hrafnhildur Hafsteinsdóttir.

The hotel's history dates back to 1982 and has attracted guests who appreciate the peaceful atmosphere with a touch of romance. For decades it has been a well-known weekend retreat just off National Road No. 1, between Djúpivogur and Egilsstaðir.

### A comfortable stay

Hotel Bláfell prides itself on its restaurant and its log cabin-like 34 rooms with free Wi-Fi. There are single-rooms, double-rooms and family-rooms, all with adjoining bathroom and TV. The rooms are bright and spacious, each with its own charm and character. When the days get shorter and colder, you want to feel at home while travelling—and that's exactly what Hotel Bláfell is made for.

Just relax in the hotel sauna after your promenade along the endless black beach of Breiðdalsvík or dream away in front of the fireplace. Refreshed and with renewed energy, you might make your way into the silent East Icelandic night to discover some unforgettable Northern Lights.



**Hotel Bláfell**  
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# SOUTH ICELAND

*South Iceland has a long list of sights and activities*



The wealth of South Iceland lies in the variety of geological, historical and nature sites along with the long list of activities that can be experienced in the region.

This region has geological wonders such as Geysir; the Gullfoss, Háifoss, Skógarfoss, Systra and Seljalandsfoss waterfalls; Þingvellir, where the tectonic plates crack the Earth; Europe's largest glacier, Vatnajökull; the Kerið caldera; world-famous volcanos like Hekla, the Gateway to Hell, Lakagígar, Laki, the notorious Eyjafjallajökull and the Katla Geopark; fantasy sites like Pórmörk and Jökulsárlón. Here are historical sites like the world's longest-running parliament at Þingvellir;

museums, churches, the Stöng settlement, the Saga centre and villages like Ýrárbakki. Activities abound. Tours take you to all the sites, including the glaciers. Horse riding tours are popular. Try the riverjet, boat trips or kayaking; scuba diving in clear waters, fishing or caving. Independent travellers can try hiking and cycling, camping or caravanning. Winter activites are just as thrilling.

Fortunately, there is plenty of accommodation available throughout the region from camping to high-class hotels and restaurants to suit every taste. A developed infrastructure helps you get the most from your trips.



*Photographs complimentary of the Marketing office of South Iceland, [www.south.is](http://www.south.is)*



## A TASTE OF ICELAND'S WILD & SWEET

*Laugarvatn's Lindin Restaurant & Café Bistro*

Lindin Restaurant & Bistro Café, located on the banks of Lake Laugarvatn, has a firm foundation of culinary excellence that attracts patrons from around the world. Owner, Baldur Öxdal Halldórrsson, pastry and master chef, trained at the Hotel and Restaurant School of Iceland. But it was between 1980–1984, as he received training as a pastry chef at the Culinary Institute of America, New York and worked with two pastry chefs at the Palio restaurant in Manhattan that he got his inspiration to specialise in chocolate and desserts that, in 1986–1987, led him to the prestigious Richemont Professional School in Lucerne from 1988–1989, where he developed his interest in the art of chocolate and learnt the secrets behind a great dessert. He was also a successful cafehouse owner in Reykjavik in the years between 1992 - 2010.

After his training abroad was completed, Baldur began something of a culinary revolution in Reykjavik, working at many of the top hotels and restaurants, creating spectacular and sophisticated desserts that were hitherto unknown in the capital.



in the wild. His menu is seasonal and features exotic dishes that can be made from reindeer, goose, duck, cormorant, guillemot, puffin, minke whale or pan-fried arctic char. Always on the cutting edge, you can be sure of finding new and exciting additions to his dessert menus such as his delectable chocolate mousse with raspberry sauce, with watermelon pieces and white chocolate foam and his almond pie with rhubarb crow- and blueberries and Icelandic skyr mousse.

### Passion for purity and freshness

Passionate about food, Baldur insists on the absolute purity and freshness of all his ingredients. Located in the heart of Iceland's 'greenhouse belt', he can take his pick of the choicest fruits and vegetables grown in the area year round. The restaurant even has

its own small kitchen garden, providing a fresh supply of rhubarb, chervil, red and blackcurrants. The lamb and venison come from N.E. Iceland and are known for their delicious flavour, fed on mountain herbs. The Arctic char are caught fresh from either Lake Pingvelli or Lake Apavatn daily.

### In the heart of the Golden Circle

Lindin is located in the village of Laugarvatn, right beside the lovely natural sauna, steam baths and pool at the Fontana Spa. The 45-minute scenic drive from Reykjavik takes you through enchanting landscapes. Laugarvatn is half-way between Þingvellir and Geysir and Gullfoss, making it an excellent choice for a day trip to one of the most scenic areas of Iceland. You can also now stay at any time of year in Laugarvatn at either the Golden Circle Apartments next to Lindin, the Gallerí Guesthouse or the village hostel to enjoy the Northern Lights in winter and the midnight sun in summer and the spectacular views from Lindin's terrace and garden across the lake to the Hekla and Eyjafallajökull volcanoes.

- EMVIAF

### Mecca of Icelandic Wild Game

Baldur took over Lindin Restaurant in 2002, which has become known as the 'Mecca of Icelandic wild game', with its lamb, fish, seafood and game caught



## SHARING THE BEAUTY OF THE LANDSCAPE

*Hotel Laki is set in one of Iceland's most scenic spots*



*At Hotel Laki you can experience the magic of the bright summer nights or the darkness of the winter with the Northern Lights*

Hotel Laki is run by a family who have been living in Efri-Vík since 1968. At first, they were traditional farmers but since 1973, the family has also been involved with the travel services and started building Hotel Laki in 2005 beside their old home. Today there are 64 rooms available in different categories and 15 summer cottages.

It has been transformed into a clean and modern Scandinavian-style hotel but its design is aimed to make the most of the abundant Icelandic summer light. It has very large vertical and panoramic windows which flood the spacious dining and recreation areas with natural light. On



the horizon, the gargantuan Vatnajökull Glacier dominates the landscape.

### The Magical Northern Lights

You will find a warm welcome at Hotel Laki to experience the magic of the nature in the countryside, the bright summer nights or the darkness of the winter with the Northern Lights. They strive to fulfill all your needs and exceed your expectations by offering you simply the best possible service in the most amazing surroundings. There is 24-hour room service and free WiFi in all the rooms. The hotel now boasts a glass pavilion on the roof of the second wing, which provides a perfect opportunity to observe the marvellous Northern Lights whilst enjoying a hot cup of cocoa, sheltered from wind and light pollution. Photographers can step out onto a large balcony to capture the phenomena.

They're located close to many of Iceland's best known natural gems and are more than happy to assist you in planning your stay.

In the area of Kirkjubæjarklaustur you will find all the different services, such as a bank, swimming pool, post office,

a supermarket, a garage, a doctor, the information centre and a café, among others.

- Víkurflóð is a small lake 500m east of the hotel where you can fish fresh water fish, river trout and sea trout. Angling licenses are sold at the reception.
- In the old barn by the hotel you can see bygone farming tools. Ask at the reception.
- Rent a bicycle for the day. Ask at the reception.
- Hólasport offers adventure tours on 4x4 quad bikes and in super SUVs. Further information on [www.holasport.is](http://www.holasport.is) or ask at the reception.

Hotel Laki is open all year. Before you leave, be sure to visit the cosy gift shop which carries woollen goods, paintings by local artists, jewellery and various hand-made items.

- HH





## A SPRING EVENING IN STOKKSEYRI

*Icelandic Times checks out Fjöruborðið Restaurant*

Chef Robert was busy pouring drinks when we arrived. The well known song Vorkvöld í Reykjavík, (a Spring Evening in Reykjavík) was playing softly in the background. A table of tourists who had spent the day exploring a glacier with a guide, talked animatedly over dinner in the front room. The low slung building with pleasantly creaky wooden floors, once serving as the search and rescue building of Stokkseyri, is now one of the most popular lobster restaurants in Iceland, with over 35,000 patrons dining there in 2011.

**15 tons of lobsters can't be wrong.** Fjöruborðið's website says that some 15 tons of lobster are used annually to make its famous soup, aka langoustine soup. Hmm...impressive statistics but

does it really live up to its reputation? After all, there are many fine restaurants right in the capital, so is it really worth the 45 minute drive over a mountain in sometimes dubious weather conditions? Yes! I am happy to report that the soup was sublime. And just forget the word soup, how pedestrian! Chef Robert informs me that it is, in fact, a classic bisque de langoustine.

Whatever name you go by, it was delicious and I would have happily eaten another bowlful had I not needed to move on to taste everything else that was set before me: lobster tails that were

perfect in themselves, homebaked bread with various dipping sauces and if, per chance, you are not partial to sea food, there is a wonderfully tender roasted fillet of lamb served with baby potatoes and red wine sauce that is excellent. A crisp salad made with local produce was

refreshing and nicely complemented the seafood and meat dishes. Right on cue as soon as we had finished the lobster tails, our attentive server brought a warm wet cloth for our, by then, messy hands, which was much appreciated.

- EMV



[www.icelandictimes.com](http://www.icelandictimes.com)



From the outside, Fjöruborðið appears deceptively small but in fact, it can seat several hundred all told, something that those having a tête-à-tête in the main building would never guess. Facing the ocean out back, a large permanent marquee can seat another 100 or so guests. All that to say, groups are welcome.

Favoured by tour guides who often bring their clients here as the ultimate finish to a perfect day of sightseeing, the restaurant has received several well known personalities such as Prince Frederik of Denmark, the Rockefellers, Clint Eastwood, Martha Stewart, Bette Midler and Cherie Booth (wife of Tony Blair).

- EMV



## THE OLD COWHOUSE RESTAURANT

*Sitting Pretty under the volcano on Iceland's South Coast*

Location wise, The Old Cowhouse Restaurant couldn't be in a more perfect position for feasting your eyes upwards to the misty, craggy, moss-covered peaks of Eyjafjallajökull. It's a welcome addition to Iceland's ever-growing list of new amenities that have been popping up all over the country.

The remodelled former barn easily seats 50 to 60 dinner guests while retaining its unpretentious character and sweet bovine simplicity, making this a thoroughly

enjoyable place to stop for lunch or dinner while travelling the south coast.

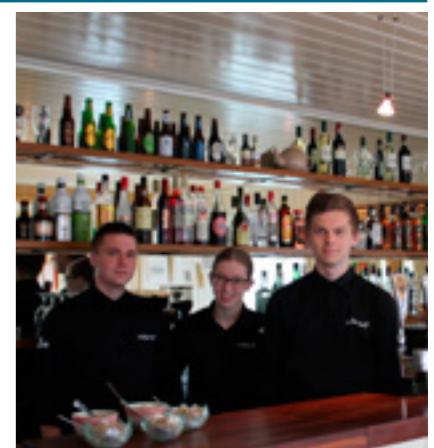
The menu boasts grass-fed beef, as is the norm in Iceland, coming straight from restaurant's own cattle herds. A hearty and warming meat soup, called Volcano Soup, served with homemade bread, is a favourite.

Open year-round, the Old Cowhouse plans monthly events including an October evening of traditional food, a November evening of game (reindeer and geese), a December buffet

of traditional Christmas dishes, as well as musical evenings of Icelandic folk music at various times throughout the year.

For opening hours in winter, please contact The Old Cowhouse Restaurant directly. Large and small groups welcome.

- EMV



## REFRESHING VÍK

*Halldór's Café satisfies locals and travellers alike*

Guests at Halldór's Café are greeted by the scent of steaming soup and freshly baked bread as they walk through the door. Across from Vík's shoreline with its black sand beaches, Halldór's Café serves dishes like soup of the day or salads with tuna, chicken or just feta, along with bigger meals of fish, lamb or chicken. Deserts include home-baked cakes and ice cream from a

local farm. Originally, Halldór's Café was a general store, built in 1831 to meet all of the needs of Vík. Today, it continues to satisfy patrons with its menu, which has something for every taste, with a local produce, where possible.

Halldór's Café supports artists with a rotating display of local talent featured on its walls, and serves up steaming cups

of coffee and cake, ideal for meeting and greeting old friends or new acquaintances. Halldór's Café is open all year round. Its hours are 11:00 to 22:00 or 23:00, but Fridays and Saturdays can turn into late nights, with the cafe remaining open until 1:00 am with its fully stocked bar providing a late night place to grab a drink.

- KB



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## IT'S ALL ABOUT LOVING IT, THEN IT WILL BE FINE

*Picture hunting with the photographer Rafn Sig*

The soft light of a sunset and dawn's freshness are part of the magic that the island exerts on hunters of the moment. For photographers, Iceland is among the most magical places in the world.

If you like to live your passion for taking stunning pictures under professional guidance, you should get in touch with 'Rabbi' Rafn Sig, one of the big names among Iceland's photographers.

### Small groups, big chances

Being a professional tour operator, he knows that the best way to elicit secrets from the country is by travelling in small groups. "You have to be relaxed for landscape shooting," says Rafn, "everyone needs his time for a picture. And, after all, you want to enjoy the moment." He offers tours travelling in a comfortable four-wheel drive Mitsubishi, suitable for any highland trip.

He doesn't conceal the fact that photo hunting is still a lot of fun for him, even after 30 years of professional work. When he was a boy, he found places of incredible beauty in the highlands. Their special magic had to be captured—and a lifelong passion was born. "It's all about loving it," says Rafn, "Then it will be fine."

### Like-minded travelling companions

This professional photographer's pictures have been published all over the world.

He likes to share his passion for travel with likeminded people. His offers of customized, all year round photo trips and workshops range from a day to a fortnight long.

During the summer, he prefers the gentle midnight light of highland gems such as Landmannalaugar, the summit Hrafninnusker, or the impressive Kerlingafjöll, with its colourful rhyolite mountains and geotherma valleys. Going south, he is fascinated by the black beaches of Vík, the incredible diversity of Skaftafell National Park, and of course, the goddess for all photographers: the famous Jökulsárlón glacial lagoon. When you join him in his car, he might have a few more secrets to share.

### Fascination of the Westfjords

Rabbi likes to travel to the Westfjords—Iceland's forgotten paradise and one of the least visited areas of the island. Everything in the Westfjords is extreme—from the almost vertical cliffs to the terrible storms that have created the coastline's wrinkled face. Iceland's most famous cliff, Látrabjarg, offers an opportunity to experiment with your camera's exposure timing to capture flying puffins and other seabirds. A photo trip so far in the north is not for the timid,

with temperatures rarely reaching 10 degrees, and frequent icebergs drifting past the coast.

### Treasure Hunting

The winter, with only a few hours of daylight, is a particular challenge to any photographer. Long twilights, with sunny gold pouring over the hills, and nights when the sky is full of Northern Lights that appear to be closer than anywhere else, are a real treat and best to be enjoyed in a group.

You can find a sampling of Rafn's photo art and his tour offers on his websites: [www.islandsmyndir.is](http://www.islandsmyndir.is) [www.IceStockPhotos.com](http://www.IceStockPhotos.com)

- DT



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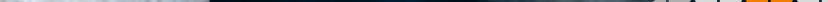
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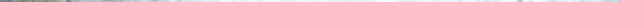
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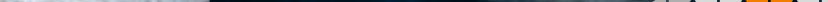
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