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ICELANDIC TIMES

ISSUE 30 • 2016



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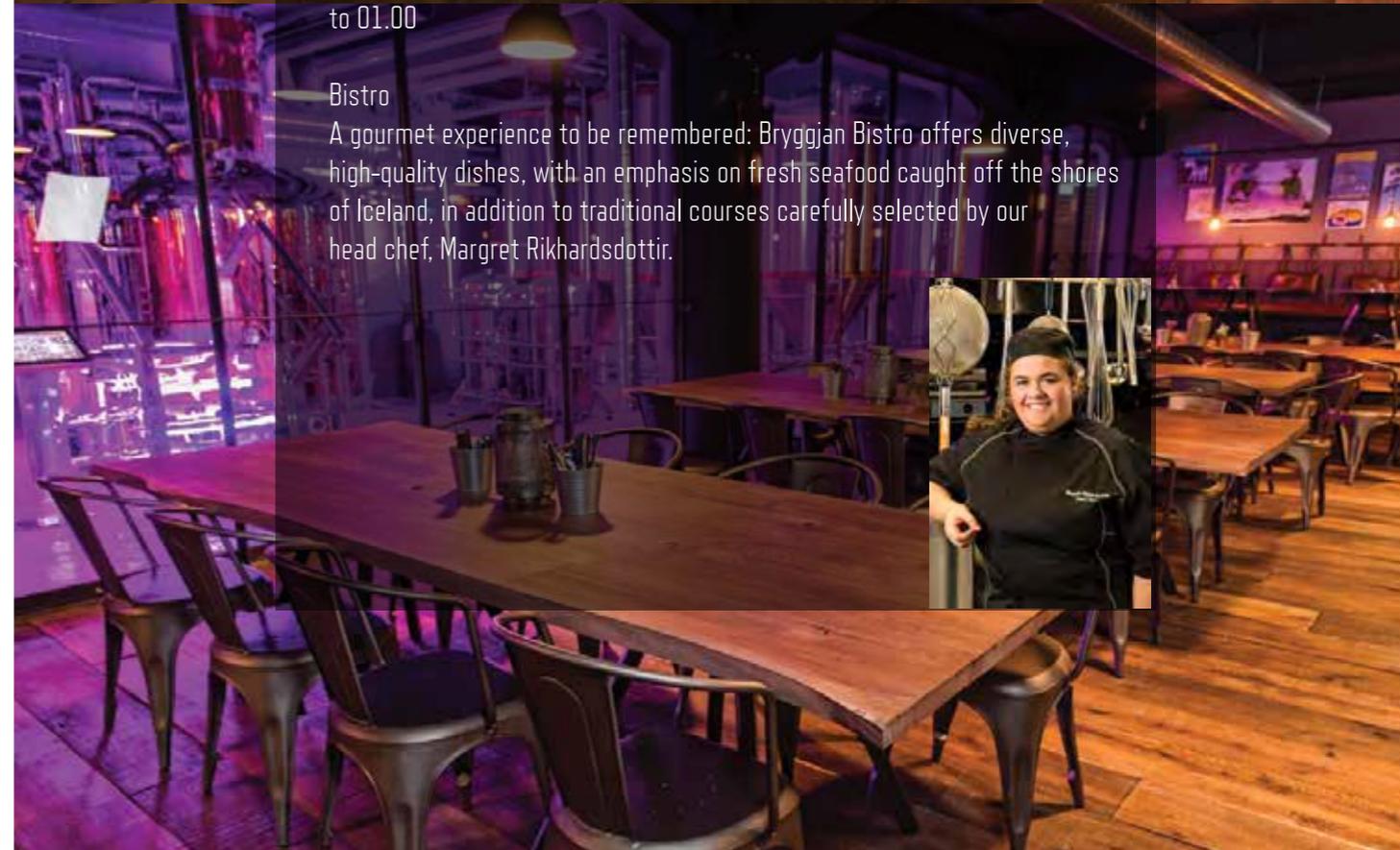


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You may have noticed the tremendous growth in tourism to Iceland. Word is getting around that this small island, halfway between America and Russia, where the sun never sets in summer, has something special about it that other destinations lack.

Icelandic culture and music is drawing thousands to festivals each year. Top orchestras vie to play in the new Harpa concert hall, which hosts an increasing number of major international conferences and conventions. Their participants are finding new, high quality hotels rising up quickly in the capital.

The air is pure. You can drink the water and relish its purity and delicious taste. Lambs feast on mountain slopes covered with untainted herbs, also used for healthy cosmetics and in meals. Restaurants around the country promote healthy food—with fresh Icelandic lamb—and fish, caught just the same day, on the menu. Local, much sought-after

beers and wines, each with its own specific flavour are produced in micro-breweries, and enjoyed in the vibrant nightlife.

All around the country, one of the oldest industries has, in recent years, seen a revolution take place. The Icelandic fishing industry has grown to become a world leader, not just in sustainable fishing but in all the ancillary support industries, with brilliant, young minds developing new technologies. Some of these companies and their advances are to be found in the special section at the end of this issue.



Einar Th. Thorsteinnsson
Managing Editor and Publisher

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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.

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

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THE GREATER *Reykjavik* AREA

One of the world's smaller capitals, Reykjavik is surrounded by the towns of Seltjarnarnes, Kópavogur, Garðabær, Álftanes (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 900s, 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 Reykjavik'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. 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.



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THE ICELANDIC SECRET TO A HEALTHY LIFE

SagaMedica focuses on natural solutions for health.

SagaMedica provides quality natural products from Icelandic medicinal herbs, with a special emphasis on angelica, which grows wild in Iceland. Some research claims that Icelandic herbs are more potent than others due to the short growing season in the summer months under the midnight sun. Today, scientific evidence backs up this claim. Research has proven that the Angelica archangelica plant is, in fact, an effective way to treat health problems such as cold symptoms, an overactive bladder, and frequent urination.



Impressive history

Angelica has a long history in Iceland. The plant was considered an asset to the Vikings who first settled in Iceland, as they knew its value full well. The root, stem seeds and leaves were all used, both as food and medicine. This is documented in an Icelandic medical book over 150 years old.

SagaMedica has been selling natural dietary supplements made from Angelica since the company was founded by academics from the University of Iceland in the year 2000. Dr. Sigmundur Guðbjarnason, a former



dean of the university, was a pioneer in research into Icelandic medicinal herbs and their health benefits. He laid the foundation for SagaMedica, which has grown steadily through the years, and now offers a range of products that improve the lives of consumers. SagaMedica combines 1100 years of history and scientific research with the pristine Icelandic nature to create innovative health products.

Harvested on Hrísey

Angelica grows wild on the island Hrísey, which is situated in the northern Eyjafjörður fjord. The soil is fertile and pure and the air is clean. In fact, Hrísey was awarded an organic

certification due to its clean, positive environment. The herb is picked by hand on the island and every mevoxisasure is taken to ensure its purity and the protection of the Icelandic nature. The process takes the natural environment into account from harvesting the herbs to the manufacturing of the final products.

The voice of Iceland

Voxis is a popular SagaMedica product that is produced from the leaves of Angelica. The throat lozenges, which are available in shops in Iceland and in the Duty Free area in Keflavik International Airport, contain antiviral phytochemicals which can help to prevent cold or flu infections. Voxis has been shown to relieve irritating coughs and has a soothing effect on sore throats. The lozenges contain menthol and eucalyptus and have a pleasant, refreshing taste.

SagaMedica's products are available for purchase in Iceland's grocery stores, pharmacies and on the company's website www.sagamedica.com. -JG

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- WELCOME TO MÝVATNSSVEIT -



THE FINE ART OF KNIFEMAKING

Bringing an Ancient Viking Tradition Into the Present since 1990

In the town of Mosfellsbær, just a 15 minutes' drive from Reykjavík, master craftsman Páll Kristjánsson (or Palli) and his co-creator Soffía Sigurðardóttir are hard at work in their rustic atelier, where they create an array of handsome knives for collectors, chefs, and all those who appreciate the workmanship that goes into a finely crafted tool.



Icelandic Artisans at Work

Damascus steel, well known for its durability and razor sharp blades, as well as stainless steel from Denmark, Germany and Sweden are choice materials favoured by Palli and Soffía. Many of the blades are Viking Age replicas decorated with finely etched designs that are then expertly paired with a handle carved by Palli. Traditional Icelandic materials are all used to create beautifully carved handles—birch, rowan, horse's hooves, reindeer antler, goat and sheep horn and even fossilised wood. Palli's knives can be found scattered throughout the world in 85 countries and as collector's items, they sometimes enjoy fierce bidding between collectors on the Internet.

The Woman's Touch

For her part, Soffía, who has worked under Palli's tutelage for several years, has created a line of beautiful professional kitchen knives and forks which are gaining in popularity. Blades for these knives come in various shapes and materials (Japanese, Damascus steel or high carbon steel) and the finely balanced handles make them a joy to use in the kitchen. Chefs, cooking schools and cooking enthusiasts tend to love to show off these one-of-a-kind handmade kitchen tools that have become something of a sought after souvenir from Iceland.

Custom-made

Should you have your own design ideas or materials that you would like to use, Palli

and Soffía are happy to work with you to produce a custom knife made to your specifications. More information can be found at their websites listed below where you can browse their collections and even special order online.

Walk-ins Welcome

Palli and Soffía's workshop can be found at Álafossvegur 29, 270 Mosfellsbær. Opening hours are 9–6, Monday through Friday, from 9–4 on Saturdays or if you are in the neighbourhood outside of those hours, you are always welcome to pop in for a chat.

Though a visit to their workshop would be well worth your time, you can also find their products available in Brynja hardware store on Laugavegur 29 in the centre of Reykjavík. *-EMV*



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VÍN OG SKEL

Icelandic and French cuisine join forces in the first mussel restaurant in Reykjavik

Ingredients from the sea have always featured prominently in Icelandic cooking, but at the newly-opened Vín og Skel, the focus is more unique. The first mussel-oriented restaurant in Reykjavik combines Icelandic ingredients, French recipes, and a creativity all its own to give new flavour to the popular shellfish. Fresh on the scene – having opened on January 2nd of this year – the mussel menu is already sophisticated and adventurous, spanning tried and true favourites such as Moules Provençale to the elegant innovation of mussels with blue cheese and hazelnuts. The restaurateur brings extensive experience to the table, and the dishes are all made in-house; some prepared in his home kitchen.

The name of the establishment translates as ‘Wine and Shell’, a phrase which perfectly encapsulates the focus of the food and reflects the neat, modern décor. The bright,

alluring colours of the mussel platters stand out against the soft greys and mint greens of the surroundings. Its open design makes the room remarkably versatile. Tables for two are an intimate setting for a date, but the booth along the wall could easily accommodate a larger party.

Mussels are a dish for lovers of variety; because we each ordered a different kind, it was easy to share. The mango chutney mussels came awash with flavour, and the classic Provençale were delightfully creamy. Neither salt nor pepper are on the table – and

neither is needed. The fresh trout was served with lemon, bringing out the pepper with which it was seasoned. Warm flax-seed bread accompanied the meal, and served to take up every drop of the rich, tangy sauce. We had just enough room for dessert: crème brûlée and chocolate mousse. Had we dined some time later, we might have faced a dilemma, as chocolate cake will soon join the French-inspired dessert menu.

There are flavours on offer for all tastes. Although it is possible to order mussels for every course – and with such variety, it is tempting – both fish and Icelandic lamb provide alternatives, and the list of options will continue to grow. The drinks selection combines the best of both regions. Vín og Skel is the only restaurant in Iceland to serve wines from the Domaine Charles Guitard in France, notably, the Rosé Pamplemousse. The wines are chosen to pair with each mussel dish, and there is also a fine range of Icelandic beers – the latter a key ingredient in Moules à l’Islandaise. As the restaurant expands its horizons, the best thing to do is to dine with friends – and try every mussel on the menu.

Vín og Skel is accessible via Austurvöllur or through the lobby of the City Centre Hotel on Austurstræti 6, and it’s open from 18:00-22:00 every night. -SP



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THE ICELANDIC PHALLOLOGICAL MUSEUM

From penises of elves to those of whales

The Icelandic Phallogological Museum in Reykjavík is without a doubt one of a kind. It contains a collection of phallic specimens that belong to various types of mammals. In the museum you can see a collection of more than 220 penises and penile parts that belong to all the land and sea mammals found in Iceland. It even has on display the penis of an old, Icelandic gentleman who died in 2011 at the age of 95.

Furthermore, the museum has between 40–50 specimens from foreign mammals including a giraffe and an elephant.

“The purpose of the museum is showing these specimens,” says the curator, Hjörtur Sigurðsson, “but it’s also a scientific museum. Many professionals visit the museum to study, like biologists and doctors. The purpose is also to educate and amuse people and of course

to lift the taboo that has been shrouding this subject for so long. It’s just a part of the anatomy; people should be able to discuss these things.”

Hjörtur says that what gets the most attention are the big things, like the penis of a sperm whale that is 1.7 meters long and weighs somewhere between 70–80 kilos. The human penis gets a lot of attention too.

For the foreigners the folklore section is popular. “They find it very funny that we can display penises from elves, trolls and the hidden people.” Regarding the hidden people: some claim they can see the hidden man’s penis; especially the women. -SJ

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REFINEMENT IN REYKJAVIK

Einar Ben Brings Style and Class to Dining in the Capital

Einar Ben is one of a select few restaurants in the highly competitive Reykjavik scene, where new, trendy places come and go on a monthly basis, that has found its way into the Icelandic psyche and has been able to maintain the delicate balance of class, comfort and top-rate food at reasonable prices that inspires customers to return.

Home of a Hero

The restaurant is, in fact, the former home of one of Iceland's greatest heroes, after whom it is named. Einar Ben was a poet and pioneer who personified the dreams and ambitions of Icelanders in the early 20th century.

It is easy to see why the restaurant has become a part of Reykjavik's culture. It retains the romanticism and grace of the Golden Age period and yet it is free of pretense and excess. You'll find none of the modern, careless, fast food rush here. The staff enjoy taking time to provide a quality service in an open, friendly manner.



Dishes With a Difference

Of course, what matters most is the food, and here, Einar Ben's reputation is well known. Its dishes are built around the classics: fish and lamb. They are justifiably proud of their menu,



from the hors d' oeuvres, the main course to the desserts and coffee drinks, the master chef creates sublime tastes which blend together for an amazing dining experience.

Fortified for the night

Up on the third floor of the house is fun surprise: Rauði barinn, Einar Ben's lounge. It's the perfect place to relax with some after-dinner drinks. Reykjavik's nightlife is legendary, so the 'Red Bar' will prepare you to start a night on the town.

Einar Ben is found on the corner of Ingólfstorg, at the end of Austurstræti, right in the city centre. -ASF



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CELEBRATING ICELANDIC NATURE THROUGH TEXTILE DESIGN

GJÓSKA WOOL ART

Textile artist Birna Kristín Friðriksdóttir walks through the pasturelands that surround her farm Brúnagerði, in the Fnjóskadalur valley, North Iceland. In summer, the countryside is full of life and bursting with energy. In winter, the profound stillness of this valley is restful and refreshing. Now, in late September, the rapid transition from summer to winter begins and it is here in the midst of all this splendour, that Birna gets her inspiration, in hefty daily doses, while working out of her studio.



100% Icelandic Craftsmanship

Her medium is textiles. Reams of knitted Icelandic wool is her canvas upon which she skillfully incorporates strands of loose unspun merino wool, interspersed with flashes of neon green or bright red/orange silk, evoking a magnificent Northern



Lights display, or the lava falls from the eruption of Eyjafjallajökull in 2010. Once the patterns are created, Birna cuts the material into shapes that will then be sewn into woollen outerwear—hats, gloves, jackets, capes & ponchos and of course sweaters, in her own inimitable style.

Inspired by Nature

After many years working as a textile teacher in her hometown of Grenivík, Birna felt the call to move into the realm of clothing design.

In 2013 Gjóska Clothing Company was set up, allowing Birna full reign to indulge her passion for clothing design. She's been going full steam ever since.

Plans for the Future

Birna hopes to export her creations to other nations where the Northern Lights are visible, such as Canada, Finland and northern Norway. Closer to home, plans are afoot to bring Northern Lights tours to her workshop in Fnjóskadalur as an exciting addition to Northern Lights tours in North Iceland.

You are welcome to visit Birna at her workshop in Fnjóskadalur, a 30-minute drive from Akureyri or to pop in to the retail shop at Skólavörðustígur 20, 101 Reykjavik to see her creations.

They make wonderful mementos of your trip to Iceland! -EMV

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 Find them on Facebook: Gjóska



WHAT'S COOKING AT THE TIN CAN FACTORY?

Language, Culture, History, Food and Fun

There's more to a country than just sights and restaurants, shopping and hotel rooms. What made the nation what it is today? Where did they come from? What did they do? How do you speak the language? What do they eat and how do they enjoy themselves? What's life really like here?

To get to know some Icelanders and find out more about life in Iceland, both individuals and groups have been meeting at the old Tin Can Factory, that has now become a centre of language, culture, history food and fun. You learn so much more when you're enjoying yourself and this is the way this school and travel centre works. Situated just behind the Chinese embassy, many people are discovering a different way to experience a country through their innovative approach.

The Reykjavik Walk

It's a small city - more the size of a large village in China, so it's easy to take in a lot of interesting sites - especially when there's a historian acting as your guide, speaking your language. You'll stand on a spot where a photo was taken years ago and, using that same photo you will be able to see how much and how quickly the town changed into a city. You'll hear stories and experience for yourself what life is like here. The relaxed style of presentation and unhurried approach gives you time to learn and enjoy yourself, at the same time.

After the walk, the group returns to the Tin Can Factory - so named because, in days past, that is what was produced in the building. It

has been totally converted now, so when the group arrives, they can take in spectacular views across the bay while they enjoy different Icelandic foods. The day tour will have a great time baking Icelandic pancakes with traditional pans, tasting a variety of Icelandic foods and seasonal snacks.

The Evening tour gets to enjoy a delicious meat soup, made with lamb and flavoured with garlic and other herbs. To go with it, there is Icelandic beer, including Einstök beer for the ladies. This is a special, one-of-a-kind beer. Guests also have the opportunity to try pancakes, shark that melts in the mouth and homemade marmalade on fresh bread. Another speciality are the refreshing and healthy herbal teas, made with hand-picked herbs picked on the mountain slopes.

There is also a very popular family-friendly tour especially geared for children, with history prepared for their level. Together, they make pancakes and enjoy toasted angelica with garlic on bread. It provides a really fun activity for the family to do together.

Meet the Natives

For visitors to Iceland, there is so much more than simply taking coach tours out to see the beautiful natural wonders. There is all that makes up the general knowledge of the country. There is the history - the origins of today's inhabitants. Then there's the culture - totally different from most other countries you might visit. The language, one of the oldest living languages in Europe, has influenced both the country's history and culture and has its own



alphabet with characters you won't find in nearly any other languages of the world. What sounds do they make? What do they mean?

Learning a few phrases opens up a whole new understanding of the country and, when you meet some of the local people, communicating with them in their own language and understanding at least a little of what they tell you in return adds a different dimension to your visit and can lead to life-long friendships developing.

The 'Meet the Natives' tour offers all this and more. The same food options that the Reykjavik Walk provides add that special extra touch to this tour that will make you feel, as one visitor put it, "I wish I had done it on the first day here, instead of leaving it until the last moment".

These tours are a fun and fascinating way to learn about the country and the nation in an informal and relaxed way - just what you need after travelling half-way around the world to get here. A Chinese speaking guide can be booked in advance and all the guides have been trained at the University of Iceland's Guide School. You can get much more of an idea of the tours by checking their Facebook page. Just search for "Reykjavik Walk and Meet the Natives". -ASF

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LEATHER DESIGNER

Ladies handbags, earrings and necklaces

Quality Icelandic design and leather handcraft is much sought after. “My first leather design was a handbag painted with colourful artwork and patterns,” says Guðrún Stefánsdóttir, a successful independent architect who found a second career in creative leather designs. Guðrún designs leather handbags and now she’s added necklaces and earrings to her Ark Art accessory collection. “I wanted to use the leather cut-offs for something useful, when I came up with the idea to use them to make jewellery—earrings and necklaces.”

Guðrún’s Ark Art leather jewellery is recognisable by her use of thin leather rings or squares and use of colours. It is a sophisticated yet simple design, skilfully using geometric shapes and colours.

Guðrún graduated from the Royal School of Architecture in Denmark in 1986. After

working at an architect’s office, she started her own business.

“I’ve worked on some amazing projects, ranging from large buildings to single family homes. My favourite projects are those where I design everything from A-Z for private homes. Those projects would typically involve the house and interior design, the landscaping around the house and the furniture inside.”

The Ark Art collection is available at the National Art Gallery, Snorrastofa in Reykholt and directly from Guðrún.

More information can be found on Facebook: Ark.art leather design. -NHH



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BRINGING ART TO THE PEOPLE

Engilberts Offers Inventive Designs that Feature the Work of Jón Engilberts

Engilberts is a dynamic design company that cherishes the work of one of Iceland’s most beloved artists, Jón Engilberts. Jón was a very accomplished and distinguished artist who won the Van Gogh prize in 1939, and was given the Order of the Falcon from the president of Iceland in 1961. The owner of the company, Greta Engilberts, is Jón’s granddaughter. She owns the rights to his work and wants to celebrate his memory by printing his work onto various design

products. The goal is to allow Jón’s art to live on and her dedication is to bringing Jón’s art to the people.

Diverse Product Line

Engilberts, which has an online shop at www.engilberts-honnun.is, offers varied product lines with something for everyone. The company creates delicate scarves, buffs and pillows that feature Jón’s printed artwork as well as unisex T-shirts and fibre cloths to polish glasses. Stylish collars made



from Icelandic goat skin and handmade jewellery that incorporates ostrich and raven feathers are also available. Each piece is carefully handcrafted with great care. Engilberts’ workshop, which holds the entire collection, is open to the public and the designer loves welcoming visitors! Design pieces are for sale at the workshop as well as at the Blue Lagoon, Rammagerðin, Listasafn Íslands, the flower shop in Harpa called Upplifun, onboard Wow Air flights, at Sirka in Akureyri, and at Skjaldarvík Guesthouse in North Iceland. -JG



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NORDIC CHIC AT ITS BEST

Modern Icelandic Fashion Brand Farmers Market Makes Waves in Grandi

Farmers Market is an Icelandic design company and clothing brand that features designs that mix modernity with classic Icelandic heritage. Natural fibres, muted colours and unrivaled craftsmanship are at the centre of each piece of the collection.

Founded in 2005 by a young artist couple—a designer and a musician, Farmers Market has become a staple in Icelandic fashion, found in the closets of artists, musicians, everyday Icelanders and hip tourists. The clothes are impeccably styled with pieces suitable for city life while sustaining the outdoor elements. “We place ourselves at a junction,” said Farmers Market designer Bergþóra Guðnadóttir. “A place where heritage meets modernity, the national meets the international, and the countryside meets the city. We find this an exciting place to explore.”

The brand focuses on sustainability,



respect for the environment and the use of natural fabrics. Farmers Market works with materials including local Icelandic wool to waxed cotton fabrics from British

Millerrain to raw Indian silk. The use of synthetic materials is kept to a minimum.

While knitwear is at the core of the brand with luxurious cardigans, sweaters



Farmers Market
— ICELAND —

and dresses; Farmers Market also creates quality pants, skirts, tops and underwear for women. For men, the brand offers knitwear along with shirts, pants, vests and underwear. Scarves and hats are also a must for men and women. Adorable sweaters and jumpsuits are on offer for children.

Farmers Market’s flagship shop, Farmers & Friends, is situated in the up-and-coming Fishpacking District in Grandi. Just a 20-minute walk from the city centre, Grandi is home to a growing number of businesses including a microbrewery, ice cream shop, restaurants and gourmet butcher. Farmers & Friends is the perfect place to purchase clothing and accessories, while browsing a perfectly curated selection of CDs and LPs, books, and other goods. It’s a fun shop to spend some time while exploring the charming old harbour district. The shop is open Monday-Friday 10am–6pm and Saturdays 11am–4pm. —JG



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www.farmersmarket.is





JOE & THE JUICE GETTING JUICED IN ICELAND

Joe & the Juice is an on-trend coffee shop/ juice bar that opened in January 2015 at Keflavik International Airport. The concept answers today's traveller needs for a quick pick-me-up in the form of great espresso drinks, freshly pressed smoothies and juices, and a variety of sandwiches prepared on the spot.

A Winner Is Born

Created by the Danish entrepreneur Kaspar Basse, Joe & the Juice won the prestigious FAB Awards in the category of 'Best Airport Coffee Shop of the Year' in Copenhagen for 2013 and 2014.

Whew! Hot!

The popular brand, known for its attractive 'juicers' and hip electronic dance music, can be found all over Denmark, and has been popping up elsewhere in Europe—Norway, Sweden, Germany, the UK, France and more recently, here in Iceland. According to Joe & the Juice's Icelandic manager Daníel Kári Stefánsson, "People come for the atmosphere as well as for the healthy drinks, and it's been going even better than we initially expected. The reaction from the Icelandic public has been great".

Flavour, Nutrition and Hydration

Unmistakable names for freshly pressed juice combinations such as 'Sex Me



Up'—passion fruit, ginger and apple, 'Joe's Green Kiss'—spinach, ginger and apple and one called 'Hell of a Nerve'—strawberry, elderberry and banana, are sure to grab your attention. For a distinctly Danish touch, Joe's sandwiches are made with traditionally baked rye bread, using flavourful combinations of fillings such as Serrano ham, mozzarella and tomato, and a touch of pesto.

Size Matters

Joe & the Juice uses a unique blend of coffee beans that have been specially cultivated in South America. There's no extra charge if you want to up your caffeine intake with



a double shot in your latte and you choose your cup size—in pink, purple, yellow or grey. How about a ginger shot for a natural boost of energy? Coming right up! Just ask!

Where to Get Juiced in Iceland

You can find Joe & the Juice at Reykjavik's Kringlan Shopping Mall, Kópavogur's Smáralind Shopping Mall, Laugar Fitness Centre and Keflavik Airport's check-in lounge. A new Joe & the Juice will open in Keflavik airport's departure lounge on March 15th. This is one place to check out!

-EMV



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www.joeandthejuice.is



CATCH THE NORTHERN LIGHTS ALL YEAR AROUND

Aurora Reykjavik'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 Reykjavik's Northern Lights Center, where the Northern Lights are always on display.

A Unique Experience

The centre is the unique creation of four enterprising young Icelanders who recognised the need for just such a place—a kind of one-stop-shop for all things Northern Lights. Located on the far side of Reykjavik's Old Harbour, the centre serves both educational and inspirational purposes. Here you can read up on the auroras through 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 Reykjavik'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.



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JOURNEY TO THE INSIDE OF A GLACIER

Experience a Glacier from the Inside with Into the Glacier

Exploring the surface of a glacier is thrilling, but actually getting inside one is a once in a lifetime experience. The staff behind Into the Glacier offers travellers that rare opportunity. Situated in the western part of Langjökull, the second largest ice cap in Iceland, and 1,260 metres above sea level, the ice cave stretches 40 metres deep underground giving visitors the chance to see ice that's been forming over centuries. The ice cave stretches more than 550 metres into the glacier.

Trip to the Top

The classic guided tour begins in Húsafell, which is 130km from Reykjavik, when guests board one of the most unique vehicles ever made, a customised super truck. The truck, which seats up to 35 passengers, was acquired from NATO, where it was originally used as a cruise missile launcher. The 20km trip up to the glacier is an experience in itself in good weather or bad. Clear days offer exquisite views of the vast icy desert, while poor weather conditions reveal the power and unpredictability of Icelandic weather.

Enter the Glacier

Once inside, travellers, with crampons attached to their feet, get to experience



something very few have seen. Lit by LED lights, guests begin to explore the tunnel, with a knowledgeable guide leading small groups, sharing many interesting facts about Iceland's glaciers. Travellers are treated to views of gaping crevices as they look above. Additionally, there is a special area in the cave, which developers named 'the chapel', with LED-lit blocks of ice supporting

wooden beams, which serves as a venue for weddings, marriage proposals and concerts.

Into the Glacier offers daily departures from Húsafell at 12:30pm and the tour lasts about four hours during the winter. Day tours from Reykjavik to the ice cave are available as well. For those that would like to treat themselves to a meal, you can buy a scrumptious lunch at Hotel Húsafell before you head out on your excursion. Be sure to consider Into the Glacier on your next trip to Iceland!

-JG

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THE WARMTH OF NORDIC FUR

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

Feldur 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 experience the very best of fur products.

Alternatively, there are a number of stores that keep his designs in their collections. Among these located in the centre of Reykjavik are Rammagerðin, Geysir, Mýrin and Ravens. Some stores in Kringlan and Smáralind shopping

centres also carry his products, as does the Duty Free shop in Keflavík 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

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 feldur@feldur.is
 www.feldur.is

ANCESTORS' KNOWLEDGE

Healthy Food Direct from the Earth



In the old days, people still had knowledge about nature's richness. They used what Mother Earth provided them: picked leaves and herbs, or searched the shores for the ocean's supplies such as seaweed. The shore is a garden; you just have to know where to harvest and what to collect.

A Pioneer

Biologist Eyjólfur Friðgeirsson knows nature pretty well. He is passionate about the harvesting of nature, which he sees as a food source and a treasure for delicacies. In 2005 he started his company Íslensk hollusta (Icelandic Wholesomeness), aiming at the use of natural Icelandic products in their own taste and freshness, such as cheese and a varieties of herbal tea. Nothing is added or changed in the production of the products.

Eyjólfur is a pioneer in his field in Iceland. He was the first one to revive

the idea of using seaweed as a dried snack and adding Iceland moss, angelica and birch leaves into cheese making. He was also the first to create a bath salt from Icelandic geothermal salt, using seaweed and Mount Hekla pumice. The country is rich in natural resources when it comes to nutriment. His task was to reawaken folk knowledge about how to harness these gifts of the earth. The idea proved to be a success, and today his goods can be purchased in souvenir shops around Iceland. Northern Lights Salt (a seasoned salt made according to his special recipe) gift packages are available in Icelandair's Saga Shop on board your aircraft.

Hand-Picked and Healthy

The hand-picked Iceland moss is ready for use in tea or porridge. In the old days, seaweed was consumed in times of famine. Today we

know that there is hardly a more nutrient food. By adding seaweed to your daily diet, you can be sure that you are consuming ingredients from unspoiled Icelandic waters. Homemade sauces, juices and jams made from traditional materials are a treat. Pamper your body with a rich bath salt, or treat yourself with Icelandic Herbal Tea and Arctic Thyme Tea from Íslensk hollusta. Try the Viking Salt, produced with an ancient salt production method. The light and compact Seven Spices Gift Packet containing tea, salt and seaweed is an excellent contribution to your cuisine.

"Mother Earth knows what is best; we pick it for you, and you just have to take it home," says Eyjólfur. -DT



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Do you love surprises? A trip to Iceland's most popular restaurant just might give you a pleasant surprise. We offer a wide variety of delicious food, and drinks to go with every mood – at a price you won't see elsewhere in Iceland. The store is easily accessible, right next to Route 1 on the way to and from the airport. We're hard to miss, just keep an eye out for the blue box!

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THE PLACE TO STAY IN GRINDAVÍK

Guesthouse Borg offers economical comfort in a friendly house

In most countries, the opportunity to experience life in a fishing town has all but disappeared. Not so in Iceland, where Grindavík is one of the busiest. Situated a few kilometres from the world-famous Blue Lagoon, 20 minutes from Keflavík's International airport and 40 minutes from the capital, the town is packed with history going back as far as the first settlers.

A geological hotspot, the area offers such a wide array of other tours, sights and experiences that one holiday is not enough.

Guesthouse Borg is an ideal place to stay, meet interesting people and enjoy the facilities and fun the town offers. It caters for individuals, couples, families and groups of up to 16 people in a clean,



modestly-priced homestay accommodation. You'll find a full kitchen where you can cook your own meals, a laundry and a computer to go online. Breakfasts are provided on a self-service basis. Owners Björk and Magnús make this a comfortable home from which to launch out to explore the area. -ASF

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explaining the area and showing them on a map the best places to visit.

It's in the evenings and on weekends that things really take off, though. It's a small place but packed with character. A piano in the corner is often pressed into use, making it a fun and inspiring evening. Whether you are a local or just visiting, you'll feel at home.

Bryggjan is open from 8am-11pm on weekdays and from 9am-midnight or so if there is a lot of action, on weekends. Bryggjan can also be found on Facebook by the name of "Bryggjan Kaffihús". -ASF

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GRINDAVÍK'S HARBOUR CAFÉ

The reputation of the Bryggjan netmakers' café is spreading fast

Walk down by Grindavík's harbour and you may see the nets. Then you know you're there. Bryggjan's main work is repairing fishing nets and lines—nets that would completely cover the nearby mountain and lines that would stretch way beyond Reykjavík, over 50km away.

This is a fishing town and the café is a fishermen's café—though, with the

growing number of visitors from all over the world finding it, it is quickly becoming the café of choice in the area. Little wonder, as the help and friendliness of the owners is only matched by the delicious food they offer. My suggestion: don't leave without having a bowl of their soup. It's really good.

While I was there, one of the owners was spending time with visiting tourists,

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ICELAND IN A DAY

Reykjavik Excursions
tour to Reykjanes
reveals the country



When you visit this country, you want to make the most of it. This tour encapsulates so many aspects of Iceland in one day that it's almost a no-brainer. Here's a summary.

Over the mountains

Leaving Reykjavik, you're heading towards the mountains, with their columns of steam billowing into the morning sky. It's a clear reminder that Iceland was born in the fires of volcanic eruptions. They leave the rocks burning hot for generations—a feature that Icelanders have capitalised on to create clean geothermal energy that both heats their houses and powers their society. A geothermal power station sits at the base of the mountains, with pipes snaking out into the distance.

Crossing the heath on the mountain plateau can be impossible at times in the winter storms but its stark beauty shows



how, despite the harsh conditions, plant life flourishes even here. Coming down the twisting road off the plateau reveals a view all the way to the Westman Islands and the glaciers beyond as the coach passes through the little garden village of Hveragerði to the first stop.

Fákasel—the Icelandic horse

Other tours take you here for the spectacular display but today, you can enjoy a visit with the Icelandic horse—the faithful beast without whom life on the island would not have been possible. Small and strong, loving but spirited, the horse is a treasured part of Icelandic society.



Eyrbakki—a trip into history

The next stop at Eyrbakki gives a clearer picture of what life was like in last couple of centuries. A former trading centre, many of the original houses have been faithfully preserved and kept up.



Strandkirkja

Iceland's strong Christian heritage has enabled its people to stoically face disaster and tragedy, plague and poverty. Its churches, eloquent in their beauty and simplicity, are a testament to their faith. On the Reykjanes' south coast, Strandkirkja is a classic example.

Krísuvík

From the peace of the church and the village, now it's time to get a little idea of the power of the forces that formed the country. Don't get too close to these mud pools, though, that's boiling mud and steam heated by burning hot volcanic rocks. Even the beautiful lakes, with their rich colours are bubbling steam. If you have any doubt about the seas here, it will be dispelled at Hópsnes, where the wreck of a ship, flung about 100 metres onto the land is a stark reminder of its power.

Grindavík feeds the world fish

It's not often nowadays that you can get to see a fishing village in full swing, with

all the harbour action. Fishing has been taking place here since the Settlement in the 900s yet the fish still haven't learnt and the catches are still plentiful. Now, the fish can be on a restaurant table in New York within 24 hours of being caught and fresh-frozen.

Fishermen are a breed of their own and you'll get to savour a little of that atmosphere over lunch at the Bryggjan restaurant right down on the harbourside. I can vouch for their soups: they are the best! It's good to fortify yourself as you're going to face ghosts, stand on two continents, amongst other experiences, before you reach the warm, soothing waters of the Blue Lagoon. (You'll need to buy entry tickets if you want to experience the warm, blue oasis amidst volcanos and lava, and catch one of the later coaches back to your hotel).

Home to your hotel

Whether you take advantage of the stop at the Blue Lagoon or want to get back to see more of Reykjavik, the coach will make sure you are dropped at the right hotel, so you can enjoy your evening in the town while reviewing all your otherworldly photos from the trip.

- ASF



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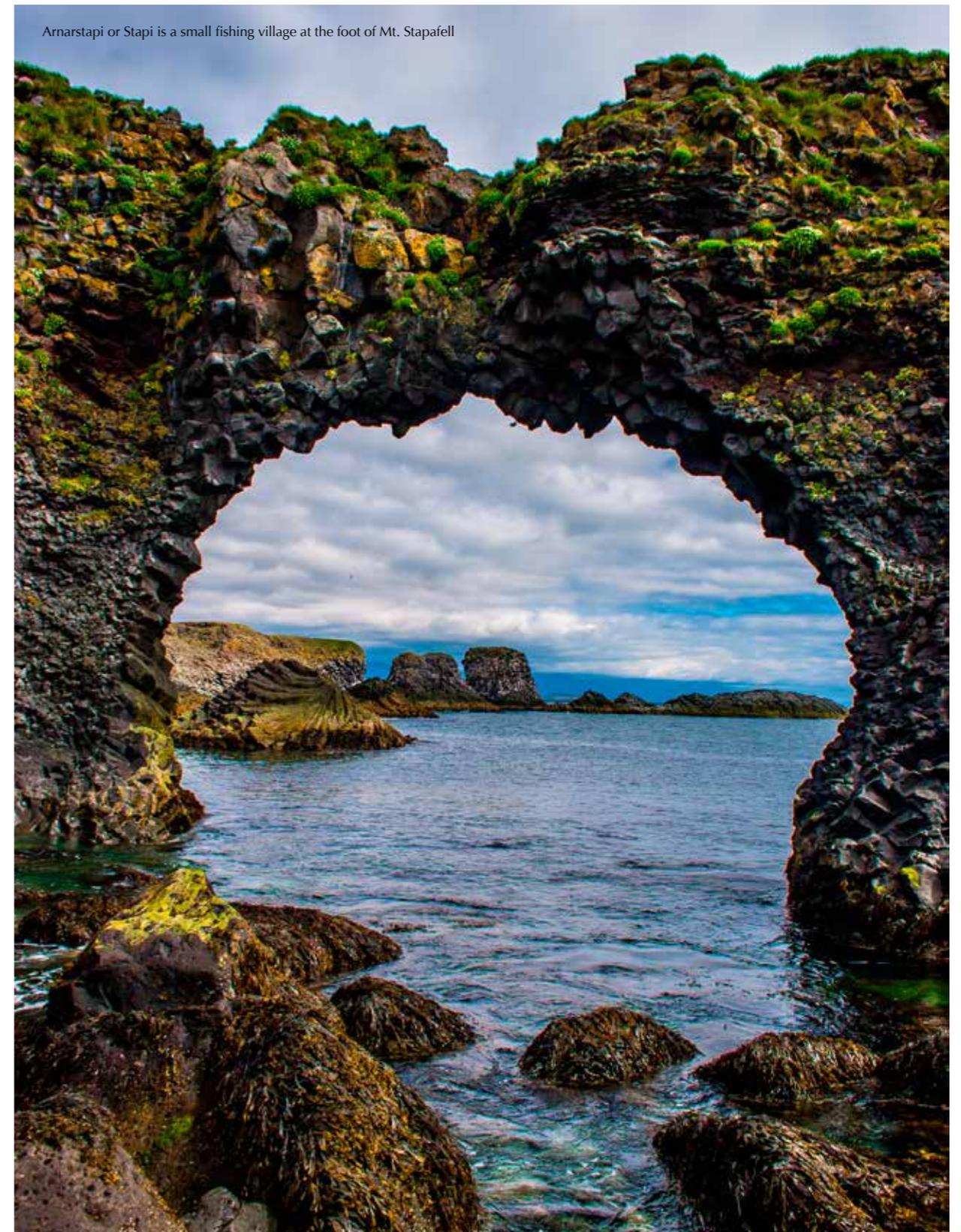
WEST *Iceland*



#WESTICELAND

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.



Arnarstapi or Stapi is a small fishing village at the foot of Mt. Stapafell



Grundarfjörður is a small town situated on the north of the Snæfellsnes peninsula in the west of Iceland.



Stefánshellir cave lies in West Iceland in the Hallmundarhraun lava field. This lava field was created during the eruption in 930 AD and contains several large lava fields. Some of the the largest and deepest caves in Iceland are found here. Stefánshellir is around 1,520 metres long

DELVING INTO HISTORY

The Settlement Center in Borgarnes Takes You on a Trip Through Time

Some 1100 years ago, Iceland was a place covered with impenetrable forests and dangerous bogs, and it took groups of bold men to cross the rough North Atlantic sea, to discover the remote island and determine to settle there in order to start a new life. They were the first to name rivers, mountains and places that are world famous today, and many farms are still able to trace their history back to the days of the Settlement. As the most important source of Iceland's history, the Sagas are a collection of exciting stories built around these first settlers. Understanding Iceland completely means paying tribute to their achievements, which made the country what it is today.

A Warehouse of Exhibitions

In 2006 an Icelandic couple, actor Kjartan Ragnarsson and news reporter Sigríður Margrét Guðmundsdóttir, decided to dedicate a project to the story of the Settlement. They found a charming old warehouse in Borgarnes in West Iceland and started building up two



exhibitions on the brave pioneers who followed their curiosity into the unknown.

Provided with an audio guide available in 15 languages, visitors find themselves in an elaborate labyrinth that displays history in a really exciting way. Step onto a moving boat and get the feeling of how it must have been to cross the ocean in an open boat! Listen to stories, while figures behind the glass silently watch over you. On the lower floor the

exhibition of Saga hero and settler's son, Egill Skallagrímsson, takes you right into the story, with Egill's spirit at your steps.

Transformed through Art

Visual artists from Iceland and abroad contributed their work to both exhibitions, transforming it into a unique experience. Each audio tour takes 30 minutes, leaving the visitor with the deep desire to learn more. The Settlement Center's shop serves as a treasure chest of books on Saga literature, as well as Viking-themed handicrafts and woolen items created by local artists. Take your time to complete your visit with a dinner in the cosy restaurant that catches the atmosphere of the house perfectly and boasts a range of sophisticated Icelandic food at reasonable prices.

-DT/ASF



The Settlement Center

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REAL LIFE FANTASY FROM BREIÐAFJÖRÐUR BAY

Láki Tours takes you to meet the whales and more



Anyone who has met them will agree that whales are amazing animals—especially seen close up. Whether they be orcas, humpbacks, minke or pilot whales—or dolphins, for that matter, catching a sight of them is a real experience. Láki Tours offers you just that, leaving from Ólafsvík in the summertime (Summer Whale Watching) and from Grundarfjörður in winter. (Winter Whale Watching).

Basking in the Bay

Grundarfjörður and Ólafsvík lie on the mystical Breiðafjörður Bay—a fantasy world of countless islands, birds, fish, dolphins and whales. They are sighted almost daily through the year here. Recently, for instance, 100 pilot whales put on a show for visitors aboard Láki's boat. Such a high rate of sighting a range of these maritime creatures makes this area tops for both experience and photo opportunities. The tour to the whales leaves from Ólafsvík.

Sea-angling and Bird Watching

While the whales are very popular, the tour to the islands to see the birdlife and catch some fish is not to be missed. Sea angling is a lot of fun; if you haven't tried it—and if you catch your dinner



yourself you can certainly guarantee its freshness. You're in the perfect position to spot any whales or dolphins that are curious enough to see what you're up to and if you're taking their dinner!

The photographers on this tour will have a feast of their own, with so many photo opportunities as the roughly 2-hour tour from Grundarfjörður on Láki, is an experience that many want to repeat. During the summer months, when the evening sun paints the sky red, the bay takes on a wholly different, romantic character. Sea angling in this setting is quite special, too.

Last but not least, there are special one-hour puffin and seabird tours only in the summertime, leaving from Grundarfjörður. A slow sailing on Láki offers the maximum potential to see these furry creatures in their nesting environment as nature reserve on a nearby island, Melrakkay attracts hundreds of puffins and other seabirds.

Check Láki Tours out on Facebook, where beautiful photographs tell half the story and 'diaries' following every trip are on display.

Stay by the Bay

While Láki Tours are an amazing experience, the area has more to offer. It is very popular for hikers, photographers, bird watchers and horse riders, as all these activities are available—not to mention tours up onto the famous Snæfells glacier. No one has yet replicated Jules Verne's 'Journey to the Centre of the Earth' but the glacier is spectacular.

Then, open since early 2015, Láki Hafnarkaffi café is another treat and just the place to visit after a whale watching trip. Refreshments are great quality, soup of the



day is always available and the menu offers anything from pizzas to paninis to fishpies—over to a wide range of cakes and the coffee is marvellous!

Láki Hafnarkaffi can also be found on Facebook, as well as Láki Tours.

Hótel Framnes

Staying at the Hótel Framnes, situated right by the bay, is a very good choice, as it perfectly located for whale watching. It is a comfortable, homey hotel that provides very friendly and personal service. You can watch the sky changing over the bay in the evening as you relax in the hot pot. Its restaurant offers delicious freshly-caught fish on its gourmet menu. The restaurant at Hótel Framnes is open from January to the middle of October between 18:30–21:00 and winter opening times vary according to demand, so please contact the hotel for details. Open all year round, the hotel makes a very good base for all your activities on and around the peninsula. —ASF/SP

Láki Tours
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 +354 546 6808
 lakitours@gmail.com
 www.lakitours.com




LJÓMALIND FARMER'S MARKET

Not to Be Missed! - Authentic Icelandic Products

Ljómalind Farmer's Market specialises in exclusive regional products. Small batch production of items such as traditional skyr from a local creamery, fresh farm eggs, dried fish, grass-fed beef and smoked salmon from local producers ensure top quality products. Sugar free chocolate candies, skyr confect, jams, ice cream and a variety of handcrafts and woolen knitwear, make unique gifts or snacks for the road. Unlike the big supermarkets, small production sometimes means limited quantities so you never know what you will find on offer at the market, which makes the experience all the more



exciting. Open year round including bank holidays.



Open every day as follows:

Winter opening hours: From 1.00pm to 6.00 pm. Summer opening hours: From 11.00am to 6.00pm.

Location: beside the Borgarnes Tourist Information Office. —EMV

Ljómalind Farmers Market
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 +354 437 1400
 ljomalind@ljomalind.is
 www.ljomalind.is





BORGARNES IN BORGARFJÖRÐUR

The Heart & Soul of Iceland's Cherished Sagas

Whether you're off to visit Akureyri, the Westfjords, or Snæfellsnes Peninsula, the journey to Iceland's north always includes a stop in the village of Borgarnes. It's time to stretch one's legs, have a bite to eat and soak up nature's magnificence in this most picturesque spot, where mountains, sea and sky

converge... and to take time out for some in-depth exploring of this important historical region that is oft overlooked.

The town offers wealth of activities and services that you would normally not expect to find in urban area of this size. There are museums, restaurants, art galleries, guesthouses and of course one of Iceland's



finest bakeries. So, when you are travelling through Iceland, be sure to take your time and explore this historical district where the Icelandic sagas come to life and the nature consumes you with its quiet grandeur. —EMV

SOAK UP SNÆFELLSNES PENINSULA

*Kast Guesthouse
provides accommodation,
camping and nature*



The silver and white lines of Kast Guesthouse stand out in stark contrast to the earthy tones of the surrounding nature here on the south shore of Snæfellsnes Peninsula. To the south, the waters of Faxaflói Bay lap gently upon the shore and to the north, craggy rhyolite mountains rise up directly behind the guesthouse. In the distance, the glacier-topped Snæfellsnes Volcano sits serenely in all its splendour, just waiting to be explored.

Sleep in Heavenly Peace

Family-run Kast Guesthouse opened for business in 2011 but recently added an additional house to their accommodation. Known for great atmosphere and hospitality, this hidden gem offers both double, triple and family rooms, all spacious yet cosy. All 27 rooms (21 with ensuite bath and 6 with shared facilities) are equipped with soft white bed linens, modern bathrooms and comfortable double beds, ensuring you have a restful night's sleep in the absolute peace and quiet of the Icelandic countryside.

Swim in the Sparkling Waters of Lýsuhólslaug

Just a few minutes walk from the guesthouse is the Lýsuhólslaug swimming pool; one of the few pools in the world where you can



bathe in naturally carbonated geothermal water with not a drop of chlorine. The water is rich in minerals and its healing properties are especially effective for eczema and psoriasis. At winter time the opening hours are irregular but they try to keep it open when weather allows, so look them up on Facebook to keep tabs on the opening hours.

Horse riding and fishing

The guesthouse offers guided horse riding tours from one to three hours long in the surrounding area, and relatively inexpensive fishing licenses can be arranged for fishing in nearby lakes.

Wake up to freshly baked bread

A light and typical Icelandic breakfast is served in the main dining room every



morning from 7.00 to 10.00 and a variety of breads are baked daily on the premises. During the day, the café is open for snacks and sandwiches and, in the evening, a basic, fixed menu is served from 19.00 to 22.00.

The centrally located guesthouse is approximately 2 hours drive from Reykjavik and a 40-minute drive from Stykkishólmur. Open year round, Kast Guesthouse welcomes you. *-EMV*



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VIKING BEER FOR THE WORLD

Brugghús Steðja brews beer for every occasion

Bring together a Viking farmer, a German brewer, pure Icelandic spring water and the innovation that Vikings are famous for and you have an award-winning phenomenon: a range of unique beers from one of Iceland's youngest breweries.

Based in West Iceland, not far from the town of Borgarnes, the Brugghús Steðja brewery produces a whole range of beers, some of which are designed for specific seasons. They are not bound by traditional recipes but have come up with highly unusual creations that have to be tasted and savoured.

Take, for instance, the Easter beer that counts cocoa and Icelandic seaweed as ingredients; Summer beer that uses New Zealand's citrus hops; Strawberry beer that is made with pure strawberries; October beer, a bock style of beer made with pumpkin seeds from Austria or the Christmas beer and Icelandic Northern Lights beer—very dark, malted beers with licorice, fitting for the dark nights of winter.

Another seasonal beer, with its own unique flavour, is the Hvalur 2, specially



brewed for the Thorri season in February. Pagan Vikings celebrated during these dark days with a festival honouring Thor, the mighty god of thunder. It's a festival that has been passed down through history to the present day. Icelanders eat ram's

testicles, soured whale fat, fermented shark and other 'delicacies' during this month at parties held throughout the country.

The Hvalur 2 beer is brewed with similar ingredients to provide a unique taste for this equally unique festival. The company takes fresh testicles from a fin whale, smokes them in the traditional Icelandic way, using dried sheep dung, with one testicle in each brew. This gives the beer its own special flavour—as well as a slightly meaty taste.

So unusual is this beer that the company has received orders from all parts of the world for it. Some believe its ingredients are like a natural viagra, producing positive effects on an individual's sex drive and potency. If proven true, Iceland will have to embark on a rapid fin whale breeding programme! Judging from the demand for the beer, they had better start soon. Smart entrepreneurs are advised to contact the company right away to ensure their supply.

As any connoisseur of beer knows, the whole experience is important. The bottle and the label set the stage for the climax. The labels are designed by an award-winning designer. The label for Hvalur 2, for instance, is in the shape of a whale and, on the back is a poem from the Hávamál, one of the ancient Viking poems.

These tasty, unique beers can be found at the Icelandic 'Vinbúðin' or wine shop and at selected bars in Iceland. The company also ships worldwide to individuals, companies, hotels and restaurants. Nothing creates interest more than an Icelandic beer in the heart of China. *-ASF*



Steðji Brewery
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WELCOMING GUESTS FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD

Surrounded by powerful glaciers and beautiful sights

The magnificent two-story building of Hótel Húsafell is located in an area characterised by rich history and natural wonders such as lava formations, mountain springs, hot water, rushing glacial rivers and extraordinary animal and birdlife.

Luxury All Around

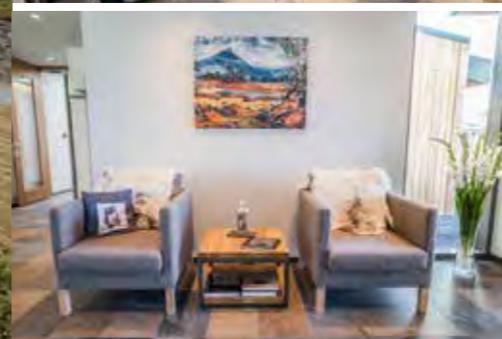
Hótel Húsafell opened their doors to visitors from around the world on the 15th July 2015. Designed as an outdoor activity centre for the Borgarbyggð area, the building offers facilities servicing hikers and others involved with activities such as caving, angling and glacier tours.

Connected to a square that opens to the swimming pool, the golf course, the service centre, and the bistro, Hótel Húsafell also offers an exciting location for meetings and conferences. On either side of the centre are two buildings with thirty-six spacious rooms, including six deluxe rooms, each with a living room, grand bathroom, shower, double sink and bath tub.

Hótel Húsafell uses only 100% natural energy produced on the site. The electricity comes from small hydro power plants which are driven by crystal clear spring water. Additionally, the hot water heating up the hotel and geothermal baths comes from nearby mountains. Guests are



encouraged to benefit from this natural wonder by soaking in the steaming water, as this long-held Icelandic tradition will leave everyone feeling fresh and completely invigorated.



Húsafell Area

Known for its mild weather, the region offers surroundings and activities which cater to all groups of people; regardless of whether guests prefer to relax, have an action packed adventure or spend time with family outdoors. The land of Húsafell reaches up to the Eiríksjökull and Langjökull glaciers and stands in the middle of the Hallmundarhraun lava field, 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.

In the hinterland is Arnarvatnsheiði, an area with abundant good fishing lakes and the remote Kaldidalur valley connecting Húsafell to Þingvellir National Park.

A short distance away is the centre for glacier activity in Langjökull. Fancy marrying in an ice cave? That can be arranged!

Musical Art in Stone

For those interested in Icelandic art and music, the artist Páll Guðmundsson lives and works on the premises. He has carved many faces on rocks in the gorge behind the farm and with his amazing ability to work with stones, he even worked with the Icelandic band Sigur Rós as a musician—with a unique idiophone, a large xylophone-like instrument he made of stones, called a Steinharpa.

Location and Hours

The hotel is located an hour and forty minutes' drive from Reykjavik while the drive from Keflavík airport is about two hours and twenty minutes. Wireless internet

is free for guests at the hotel and breakfast is served in the restaurant from 8 to 10am.

The restaurant is open from 8–10am, 11:30–6pm and 6–10pm. Then the bar is open from 11pm to midnight. Geothermal baths and hot tubs are on the premises, free of charge and open all day for hotel guests—and even open outside formal hours upon request!

Hótel Húsafell, truly an amazing experience, surrounded by Icelandic nature at its best. -SP

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WESTFJORDS *Iceland*



#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.



Rafn Sig.-



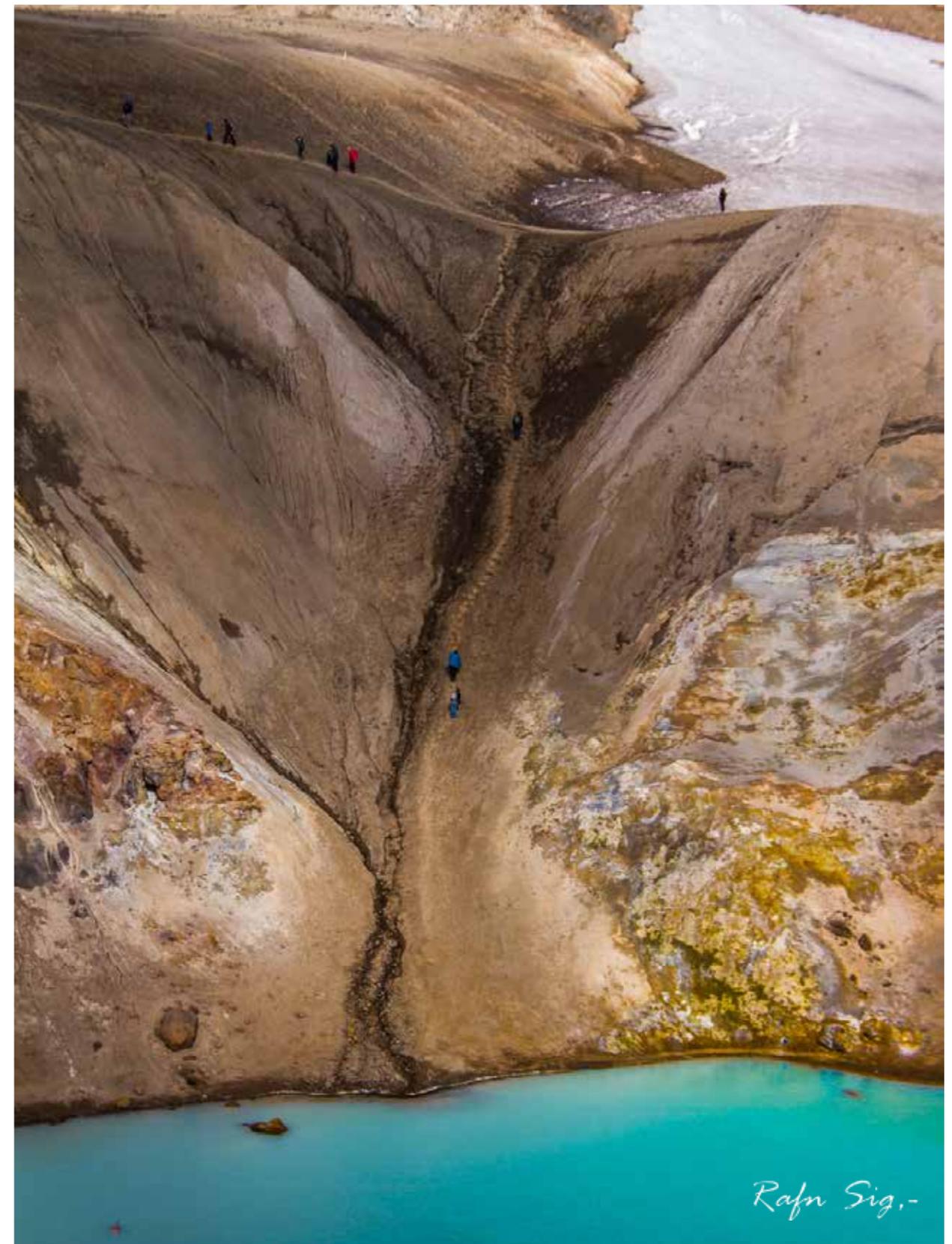
NORTH *Iceland*

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.



#NORTHICELAND



Rafn Sig.

Acco ACCOMMODATION

In the Heart of Akureyri

Akureyri, known as the capital of the North, is a charming and tightly knit community with a population that barely surpasses 18,000 residents at last count. In spite of its small size, the town centre boasts a surprisingly broad variety of shops, cafés, fine-dining restaurants, art galleries and musical happenings, all within a very small radius and within walking distance of one of Akureyri's latest additions in accommodation, aptly named, Acco.

A warm and welcoming place to stay

Owner Helga Björk Eiríksdóttir goes to great lengths to make sure things are running smoothly and guests are well looked after. "We are a family run operation and want to offer something for everyone, so our accommodation options are as different as they are many. Most of our apartments and rooms have just recently been renovated in a modern Scandinavian style. Spacious and relaxing are two keywords that describe our concept so that guests can really enjoy their stay."



Helga Björk Eiríksdóttir

Convenience, comfort and style

Located right on the town square in the city centre, Acco offers a range of options including eight roomy, fully furnished apartments in varying styles. One to four bedroom apartments are available as well as a 2-bedroom superior apartments with outstanding contemporary décor and attention to detail, such as blackout curtains, washing machine, and a fully equipped kitchen with everything you need to stay in style.

"Our guests are out all day long exploring the stunning land and seascapes as well as the countryside that surrounds Akureyri. We want them to come back to a warm and



welcoming place and to experience it as their home away from home", says Helga Björk.

Catering to every budget

Acco's moderately priced guesthouse has 13 rooms in various sizes and

formats, some with private, and some with shared bath, and an adjoining separate communal kitchen for those who wish to do their own cooking. If you are travelling on a shoestring, Acco Accommodation offers a neat and clean hostel with bunk beds, shared bathrooms and its own communal kitchen.

On the ground floor, the welcoming and friendly Café Berlin, with its bistro-style menu offers simple, light and fresh meals for breakfast, lunch and dinner. Start your morning off right with a cup of Café Berlin's excellent coffee and in the evening celebrate your successful day of sightseeing with a round of drinks. Skál!

-EMV

Acco Accommodation

Skipagata 4 • 600 Akureyri
 +354 547 2226
 info@acco.is
 www.acco.is



THE EXPERIENCE OF A LIFETIME

Iceland on Horseback with Pólar Hestar of North Iceland

One of Iceland's most iconic symbols can be found in its own special breed of horse, known for its friendly nature and its two extra gaits. The hardy and sure-footed Icelandic horse is an excellent introduction to the world of riding, and what better way to experience Iceland than from the back of one of these magnificent creatures that have been part of the Icelandic landscape for over a thousand years.

Now you can get a feel for the real Iceland with Pólar Hestar Tours of North Iceland who offer a range of riding tours that appeal to all levels of ability, from the absolute beginner all the way to the most seasoned rider. The tours can be arranged from 1 to 4 hour period.

Short Duration Tours are perfect for beginners or those with a little riding experience. These reasonably priced tours run from just one hour to two hours up to half-day tours of 4 hours and are also available in winter, weather permitting. This is a wonderful introduction to the Icelandic horse and great fun for both adults and children.



For intermediate riders there are many options to choose from including our popular 'Between the Fjord and the Valley of the Elves Tour'. This 6-day, 5-night tour takes you through lovely landscapes, with breathtaking views, delightful deep green valleys with rushing brooks and along a fascinating scenic coastline.

Ring Around the Midnight Sun

The fragrance of early spring, bright nights and the awakening nature are characteristics of this tour, which consists of several rides and sightseeing by bus. You will experience the days around the midnight sun visiting the famous

turf houses of Laufás, the whales in Eyjafjörður fjord and the amazing area around the breathtaking Lake Mývatn. A Midnight Ride as a highlight of the week at this special time of year when the sun hardly sets is included.

Fascinating North Iceland Tour

Take part in this exhilarating 8-day, 7-night tour—a wonderful opportunity to experience the diversity of Iceland's mesmerising nature.

The tour's itinerary includes some of North Iceland's well known waterfalls as well as Europe's most active volcanic area. You can witness the breathtaking Highlands, once the domain of outlaws, elves and trolls, and journey over ancient lava fields in this unforgettable tour that is suitable for more experienced riders.

-ASF/EMV

Pólar Hestar Tours is run by the husband and wife team of Stefán and Juliane and has been a firm favourite with horse lovers from around the world for over 30 years.

Pólar Hestar

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MARVELOUS MÝVATNSSVEIT

Welcome to the Northern Lights capital of Iceland.



Mývatn is one of the fastest growing tourist destinations in the northeast and is increasingly a must-see winter location. Travellers are lured by the unique nature, fun winter activities along Lake Mývatn, the soothing Mývatn Nature Baths, and the chance to see the Northern Lights in a remarkably clear atmosphere. The region has been shaped over time by punishing volcanic eruptions. Visitors come to soak in the rugged landscape, with its vast lava elds, gigantic craters, soaring mountains, and, of course, the 36.5km² lake that is home to scores of bird and fish species. The town culture is warm and welcoming and there are numerous hotels and guesthouses ready to accommodate guests during their stay, and an eclectic mix of restaurants serving up fresh and local fare as well as international cuisine.



Northern Lights Hunt

In the winter months, Mývatn is the perfect location to hunt for the Northern Lights. The region has minimal light pollution, favourable weather conditions and is a perfect place for photographers to capture the aurora borealis dancing in the sky. Nothing beats bundling up on a cold, clear night and waiting for the show of flickering lights, changing colours, that disappear and

pop up again, stronger and brighter. Mývatn has the perfect backdrop to experience this jaw-dropping phenomenon.

Unique Experiences

In addition to the glorious Northern Lights, there are plenty of outdoor activities to keep travellers entertained. Thrill-seekers love snowmobiling in the plush snow, roaming the region in jeep tours, and experiencing the charm of dog sled rides. After a long day of outdoor excursions, many guests enjoy relaxing in the local swimming pool, or plan a visit to the renowned Mývatn Nature Baths. The baths get obvious comparisons to the Blue Lagoon in the south near Keflavík, but Mývatn's baths have their own unique personality and atmosphere. While tourism has increased to Mývatn in recent years, it feels downright secluded compared to the Blue Lagoon. There's more room to wade

and fewer people in the locker rooms—and the steam baths are far from full. Overall, the basin and lagoon holds about 2.5 million litres of water.

The bottom of the lagoon, which is 3km east of Reykjavík, is covered by gravel and sand, and it contains a large amount of minerals. Because of its chemical composition, vegetation and bacteria are not a problem. There is some sulfur in the water, which is beneficial for skin problems such as eczema and psoriasis, as well as respiratory issues. The bathing experience is heavenly, soothing your skin and relaxing every inch of your body. The views of the landscape are striking, with the volcanic crater of Hverfall and the edge of Lake Mývatn in the background. If you are in the area, this is a must-see. You simply cannot leave without experiencing the baths.

During the day, travellers can experience

the winter beauty by visiting some of the region's special nature attractions. Dimmuborgir, which means 'Dark Cities' or 'Dark Castles', are interesting rock formations jutting out of the ground, resembling a fort from an ancient city. The black lava pillars were created from a collapsed lava tube from a large volcanic eruption more than 2,000 years ago. Hverfall is the largest tephra crater, created from volcanic debris, in the Mývatn region. The crater is striking because it's almost a perfect circle, and considering its size (140m deep and 1km across), it's quite impressive. Scientists have said that the crater was formed after repeated eruptions over 2,500 years ago. The Krafla area is home to Víti (which means "hell" in Icelandic), one of the best-known craters in Iceland. Víti is huge, about 300m in diameter, exposing interesting formations that resulted from

lava flows and water over the ages. The area is another reminder of how active this island has been, and continues to be, with spectacular eruptions resulting in the reshaping of the land.

The Mývatn region is perfect for the independent traveller who prefers to roam on their own time. Jump into a rental car and discover everything from the charming town of Reykjavík, which is 9km north of Lake Mývatn, to roaring waterfalls, volcanic craters, and black lava rock pillars. There are also a number of tours in the region that include dog sledding and jeep tours. Be sure to include Mývatn on your next trip to the North.

-EMV



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HÓTEL LAXÁ

A brand new 3 star hotel is born

One of the most popular destinations for travellers in Iceland is Lake Mývatn, in the north of the country. Recently a brand new 3-star hotel opened here, giving visitors an opportunity to experience the wonders of North Iceland in style.

Quality first

Hótel Laxá is located on the southwest side of Lake Mývatn on a ridge that overlooks the entire region with magnificent views in all directions. A total of 80 rooms, decorated in a minimalist style in keeping with the surrounding landscape, and include amenities such as free in-room Wi-Fi, flat-screen satellite TV, as well as toiletries, towels and hair dryer in the attached bathroom.

Going green

With a goal to become certified 'green and clean' Hótel Laxá recently applied for this certification from SWAN, the official sustainability eco-label for the Nordic countries, introduced by the Nordic Council of Ministers.

Hótel Laxá is located just 20 minutes



GPS 65°34,375N - 17°05,480W

drive from the Lake Mývatn Nature Baths, 45 minutes from the village of Húsavík, 30 minutes from Godafoss Waterfall and Krafla Crater and 50 minutes from Dettifoss Waterfall.

As of May 2015, Hótel Laxá will be open year-round, making this an excellent location from which to base

from for all the Northern Lights hunters who flock to the country every year in winter. -EMV

Hótel Laxá
 víð Ólinbogáds • 660 Mjvatn
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SKAGASTRÖND

WHERE PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE MEET

One might think that life in a small remote fishing town would result in a reserved population vary of outsider influence. This is not the case in the town of Skagaströnd in the north-west of Iceland, where international artists mingle freely with local fishermen, creating a unique atmosphere where the past meets the present without judgment.



Fish Is Life

Like many Icelandic towns Skagaströnd's history is centered around fishery, which is very much a part of Skagaströnd's identity today. The harbour is usually bustling with life with boats coming and going, people and forklifts moving about trying to get the fish from the boats and to the stores as quickly and securely as possible. Just watching the harbour life is an activity in itself, enjoyed by locals and visitors alike - just be careful not to get in the way. There is also a pleasant coffee shop, Kaffi Bjarmanes, in a renovated old house right by the seaside just across from the harbour, giving an excellent view of the harbour life, the ocean and the ever-watchful seabirds around.

What Does the Future Bring?

The first documented settler in Skagaströnd was a woman named Þórdís who resided there in the late 10th century with substantial influence in her community. She was known to be a spirited and fierce woman, with the gift of prophecy, who made no compromises when it came to dealing with powerful men at the time and is noted as such in several of the Icelandic old Sagas. Although the people of her time might have been glad to be rid of her, present day inhabitants of Skagaströnd celebrate

her legacy and have opened a museum in her honour. There visitors are taken through her fascinating life with various exhibitions and artifacts - as well as given the chance to have their prophecy told. Another museum can be found in a charming tiny old house, named Árnas, which gives an impression of daily life in the early 20th century.

Art and Fish

You might not think that modern day artists and small town fishermen would have much in common, but as it turns out they have co-existed in Skagaströnd with great success for several years now. The Nes Artist Residency was opened in 2008 and has resulted in a colourful atmosphere where past and present traditions find common ground. The mayor of Skagaströnd, Magnús B. Jónsson, says the success of the artist residency is a testament to the positivity and open-mindedness of the people of Skagaströnd. "We have all types of people coming here from all over the world and staying with us for extended periods of time working on their craft and the fact that it has gone seamlessly really says something about our community." Magnús says that the advent of the Nes Artist

Residency has livened up the town and the creative atmosphere has proven to be quite contagious. "Now it is not at all uncommon to have all sorts of happenings and events that would have seemed strange before, but are considered part of everyday life here in Skagaströnd." The town itself is also decorated with creative art. You'll find a very striking exhibition centered on the old Nordic gods made from scrap metal, carefully selected to represent each item. Loki, the god of mischief and deception, is for example made from an old manure spreader and Odinn, the highest god of all, is made from scraps from a power station. The Sunwatch is also a quite striking piece, made from four basalt columns that guide sunrays according to an old Icelandic time-telling tradition.

Plenty to Do

A popular activity is hiking to the top of the mountain Spákonufell or along the sea cliffs at Spákonufellshöfði, which is where Þórdís resided and some even claim that her face can be seen petrified in the mountain.

Detailed trail descriptions and maps are available in town. You'll find a traditional Icelandic swimming pool in town, with the obligatory relaxing hot pot, a nine-hole golf course and Borgin, a restaurant in a unique log house with a maritime theme. -DT/ASF

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THE FESTIVAL OF HORSES

Landsmót—Iceland's National Horse Show in Skagafjörður

Iceland is inconceivable without the Icelandic horse. For centuries, it helped people to survive, being their nimble and convenient travel companion, due to its special gaits: tölt and pace.

Organisers of the first National Horse Show in 1950, called Landsmót Hestamanna, literally 'the National Meeting of Horsemen', had no idea that they would launch a real crowd puller. But there is hardly anything that Icelandic horse lovers like more than watching top horses and their riders competing and discussing their qualities. In those days, more than 10,000 people gathered on the grassy slopes of the old parliament site at Þingvellir in order to admire 130 horses, competing in all their gaits.



Landsmót, the people's perennial favourite

As a matter of fact, 66 years later it's still the same. The number of featured horses from both top breeders and from remote farms has almost doubled, but the audience still gathers every second year on grassy slopes around an oval track, discussing their favourites. In the breeding assessments and riding competitions, horses are presented to judges and audience alike, performing their amazing gaits, with the main focus on their two special gaits: the tölt, or running walk, and the flying pace.

This year Landsmót will take place for the 23rd time. After 50 years it is returning to another very historic site. From 27th June to 3rd July Iceland's best horses and riders will perform in Hólar in Hjaltadalur in North Iceland's Skagafjörður district.

Horses, friends and much more

Horse-crazy friends and families from across the country will meet each other, spend nights in tents and caravans and celebrate the Icelandic horse with singing, stories and applause. A unique atmosphere characterises Iceland's greatest festival, one that definitely should not be missed. There is no better way to experience these magnificent horses and casually mingle with the locals.

Enjoy Icelandic food, or stroll through Landsmót's shopping village, which provides lots of information on breeding and horseback riding in this country, along with fashionable Icelandic riders' clothing and riding equipment—and, of course, a wide range of handicrafts and hand-knitted goods from local craftspeople. A wide-ranging cultural programme, including concerts, dances and events for the whole family will make Landsmót a memorable part of your vacation.

Historical setting

Hólar in Hjaltadalur is home to the famous Hólar University College, where many horse

trainers and riders receive their high class education. In 1106 the first bishopric of Northern Iceland was founded in Hólar, and it later became a centre of power and the main cultural centre for the North, a strong counterpart to the South Iceland bishopric in Skalholt. For hundreds of years, up to 19th century, Icelanders would go "home to Hólar". The cathedral school of Hólar gained fame beyond the country's borders as it also housed Iceland's first printing press. Bishop



Guðbrandur Þorláksson initiated the Holy Bible's translation into Icelandic and printed it there in 1584. Even today Hólar is a cultural centre, not only in terms of church history. The Icelandic Horse History Centre provides an interesting insight into the history of the horse in Iceland. After all, if you wish to understand Iceland, you have meet its horse.

A treasure of the North

Skagafjörður district itself provides a variety of cultural attractions such as the Glaumbær Farm museum with its turf houses, the Folk Museum

in Sauðárkrókur or the Icelandic Emigration Center in Hofsvós. The fjord is also one of the most beautiful coastal areas of Iceland, whether you plan to go hiking, fishing or renting a jeep in order to explore Skagafjörður's rough serenity. Sailing to the beautiful island of Drangey is an unforgettable experience, just like dipping into the natural pool or Iceland's unique swimming pool in Hofsvós.

The most Icelandic way of travelling, however, is on horseback. A great number of tour operators offer riding tours for every equestrian level. Spending from an hour up

to many days on horseback is the best way of experiencing Iceland with all your senses—and you will come back for sure!

Freedom and the midnight sun

Skagafjörður's mountainous interior is also notable as the only area of the country where horses still are allowed to roam free during the summer, before being herded back to their farms in the autumn. The summer pastures' wide freedom creates horse livestock both independent and brave—another treasure of the Skagafjörður district.

Remember, there is no darkness during the summer! The romantic midnight sun will make your stay at the oval track in the company of horse-crazy Icelanders an unforgettable memory. That sun transforms oceans into gold and casts a magical glow over the heath. And, in the distance, you still might hear the thunder of hooves of the proud Icelandic tölt horses at the Landsmót in Hólar. -DT



Landsmót hestamanna

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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, enables visitors to enjoy the beauty of the region. The ferry from Europe docks at the 19th 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—influence. There is a long history of folklore here. Borgarfjörður eystri 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.



#EASTICELAND



Rafn Sig.



SOUTH *Iceland*

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 waterfalls of Gullfoss, Háifoss, Skógafoss, Systra and Seljalandsfoss; 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 Þórsmörk 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 Eyrarbakki. 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 activities 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.



#SOUTHICELAND



Rafn Sig.,-

WE ARE PROUD TO WELCOME YOU TO VATNAJÖKULL NATIONAL PARK!

Vatnajökull National Park is Iceland's newest protected area, established in 2008. With a total area of roughly 13.950 km² it is by far the largest national park in Iceland as well as in Western Europe.

Key features of the park are the ice cap of the Vatnajökull Glacier (8,200 km²) and several highly active volcanic systems within and outside the ice cap. The interplay of ice and fire is the single most important force in shaping the nature of the park. As a result, one can find in one place an unparalleled range of volcanic-, geothermal- and other landscape features.

We offer information at our three Visitor Centres, Gljúfrastofa, Snæfellsstofa and Skaftafellsstofa. Information Centres are situated at Kirkjubæjarklaustur and Höfn. More information at our website www.vjp.is



Gljúfrastofa



Snæfellsstofa



Gamlabúð



Skaftafellsstofa



Skaftárstofa



▲ Svartifoss



▲ Dettifoss



▲ Hiking Geldingafell, Snæfell in the distance



▲ Langisjór



▲ Morsárdalur



▲ Askja and Lake Öskjuvatn

HELLISHÓLAR COTTAGES, GUESTHOUSE AND HOTEL

A LITTLE BIT OF ICELANDIC PARADISE



Set in one of the most idyllic locations in South Iceland, Hellishólar offers a variety of accommodation for the weary traveller who is looking for a good night's sleep in peaceful surroundings.

The sprawling Hellishólar property is located 17 minutes from Route 1, near the village of Hvolsvöllur in the middle of Fljótslíð, a picturesque farming district sheltered by three glaciers: Mýrdalsjökull, Eyjafjallajökull and Tindfjallajökull.

Cosy Cottages

Why not bed down for the night in one of Hellishólar's 25 popular, fully-furnished cottages? Each cottage can sleep from 3 to 6 people and has a small kitchen for making your own meals. If you prefer, you can also have your meals in the on-site restaurant that serves breakfast, lunch and dinner.

So Many Choices!

At Hellishólar there is also a guesthouse and a brand new hotel called 'Hotel Eyjafjallajökull' with 18 spacious and comfortable bedrooms, all with ensuite bathroom.

A Glorious View of Nature

The views from Hellishólar are, in a word, stunning! In winter when the northern lights are active, one has only to step outside the door and look up. The lack of light pollution



makes Hellishólar an ideal location for Northern Lights viewing.

In summer, the long days bring optimum opportunities to experience the many activities that are possible at Hellishólar—trout fishing on the lake, salmon fishing from the river that runs through the property and enjoying a round of golf on the

18 hole golf course. Hellishólar is the perfect base from which to explore South Iceland year round. See you there! -EMV

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SUÐUR-VÍK RESTAURANT

Food, Culture, Nature and History Combined

Every visitor has a unique take on what makes a destination interesting; some come for the nature, others for the food, some for the culture and history and others for the people. The stately Suður-Vík restaurant in Vík í Mýrdal combines all of these and more with splendid views over picturesque rock pillars in the ocean, locally made delicacies, historical building and family atmosphere.

The house itself is positioned on a hill with a panoramic view, in one of Vík's oldest houses, built in 1902. The interiors capture the building's history with romantic furniture and decoration, which makes for a very peaceful and warm place to be.

This family-owned restaurant blends past, present and different cultures imaginatively, as the restaurant is based around local materials and traditions with a modern twist with the welcome addition of Thai influences. All ingredients are



locally made—everything from fresh locally caught fish, locally made ice cream and picking their own rhubarb for the traditional Icelandic rhubarb porridge.



The pride of Suður-Vík is their pizza, which they claim is the best in the area—a claim many of their customers support.

Other staples include the always popular steak sandwich, which Ben says has been developed to perfection by the kitchen staff, and of course varied quality Thai dishes to add welcome variety to a small Icelandic town.

Suður-Vík is open from 12:00 noon to 10pm, offering lunch and lighter dishes as well as an elegant evening dining experience. -VAG

Suður-Vík Restaurant
 Suðurvíkurvegur 1 • 870 Vík
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 sudurvik@gmail.com
 none





IN THE SHADOW OF THE GIANTESS



South East Iceland's Vatnajökull Region

The Vatnajökull region is a narrow stretch of land that lies just below Vatnajökull Glacier, spanning from Lómagnúpur in the west, to Hvalnes on its eastern border. From the highest peaks of Hvannadalshnúkur, down to the expansive glacial outwash plains that characterize the area, the region embraces over 200km of Iceland's main ring road.

Presiding serenely over the area, Vatnajökull Glacier rises to just over 2,000 metres and conceals a number of very active volcanoes under her massive ice cap. Formed as a result of the relentless grinding and crushing of everything in its path, many scenic wonders can be found at the very edges of the glacier. Glistening glacial lagoons, thundering rivers and waterfalls as well as numerous ice caves are just some of the natural gems that can be found within the borders of the region.

Iconic glacial lagoons

The popular Jökulsárlón Glacial Lagoon has certainly been a popular destination in recent years, and now its sister, Fjallsárlón,

is set to join in the limelight. The beautiful lagoon, which lies hidden just 10km west of Jökulsárlón, now hosts a team of well-seasoned locals offering zodiac boat rides on its pristine waters.

Into an ice-blue world

Should you have your heart set on visiting an ice cave, look no further. These crystal-ice-blue caves are only open from November to March for obvious reasons and several local companies run by experienced teams of caving experts offer tours into this ever-changing world of subglacial speleology.

Kayaking for everyone

It's so relaxing taking a kayak out on the peaceful waters of Heinaberg Lagoon in the heart of the Vatnajökull region. This is a wonderful opportunity for everyone from complete beginners to seasoned kayakers to experience the beauty of this very special corner of Iceland.



Of course, there are just oodles of other activities as well—take a snowmobile, jeep or hiking tour on the glacier, observe puffins at Ingólfshöfði, or get a bird's eye view over the glacier on a sightseeing flight, and don't forget the not-to-be-missed annual fireworks extravaganza at Jökulsárlón in late August.

For more in-depth information about the Vatnajökull region, check out their website listed below. *-EMV*

The Vatnajökull Region

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THE ICEBERG BOAT TOURS

Guided boat tours on Fjallsárlón that have become increasingly popular

The Iceberg Boat Tours on Fjallsárlón Glacial Lagoon are guided boat tours that have become increasingly popular, receiving top 5 star reviews on TripAdvisor.com.

These boat tours are really personal since there are fewer people in each boat. You will have a greater opportunity to learn new and interesting things with your guide about the icebergs and glaciers as well as about the people

who have lived close to the glaciers through the years.

Using a smaller boat gives you the advantage of picking the most interesting route to sail, going closer to the best icebergs and to the glacier. With ease your guide can circle around the nicest icebergs and explain to you all about the natural wonders you are seeing.

This is a calm cruise and all safety



precautions are taken, including providing you with clothing for safety, using strong, professional boats and trained staff. The government has licensed the company. You will feel safe and have time to enjoy and take pictures of both the lagoon and the icebergs.

Since Fjallsárlón is smaller, you get closer to the edge of the glacier. If you are lucky you will see a piece of ice breaking off the edge into the lagoon. As the glacier is unusually steep and surrounded by high mountains on each side the experience is without comparison. *-EMV*

Fjallsárlón

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www.fjallsarloun.is



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 emphasises the use of only quality ingredients from the locality in their cooking. Whether be it a freshly caught salmon you crave, steaks from grass-fed cattle or free range lamb served with the accompaniment of locally grown greens – you can be sure that Halldór's Café will deliver. They also offer a variety of lighter meals such as soup of the

day and light salads, and those with a bit of a sweet-tooth will not be disappointed, as the menu includes home-baked cakes and home-made ice cream from a local farm.

Originally, Halldór's Café was the 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, using 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. The café is open all year round. Summer opening hours are from 11:00am to 10:00 or 11:00pm, but winter openings are from 11:00am to 9:00pm. When travelling in the area around the beautiful Vík, be sure to stop at this charming café and get greeted with a welcoming smile and a seductive menu. *-JB*

Halldórskaffi

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A DELIGHTFUL EXPERIENCE IN STOKKSEYRI

Icelandic Times checks out Fjöruborðið Restaurant

Chef Eiríkur Þór Eiríksson 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, but is now one of the most popular lobster restaurants in Iceland, with over 45,000 patrons dining there in 2014.

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 Eiríkur 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.

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



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FAMILY-FRIENDLY KIRKJUBÆJARKLAUSTUR

THE CENTRE OF THE SOUTH

One hour east of Vík-i-Mýrdal, you will come to Kirkjubæjarklaustur, or just Klaustur as its usually called, a tiny village set on the edge of an ancient lava field. Part of Katla UNESCO Global Geopark and Vatnajökull National Park, it's like driving into an open-air natural history museum—springy hummocks of woolly fringe moss and conical volcanic mounds topped with little vents, called rootless cones, dominate the landscape for as far as the eye can see. The entire region is bursting with mysterious tales connected with events that occurred hundreds of years ago when Klaustur was the site of a convent. It's home to the greatest lava flow from a single volcanic eruption in the history of the world, the Laki Eruption of 1783-1784. Exciting stuff indeed and just waiting to be discovered!



Yes there's an app for that!

Now you can take a guided tour of the area using Locatify's SmartGuide, a downloadable audio-guide app, which takes you to 26 locations all connected to the Laki Eruption. Available in English

and Icelandic, the app can be accessed by GPS from anywhere using your smartphone. There is also a SmartGuide that covers the 20km Klaustur trail or you can get a detailed brochure with a map of

the route at the Skaftárstofa Information Centre in Kirkjubæjarklaustur.

Design your own nature souvenir

A fun activity that is unique to Kirkjubæjarklaustur is called 'Natural Treasure'. From local shops and hotels you can purchase a special glass bottle with a map that leads you to a little turf house filled with samples of moss, air, lava, lichen and wool, which are sustainable and have been collected with approval. Fill your bottle with a sample of your choosing, which will then be officially sealed and voilà!—you have designed your very own souvenir to take home with you. The Icelandic team at HAF Design, in collaboration with visitklaustur.is, has created this unique-to-Iceland tourism concept.

See you in Kirkjubæjarklaustur—The Centre of the South. -EMV




Visit Klaustur
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HÓTEL VESTMANNAEYJAR

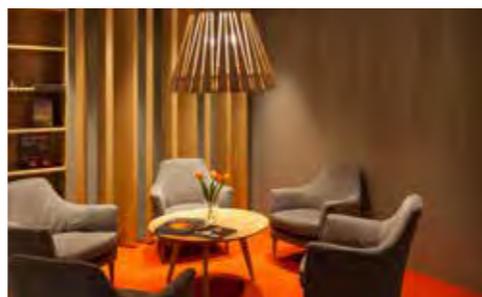
A family friendly oasis in the unique Westman islands

Explore the uniquely breathtaking scenery of the Westman Island while staying at the comfortable and relaxing Hótel Vestmannaeyjar. The recently upgraded and renovated hotel offers 43 comfortably furnished rooms, all with en-suite bathroom, TV and Wi-Fi with the option of flexible room arrangements whether you are traveling alone, as a couple or in a family group.

Nearby hiking trails and bird watching areas are within walking distance and for thrill seekers, the hotel offers exciting activities and tours, ensuring that every guest finds an activity to their liking.

With the renovation of Landeyjarhöfn, transportations to the Westman Islands has drastically improved. The Herjólfur ferry now sails back and forth to the island 5 times a day during summer and 4 times during winter.

Worth mentioning is the hotel's relaxing spa, beauty and massage parlour (with Jacuzzi and sauna). The bar and restaurant offer a delightful area for guests to socialise in and the exquisite, locally sourced food, gives guests a true taste of the Westman Islands.



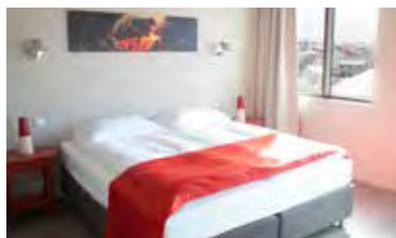
Low budget option

Guesthouse Sunnuhóll is managed by Hótel Vestmannaeyjar and provides guests with a low budget accommodation option right next door. Each room can accommodate from two to five people and Sunnuhóll guests are welcome to order breakfast in the hotel dining room as well as access the hotel's other amenities.

Sunnuhóll is a great choice for those looking for less expensive accommodation, without forfeiting comfort. -EMV



Hótel Vestmannaeyjar
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DINE IN THE LANGOUSTINE CAPITAL

Humarhöfnin satisfies the hunger for whole langoustine in Höfn

Iceland is known for some of the finest fresh fish in the world and a large share of the country's catch is landed at Höfn í Hornafirði, on the south-east coast. Höfn (which sounds like 'Hup' to our ears and means harbour) is also known as the langoustine capital of Iceland, where several thousand visitors gather in the town for the annual Humarhátið (Langoustine) Festival, to be held in June.

You would expect the langoustine capital of Iceland to have a fine-dining restaurant that can do justice to the lovely little crustacean. The Humarhöfnin sea-food restaurant, which has been a big success since it was opened over 7 years ago by Anna Þorsteinsdóttir, her brother Ari Þorsteinsson and their spouses, has definitely earned that accolade.

A menu to entice any connoisseur

A favourite with tourists from the Mediterranean countries, Humarhöfnin was the first restaurant in Iceland to serve whole langoustine, though it has now become



popular in the town. The concept is still new in Iceland, so each diner who orders langoustine receives illustrated instructions on the finer points of using the langoustine cracker and fork that come with the dish.

The menu was created and developed by the French chef Jacques DuPont and his many dishes such as the beautifully presented 'Mix of Whole Langoustine and Tails' and the famous 'Black Magic Sauce' have been very successful. Paired with one of Humarhöfnin's specially selected wines, you are in line for an absolute feast. Also on the menu, the arctic



char is a delight. The crème brûlée, made from local eggs and imported Madagascar vanilla will have you swooning and you might want or need to order a double portion.

The casual, bright and lively décor fits Humarhöfnin's harbour location and the friendly wait staff will be happy to point out the very boat that brought in the day's catch, moored at the docks just a short distance away. The building itself was originally the town co-op before it was totally renovated and transformed into this beautiful restaurant. There is an exhibit on the 2nd floor which portrays the history of the house.

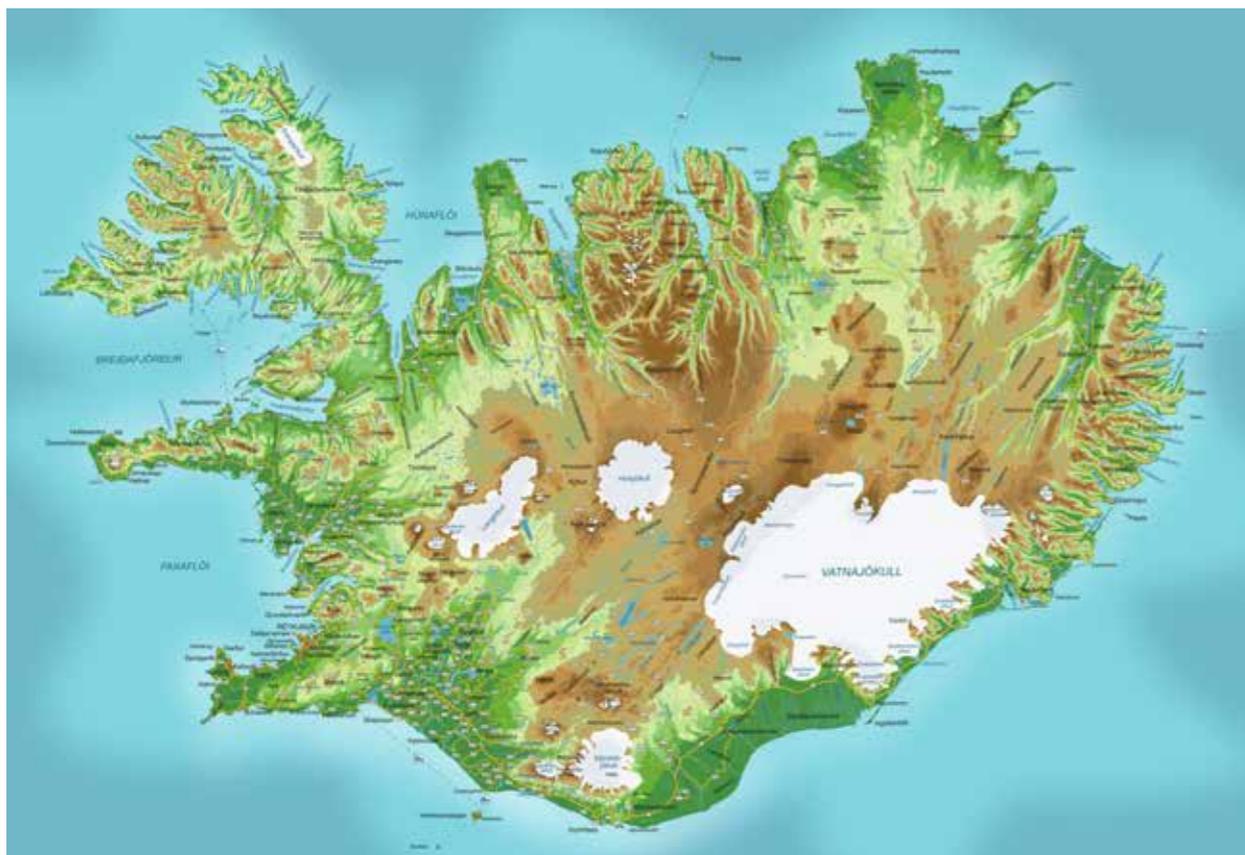
If you are a langoustine aficionado, you can fly, drive or take a bus to Höfn where you will find your seafood haven awaiting you.

-EMV



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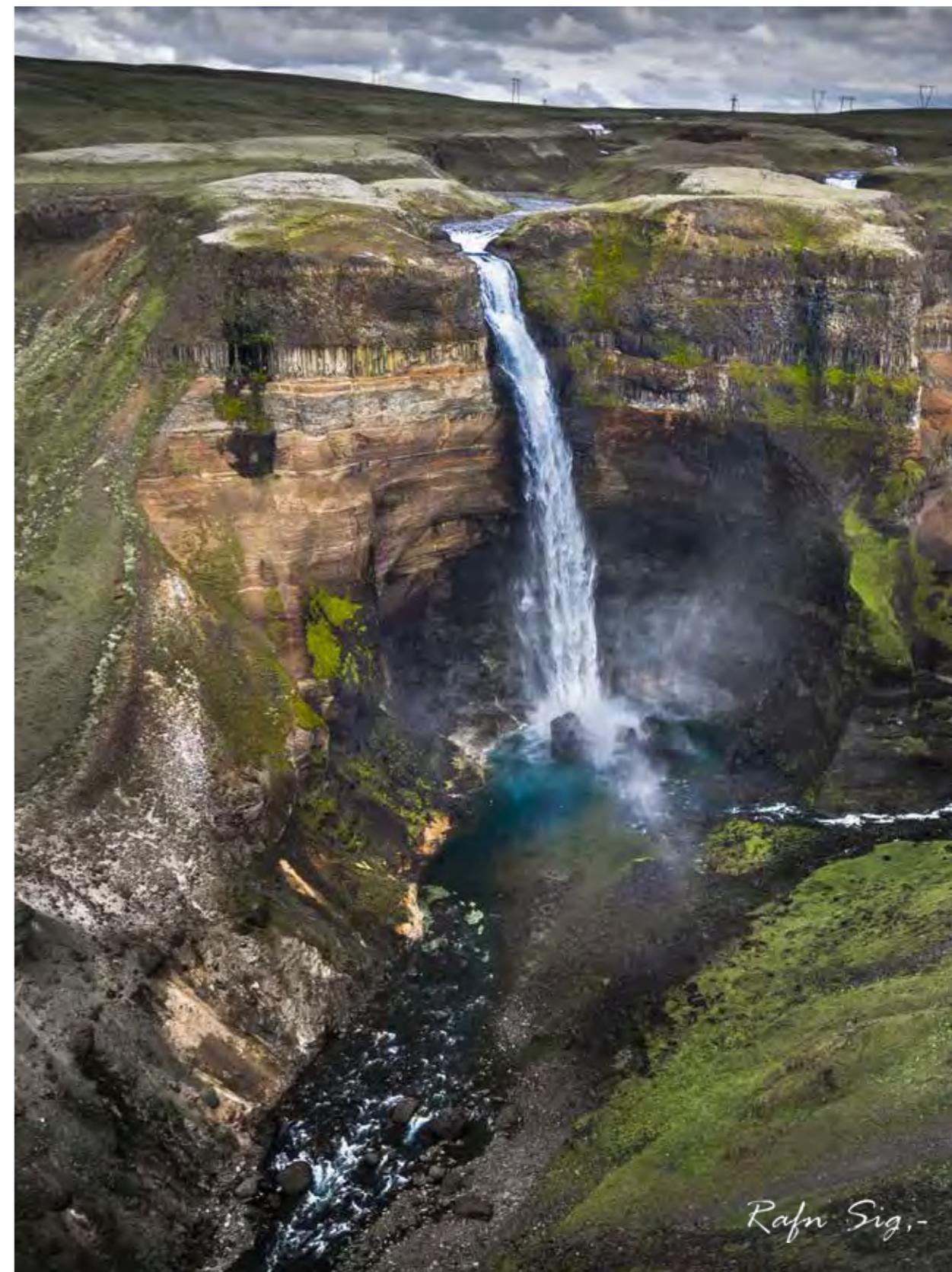
THE HIGHLANDS OF *Iceland*

Nothing in Iceland prepares you for the stark, desolate, raw beauty of the barren upland plateau called the Highlands. An uninhabited area, The Highlands are completely without towns or villages, just endless plains, glacial rivers and lava fields punctuated by ice caps, volcanoes and jagged mountains. The isolation is the reason why people visit and travellers are humbled by the sublime sight of nature in its rawest, barest form. Historically, trails in the highlands were used as summer short cuts between north and south and myths of ghosts and fearsome outlaws spurred travellers along the tracks with all speed. Today, it is probably wiser to worry about the weather, as conditions can be fickle

and snow is not uncommon, even in mid-summer. The solitude is exhilarating, the views are vast and it is immensely tough but equally rewarding to hike or bike these cross-country routes. Any self-driving, cycling or hiking trip must be carefully planned. There are no roads in the area, just tracks and hardly any bridges across the rivers. Of all the various tracks, only two routes actually cross the whole way between north and south: Sprengisandur (F26) and Kjölur (F35). The region is fully accessible only by four wheel drive vehicles. It is also possible to get a taste of this utter isolation in safety on bus tours, where you will discover amazing landscapes, similar to lunar landscapes. Which is the reason why the Apollo astronauts came there to train for moon landings!



#ICELANDSHIGHLANDS



Rafn Sig.

IT'S ALL ABOUT LOVING IT

Picture hunting in Iceland with the professional photographer Rafn Sig,-
Day tours / Photo and Photo Workshop tours / Winter and Summer tours

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 Super Jeep four-wheel drive Mitsubishi, suitable for any highland and low land trip.

He doesn't conceal the fact that photo hunting is still 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.

Like-minded travelling companions

This professional photographer has published 8 books about Iceland and his pictures have been published all over the world. He likes to share his passion for travel with like-minded people. He offers customized, all year round photo trips and workshops range from a day to a fortnight long.

When you join him in his adventures, he might have a few more secrets to share.

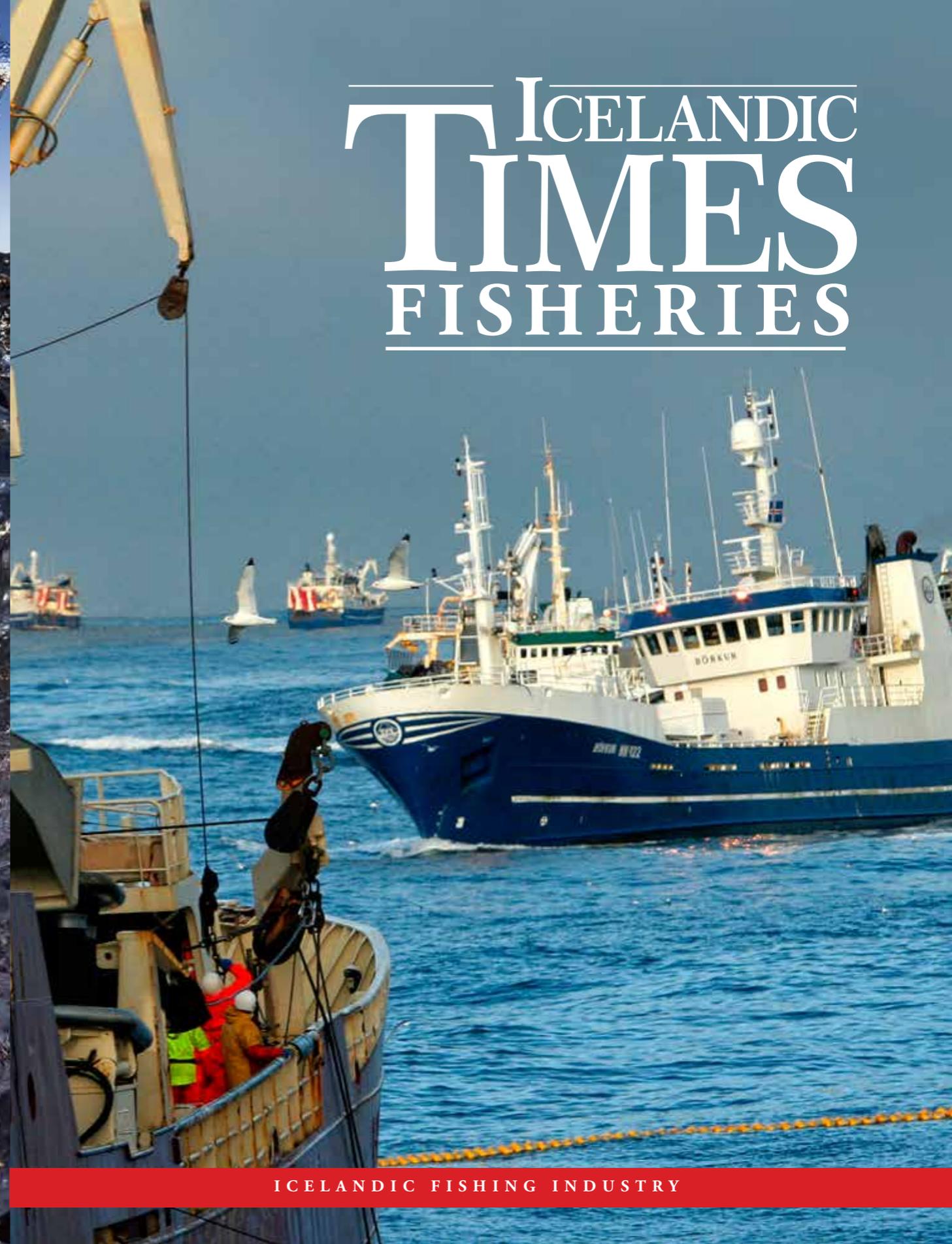
Treasure Hunting

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 goooooooood group.



ICELANDIC TIMES FISHERIES



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ICELANDIC FISHING INDUSTRY



A MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER

The Icelandic fisheries sector has come a long way over the past 30 years. From a position of fishstocks, weakened by a long period of mild overfishing and a poorly organised sector with poor economic performance, Iceland has achieved the position of strong and sustainably managed fish stocks as the foundation of a well organised and profitable fishing industry.



The key to success is well managed fisheries for conservation and sustainable use. Thus responsible fisheries are the foundation for all other elements of fisheries success. The Icelandic approach is to set the annual total allowable catch based on scientific advice and distribute annual catch allotments to fishing vessels based on long term vessel quota shares in an individual transferable quota fisheries management system (ITQ system).

This management approach has eliminated the destructive race to fish that plagues sustainability and profitability in many fisheries, thus allowing industry operators to plan their operations for the entire year based on their known and secure fishing opportunities. This allows the industry to better serve its customers and meet market needs in the short and long term.

This approach to responsible, long term fisheries management has had a profound effect on fishing industry culture in Iceland. Now the key to all thinking and operation is value

generation instead of sheer volume. With the race to fish having been eliminated, investment in fishing vessels focuses on achieving the best handling and treatment of the catch for maximum freshness and quality for the consumer. This new culture, enabled by better fisheries management, has created opportunities for research and innovation, product development and technical progress in general.

All of this has resulted in a very different fishing industry compared to 30 years ago. Now we see an advanced, flexible and adaptable market driven industry, generating and employing new technology and providing new and diverse products. Jobs in the industry are also very much changed, with emphasis on recruiting highly qualified, well educated young people for careers in the fishing industry. In this setting, the aim is to use every part of the fish to produce high value products—not just the tasty fillets but also cuttings, skin, etc. Examples of products thus available include wound dressings and pharmaceuticals made from fish skins and cosmetics created from crustaceans shells.

But despite increasing success over the past decades, future challenges are many. We must remain vigilant to ensure continued sustainable harvesting. We must maintain and expand our market position with high quality products. We must continue to generate new products suitable for ever-changing times. And we must improve our position on international markets. The key to success will remain responsible and well managed fisheries with secure fishing rights, allowing the continuation of responsible and profitable fisheries.

Sigurður Ingi Jóhannsson

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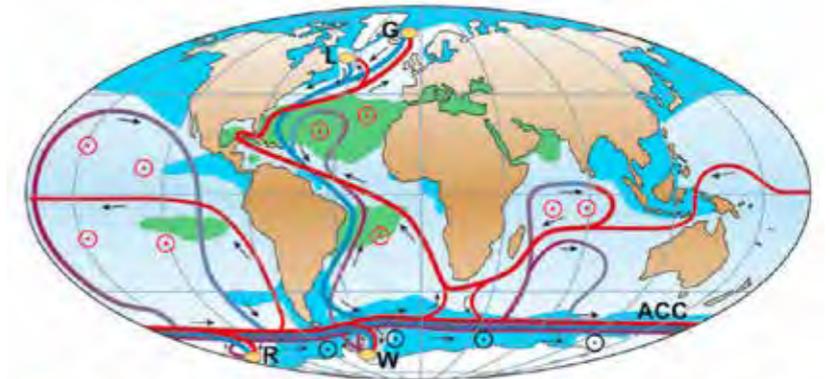
DISCOVERING THE OCEAN'S WONDERS

A revolutionary tagging of Humpback whales premieres in January 2017

In Iceland, a truly revolutionary tag is being developed that will be put on Humpback whales to allow mankind to follow these great creatures on their journeys through the oceans. Humpback whales are truly global citizens, so whales across the seven seas will gather new, groundbreaking information, monitoring the ocean for mankind. The first whales are being tagged this year but the 'global-premiere' of the project will be in January 2017.

This plan was revealed at the Arctic Circle Conference in Reykjavik in October last year; the largest international gathering on the Arctic with more than 1500 participants from 50 countries attended by the President of France, Francois Hollande, and President of Iceland, Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson.

The Icelandic high-tech company Star-Oddi is producing the tags for the international company Lifriki. Star-Oddi,



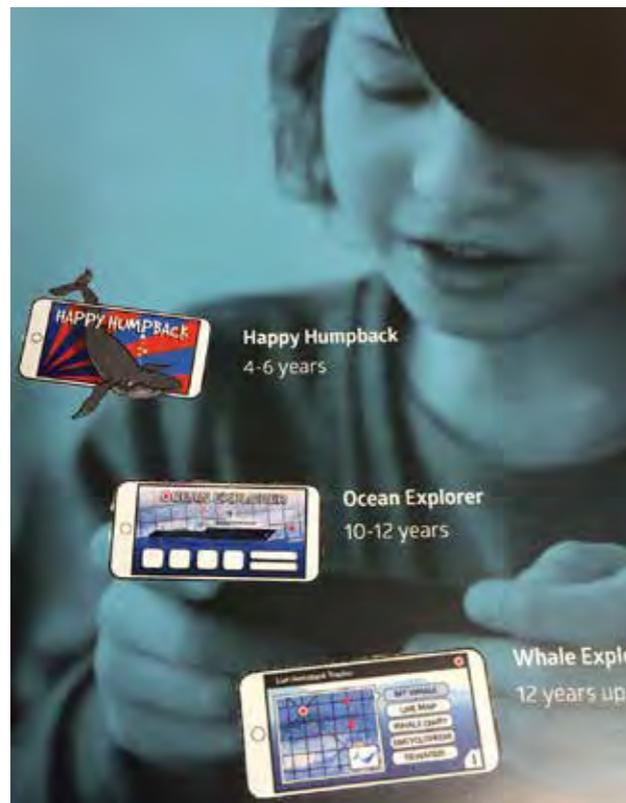
- | | | |
|------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------|
| — Surface flow | ⊙ Wind-driven upwelling | L Labrador Sea |
| — Deep flow | ⊙ Mixing-driven upwelling | G Greenland Sea |
| — Bottom flow | ⊙ Salinity > 36 ‰ | W Weddell Sea |
| — Deep Water Formation | ⊙ Salinity < 34 ‰ | R Ross Sea |

Currents of Earth.

The ocean dictates the weather and deep water formations are of special interest, the yellow spots. The areas of deep water formations are frequented by the whales. Scientists hope to better understand this phenomena through the tagging of the great Humpback whales.



President of France, Francois Hollande and President of Iceland, Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson at the Arctic Circle Conference in Reykjavik.



Edu-games and apps for children.



The revolutionary tag on a Humpback whale.

which is a leading international company in the tagging of animals on land and sea, was founded in 1985.

Lifriki was founded in Iceland around the tagging concept, with offices in Iceland and Denmark and has now become a global company.

The wonders of the ocean

Data from the tags on Humpback whales will teach mankind about the wonders of the ocean as they travel through the deep on their migration between their feeding and mating grounds—basically from the polar areas to warmer climates, travelling enormous distances.

The public, including schoolchildren, will be able to follow their whales. In doing so, the whales will connect mankind to their underwater worlds, their lives and relationships. As a result of the groundbreaking tags, it will be possible to join the whales on their trans-boundary adventures.



The Humpback whales have caught the imagination of people all over the world with their breaching.

In an age of endless information, it is hard to believe that there are places in the world which man knows virtually nothing about. Yet close to 95% of the world's oceans remain

unexplored. Though explorations have taken man to the moon and mankind continuously strives to explore more of the universe, the oceans remain relatively unknown. -JG

FRESH, SUSTAINABLE FISH

Fishland is a Reykjavik-based company that delivers Icelandic fish worldwide.

Iceland is surrounded by some of the best fishing waters on earth as a diverse range of fish species breed in the clean and vast North Atlantic Ocean. Fishland is a local company that was founded in 2014 by Kjartan Andrésson, a man with an impressive background in the fishing industry. “A lot of the other guys selling fish abroad are salesmen,” says Kjartan. “I owned a fish store and I was a sailor, so I know how to cut, process and prepare the fish. I have a strong background in fishing.” Fishland’s main emphasis is on delivering fresh fish, caught in a sustainable manner in the Atlantic Ocean, to worldwide markets. Fishland is growing quickly due to its owner’s experience and unrivalled customer service.

Choose Iceland

Fish is the lifeblood of Iceland, sustaining its inhabitants and the source of the country’s biggest trade resource. Iceland has an extensive history in fisheries management and is considered a leader in the industry. The country is known for focusing on the sustainable use of fish stocks and its careful treatment of the local marine ecosystem. Responsible fisheries are the prerequisite for the Icelandic fishing industry continuing to be a mainstay of the Icelandic economy and a pillar in its exports. Fish species found in Icelandic waters include cod, haddock, Arctic char, herring, halibut, monkfish,



catfish, plaice, ling and mackerel, among others.

Fishland sells fresh cod, haddock, cod cheeks, cod loins, Arctic char, halibut, monkfish, catfish, redbfish, plaice, and skate. As for frozen fish, Fishland sells cod, haddock, mackerel, and scampi. Plaice has been one of Fishland’s biggest sellers in the international market in recent months.

Growing Market

Fishland currently sells fish to cities in Canada and the United States. “The first city we sold to was Edmonton in Canada,” says Kjartan. “We are also selling fish to

New York, Washington D.C., and Denver.” Fishland partners with Icelandair Cargo and Cargo Express to securely ship its fresh fish products abroad. Other cities of interest include Chicago, Vancouver, Los Angeles, Seattle, and Portland, Oregon. “We are a small company, but we have great contacts. We focus on personal service in the international market in recent months. The future looks bright for Fishland. -JG



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ICELAND: THE MOST IMPORTANT FISHING NATION IN EUROPE

Photo: Friðbjófur Helgason

Fishing is one of the pillars of Iceland's economy, and the country is a leader in fishing sustainability.

Iceland is home to one of the most modern and competitive fishing industries in the world, based on protection of the marine ecosystem and a sustainable harvest. Fishery continues to be one of the strongest sectors of the Icelandic economy, making it responsible for a large share of both the GDP and the nation's export revenue. Iceland, which is a small country with just 330,000 inhabitants, is undeniably one of the world's leaders in total fisheries but has, in recent years, also become a leading country in the advancement of marine technology, fish detection instruments, while maintaining a sophisticated fishing sector, exporting world-class produce

around the world. It's difficult to overstate the importance of fish to Icelanders. Throughout the centuries, it has been the backbone of the nation's economy, both as its chief food supply and its main export product. Historical evidence suggests that Icelandic fish export dates back to the 12th century at the very latest, so Iceland has centuries of experience.

Economic Impact

The fishing industry is one of the main pillars of the Icelandic economy. According to data released by Statistics Iceland, Iceland is the most important fishing nation of Europe. In 2013, the total catch by Icelandic fishermen was 1,362,790 tons. At the same time the total world catch was 94 million tons, most of which was caught in Asia and Africa, followed by Europe. In

that year Iceland was the second largest fishing nation in Europe after Norway, and the 18th largest fishing nation in the world. China was the largest fishing nation in the world in 2013.

Iceland's fishing industry is one of the key industries in Iceland, and directly employs around 9,000 people, or approximately 5.3% of the total workforce on the island. In 2012, the fishing industry contributed 11% to the GDP directly, and 25% if account is taken of the indirect effects of the ocean cluster. Additionally, in 2012 the export production of marine products amounted to ISK 269 billion (€ 1.7 billion), an increase of 6.8% over the previous year and of 11.4% in quantity, a total of 749,000 tons. Frozen products generated 53% of the value of exported marine products, and marine products

account for approximately 42% of total export value.

Iceland's exclusive fishing zone has an impressive area of 760,000 square kilometres, seven times the area of Iceland itself. Some of the largest fish stocks in the North Atlantic are found within Icelandic waters, including halibut, haddock, and cod, which is Iceland's most important stock.

Management System

The Icelandic fisheries management system was put in place to ensure responsible fisheries, an important issue for the country. The fisheries management in Iceland is based on extensive research on fish stocks and the marine ecosystem, and decisions on allowable catches for quotas are made on the basis of advice from the

Icelandic Marine Research Institute. Catches are then monitored and enforced by the Directorate of Fisheries. These are the main pillars of the Icelandic fisheries management intended to ensure responsible fishing and the sustainability of the North Atlantic Ocean's natural resources.

Rapid advances in Icelandic fisheries have been accompanied by the development of manufacturing and service industries that draw on long experience of the practical needs of fishing and fish processing operations. The fishing fleet is equipped with advanced technology and the same is true for the processing facilities on land. Among the leading fields are software, electronic and digital equipment, as well as land-based weighing and process control.

A wide selection of packaging for handling the storage and retailing of fresh

and frozen products are made in Iceland, as well as trawl nets, safety equipment and protective clothing. Icelandic manufacturers have designed and installed many processing plants around the world for companies ranging from vessel owners to industrial food processors.

Sustainable and responsible harvesting of wild fish stocks in Icelandic waters and good treatment of the marine ecosystem is of fundamental importance to Iceland. The fishing industry in Iceland is meeting the demands of buyers for sustainable use of marine resources with the Iceland Responsible Fisheries programme, developed on the basis of commitments made through national law and international agreement. Iceland's fishing industry is thriving and remains one of the most important in Europe. -JG

THE BIOECONOMY IMPACTS EVERYONE

Matís is an Icelandic Food and Biotech R&D company



Matís specialises in value creation within the bioeconomy and the development of policy and infrastructure.

The bioeconomy plays a big role in the Icelandic economy and Matís is at the forefront of research and solutions within the bioeconomy. Internationally, the bioeconomy is viewed as a key element in battling major societal, environmental and economic challenges, including climate change, food security and resource efficiency.

The bioeconomy includes all biological resources that can be found in the oceans, pastures, wildernesses, forests and freshwater, and their conversion into food, feed, bio-based products and bioenergy via innovative and efficient technologies.

The focus put on the bioeconomy within European research programmes has the ultimate goal of keeping Europe competitive and prosperous by providing sustainable and inclusive economic growth and jobs, and by meeting the needs of a growing population while protecting the environment and natural resources.

Matís, an independent, governmentally owned company founded in Reykjavik



in 2007 following the merger of three former public research institutes, provides research and development for the food and biotechnology industries. Matís' vision is to increase the value of food processing and food production, through research, development, dissemination of knowledge and consultancy, as well as to ensure the safety and quality of food and feed products. "What we do is to help strengthen the bioeconomy," said Sigrún Elsa Smáradóttir, the research group leader at Matís. "In Iceland, the bioeconomy is largely based on fisheries and marine resources, and we believe it can extend further."

Bioeconomy refers to the part of the

economy that is based on renewable bio-resources. By strengthening the bioeconomy, increasing production of bio-based fuel, chemicals and materials, sustainably sourced and produced, is an alternative to our heavy reliance on finite fossil fuel resources. "In biorefineries, we are looking at replacing fossil fuel based chemicals with renewable bio-based chemicals," she said. "Global industries are largely based on fossil fuels and carbon-based chemicals. There needs to be a shift to renewable sources going forward." Today, the European bioeconomy is already worth more than €2 trillion annually and employs more than 20 million people, often in rural or coastal areas.

Leading role, diverse projects

Matís has played a leading role in several large international projects within the EU Framework Programmes and Horizon 2020. Representatives of Matís have participated in the European, Nordic and West Nordic bioeconomy panels and the International Advisory Committee for the Global Bioeconomy Summit. Matís also plays a role in the development of an Icelandic bioeconomy strategy.

One recent project, 'Arctic Bioeconomy II-Biotechnology', researches feasible biorefinery feedstocks available in the Nordic region and opportunities to create multiple value streams from those resources. "One way to enhance a bioeconomy is to utilize the resources that are already being utilized, and to look at different value streams," said Sigrún. "As an example, fish skin has, in the past, been looked at as waste, but it can be utilized in many ways. It can be processed directly and used in fashion clothing or into skin and tissue repair medical products. It is also possible to isolate chemicals and proteins from the remaining fish skin and the leftovers can be processed for feed and biofuel."



Sigrún Elsa Smáradóttir.

European Bioeconomy Panel

The European Bioeconomy Panel was created in 2013 by the European Commission. It consists of 30 members and Hörður G. Kristinsson, the Chief Science Officer at Matís, is one of its members. The Bioeconomy Panel was established to answer the Europe 2020 strategy calls for a bioeconomy as a key element for smart and green growth in Europe. Matís, however, wants to highlight the importance of talking about both the green and blue growth. Blue refers to the marine and freshwater environment and is of particular importance to Iceland and our neighbours sharing the Atlantic Ocean's resources and holds great untapped future potential for sustainable utilization and added value.

Reaching beyond Europe

Matís has participated in numerous programmes with governments and developmental aid funds. For instance, outside Europe, Matís worked with the Tanzanian government to improve fisheries in Lake Tanganyika, provided courses and consultation for the Kenyan government on quality issues for fish, the treatment of the catch, and fish processing methods and packaging. And, last but not least, Matís participates in the United Nations University Fisheries Training Program (UNU-FTP) where Matís has handled the programme concerned with specialist training in quality management of fish handling and processing.

World Seafood Congress

Matís will host the World Seafood Congress 2017, held for the first time in Reykjavik, Iceland. The theme of the conference will be "Growth in the Blue Bioeconomy", focusing on a practical approach and cutting edge research for market innovation, safe seafood supply and food integrity.

Dedicated employees

Matís employs about 100 individuals in offices, laboratories and Food Innovation Centres and operates in eight locations around Iceland, headcounters being in Reykjavik. Employees include many of Iceland's most forward-thinking scientists in the fields of food technology, food research and testing, and biotechnology; food scientists, chemists, biologists, engineers and fisheries scientists. Several employees hold associate positions within Iceland's universities, while many Ph.D. students conduct their research at Matís in collaboration with the industry both in Iceland and abroad.

The bioeconomy might not be a panacea for all of society's challenges, but it is an important piece of the puzzle in creating a more sustainable future where resources are used in the most efficient way. -JG

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Fisheries Iceland was established in 2014 to increase value creation from Iceland's fishing resources. Iceland's fishing industry is a competitive, exciting industry with high demand for professionals from diverse backgrounds, education and experience. Some of the island's best and brightest work at the organization.

Fisheries Iceland safeguards the interests of its members and functions as Iceland's association of companies involved in the fishing industry. Fisheries Iceland aims to get young people excited about the country's dynamic fishing sector. The aptly named Hnakkapön aims to do just that.

Hackathon, Icelandic style

In order to get young people excited about Iceland's fisheries, the organization teamed up with Reykjavik University to sponsor the 'Hnakkapön', a play on the term 'hackathon'. Students were challenged to find ways in which the Þorbjörn hf fishing company could excel in terms of sustainability and environmental management. They were directed to conduct an analysis of the company's operations aimed at reducing waste and emissions and to develop suggestions for improvement that will also enhance Þorbjörn's efficiency and competitive advantage.

"Icelandic fisheries can be technical and complicated, but it is an exciting business," stated Karen Kjartansdóttir, Information Officer at Fisheries Iceland. "The Hnakkapön allows students to consider the entire value chain of the fish industry and how businesses can be more efficient."

Winning Team

Teams were split into groups of five. The students had different educational backgrounds ranging from business to environmental studies to law and engineering. "They had two days to think about the relevant problems and to come up with solutions," said Karen. The judges were Ari Kristinn Jónsson, president of the university, Björgólfur Jóhannsson, CEO of Icelandair, Gylfi Sigfússon, CEO of Eimskip, Sólveig Arna Jóhannesdóttir, Sales Manager for HB Grandi, Arni Finnsson, chairman of the Iceland Nature Conservation Association, Heiðar Hrafn Eiríksson, director of Þorbjörn, Ketill Berg



Photo: Friðbjófur Helgason



Magnússon, director of the Icelandic Center for Corporate Social Responsibility and Karen Kjartansdóttir, for Fisheries Iceland.

The winners were Guðjón Smári Guðmundsson, Ingi Svavarsson, Hjálmar Óskarsson, Margrét Lilja Hjaltadóttir and

diverse jobs that Icelandic fishing offers and trigger new ideas from Reykjavik University students. "The students approached their task with flying colors and the suggestions made were both diverse and very useful," said Ari Kristinn Jónsson, the president of Reykjavik University. "It was a tall order for the jury, but in the end, the result was nevertheless unanimous."

Fisheries Iceland-Diverse Work

Fisheries Iceland merged two former associations in the fishing industry of Iceland, The Federation of Icelandic Fishing Vessel Owners and the Federation of Icelandic Fish Processing Plants. The organization has 19 board members and 12 full-time employees dedicated to Iceland's fishing interests. In addition to providing information and representing the industry, Fisheries Iceland also provides an Iceland Responsible Fisheries logo that indicates Icelandic origin of fish catches in Icelandic waters and responsible fisheries management. The logo provides opportunities for stakeholders in the value chain of Icelandic seafood to highlight Icelandic origin.

"The fishing industry is complicated with a lot of moving parts," said Karen, "But, we take great pride in the industry and we want to educate others about what we are doing. The Hnakkapön is a great way to get young people in Iceland interested and to inform others."

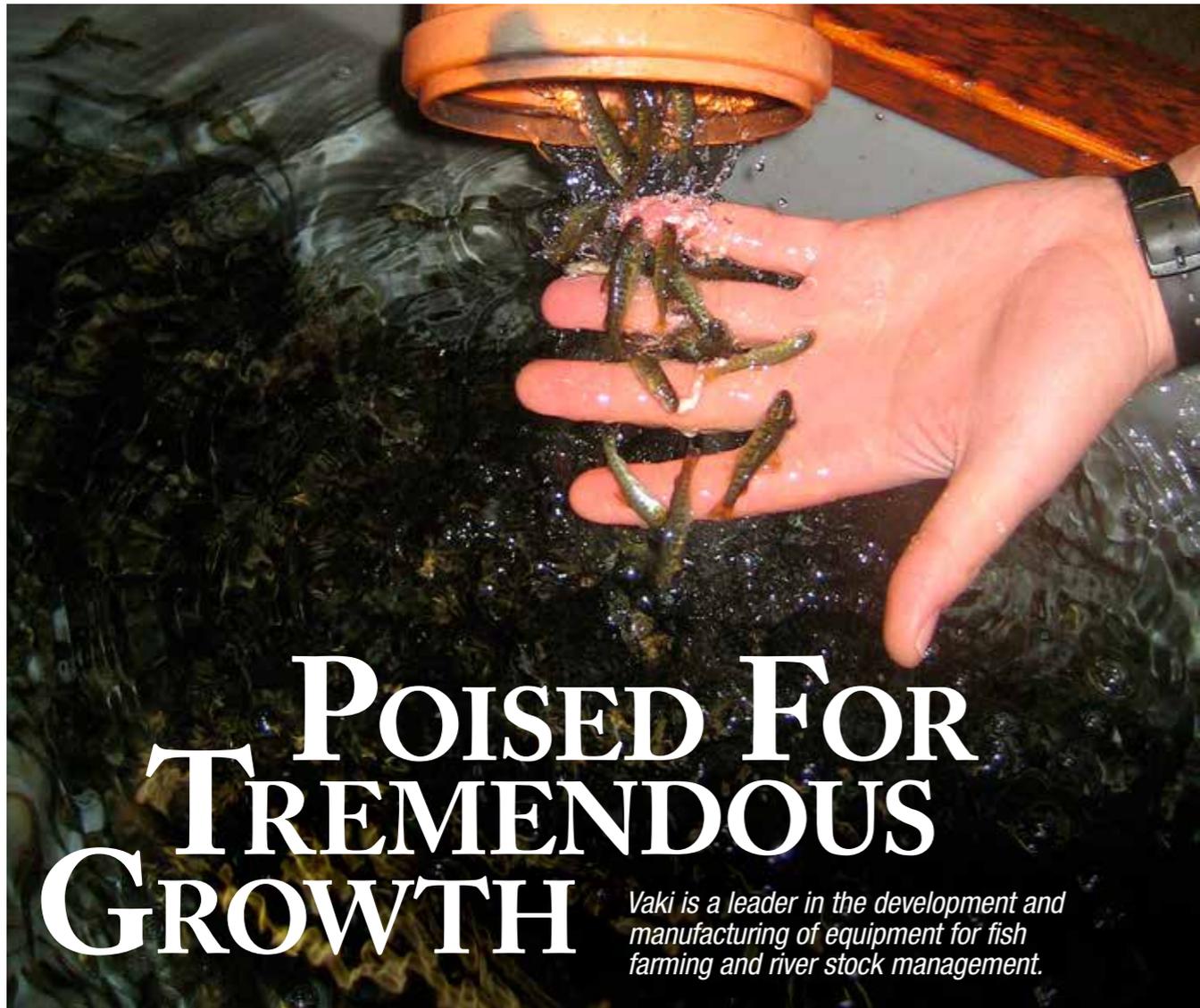
-JG

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Hrönn Vilhjálmsdóttir. "The prize was a flight to Boston for the World Seafood Congress and US embassy staff members will introduce the winners to influential people in the industry," said Karen. "The US embassy is really interested in the Hnakkapön and it is so nice to work with them."

Working in Icelandic fisheries is a complex profession requiring great expertise and professional staff. Among the subjects involved are fishing, food processing, marketing, innovation, technological development, transport, research, the environment and much more. The objective of Hnakkapön is presenting students with countless opportunities for innovation and





POISED FOR TREMENDOUS GROWTH

Vaki is a leader in the development and manufacturing of equipment for fish farming and river stock management.

Fish farming is a growing global industry, and Vaki Aquaculture Systems is at the center of it all. Vaki, a dynamic Iceland-based company, specializes in manufacturing and developing equipment for fish counting and size estimation for fish farming businesses around the world. The company, which celebrates its 30th anniversary this year, exports its products to more than 60 countries, with particular focus on Norway, Scotland, Chile, Canada and Mediterranean countries. Vaki works with companies that have industrialized fish farming businesses using modern fish farming techniques. Companies that use Vaki's equipment process a wide range of fish species including salmon, sea bass,



Vaki has an impressive and diverse product line that can accommodate businesses of all sizes

tilapia, carp, white fish, and flatfish, among others.

While headquartered in Iceland, Vaki has a worldwide reach with offices in Norway,

Scotland and Chile. The dedicated staff of more than 50 people work tirelessly to ensure that each product manufactured meets the strict standards set by management, and that customers can reach staff at a moment's notice. "It's important to have sales and service agents around the world to provide the best service possible," says Benedikt Hálfðanarson, managing director of Vaki.

Diverse Product Line

Vaki has an impressive and diverse product line that can accommodate businesses of all sizes. The company manufactures an extensive range of counters that count fish from the hatching stage to harvesting. The products can count a wide range of fish



Service and support are a core part of Vaki's business model that doesn't end once a purchase has been made.

species from 0.2 grams to 12 kilograms. Other products handle tasks including grading, splitting, moving and delivering fish stocks. Another of Vaki's strengths is their technology, including infra-red camera-based and imaging software technology that puts Vaki counters above its competitors.

Vaki's management team has chosen to specialize on select products to ensure quality and the best approach for each need, instead of offering every type of fish farming equipment. "Fish counters are the heart of the company and we strive to be the best at that, to be a leader in the industry," says Benedikt. "We are loyal to our focus and are determined to work at what we are best at."

Unrivaled Training and Customer Service

Service and support are a core part of Vaki's business model that doesn't end once a purchase has been made. The company prides itself on its professional level of support when it comes to the service and maintenance of its suite of products. Company employees train equipment users to maximize performance and productivity, increase in-house expertise, and ensure that all users have the proper qualifications to take responsibility for improving production. Training is delivered during a

time and location that is most convenient to the customer. Vaki also offers customers an online service contract and continued after-sales support. "It's important to note that the relationship does not end at the sale," says Benedikt. "We nurture relationships with customers, and are available for questions, maintenance, software issues and add-ons."

Positioned for Growth

The company is committed to innovation and development and Vaki will continue

to act as a leader in this growing industry as a trusted manufacturer and advisor to its customers.

One market that continues to be of interest with the possibility of strong growth is Asia, with a particular focus on China. Indeed, China is the biggest fish farmer in the world and, as Chinese companies continue to modernize, business owners are looking for the type of equipment that Vaki provides. Other Asian countries that are potential markets are Japan, Philippines, South Korea, Thailand, as well as Middle Eastern countries like Iran, Israel and Saudi Arabia.

Numerous Accolades

Vaki is a healthy, profitable company that has been recognized for its success. In 2015, Vaki was named one of the strongest companies in Iceland by CreditInfo, for the fifth year in a row. Vaki was amongst the 1.7% of Icelandic companies that have achieved the requirements for this accreditation. Additionally, in 2009, Vaki received the President of Iceland's Export Award for achievement in the exporting of Icelandic products and services to overseas markets.

The fish farming industry is a growing worldwide business and the future looks bright for Vaki. -JG

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1,000 YEARS OF FISH

A small fishing village has turned into an export hub

Fishing is in the blood and heritage of the Vikings of Iceland. Starting out as a small settlement founded by one of the first settlers, Molda-Gnúpur, in about 934, Grindavík has been in the fishing business for over 1,000 years. With rich fishing grounds not far from shore, for many years small, open boats set out to bring in a catch.

However, fishing around Iceland is not for the faint-hearted. It's coasts are famous for their rich fishing grounds—and notorious for their tumultuous seas and shipwrecks. As fishermen across the world know, their profession is a dangerous business and the price of fish could be measured in men's lives. With no real harbour, and the very powerful, rough seas to contend with, many lives were lost over the years. The cry, "Row for



fishing vessels of different sizes once again transformed the lives of the fishermen. Also, the introduction of compulsory seamen's training led to a dramatic fall in the number of lives lost, while at the same time, boosting catches.

Further improvements to the harbour and now a very modern fishing fleet, supported by cutting-edge technological advancements has dramatically increased both the numbers and quality of the fish caught. The introduction of the Iceland Responsible Fisheries programme and the 760,000 square kilometres of the Icelandic exclusive fisheries zone has brought the country a protected, sustainable fishing area that has stopped the decimation of fish stocks through overfishing around the country by many other fishing nations. Today Grindavík's harbour is one of the safest in Iceland and gets around 2,500-3,000 landings that provide over 40,000 tons of fish per year. The latest addition to the catch is the Blue fin tuna—the most expensive type of tuna fish that is becoming successful in Iceland.

Proximity to the international airport at Keflavik means that fish caught one day can be on a restaurant table in New York or Italy the next day. That freshness makes a palpable difference in taste. Naturally, there are top class restaurants in the town itself where visitors can enjoy that day's fresh fish catch for dinner, cooked by world-class chefs—a full dining experience with their international menu, supported by a full range of wines

and spirits. It makes a great stop and a memorable way to remember Iceland—especially before heading to the airport for a flight home.

The opportunity to see a fishing village in action today is a big draw for tourists who can see the fleet sail in and unload on the quayside. They can also observe the processing and packing taking place in a factory or enjoy a soup at the small fishermen's café on the harbourside whilst watching the activity.

Just 3km down the road from the famous Blue Lagoon that formed as an outfall from the geothermal power plant built following the 1973 oil crisis, the small town still has the air of a quiet village. Now grown in size to over 3,000 inhabitants, it has numerous sport teams and a wide range of activities to enjoy. Hotels, such as the new Geo Hotel, guesthouses like Borg and a well-equipped camp site provide popular accommodation options for those wishing to enjoy the Reykjanes peninsula.

This vibrant community is today home to 29 companies directly involved in fishing, fish processing and packaging and a further 15 who provide services to the industry from nets to fuel, from transportation to technology—not to mention other tourist services. Their shared commitment to quality service permeates every aspect of their society. This is what has turned a small village into one of the most important centres of the fishing industry in Iceland.

-ASF



Chinese Ambassador, Zhang Widong, in the Icelandic Times headquarters, declares his approval of the Chinese magazine to Edda Snorraddóttir, Project Manager of the Icelandic Times and Einar Th. Thorsteinsson, the company's Managing Editor and Publisher.

ICELANDIC TIMES EXPANDS FURTHER IN CHINA

The first issue of the Icelandic Times was printed and distributed in China more than a year ago, in November 2014. Expert Chinese speakers translated the content of the English issue into Mandarin Chinese. Printed in China, it is the only version of the magazine distributed there. In

addition, it is also distributed directly to five thousand travel agencies throughout the country.

The Icelandic Times has been very well received in China. The third edition has been released and as before, its subjects are tourism, culture and business. The magazine is now well-

established in China, and aims to expand further in the coming months.

There has been a significant increase in the number of tourists from China visiting Iceland over the past few years. In 2014 the increase was around 50% compared to the year before. In 2015, there

was an 80% increase compared to 2014. Likewise, Icelanders have also been looking increasingly to China, both as a tourist destination and for business connections. The possibilities for innovative Icelandic business are virtually endless in China, given the size of its market. Bilateral relationships between China and Iceland in the various economic sectors increased as both individuals and companies have become more engaged in the process.

Given these circumstances, it's therefore no surprise that the Chinese edition of the Icelandic Times has become popular. It is available in both print form and on the Internet at www.icelandictimes.cn.

Important partnerships in China

With the next issue, the Icelandic Times enters a new field. The paper will be dedicated to fishing, the fishery industry and food relating to it. There are about 5,500 companies that belong to the Chinese fishing and food industry organisations and the magazine will be developed in close cooperation and collaboration with them.

The Icelandic Times is also working together with the Chinese State News Feed, the Xinhua News Agency. Two



Iceland's Prime Minister, Sigmundur Davíð Gunnlaugsson, reading the Icelandic Times, with Einar Th. Thorsteinsson, the magazine's publisher.



Karl Lúðvíksson, Sales Manager for the Icelandic Times, will be overseeing the sales for the new Fishery magazine in China.

documentary programmes have already been produced, one about tourism, and the other on the Icelandic Þorrablót or Thorablót, the mid-winter feast rooted in Iceland's pagan history. These programmes have been shown both in China and around the world. Xinhua News Agency operations include the television channels CNC China and CNC World, which broadcast in English and Chinese in over 120 countries and on the Internet.

The need exists

The introduction of Iceland as a tourist destination has had a considerable impact in China. The Icelandic Times has played a role in this. The aim of the magazine is to contribute valuable information to foreign travellers who visit Iceland, including its topography, Icelandic culture, history, nature, and the services available so that their visit to Iceland is as enjoyable as possible. Therefore, it is important that information is provided in the language the visitors speak.

In addition to the Chinese version, the Icelandic Times is also published in English, French and German. The English version was introduced in 2009 and is published five times a year. The first editions in French and German were published in 2012, and come out once a year.

-ASF



Ragnheiður Elín Árnadóttir, Minister of Industry and Commerce, a strong supporter of the Icelandic Times magazines.

ALL NATURAL STORAGE

Natural White finds solutions for protecting raw materials.



Natural White is a dynamic Iceland-based company that focuses on developing natural methods to protect raw materials before processing. Johannes Arason, who developed the flagship Natural White product, leads the company, which has been operating since 1991. Natural White is a spice/salt solution that binds with protein on cut surfaces, which in turn binds the cellular water. The product eliminates

drip loss, keeps the cells turgid and provides an improved texture and quality to buyers. Natural White is made from rosemary full extract (Rosemary oleoresin) and weak mineral salt brine solution.



Groundbreaking Product

The Natural White formula, which is 100% natural, was first tested on fish products in New Zealand and the results were undeniable. Not only did the fish remain whiter, it held its flavor, and the texture was much improved over the control samples, and the improvement in yield was obvious. Over subsequent seasons, additional trials were conducted on fresh and reprocessed fish of the many species available in New

Zealand, with positive results. Those trials extended to the production and export of some salted cod and ling and the production of cod and Hoki fillet block.

New Focus

In 2011, there was a major change at the company when the main focus shifted to the handling of raw materials, fresh and frozen. A new method was developed to under-cool white fish, cod, haddock, pollock, catfish, and other fish species. The method allows raw materials for fresh and frozen processing to be stored from 12-72



Johannes Arason. Gudni Bjornsson.

Dedicated, Experienced Staff

Johannes Arason, Jon Aki Bjarnason and Gudni Bjornsson have a combined 120 years of experience in the food industry, working with fresh fish, chicken, lamb and other proteins. Johannes has more than 50 years experience as a food technician, while Jon Aki operates the largest canning factory in Iceland, and Gudni has expertise in selling and producing dried fish both in Europe and the United States. "We are working with businesses around the world," said Johannes. "Our experience and knowledge helps businesses find solutions and we are a strong team together." -JG

hours, until the fish muscle is made tough to endure filleting, skinning and trimming without drip loss. The processing yield increase is in the range of 5%. During the salting as storage process; the fish is ready directly after filleting as it is lightly salted with the highest possible yield rate, density and quality.



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THE FINEST FISH FOR FISKMARKAÐURINN

Head chef Hrefna Rósa Sætran has a passion for local, fresh seafood ingredients.

Fiskmarkaðurinn combines fresh Icelandic ingredients with a modern twist, delighting the palates of foodies from around the world. Fiskmarkaðurinn stands out among a number of fantastic seafood restaurants in downtown Reykjavik. What makes Fiskmarkaðurinn special is the combination of ingredients the chef employs. For instance, the fresh, grilled monkfish comes with crispy bacon, cottage cheese, tomato yuzu pesto and crunchy enoki mushrooms. It's a vision, as is the salted cod with lime zest, with potato puree, apple and celery salad.

Hrefna Rósa Sætran, the head chef at Fiskmarkaðurinn, takes great care to source the finest Icelandic fish for her delicious, inventive



dishes. She buys the best local salmon, cod, langoustine, and monkfish that Iceland has to offer from its vast, clean waters. Hrefna has an obvious passion for the ingredients she chooses. “To this day, my favorite single ingredient is salmon,” she said. “The ultimate thrill is to have a fresh whole salmon in front of me, cutting it up and preparing it for sushi and other dishes—even picking and counting all of its 32 bones. It is just so beautiful and fascinating.”

Unique Vision

The restaurant's deep-fried dried fish is a perfect example of her creative spirit. Harðfiskur (dried fish) has been an Icelandic favorite snack for centuries, providing wholesome nourishment and ample protein in every bite. But Hrefna simply dipped the fish in green tempura and deep-fried it, creating a tasty treat that combines a classic Icelandic ingredient with a new spin. Indeed, her dishes have been described as traditional Icelandic cuisine with a modern twist. “We cook local, but still I want the freedom to go

anywhere I want, using fresh ingredients from all over the world to turn the local core ingredients into a culinary rollercoaster,” said Hrefna.

Household Name

Hrefna is well known and respected throughout Iceland and has made her mark on Icelandic food culture with her restaurants, television appearances and recipe books. But, that success did not arrive overnight. Hrefna is an experienced, trained chef who completed her chef's internship at Apótek Restaurant in Reykjavik. She was a member of the first Junior Culinary Team of Iceland and became head chef of Maru restaurant while

she was still in training. After graduating, Hrefna began her cooking career at the Michelin-starred restaurant Léa Linster in Luxembourg. Hrefna eventually returned to Iceland and continued her career at Sjávarkjallarinn where she became head chef. Fiskmarkaðurinn was founded in 2007 and quickly became a favorite in the Reykjavik restaurant scene with Hrefna as head chef, and the restaurant remains both popular and highly acclaimed.



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