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To Tourism, Culture and Business Issue 37 • 2018

Good shoes. A warm, windproof coat is about road safety in the magazine. As around you. So being prepared is very essential. You’ll find the Icelandic sweaters should the weather turn off. See the article sure you have everything you need, stretches to the horizon. Then, before you preparation, you’ll find your stay much more comfortable when going outside.

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ICELAND IS very much alive during the winter months. The days may be short but you can pack a lot into them! There are countless activities offered across the country to take advantage of the different weather. Smart travellers head out of the capital to the outlying towns for special experiences. There are regular scheduled flights to every part of the country.

In each article, you’ll find a main idea that you can use to fine-tune your trip. Be sure to check the recommended places included in the article, as many are clearly the best in their category. When you’re out and about, you can use your time efficiently by looking for your main idea. Check out the map of Iceland to see the main articles.

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

How to make use of QR codes

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

Leisure

Iceland is a destination where you can combine relaxation with adventure. In these pages, you’ll find an array of options for both activities. For example, there are guesthouses with 'hot pots' or jacuzzis where you can sit snugly in the warm water while sipping a glass of wine and watching the show overhead. Take photos—your friends won’t believe you otherwise!

Iceland is very much alive during the winter months. The days may be short but you can pack a lot into them! There are countless activities offered across the country to take advantage of the different weather. Smart travellers head out of the capital to the outlying towns for special experiences. There are regular scheduled flights to every part of the country.

A day out, the restaurants, pubs and bistros are great places to relax and the quality of the food is exceptional. There are lots of high quality, award-winning local brews available from beers to spirits that are worth tiring—and taking home with you. You’ll find them in the Duty Free Store at the airport. Snacks are always nice and chocolate all the more so! You’ll find that Iceland has some of the world’s top master chocolatiers. It may be a small country, but what Iceland has to offer in every season is something magical.

Editor

Einar Th. Thordarson
Managing Editor and Publisher

Credits

Icelandic language

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Tourism

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www.icelandictimes.com

Printed in Sweden by Y-TAP

Opening hours:
Store 11-21 Restaurant 9:30-20-30
Kaufmann 4, 210 Garðabær - www.IKEA.is

ISK 445,-

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REYKJAVÍK
Kaffitár: Quality Coffee in Vibrant Cafés
The local company produces a delightful range of coffees that can be enjoyed in a number of cafés in Iceland.

Coffee culture is strong in Iceland, and Kaffitár leads the way. A big part of Kaffitár’s story is their seven coffee houses, with the newest location at Perlan (The Pearl). The cafés feature vibrant hues, cheerful décor, and an engaging staff. The company aspires to combine the hominess of coffee house culture in a playful environment. You won’t find a pretentious, stuffy aura in Kaffitar cafés. The culture emphasizes a friendly feel that offers a fun ambience with a background of bright oranges, deep reds, and primary yellows for customers to enjoy while they feast on artisan sandwiches, gourmet cakes and pastries, and fine Icelandic treats.

Direct trade is important
Sourcing, roasting, brewing and serving great coffee is the reason why Kaffitár exists as a business and what makes employees excited to go to work every day. The coffee is carefully sourced and comes from different parts of the world, but the producers are very much part of the Kaffitár family. The company is proud to buy 85% of their green coffee beans directly from the farmers themselves. They also employ a direct trade concept that allows the company to provide donations and offer cooperation to the farms they buy from in order to enhance the quality of life for their workers. These are important principles to Kaffitár and they are pleased to bring a bit of Icelandic cheer to their communities.

Sustainability is key
The sustainability issue is also near and dear to Kaffitár, and by having their cafés certified by Nordic Ecolabelling (The Swan), they can assure sustainability from seed to cup. Kaffitár is the first café in Iceland to receive the Nordic environmental certification. The Swan is the official ecolabel of the Nordic countries that helps consumers choose products and services that are more environmentally friendly than others on the market. In accordance with The Swan, Kaffitár has taken specific measures to reduce the use of disposable packaging, like cardboard and plastic, which reduces trash. The company strives to use recyclable packaging as well as eco-friendly cleaning products. Strict requirements related to The Swan designation ensure that Kaffitár’s activities and services are at the forefront of minimizing negative environmental and health effects. In collaboration with customers, Kaffitár has worked hard to focus on reducing waste and promoting positive environmental factors.

Great coffee and cozy atmosphere
You can expect a fun, light-hearted atmosphere when you visit a Kaffitár café and the new addition at the Pearl is a welcome addition to the neighbourhood, where tourists and locals enjoy quality coffee in comfortable surroundings. Kaffitár is popular for a reason: customers get quality coffee and delicious food, along with a company that cares about its environmental impact in the world. Enjoy a break at Kaffitár during your trip to Iceland!

-KG

Kaffitár: Quality Coffee in Vibrant Cafés
The local company produces a delightful range of coffees that can be enjoyed in a number of cafés in Iceland.
Reykjavík City Museum

Multiple exhibits focus on historical and cultural aspects of the capital city.

Reykjavík City Museum gives travellers the opportunity to experience the history of Reykjavík in a fun and engaging way. The museum, which comprises five separate sites, aims to preserve Reykjavík’s cultural heritage, which dates back to the days of settlement in the late 9th century.

Four of the museums are conveniently within walking distance of downtown Reykjavík, while the Árbær Open Air Museum is only a 15-minute drive from the city centre. The ferry to Viðey Island leaves from the Old Harbour, which is just off the coast of Reykjavík. Viðey is a little gem of an island just off the coast of Reykjavík and is accessible by ferry. The island, which is just 1.6 km² in size, hosts unpolluted nature with vast stretches of grassy plains and rich birdlife, as well as the John Lennon Peace Tower, an installation created by Yoko Ono, along with art by world-renowned artist Richard Serra. Viðey is a favourite among birdwatchers, as the island is a nesting ground for more than 30 bird species. In the summer, there are daily ferry trips from the Old Harbour, Ágrippabakki harbour and Skarfabakki harbour.

Please visit www.videy.com for information about the ferry schedule.

The Settlement Exhibition

The Settlement Exhibition is as authentic as it gets as it was built around the actual ruins of a Viking Age longhouse that has been preserved in situ. The exhibition gives visitors a look into the life of the first people who called the Reykjavík area their home and the ways in which they adapted to their new life. The construction of Viking Age buildings is explained using multimedia technology. Computer technology is used to give an impression of what life was like in the hall. The exhibition is suitable for all ages and includes an activity centre for children.

Reykjavík Maritime Museum

Fishing has been the backbone of Iceland since the days of settlement. Fish nourishes Iceland’s inhabitants and is an important industry, exporting Icelandic fish abroad. The museum shows the equipment fishermen used through the ages. However, one of the main attractions at the museum is the Coast Guard ship, Óðinn, which took part in all three cod wars with Britain. Guided tours are offered daily at 13.00, 14.00, and 15.00.

Reykjavík Museum of Photography

Reykjavík is home to some great photographers, past and present. The Reykjavík Museum of Photography has an impressive collection, which now comprises about six million photographs. The oldest photos date from around 1860, giving a glimpse of city life decades ago. The museum preserves photographs from professional, and amateur photographers, including industrial and commercial photographers, as well as portrait and press photographers. Reykjavík is a vibrant city with rich history and contemporary culture. Stop by to check out the latest exhibitions.

Viðey Island

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When Tourism Meets Design

Icelandic design is having a moment. For a country with only just 340,000 inhabitants, there are so many talented designers making waves on this small island in the North Atlantic. Everything from clothing to accessories, jewellery, ceramic, graphic design and everything in between, Icelanders are a creative group.

Rammagerðin is a shop with several locations in Iceland, including a shop in the heart of downtown Reykjavík, on Skólavörðustígur. Here, visitors can buy goods from well known, established Icelandic brands and independent designers alike, including clothing from local designer Sigríður Sunneva.

Passion for design

Sunneva is an educated fashion designer specialising in fur garments, mainly producing warm coats and cold weather wear. She studied fashion design in Italy at Polimoda University of Fashion and decided then to specialise in fur. After working in Florence for a number of years, she returned to Akureyri, her hometown in North Iceland, to establish her fashion studio and creative base. “I’m very happy with the decision because I have worked with fur in my profession ever since, both in my small business which I founded in 1995, and for larger companies,” she says.

Natural materials

Sunneva has always emphasised the importance of using only natural materials in her designs. The use of natural fabrics reflects her respect for nature and has shaped her personal style. Sunneva combines influences of Italian aesthetics she became familiar with when studying, with a chic Nordic look.

New for Rammagerðin

The new collection VEDRABRIGDI is a unique collection that uses untraditional materials like lamb skins. “I’ve always had it in mind to design a product line from raw materials that are not as seasonal as past collections,” she says.

The product line includes three sizes of bags, key rings and teddy bears in three sizes. “Earlier this summer I was working with Elizabet Jónsdóttir, the designer of the Volk brand, on a new version of a teddy bear, in which we “propped” him up with colourful woolen material on one side and lamb sheepskin on the other and now the first bears of this type are at Rammagerðin.”

For a large selection of unique Icelandic designs, drop in to Rammagerðin during your visit to Iceland!
Gljúfrasteinn—Laxness museum, in the Mosfellsdalur valley, is only 20 minutes away from Reykjavík on the way to Þingvellir National Park. It was the home and workplace of Halldór Laxness, winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1955, and his family for more than half a century. It is now open to the public as a museum. Hardly anything has been changed in or around the museum since Laxness lived there and thus, it is a perfect example of how the cultural families of Iceland lived during a century of stunning changes, an era when Iceland took a leap from being a remote and tad reclusive fishing and farming community to becoming a player on the world stage.

Capturing the Soul
Laxness, who was born in 1902 and died in 1998, absorbed society’s players and all its tiny steps as well as its big jumps, often foreseeing their consequences, and creating his much-loved literature from the fast-paced journey and characters the Icelanders discuss and refer to as if they had actually existed. He totally captured the Icelandic soul.

In the reception building at Gljúfrasteinn, you can watch a multimedia presentation dedicated to Laxness’ life and work. Indeed, it is worth your while, as the writer was both interesting and fun, with a tremendous sense of humour. There is also a souvenir shop on the premises where Laxness’ books can be obtained in various languages.

The Source of Inspiration
The reason Laxness built his home here was his love for the Mosfellsdalur valley. He was born and raised in the valley. It was there, at his grandmother’s knee, that he learned to appreciate the different destinies of the human race and develop a kindness towards those less fortunate—which is quite apparent in his novels. The area where Laxness spent his childhood became his source of inspiration throughout his life.

The garden at Gljúfrasteinn is open to the public and a number of pleasant walks can be taken throughout the area. Halldór Laxness spent long hours roaming the beautiful countryside around Gljúfrasteinn and visitors are encouraged to walk along both the river Kaldakvísl and around the valley, which were both his childhood haunts and his inspiration in later life.

If you already know Laxness’ work, you will love this museum. And if you don’t know it, the museum is your first step towards an unimaginably versatile and rich world.

If you are planning to visit during the summer check the museum’s schedule first. During June, July and August there are chamber concerts in the living room, which sports a grand piano, as Laxness was an excellent pianist himself.
Flóki being made from just a couple of kilos of Icelandic barley. The goal was always to make a great and truly Icelandic whisky. The journey began in 2009 with the first experimental batch of Flóki being made from a crop of barley from the Hekla volcano, where Flóki is slowly maturing in oak casks in the family barn. Perhaps one of the more interesting things about how Eimverk Distillery produces Flóki is that their Smoked Reserve uses an age-old tradition of smoking with sheep dung rather than the traditional peated smoke which is the prevalent way of smoking whisky. This smoking method imparts sweet and subtle smoky notes that perfectly complement the taste derived from the Icelandic barley and Flóki, Sheep Dung Smoked Reserve has been getting great reviews from whisky connoisseurs all over the world.

The taste and spirit of Icelandic nature Flóki Whisky is handcrafted and produced from 100% local Icelandic barley. The Icelandic barley is a hardy strain that thrives during the short, intense Icelandic summer, and it has a sweet breadiness with complex spice notes. Much of the barley is sourced from the family farm, at the base of the Hekla volcano, where Flóki is slowly maturing in oak casks in the family barn. Perhaps one of the more interesting things about how Eimverk Distillery produces Flóki is that their Smoked Reserve uses an age-old tradition of smoking with sheep dung rather than the traditional peated smoke which is the prevalent way of smoking whisky. This smoking method imparts sweet and subtle smoky notes that perfectly complement the taste derived from the Icelandic barley and Flóki, Sheep Dung Smoked Reserve has been getting great reviews from whisky connoisseurs all over the world.

A premium pot distilled gin and the original Icelandic schnapps Vor Gin, a small batch pot distilled gin is not your typical Gin. Rather it is made in the style of the 19th century Icelandic gin, triple pot distilled and using only native Icelandic ingredients available to the gin makers of that time. Vor is handcrafted in small batches of only 500 bottles, and all herbs and botanicals are native to Iceland and steeped in the spirit for the third distillation. Eimverk is also bringing back the roots of Icelandic spirits with Víti, their handcrafted Icelandic Brennivín. Víti is a small-batch triple distilled aquavit made from local barley, caraway seeds and other native Icelandic botanicals.

Visits and availability Eimverk Distillery is located a 10-minute drive from downtown Reykjavik and is the perfect destination for whisky fans and anyone with an interest in Icelandic spirits. Flóki and all of Eimverk’s spirits are available locally in Iceland and in the duty-free store in Keflavik International Airport. The company also exports to 14 countries around the world.

For more information, visit www.flokiwhisky.is

See the Northern Lights by Boat

Watch the majestic Aurora Borealis off the coast of Reykjavik

Viewing the Northern Lights in Iceland is truly magical. Watching the green and white lights flicker and dance in the sky, fading, only to reappear brighter and stronger. It’s no wonder that people travel from all around the world to hunt the Aurora Borealis! While hunting Northern Lights by land is fun, seeing them from the ocean is breathtaking. Travellers sail from the Reykjavik harbour out to sea, leaving the capital city and towering mountains in the distance.

Experience and excellence Special Tours was founded in 1996 as a Puffin Watching & School Trip Sea Tour Operator. Over the past 21 years, the company’s main focus is providing personal service, making sure to meet customers’ expectations and also protect and respect the environment. Special Tours offers sea adventures year-round, to individuals and groups, offering competitive prices, excellent service and a great experience on the tours.

A special experience with Special Tours Special Tours operates the original Northern Lights by Boat tour in Iceland, departing from the Old Harbour in the heart of Reykjavik. The tours, which are led by an experienced and enthusiastic guide, run for 2-3 hours and operate from 1st September to 19th April. The boats are comfortable, with a café/bar on board as well as free Wi-Fi. The staff provide warm overalls to keep you comfortable and it is recommended to wear layers with a hat, scarf and gloves. After just 10-15 minutes, you will be far from the bright city lights, sailing to a perfect location to spot Northern Lights. But if you don’t get to see them, don’t fret; you will receive a free ticket to try again. You have to keep in mind that this natural phenomenon is unpredictable, but guides monitor the forecast closely and sail to the clearest area.

A variety of tours The company specialises in a number of wildlife adventures at sea. You can book whale watching and puffin watching tours, allowing you to get up close to numerous whale and dolphin species as well as Iceland’s adorable mascot, the puffin. Travellers can also book sea angling tours, a Reykjavik by Sea sailing tour, and the spectacular New Years Fireworks Cruise, where guests can watch the sky light up with one of the most amazing fireworks displays in the world.
Essentially, it is Iceland’s beautiful and unspoilt nature that makes it such a unique destination. Iceland is the outdoor enthusiast’s dream, where volcanoes, glaciers, hot springs and waterfalls set their mark on the landscape.

Outdoor Adventures
Iceland & Greenland
Icelandic Mountain Guides was established in 1994 by four pioneering mountaineers and outdoor enthusiasts whose aim was to introduce the wonders of the Icelandic nature to travellers from all over the world. Today, the company is considered to be Iceland’s premier adventure tour operator, offering outdoor adventures in both Iceland and Greenland. The tours range from short and easy glacier walks to hiking, trekking and multi-day expeditions.

Glacier Walk Pioneers
Icelandic Mountain Guides offers the original glacier walks on a daily basis, all year round from both Sólheimajökull glacier in the south and Skaftafell in Vatnajökull National Park. The glacier tours range from 2–7 hours, so everyone should be able to find a tour to their liking. On the glacier walks, you are guided through the magical landscape of the outlet glaciers, exploring the wonderland of ice sculptures, water cauldrons, ridges, and deep crevasses. Even though there are no technical requirements needed for the tours, safety is a big issue when travelling on glaciers. Therefore, all Icelandic Mountain Guides go through a strict training programme to make sure you enjoy your adventure in a fun and safe way.

Day Tours from Reykjavík
On the outdoor adventure day tours from Reykjavík, you can sit back, relax and enjoy being driven between your tour highlights by an experienced and knowledgeable driver-guide. A perfect way to enjoy a great day out in the Icelandic nature. All tours are operated on small mini buses for a more personal small group experience. The tours can include everything from glacier walks and ice climbing tours to hot spring hikes, caving, waterfalls, geysers and Northern Lights hunts, depending on your tour selection.

Ice Cave and Northern Lights Short Breaks
The Icelandic Mountain Guides winter short breaks to the natural ice caves in the Vatnajökull National Park region have become very popular amongst those looking for a 2–3 day winter adventure from the capital of Reykjavik. On these tours, you get a chance to explore black sand beaches, glaciers, glacier lagoons, waterfalls and even the Golden Circle. In the evenings you will get a chance to look out for the natural phenomenon being the Northern Lights.

Years of Experience
The company has more than two decades of experience creating exciting tours that accommodate and adapt to different needs, preferences, and languages. Whether you are a solo traveller, a family, or you are coming to Iceland in a large group, Icelandic Mountain Guides has you covered.

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PHOTO BY BjöRG Vin HÍLRAMSSON
It’s like stepping back into another era and another time. Touches of old world charm, elements of classical interior design and nearly 500 works of art by renowned Icelandic artists are what set this mid-century, boutique hotel apart from the rest.

Steeped in history
The elegant Hotel Holt is located in what can be perhaps called the most quintessential neighbourhood of Reykjavík with its quiet streets and quaint 19th century timber and corrugated iron clad houses. Over the years, the 4-star hotel has attracted many of Reykjavík’s artistic, social and political vanguard, and continues its tradition of quality and excellence.

A permanent art collection
The hotel is home to part of the country’s largest privately owned art collection and features numerous works by several of Iceland’s most cherished late 19th century and early 20th century artists such as Johannes Kjarval, Jón Stefánsson, and Ásmundur Sveinsson, among others. Many of the works on the hotel’s ground floor are by Kjarval, while the upper floors are lined with old maps and 134 lithographs by the artist M. August Mayer who accompanied French naturalist Joseph Paul Gaimard on his voyage to Iceland between 1835 and 1836. The 460 works of art scattered throughout the hotel are numbered and catalogued and a guided tour of the hotel museum is available upon request.

The geode effect
As with many Icelandic buildings, Hotel Holt’s façade belies its rich interiors; marble floors, persian carpets and gilded antiques grace the hotel lobby while the breakfast area is laid with ornate Italian ceramic tiles. Some forty-two rooms spanning four floors are furnished with the clean lines of contemporary Icelandic decor and include all modern amenities, ensuite bathrooms and of course it goes without saying—comfortable beds!

The classy Gallery Bar
The sofas and chairs are leather; the drawings on the walls are pure Kjarval–delightful and playful. On one wall, a large glass cabinet is stocked with an impressive collection of Cognac, Scotch, and whiskey from around the world. Another wall of shelves stocks an equally impressive collection of spirits, craft beers, wines and liqueurs that help liven things up every evening from 4 to 9PM. Tempting snacks and amuse-bouches are also available at the bar.

Setting the standard for fine dining in Reykjavík
I would be amiss if I didn’t mention Hotel Holt’s restaurant which has been one of Reykjavík’s finest dining establishments since it opened in 1965. The restaurant is known for its classical cuisine with a vibrant Icelandic twist. It comes as no surprise that the restaurant has earned top marks in international rankings and has had the honour of hosting dinners and events for visiting ambassadors, dignitaries and royalty down through the years. Among the seventeen paintings that adorn the walls, The Picnic (1939) by Jón Stefánsson has become something of an icon and is one of the first paintings that captures your attention as you enter the room.

The Old Library
Take your time to take in the atmosphere of the hotel’s exceptional library with its beautifully preserved collection of leather bound volumes on a variety of subjects, including poetry, the Icelandic Sagas, and even a Bible from 1728.

Hotel Holt is located in central Reykjavík, on Bergstaðastræti 37 in the 101 neighbourhood of Reykjavík, five minutes’ walk from the main streets of Laugavegur and Skólavörðustígur and within easy walking distance to Hallgrímskirkja Church and the Old Harbour area.
Iceland’s Ambassador of Belgian Chocolate

Hafliði Ragnarsson, for example, have long been celebrated for their culinary excellence and their mastery of the fine art of pastry and confectionery. Over the last few years, however, Iceland’s gastronomic landscape has been changing rapidly with new restaurants and foods that were not seen here a decade ago, bringing a wave of excitement to the industry. And now there is one enterprising Icelander who is raising the bar for fine chocolates in Iceland and has the field pretty much to himself.

Hafliði Ragnarsson’s Artisanal Chocolates

Had you arrived in Iceland even 15 years ago, you would have been hard-pressed to find much in the way of luxury food items that other destinations are known for. France, Switzerland and Belgium, for example, have long been celebrated for their culinary excellence and their mastery of the fine art of pastry and confectionery. Over the last few years, however, Iceland’s gastronomic landscape has been changing rapidly with new restaurants and foods that were not seen here a decade ago, bringing a wave of excitement to the industry. And now there is one enterprising Icelander who is raising the bar for fine chocolates in Iceland and has the field pretty much to himself.

Iceland’s Ambassador of Belgian Chocolate

His name is Hafliði Ragnarsson who comes from a long line of bakers—his great-grandfather, his grandfather and his father all had a passion for baking and ran the family bakery for as far back as he can remember. “I would help out in the bakery when I was 12 or 13 years old, sweeping floors and doing odd jobs around the shop. As a teen I became interested in cake baking, and entered many competitions, gradually working my way up to chocolate confectionery. In 2003 I won 1st place for best cake and best dessert and 2nd place overall in the International Belgian Chocolate Awards competition.”

When dreams come true and only the best will do

The prestigious award paved the way for Hafliði, and that same year saw the opening of a café and bakery in downtown Reykjavík, Mosfellsbakari, which had been his dream for many years. Here you will find signature boxes of hand-dipped chocolates lining the shelves and a glass display case full of his most exclusive chocolate confections, sold by the piece. At Christmas and Easter especially, Hafliði pulls out all the stops with beautifully packaged new creations that show off his artistry to the full.

It goes without saying that the master chocolatier insists on quality ingredients for all his creations. His beautiful creations are made from only the best raw materials—almonds from Spain, hazelnuts from Italy and of course the holy grail of chocolate from producers such as Barry, Callebaut and Valrhona.

The Ultimate Icelandic Indulgence

Do make it your mission while in Iceland to search out these fabulous hand-crafted sweets that also make wonderful gifts for friends and family back home. For more information, go to www.konfekt.is or pop in at one of Mosfellbakari’s two locations, in Reykjavík and Mosfellsbær, on the way to the Golden Circle.

The Icelandic wild nature’s variety

Utra Islandica uses more than 70 types of wild herbs and berries in their products. The herbs are handpicked, dried and stored in good conditions so their freshness lasts longer. The company’s salt comes in many flavours, which perfectly complement the food or cocktails you are preparing. For instance, their Arctic Herbal, Blackberry and Black Lava Salt go very well with meat dishes, while Rhubarb and Angelica, and Liquorice salts accompany desserts and cocktails very well. Kelp and Garlic salt is the perfect topping for your baked potato or homemade garlic bread.

Utra Islandica’s herbal tea line is impressive, with teas including Birch, Arctic Thyme, Kelp and Ginger, and their famous 100% Bilberry tea. If you enjoy sweets, you will love the company’s range of syrups all made with organic sugar and wild harvested herbs and berries like Crowberry, Rhubarb, Birch, and Rowan berry. If you are looking for a tasty jam, it will be difficult to pick just one, as their Traditional Caramelized Rhubarb jam, along with Wild Blueberry and Red Currant jams are divine, especially as a topping on their unique Black Lava Crackers which are made from Icelandic barley and herbs.

Add Utra to your cooking

There are so many ways to incorporate these delightful gourmet products into food and drinks. For instance, for a fillet of Arctic Salmon, Utra Islandica’s Kelp and Garlic Salt pairs nicely with the fish along with Rhubarb Charney with Angelica. For a simple treat, consider the company’s syrups for homemade Rice Krispie Treats. Mix Rice Krispies with butter, white chocolate, Birch syrup and Arctic salt, or Liquorice salt and Liquorice syrup for a more savoury option. As for Utra Islandica’s syrups, they are perfect in cocktails with their variety, all sorts of cocktails both alcoholic and non-alcoholic, can be made. For instance, for an Utra Cocktail, mix apple juice, beet juice, soda water, and lime juice with Utra’s Crowberry and Wild berry syrups. Top off with a pinch of parsley and three slices of cucumber.

All products are handmade and can be purchased online, at Utra Islandica’s shops, and in shops around Iceland. Utra Islandica also offers customised labels for all kinds of occasions, company meetings or weddings. It’s the perfect food souvenir or gift from Iceland.
64° Reykjavik Distillery: Quality Crafted Spirits

An independent distillery with unique spirits and liqueurs

64° Reykjavik Distillery is a family-run, independent micro-distillery that handcrafts unique Icelandic-inspired spirits and liqueurs. Popular among locals and visitors alike, the spirits feature flavors including blueberry, juniper, crowberry and rhubarb. The distillery, which was founded in 2009, uses handcrafted processes to create the spirits including natural infusion and small batch distillation. The ingredients are sourced sustainably, and are proudly foraged locally in Iceland. Great care is spent in selecting the best ingredients as the unique quality and intensity of the berries are key to the rich flavors of the spirits. There is a short window for foraging berries in Iceland, so the pickers must time the season perfectly to collect the best berries.

The spirits, which can be enjoyed in mixed drinks or on their own, can be found in the finest restaurants and bars in Iceland as well as in state-run liquor stores.

Something for everyone
There is a flavor to suit every taste: the blueberry, crowberry and rhubarb liqueurs are on the sweet side and are great for cocktails or to enjoy along with a dessert. Reykjavik Distillery’s Einibærja (juniper) is a delicious gin that has an elegant, pure, yet intense and crisp flavor. Meanwhile, the company’s Brennivín packs a bit of a punch. Distilled from the best organic caraway seeds and local angelica seeds, 64° Brennivín is enjoyed neat with traditional Icelandic food. Lately, local and international bartenders have discovered 64° Brennivín, along with other 64° Reykjavik Distillery spirits, to design fantastic cocktails.

Reykjavik Distillery
+354 695 1008
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DRINK DIFFERENT.
Seeing a panorama of the colours of the season, experiencing the feeling of soaring securely on a cloud over all the most beautiful characteristics that Iceland has to offer, is thrilling. The rotors are spinning. The pilot is a safe professional, knowledgeable and unpretentious. Your first thought: “This is what I have always dreamed off”. It is already worth it from the first minute. The take-off is soft and dreamlike. Then you are flying over the colourful roof of central Reykjavík. Harpa Opera House stands out below. The pilot explains the story of the city’s main landmarks as you pass over Viðey, the island in the middle of Reykjavík bay, where Yoko Ono, the widow of John Lennon, comes every year to illuminate the sky with the light tower she gave the city.

Fascinating from the first minute to the last, the journey continues over the dwelling of the Nobel literary prize winner, Halldór Laxness, across the Thingvellir National Park, where the tectonic plates of the European and American continents slowly tear apart through the centre of Iceland, and then into the breath-taking desolation of the country’s interior. You feel in a privileged position. Now imagine the rest of the journey. It is a dream come true as the start of the trip described above is only one of many tours that Reykjavík Helicopters could take you on.

See Iceland from above in comfort and safety
Reykjavík Helicopters is Iceland’s premium helicopter tour provider. Their fleet comprises the most modern and meticulously maintained helicopters on the market. The pilots are trained to the highest standards, experienced, friendly, multi-lingual individuals with great knowledge of Iceland’s spectacular nature. The safety and comfort of their customers is always their main priority. Under their control, your journey will be unforgettable. The company offers 24/7 service and will get you closer to the historical secrets of Iceland and some of its cultural issues.

Reykjavík Helicopters can take you to most of Iceland’s most fascinating nature pearls including volcanoes or the majority of Iceland’s “postcard” sites in only one day in a journey called The Full Monty. The country that immediately gets so remote and unexpected as you leave the ground reveals its fascinating qualities in the best possible way as you sit in the helicopters of the Reykjavík Helicopters – the transportation route of the near-supernatural. Feel it – the softness, the little pleasant turbulence that reminds you that this is reality, after all.

You want to feel a bit privileged? It is easy. Reykjavík Helicopters can arrange to pick you up just about anywhere in the country from their base at Reykjavík Airport.

Reykjavík Helicopters
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www.icelandictimes.com
The Icelandic Phallological Museum

The Icelandic Phallological Museum in Reykjavík is, without a doubt, one of a kind. It holds a collection of phallic specimens that belong to various types of mammals. Here in the museum you can see examples 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 ripe old 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, such as biologists and doctors visit the museum to study. The purpose is also to educate and amuse people and, of course, to lift the taboo that has shrouded 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 metres long and weighs somewhere between 70–80 kilos. Strangely, 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.

Nepalese Kitchen is a cozy restaurant on Reykjavík’s Laugavegur that is truly a feast for the senses. Upon walking inside, guests are greeted by the aroma of delicious spices as well as a welcome from its friendly owner, Deepak Panday. Deepak, who was born in Nepal, has been living in Iceland for about 10 years, and takes great care in creating a warm atmosphere, first class service, a diverse menu and absolutely delicious food. “I have been a chef for 34 years and I enjoy serving quality food and authentic spices for Icelanders and tourists,” says Deepak. “All our dishes are made from scratch for each individual guest.” The menu is so diverse, it could be difficult to choose just one dish! Diners will find chicken, lamb, seafood, and vegetarian dishes with sauces ranging from delicate to hearty.

The dishes, prepared by Deepak and his wife, are perfectly spiced, while the chefs are eager to cater for any dietary restrictions. “We have guests that have a gluten allergy, or a number of other food sensitivities and we are happy to prepare food just how they like it,” says Deepak. “All our dishes are made from scratch for each individual guest.” The menu is so diverse, it could be difficult to choose just one dish! Diners will find chicken, lamb, seafood, and vegetarian dishes with sauces ranging from delicate to hearty.

Inventive Dishes
The key to Nepalese food is the spice used. Deepak is very concerned about the spices; not just how they taste but also how they impact the body and soul. “We have spices that can be helpful to diabetics, people that are stressed, and those with some food sensitivities,” says Deepak. Every summer, he travels to India to hand-select the herbs and spices used in the restaurant. “I want to see the plants for myself, to see that they are the best quality,” he says.

Beautiful Space
The restaurant is tastefully decorated with a nod to Nepali culture in the art, linens and even music. “It is so important to cook good food for people; it gives them so much. People feel loved when they get good food,” says Deepak. One of his favorite dishes on the menu is a Nepali curry. “The spice mixture is unique and it comes directly from my mother.” Plan to stop by Nepalese Kitchen during your visit to Reykjavík for tasty food, a wide selection of beer and wine, and warm service.
Reykjavík, master craftsman Páll Damascus steel, well known for its durability Palli. Traditional Icelandic materials are all collector's items. They sometimes enjoy fierce choice materials favoured by Palli and Soffía. decorated with finely etched designs that are collectors, chefs, and all those who appreciate the workmanship that goes 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

Palli's knives can be found distributed from Denmark, Germany and Sweden are hard at work in their rustic tools that have become something of a sought after souvenir from Iceland. Though a visit to their workshop would

thoughts 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

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 website, Palli and Soffía, and their products available in Brynja hardware store on Laugavegur 29 in the centre of Reykjavík. 

Leather Designer

Walk-ins Welcome

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

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 her own collection of steak 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.

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The Joyful Wonderland

Anne Helen, owner of ‘The Little Christmas Shop’ on Langavegur, Reykjavík’s main shopping street, is what you might call a ‘one woman wonder’. Ten years ago, she decided it was time for a change and turned to doing what she does better than most of us; making the world a prettier place, one Christmas ball at a time.

In the Land of Eternal Christmas

Anne Helen, a genuine aesthete, says she has always had somewhat of a Christmas obsession and an intense passion for things of beauty. She never goes for anything average but hunts for things of quality that truly stand out. Though she imports merchandise from all over Europe, her ambition is to specialise in Icelandic handicraft and ornaments. She already has an extensive range, most made exclusively for her by a number of craftsmen, each having a distinctive approach and working in materials such as wool, glass and clay. In addition to customary Christmas ornaments, she includes local folklore figures, like the thirteen Yule Lads and the Christmas Cat.

Anne Helen loves is to tell customers about Icelandic Christmas traditions. Visitors often stop by simply because they’ve heard of her hospitality and the shop’s friendly atmosphere. They rarely leave empty handed. After all, placing an Icelandic Yule Lad on your Christmas tree every year is a great way to remember your visit to Iceland.

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’s design leather handbag 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.’

Her services are available upon request. The Ark Art collection is available at the National Art Gallery, Snorrastofa in Reykholt, at Rammagnóðin at the Keflavík International Airport, and directly from Guðrún. More information can be found on Facebook: Arkart-leatherdesign.

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So you’ve made it to Iceland! Hurray! Now it’s time to decide on what to see, what to do and how to get there. The options are many, but we have made a list of 8 compelling reasons why booking a trip with Reykjavík Excursions might just be one of your best decisions yet.

1. With Icelandic winter weather being rather unpredictable, it’s good to know that you don’t have to brave the elements on your own. Reykjavík Excursions is one of Iceland’s oldest tour companies. With seasoned drivers and 50 years of experience under its belt since its humble beginnings in 1968, you can rest assured that you will be in safe hands with Reykjavík Excursions—and that’s a reason to celebrate!

2. Any road trip in Iceland during the winter months demands preparedness that only the most professional companies can offer. With its experienced drivers, guides and specially equipped coaches, Reykjavík Excursions maintains one of the largest fleets in the country, with vehicles of all shapes and sizes taking you to all the most beautiful spots in Iceland. And one of the coolest features has to be the fact that all Reykjavík Excursions’ comfortable coaches are equipped with free Wi-Fi, so you can keep friends and family updated as you travel.

3. One of the highlights of any winter trip to Iceland is the possibility of seeing the Northern Lights. But those flirty, fleeting auroras have a reputation of being consistently inconsistent, dancing around the skies on their terms, not ours. To this end, Reykjavík Excursions has come up with a whole range of Northern Lights tours in conjunction with other activities, thereby giving you more bang for your buck. Choose from a variety of tours that cater to a plethora of interests: Northern Lights tours, Northern Lights and the Golden Circle Combo tour, Northern Lights and a countryside langostine dinner, Northern Lights by boat. How about a Northern Lights, lava tube cave and supermarket tour? All of these and more are available to help you get the most out of your time in Iceland and maximising your chances of catching the Northern Lights.

4. What is a trip to Iceland without seeing the Golden Circle? Reykjavík Excursions offers a whole smorgasbord of possible day tours that encompass Iceland’s three celebrated landmarks—Thingvellir National Park, Geysir Geothermal Area and the raging Gullfoss waterfall, which make up the “big three” of the Golden Circle. Reykjavík Excursions goes all out with a full list of activities that are paired with the Golden Circle how about an ATV quad bike adventure tour, or a health and wellness tour that combines the Golden Circle with a relaxing dip in the geothermal waters of Laugarvatn Fontana? Or maybe you would prefer a few hours getting to know the Icelandic horse before heading off around the Golden Circle. With so many combo tours to choose from there is something to suit everyone.

5. Enjoy the peaceful calm of Iceland’s winter landscapes. Reykjavík Excursions’ hugely popular South Coast Adventure tour is ideal for seeing all those iconic places that the south coast is known for: waterfalls such as Seljalandsfoss and Skógafoss, the black sand beach of Reynisfjara and the imposing basalt columns of Reynisdrangar. How exciting is that?

6. Getting from Keflavík Airport to Reykjavík has never been easier. Reykjavík Excursions’ shuttle, known as the Flybus is conveniently timed to coincide with many arriving and departing flights. This means you can stay with Reykjavík Excursions from the moment you begin your journey until it is time to say goodbye.

7. Reykjavík Excursions is the first Icelandic tour operator to be granted the ISO 14001 certification for environmental management from the British Standard Institute (BSI).

8. Reykjavík Excursions is the only company in Iceland with membership in the Global Passenger Network, an international association founded to promote the highest standards in coach operations worldwide. Be warm, be well and enjoy Iceland this winter with Reykjavík Excursions. Oh... and Happy 50th, Reykjavík Excursions! - EMV
The World’s Most Exclusive Watchmaker

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

It is probably the world’s smallest watchmaker, located in a very small shop in one of the world’s smallest countries and yet they produce the most exquisitely crafted and sought-after hand made watches.

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

The choice of connoisseurs

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

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

While I was visiting the shop, with its wall filled with photos of well-known personalities who are now wearing their watches, I couldn’t help but wonder if it was only the rich and famous who could afford such timepieces. My answer came as I was making small talk with the watchmaker, located in a very small studio at the back of the shop.

Relying on reliability

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

Wear the volcano

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

The Viking Village gives you a baptism into Viking life

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

There are rumours that busloads of tourists have been snatched from their coaches in Hafnarfjörður by wild Viking warriors and held in a rock wall cave, watched over by a polar bear at one end and the Viking god, Thor, at the other. The reports say that they were treated mercifully, given plush rooms to stay in, a chance to bathe in the geothermal hot pool sheltered by a rock wall, overlooked by gods, before being brought into the Viking long hall - a restaurant in modern parlance - with rough-hewn wooden tables, under the watchful gaze of Freyja, the goddess of fertility, a large wooden carving over the upstair bar. Viking shields that look as if they’ve been used recently and the heads of wild animals like reindeer, hung on the walls alongside murals of major events from history.

The bar dispenses drinks of all kinds, regaled with stories and songs by minstrels, in an evening to be remembered for schools or incentive groups to get together. Many are even inducted into the warrior clan, given helmets and certificates, certifying their valor.

Not only is the hotel state of the art in Iceland, itself. Probably the best thing you’ll see - and taken home with you, for a little bit of silver - crafts from the Nordic countries, Faroe Islands, Greenland and Iceland, itself. Probably the best thing you’ll take home is the experience of real Viking hospitality.

You don’t have to wait to be abducted, you can book in advance. Horses are stabled elsewhere, nowadays. The Viking crafts have lived on and can be seen - and taken home with you, for a little bit of silver - crafts from the Nordic countries, Faroe Islands, Greenland and Iceland, itself. Probably the best thing you’ll take home is the experience of real Viking hospitality.

www.icelandictimes.com
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 offer 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. This truck, which seats up to 35 passengers, was acquired from NATO, who originally used it 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, it 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. So be sure to put Into the Glacier on your list of ‘must do’s in Iceland! -JG

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JOURNEY TO THE INSIDE OF A GLACIER
Experience a Glacier from the Inside with Into the Glacier

Free WiFi

www.icelandictimes.com
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—and certainly not in the summer months. So it is with great joy that we welcome one of Iceland’s most recent additions—Aurora Reykjavík’s Northern Lights Centre, 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 Reykjavík’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 Reykjavík’s real pull and ace up its sleeve is its fantastic HD time-lapse film of recent auroral activity. Projected onto a 7 metre-wide screen, you can sit back and enjoy this 13 minute film that features a dazzling display of auroral activity, accompanied by relaxing music. Therapeutic and restful are two words that come to mind to describe this zen-like experience.

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

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.

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, aiming at the use of natural Icelandic products in their own taste and freshness.

HAND-PICKED AND HEALTHY
The hand-picked Iceland moss is ready for use in tea, bread 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.

HAND-picked and healthy food direct from the earth
In the old days, people still had knowledge about nature’s richness. They used what Wild Nature 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.

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Ancestors’ knowledge
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In the old days, people still had knowledge about nature’s richness. They used what Wild Nature 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.
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), promoting the use of natural Icelandic products in their own taste and freshness, such as cheese and 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 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 goal was to reawaken the folk knowledge about how to harness these gifts of the earth. The idea proved successful, and today his goods can be purchased in souvenir shops around Iceland. Northern Lights Salt gift packages, a seasoned salt made according to his special recipe, are available on board Icelandair’s aircraft in their Saga Shop.

Hand-Picked and Healthy

The hand-picked Icelandic 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-rich 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.
Bryggjan Brugghús is Iceland’s first microbrewery and bistro, situated in the up-and-coming Reykjavík harbor area called Grandi. The brewery produces and serves a variety of beers, carefully selected wines and an exciting menu incorporating fresh, local Icelandic ingredients. Locals and tourists alike love to spend time in Grandi, visiting unique shops, cafes and strolling along the harbour before heading to Bryggjan Brugghús for a freshly-brewed beer and delicious meal.

Beer fresh to the tap
The bar holds 12 beer pumps that pump beer straight out of the brewery and there are always three to five beers that are brewed and To Öl are served. Heading to Bryggjan Brugghús for a freshly-brewed beer and delicious meal. Be sure to explore Grandi during your next trip to Reykjavík and live like a local. Bryggjan Brugghús is open everyday at 17:00, and the minimum age is 20. It’s a fun way for travellers to spend the afternoon!

Scrumptious menu
The lunch and dinner menus offer a good variety of local seafood, including lobster, mussels, shrimp and catfish, as well as offering meat and vegan options, soups, salads, steaks and desserts. Some favourite dishes are the bistro’s Icelandic lobster feast that includes a whole lobster and tails with chili, garlic, parsley, potatoes and garlic bread, as well as a delicious confit de canard. For vegan customers there are plenty of options like a vegan club sandwich, baked carrots and oven-roasted cauliflower.

The Beer Academy
Bryggjan offers an entertaining hour-long seminar that beer lovers will love! The seminar offers a tasting platter of 3 beers, with up to 1.5 litres of their signature lager. But, make sure you come with an appetite. The academy offers 8 slow-cooked chicken wings tossed in Bryggjan’s homemade hot sauce, along with blue mussels cooked in beer, fennel, garlic and coriander. Along with the food and beer, guests are treated to a knowledgeable tutor explaining everything about the platters. The Beer Academy takes place, in English, every day from 16:00-17:00!

The All–Icelandic Wool Shop
The Iceland Handknitting Association of Iceland sells Icelandic wool and products that have made Icelandic wool so special for hundreds of years. The Handknitting Association’s shop only stocks genuine Icelandic wool and clothing made by professional Icelandic knitters, so you can be certain you are getting the true, web-made product. Look for the logo to be sure. Their motto from the outset has been, ‘Buy directly from the people who make them’. Walking into the shop, one cannot help but be amazed at the skill and productivity of these ladies—and some men, too, from all walks of life, living in all parts of the country. Every item has that sense of individual uniqueness that only handmade items carry.

The world of knitting has changed dramatically since the association began. A few decades ago, the designs took the form of the ‘lopapeysa’ or sweater, with its distinctive scalloped pattern, which has become so popular worldwide, but numerous young Icelandic designers have also turned their attention to wool as a medium of choice for their fashion designs, resulting in new products, styles and colours. Today, there is a wide range of sweaters, gloves, hats, scarves, socks, bags and many other items in sizes to suit everyone from a Viking warrior (or farmer) to a pretty fashion model to a newborn baby.

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

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Traditional and modern styles
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Fashionistas take note! If you’re looking something uniquely Icelandic to add to your wardrobe, you need to visit Iceland’s number one specialist in women’s designer clothing. The Icelandic fashion house, Spaksmannsspjarir, (or Spaks for short), translates roughly to “Clothing for Clever People” and is the oldest fashion design label in Iceland. And as one of the very first fashion designers in the country, with 25 years of experience under her fashionable leather belt, CEO and head designer Björg Ingadóttir is very intentional in her design process.

“My creations are influenced by the modern Icelandic women as well as Icelandic landscapes” says Björg. “The colours, the textures, the way the clothing accentuates a woman’s body to bring out her best features, right down to the sourcing of sustainable materials—all the elements that go into my creations are a reflection of Icelandic nature and have a strong Scandinavian influence.”

Avant-garde fashion, Icelandic style
Materials are sourced from many countries—top quality, hand-picked fabrics are Björg’s favourites fabrics to work with. Her forward leaning collections never go out of style as is the case with all good design and many pieces from earlier collections can be mixed and matched with her latest designs. Multifunctional, versatile, beyond short lived trends, sustainable and slow fashion are some of the keywords that are associated with Spaks.

Dressing the whole woman
“We want a woman to look and feel her best in our clothing, and we pride ourselves on providing a service that doesn’t exist in the “big box” clothing chains. I have a very loyal customer base who know they can count on me to advise them on their wardrobe, and this is something that they value very much. Especially for those big events in their lives, be it an important job interview, a wedding, or other special occasions, I am by now kind of a mother figure and people know they can come to me for wardrobe and fashion advice.”

Tips from the Pros
Famous people who have worn items from Spaks? “Oh yes, there are many,” says Björg, as she reels them off without a moment’s hesitation: “Pink, Helen Mirren, Uma Thurman, Teri Hatcher (Desperate Housewives), Charlotte Kemp Muhl (Sean Lennon’s girlfriend) Björk Guðmundsdóttir and many singers.”

SPAKS
Fashion Design Studio

Iceland’s #1 Designer Label for Today’s Woman
Two hot tubs, an amazing steambath and slide and a wavepool. Good facilities for and seven hot tubs.

In Iceland. In 2008 a large part of the facilities. This beautiful historic indoor pool is the oldest in the region. The facility also

This beautiful historic indoor pool is the oldest in the region. The facility also

Summer

autumn

winter

Spring
A good driver recognizes his inability and inexperience. The best and bravest drivers are those who stop or go back before they drive into dangerous situation or conditions that they are unfamiliar with. In some cases it may be wiser to use public transport or serviced tours.

Following are some points to bear in mind when driving in Iceland. Even though you think you are a good driver, which you probably are, we highly recommend that you visit www.drive.is or www.safetravel.is for further information. Among other things we highly recommend that you take a look at the animated video with the famous Icelandic elf – Elfis – who is a specialist in road safety. However, following are the most important things to bear in mind:

FASTEN YOUR SEATBELTS
It is mandatory by law to have a safety belt on - both passengers and drivers. If one or more is not using safety belt, it may harm others in the car if an accident occurs.

NO OFFROAD DRIVING
It is illegal to drive off-road in Iceland. The reason is nature’s fragility. Sand deserts that seems to be lifeless, are not if you look closer. Be sure to stay on a recognized road or a trail. If the trail is not marked on a map – don’t go there.

ARE YOU CAUSING DANGER?
Don’t stop or park the vehicle on the road unless in a case of emergency. There is no photo or sight worth the danger of stopping on the road. Not even if there is little traffic.

ALCOHOL & DRUGS
Under NO circumstances, is it permitted to drive while under the influence of alcohol or narcotic substances.

SPEED
The speed limit in populated areas is usually 50 km/h. Speed limit signs are usually not posted unless it is other than 50 km/h, for example 30 km/h. The main rule in rural areas is that gravel roads have a speed limit of 80 km/h, and paved roads 90 km/h.

LITHE ON ALL HOURS OF THE DAY
Be sure to turn the driving lights on. You are required by law to turn on your headlights and rear lights all year, all hours of the day. This makes your car more visible and increases your safety.

WEATHER AND ROAD CONDITIONS
Foreign travellers requiring information on weather, road and driving conditions should visit the the Icelandic Road and Coastal Administration English website at www.road.is or call 1777. When driving in winter, roads can get very icy and your tyre grip gets vastly compromised. Please drive in accordance with the road surface and your own ability and experience.

YOU STILL NEED TO REST AND SLEEP
In the summer you will get up to 24 hour daylight. Please make sure you get enough sleep and rest as your body might be getting mixed signals as to whether it’s tired.

SINGLE-LANE BRIDGES
There are many single-lane bridges on the Ring Road. This sign shows that you are approaching a single-lane bridge. Slow down and bear in mind that the actual rule is that the car closer to the bridge has the right-of-way.

LIVESTOCK ON THE ROAD
Sheep, horses and even cows can be in your path on Icelandic roads. Sometimes a sheep is on one side of the road and her lambs on the other side. Under these conditions, which are common, it is a good rule to expect the lambs or the sheep to run to the other side.

BLIND HILLS
Blind hills, where lanes are not separate, can be very dangerous, and should be approached with utmost caution. Keep the vehicle as far right as possible.

GRavel ROADS
Rural roads, where a paved road suddenly changes to gravel, are common accident sites. This sign indicates that you are approaching such situations. It is very important that drivers reduce speed before the changeover to gravel. When driving on gravel roads, which are often quite narrow, it is important to show caution in turns and when a car coming from the opposite direction approaches.

BLIND CURVES
There are many blind curves in Iceland that test a driver’s skill and attention.

CLOSED MEANS IT’S CLOSED
Closed roads are CLOSED for a reason, usually because of impassable snow on the road or other risks. If you pass a “Closed” (“Lokað” in Icelandic) sign you will most likely run into trouble which could endanger, not only you, but also those who have to come for your rescue. It can be costly in terms of time and money.

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We Specialise In Your Adventure

Iceland 4x4 Car Rental

We take pride in flexible and personal service

Iceland 4x4 Car Rental specialises in four-wheel drive vehicles intended for safe and comfortable travels in Iceland. Their fleet ranges from medium sized 4WD hatchbacks to 4WD reapers and light pickup trucks that are especially adapted for Iceland’s road conditions all year round. In addition, they offer specially equipped vehicles for travelling deep into Iceland’s interior highlands (see their Special Offer Car). Iceland 4x4 Car Rental is a local brand and they take pride in flexible and personal service, as well as competitive prices.

Adventurous times

Break Out From the Crowds and the Polluted, Paved Cities. Take an adventurous trip into Mother Nature’s back yard. Wouldn’t you like to breathe fresh, clean air for a change? Let your eyes feast on the horizon and the Rich colours and textures of nature and drink the purest of waters, straight from its source in the mountains?

How about bathing in a naturally-heated pool surrounded by real flowers—and be your own master!

Iceland 4x4 Self-drive

Taking a bus ride into the wilderness of Iceland is always fun but what they provide is the incredible feeling of being free and in total control of your own vacation. Renting a car with Iceland 4x4 Car Rental gives you the real opportunity to explore the deep interior of the untouched Icelandic highlands and being able to stop and enjoy whatever it is that catches your eye.

Their mission

It is the mission of Iceland 4x4 Car Rental to provide their customers with great cars, exceptional service and rental rates, and a lasting impression of our amazing Icelandic nature. Their friendly, knowledgeable and professional staff will help educate and inspire their customers to have wonderful travels in our amazing country.

Iceland 4x4 Car Rental

Grænásvegur 10, 230 Reykjanesbær
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www.iceland4x4carrental.com
REYKJANES

A GEOLOGICAL WONDER

Reykjanes Peninsula is a UNESCO Global Geopark and part of the European and Global Geopark network. The peninsula, with its diversity of volcanic and geothermal activity, is well suited to be a Geopark as it is the only place in the world where the Mid-Atlantic Ridge is visible above sea level.
The fish practically jump from the sea to the Fish House Bar & Grill

In the fishing town of Grindavík, a dark brown, cabin-style house hosts the Fish House Bar & Grill. In front of the restaurant there are the remains of a whale's skull that washed up on shore many years ago. The logo is a fish skeleton and a colourful plaque is adorned with the poem “Eat fish and live long. Eat fish and love strong”.

Their most popular dish is fish and chips. They have gained a reputation on TripAdvisor for having incredibly fresh fish. This makes perfect sense since they are only 100 metres away from the harbour, even offering guided walks there for guests who want to meet the fishermen or look at the fishing boats.

This proximity to the harbour makes it very easy for them to fetch more fresh fish if they need to—as was the case recently, when their pan-fried Arctic char became a firm reminder that, indeed, you are in Iceland, a country where fishing and tourism are the primary sectors of the economy.

As is often the case in small towns, this restaurant doubles as a bar, and as a music venue. They have live concerts on Thursdays in summer, which have been well attended by both locals and tourists. The last musician to play there was Mugísson, a popular singer from Ísafjörður, and they have other local legends lined up for Seaman's Sunday, which is celebrated in style in Grindavík. It is a small venue, so any concert there is an intimate affair, one that musicians often enjoy as much as the guests.

Grindavík is located on the Reykjanes peninsula, close to both Keflavík Airport and the Blue Lagoon so it is easy to include a stop at Fish House Bar & Grill in your schedule, either when you land or after you bathe in the Blue Lagoon.

Whether you’re in the mood for fish & chips, or a dinner date with live music; Fish House Bar & Grill has it all.

Fish House Bar & Grill
Grindavík • Iceland
+354 426-9939
info@fishhouse.is
www.fishhouse.is

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Whether you’re in the mood for fish & chips, or a dinner date with live music; Fish House Bar & Grill has it all.
The local company combines minerals with pure Icelandic water, which has many health benefits.

The company's first product is a highly concentrated natural silica supplement in the form of extremely small silica particles in clean ground water. geoSilica developed a unique two-step production process. First, the silica concentration in the separated geothermal water is increased without changing the chemical composition of the water. In the second step, the geothermal water is gradually replaced by clean ground water while keeping the silica concentration consistent. No chemicals of any kind are used in the production or the product.

Benefits to the body

Silica supplements have clear benefits for the body. GeoSilica could help improve skin, hair and nails to garner a healthy, youthful appearance. There are reports that silica could boost your immune system, help maintain bone health, balance hormones and stimulate metabolism. Silica can also improve joint function, promote healthy digestion, and help keep your heart healthy.

New Products

GeoSilica has developed three new products. GeoSilica Recover is a combination of minerals for oral intake made from 100% natural colloidal silica and magnesium citrate in pure Icelandic water for muscles and nerves. GeoSilica Renew combines silica, zinc and copper in pure Icelandic water for hair, skin & nails, and geoSilica Repair consists of silica and manganese to promote bone and ligament health.

Well-received by the Icelandic market

GeoSilica has received positive feedback on their products. Here are two feedback samples of the many that geoSilica received about their products:

“After a few months after I had my younger daughter in November 2014, I began to suffer from hair loss,” said Ásdis Geirsdóttir. “Along with that, I have very bad skin and nails. I was then advised to try the silica supplement from geoSilica. One bottle lasted me for one month and after about 2 weeks I was starting to see a significant difference in skin, hair and nails. I decided to take another good session and bought bottles for two months and the results were outstanding!”

Meanwhile, Anna Guðmundsdóttir shared: “I broke my hip badly 10 months ago and also broke both of my wrists 2 years ago. I’ve been taking your Silica Supplement now for eight months and after 2-3 months, I found immediately a large difference in me and now I hardly feel that I have ever broken anything.” GeoSilica’s products are available for purchase on their webshop at www.geosilica.is and in shops around Iceland.

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. Located 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.

Grindavík’s Harbour Café

The reputation of the Bryggjan netmakers’ café is spreading fast

Walk down to Grindavík’s harbour and you may see the nets. Then you’ll 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, explaining the area and showing them on a map the best places to visit.

www.icelandictimes.com
Start your day off right
The Park Inn by Radisson Keflavik Airport is a comfortable 4-star hotel in the town of Keflavík, located just minutes from Keflavik International Airport. Whether you have just arrived or are scheduled for an early morning flight, you can be assured of a good night’s sleep and to wake up refreshed and ready for your day ahead. With a total of 81 rooms spread out over three floors, the hotel offers spacious rooms, comfortable beds and a relaxing, modern décor.

Which room will you choose, Standard, Superior or Junior Suite?
Ideal for longer stays, the Junior Suite is a beautifully appointed 51m² space with unique touches by well-known Icelandic designers, top-quality bed and bath, lustrous hardwood floors, and a colour scheme of sophisticated grey with splashes of colour that make the Junior Suite an excellent choice for those looking for a touch of luxury. Amenities include luxury shower with upgraded bath products, terry bathrobes and slippers, a dining and sitting area, fridge, espresso machine, queen size bed, television, telephone, safe and free wireless high-speed internet. Each of Park Inn Keflavik’s 30m² Superior rooms boast a sitting area and luxury shower complete with upgraded bath amenities, terry bathrobes and slippers, coffee/tea provisions, 26-inch TV, telephone, safe and free wireless high-speed internet. Standard rooms are a generous 24m² and come with bath amenities, coffee and tea provisions, fridge, shower, TV/adio, and free wireless high-speed internet.

The Library Bistro & Bar
Without a doubt, Park Inn Keflavik’s newly refurbished restaurant, ‘The Library Bistro & Bar’ has to be one of the smartest restaurants in Iceland. Trendy décor by the Italian company Dialma Brown puts the restaurant squarely on the map as hip, go-to eating establishment. The bistro’s extensive menu with reasonably priced options is a nice change from the more expensive Reykjavík. Here, you can be sure of getting flavourful and imaginative creations such as langoustine soup with mussels, scallops, coconut milk and a touch of star anise takes this traditional Icelandic starter up a notch, to be sure. Hamburgers with a twist on the usual, as well as a sophisticated bar and drinks menu are all treats to be tried. Lastly, the chefs at the Library are decidedly in the running when it comes to dessert, delivering a sugar sensation to set your taste buds awhirl. Trust me on this one!

-EMV

Park Inn by Radisson
Keflavik Airport
Hafnargata 57 • 230 Keflavik
+354 421-5222
info.airport.keflavik@rezidorparkinn.com
www.parkinn.com/airport-hotel-keflavik

Treat yourself well while in Iceland
Keflavik International Airport, or KEF, is one of the fastest growing in Europe and has seen 28.6% annual expansion since 2013. During the summer months, Isavia, which oversees Keflavik International Airport, reports that 25 airlines are flying to more than 80 destinations. Iceland is clearly having a moment: tourism is booming and travellers can’t get enough of the island’s natural wonders.

Increase in flights
Flight numbers have grown very quickly. There has been a 260% increase since 2009, a challenge for all staff. There are hard working and positive staff members working for Isavia and the other companies providing services at the airport. It can be very demanding to maintain a high level of passenger satisfaction at a time of very rapid growth over several years. However, it can be seen from the Airport Council International’s Airport Service Quality surveys, that the airport staff work hard to keep the very highest level of service, even under a lot of pressure.

When arriving at KEF
Apart from its expansion, there are several conveniences to enjoy at KEF. For instance, travellers can sign into free wifi to let know friends and family that they have arrived safely and to catch up on news. There are numerous eateries at KEF and, after passing through immigration, travellers can get something to eat before going on their way and exploring Iceland’s natural wonders. For instance, the airport is home to international chains like Joe and the Juice and Dunkin Donuts, as well as Ginger, which serves healthy food options. Before collecting their baggage, travellers can also visit the Duty Free shop, which is located in the same area as baggage claim. Everything from perfume and candy to alcohol and skincare products are available, all tax- and duty-free.

When Departing from KEF
Travellers are advised to arrive 2.5 hours before departure. If travelling with Icelandair, WOW Air, Norwegian or Primera Air, the simple self check-in counters and bag drops can be used. There should also be plenty of time to enjoy the shopping area. Travellers are welcome to sign back into the free wifi and enjoy the many shops, where souvenirs and gifts to take home to family and friends can be bought.

Shopping at KEF
Keep in mind that KEF is one of the few airports in the world where all retail, food and beverage outlets are duty free for all passengers. You can find all major Icelandic designers and high end international brands like Hugo Boss, Max Mara, Gucci, Chrome Hearts and many more, with prices almost 20% cheaper than traditional downtown retail prices. The shops are both Duty Free and Tax Free for all passengers regardless of what passport they hold or which country they’re are flying to, or from. The shops are also open day and night. That’s a nice touch from the Vikings!

- JG
A s tourism to Iceland continues to grow, it has fuelled demand for quality Icelandic products. Happily for travellers, Duty Free Iceland provides a great shop window on almost everything Icelandic from sweet treats to unique spirits to natural skincare products.

Duty Free Iceland is tax- and duty-free and is conveniently open day and night. Shopping is available to arriving and departing passengers, regardless of origin or destination, and it carries all the common international brands and items, plus a growing range of unique Icelandic products.

Unique Icelandic spirits

There is always a great selection of Icelandic duty-free wines and spirits in store, featuring local favourites like Brennivín, a clear, unadulterated schnapps that is considered to be Iceland’s signature distilled beverage.

Icelandic Mountain Vodka is a year-old product that started its adventure in the Duty Free shop in Keflavik. The gluten free brand, which is made with pure Icelandic water, has grown over the past few months and can now be found in eight different countries and has received fantastic reviews in the media. SuperCall and The Spirit Business named the vodka both “Top trends to look for in 2017” and “One of the best newcomers in vodka 2016”. The Icelandic Mountain Vodka is distilled seven times so it feels extra smooth while still standing strong at a 40% alcohol level.

Vor premium gin from Eimverk distillery is made with organic barley and is bursting with the flavours of the Icelandic countryside. Also from the Eimverk Distillery is Flóki, a handcrafted single malt. Its special taste comes from barley grown organically in volcanic soil at the Arctic Circle. Reykjavik Distillery incorporates local Icelandic ingredients into spirits perfectly. Their rhubarb and juniper berry liqueurs capture the freshness and purity of Icelandic nature and offer a new way to enjoy a distinct and much-loved flavour in a cocktail or on its own.

The award winning Reyka and Katla vodkas are available as well as the tasty Birkir schnapps and Bjork liqueur, which are smooth and uniquely Icelandic. For those interested in shots, Tópas and Opal Vodka shots are not to be missed. And don’t forget about the beer—Duty Free carries brands such as Viking, Boli and the award-winning Egils Gull.

Duty Free Iceland provides a great shop window on almost everything Icelandic from sweet treats to unique spirits to natural skincare products.
Duty Free Iceland also carries a large selection of other beers, which have also earned many international awards. A wide range of flavours is on offer, from numerous smaller breweries, as well as larger companies.

Sweet Iceland
Confectionary is a big thing in Iceland, and when it comes to chocolate, the Icelandic brand Noi Sirius is one to look for. The company, established in 1920, is the largest confectionery manufacturer in Iceland. It produces a tasty line of chocolates, encompassing semi-sweet, bitter and milk chocolate in a variety of shapes and sizes, including the company’s well-known chocolate gift boxes.

Omnom is another local chocolate maker that is quite special. The company sources premium organic beans from a range of cocoa fields around the world and tailors its chocolate-making process to ensure that each variety of chocolate achieves its full potential. The only additions to the mix are raw cane sugar and, in the milk chocolate range, creamy Icelandic milk. Its design conscious packaging makes this the ideal gift to bring home.

Another name to check out is Hafldi Ragnarsson, one of the world’s top 100 chocolatiers and something of a purist in terms of the mighty cocoa bean. He works his magic to combine classic blends with more exotic flavours of pistachio, passion fruit, star anise and even Earl Grey tea.

Freyja and Stefan B Chocolatier are among other popular brands that offer sweets and liquorice that would guarantee you a warm reception back home—if only you can resist temptation during your flight!

Quality Skincare Products
Icelandic herbal oils and cosmetics sit next to international brands, offering health-giving benefits from the country’s mountains, pristine valleys and hot springs. A recent scientific breakthrough in Iceland, based on 18 years of biotechnology research, has resulted in a new concept that is marketed here as BIOEFFECT® skin care (serum and day cream). It nourishes and replenishes skin cells, bringing a youthful glow to even the most stressed or sensitive skin, without harmful chemical compounds.

The scientists at Bioeffect won a Nobel Prize for their work, and their company offers a range of revolutionary biotech skin care products, including the recently introduced EFG Day Serum which rejuvenates the skin and minimizes the appearance of fine lines and wrinkles.

A number of other companies use local Icelandic ingredients as well.

Sóley Organic, for example, uses hand-picked wild Icelandic herbs in their environmentally-friendly and preservative-free products.

Taramar uses Icelandic seaweed and organic herbs in its pure, safe skincare products.

Villimey specialises in biological salves and ointments made of Icelandic herbs in products such as anti-aging facial oils, lip balms and muscle and joint creams.

The Purity Herbs brand produces natural skin care products including joint relief oils and volcanic body scrubs.

No discrimination
The shops are both duty free and tax free for all passengers regardless of what passport you may hold or which country you are flying to or from and are open day and night, which is a nice touch from the Vikings!

Whether you’re starting your holiday, stopping over, or concluding your trip, Duty Free Iceland will give you lasting warm memories of the Land of Fire and Ice.
There's much more to West Iceland than the spectacular Snæfellsjökull, made famous by Jules Verne, gleaming white in the sunshine. The beauty and variety of Icelandic nature is everywhere. Magnificent views overlooking mountains and glaciers, fertile regions, colourful birdlife, abundant rivers and lakes, fjords and bays, along with gushing geothermal activity.

But West Iceland is more than magnificent nature. Land and history form an unbroken whole as the setting for sagas like Sturlunga, Egil's Saga, Eyrbyggja and Laedaela, not to mention the rich folklore and tales of adventure. Tours bring history to life as museums and historical sites abound.

For the outdoor enthusiasts, there is enough to keep them busy all summer long. Horse riding tours are popular, as are hiking, fishing and golf. At the end of an active day, there are plenty of swimming pools and hot pools to relax in. Accommodation covers the complete range from sleeping bag to hotel.

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 tours offering sea fishing.
Snæfellsnes is considered the jewel of the west coast, in part, because the region has a taste of everything Icelandic. If you're looking for mountains, they're there. If you want to attempt a glacier walk, Snæfellsjökull awaits. If you're interested in volcanoes, Eldfjallaun Volcano Museum in Stykkishólmur is the place to visit. The museum showcases works of art, old and new, which depict volcanic eruptions, as well as artefacts, and volcanic rocks. The museum focuses on volcanoes around the world.

**Volcanic hot spot**

Iceland has a high concentration of active volcanoes due to its location on the divergent tectonic plate boundary of the Mid-Atlantic Ridge, and also because it sits over a geological hot spot. The island has 30 active volcanic systems, of which 13 have erupted since the settlement of Iceland in 874 AD. The most recent eruptions occurred in 2014 at Holuhraun near the Bárðarbunga system and the eruption under Eyjafjallajökull in 2010 that produced an enormous ash cloud.

**Riveting museum**

Diverse aspects of volcanoes are presented at the Volcano Museum, from the science, geology and their environmental effects to how they appear in art and literature. Talks are given daily in the museum in English and Icelandic about volcanoes and their effects, as well as information on geology for people with little or no previous knowledge of volcanoes. For visitors who would like an in-depth tour of the geology behind volcanoes, the museum offers geology excursions that visit a number of dramatic locations along the Snæfellsnes Peninsula.

**Passionate curator**

The world-renowned volcanologist Haraldur Sigurðsson created the Volcano Museum to share the wealth of knowledge he has accrued. Haraldur was born in Stykkishólmur in 1939, completed a BSc degree at Queens University in 1965, and received his PhD from Durham University in England in 1970. He worked at the University of the West Indies from 1976, conducting research on Caribbean volcanoes. He served as professor of volcanology at the University of Rhode Island for 40 years. His research has been principally in volcanology, both on land and on the ocean floor. He has worked in Indonesia, Italy, West Indies, USA, West Africa, Greece, South and Central America and elsewhere, but Iceland remains firmly his home where the Volcano Museum is close to his heart.
The Snæfellsnes Peninsula is considered the jewel of the west coast of Iceland. In part, it’s because the region has a taste of everything. If you’re looking for mountains, rocky lava fields and towering mountains, you’re there. If you want to attempt a glacier walk, Snæfellsjökull is your place. If whale watching is what you’re after, this area is considered the most stunning. If you’re looking for mountains, rocky lava fields and towering mountains, you’re there. If you want to attempt a glacier walk, Snæfellsjökull is your place.

A Journey to the Centre of the Earth
The natural surroundings of the hotel are magnificent, and there are various walking paths leading from the hotel to the nearby nature attractions. Looming large in the background is Snæfellsjökull, a glacier that became world famous after author Jules Verne described it in ‘A Journey to the Centre of the Earth’ as the starting point of the terrific journey in the book. Snæfellsjökull lies on top of a volcano and it’s situated in the centre of a national park. The glacier’s peak reaches 1,446 metres and it can be seen from Reykjavik on a clear day. The volcano is considered active, though the last eruption occurred 1,900 years ago. The hotel stands on the beautiful Búðarós shore, and offers the possibility of seal spotting and original dishes, using only the finest local ingredients from the region. The menu includes fresh fish, local lamb, and other fresh, seasonal ingredients.

A Superb Northern Lights Site
Another asset of the area is the striking view it offers of the iconic aurora borealis. The absence of light-pollution and strong Northern Lights activity in the area create unique conditions for observing the gorgeous phenomena. You can order a wake-up call from the hotel staff to ensure that you won’t miss out on one of an unexpected performance from the thrilling spectacle.

Romantic Getaway
Situated at the tip of the peninsula, Hotel Búðir is a romantic hotel isolated in a nature attraction. Looming large in the background is Snæfellsjökull, a glacier that became world famous after author Jules Verne described it in ‘A Journey to the Centre of the Earth’ as the starting point of the terrific journey in the book. Snæfellsjökull lies on top of a volcano and it’s situated in the centre of a national park. The glacier’s peak reaches 1,446 metres and it can be seen from Reykjavik on a clear day. The volcano is considered active, though the last eruption occurred 1,900 years ago. The hotel stands on the beautiful Búðarós shore, and offers the possibility of seal spotting and original dishes, using only the finest local ingredients from the region. The menu includes fresh fish, local lamb, and other fresh, seasonal ingredients.

Memorable Restaurant
The in-house restaurant features the creations of a great chef who designs playful and original dishes, using only the finest local ingredients from the region. The menu is small but offers something for everyone, and the quality ingredients often take on a surprising role in the capable hands of the chefs. The hotel manager, Daði Jörgensson, says that the restaurant is one of the hotel’s main prides, and that, despite the small menu, he believes the restaurant would compare well with top restaurants in Iceland. Hotel guests love the breakfast buffet, which offers a variety, including freshly baked breads, homemade marmalades and jams, fine cheeses, and quality ham, fresh fruits and cereals.

Krambúðin
Krambúðin is a charming little shop that stands right beside the hotel, and is the only part of the original building to have survived the fire. The shop offers various Icelandic handcrafts made by locals, as well as items from Icelandic nature, such as the samples of the characteristic sand, called Gold-sand, found near the hotel. The sand, which is a popular souvenir, got its name from the rare olivine minerals that are mixed with the light coloured shell sand and cause the beach to shimmer when hit by sunlight. The shop is run by the two Valkyries, Sigga and Agnes, who so tenderly care for the hotel.

Búðir attracts visitors from around the world with its ideal location, unrivalled customer service and romantic surroundings. It’s no surprise why so many weddings are held at the hotel. Love is in the air at Hotel Búðir!
Enjoy Iceland’s sublime naturally-heated waters while bathing in geothermal baths in West Iceland. Krauma, the newly opened bathing facility, offers five relaxing natural baths, along with a cold tub, two soothing saunas and a relaxation room, where you can lounge by the fireplace while listening to calming music. This is the perfect way to experience Iceland’s renowned waters in a more intimate setting than the more crowded Blue Lagoon.

Powerful hot spring
The water for the baths is heated by Deildartunguhver, which is considered Europe’s most powerful hot spring. It provides 200 litres per second of hot water at 100°C (212°F). To achieve the perfect bathing temperature, Krauma mixes the hot water with cold water from Rauðsigil, which originates in the Ok glacier, Iceland’s smallest glacier. Visitors can see Deildartunguhver next to the baths, with its water bubbling up and splashing against bright green moss and jagged rocks. Seeing where the heated water comes from adds to this unique experience. Be sure to keep your distance, though, to avoid being splashed if you get too close.

Important hot water source
Deildartunguhver is crucial to the comfort of the region. Most of the water used for central heating in the West Iceland towns of Akranes and Borgarnes is taken from Deildartunguhver. The hot water pipeline to Akranes is 64 kilometres long, which is the longest in Iceland. It’s still about 78-80°C when it reaches the town.

West is best
Krauma is conveniently located in West Iceland, where there are numerous attractions. Starting from Reykjavik, you can make stops at the popular fishing town of Akranes and climb to the top of its lighthouse for spectacular views, before continuing to Borgarnes to visit the Settlement Center to get a taste of the infamous Sagas. In Reykholt, one of Iceland’s most notable historical sites, you can stop at the Icelandic Goat Center before visiting Snorrastofa, dedicated to Snorri Sturluson, one of the most famous and important figures in Icelandic literature. Snorri penned the Edda, Egil’s Saga, and Heimskringla before his death in 1241. There is so much to see and do in West Iceland and Krauma is perfectly positioned.

Krauma Geothermal Baths
Experience Iceland’s geothermal energy in West Iceland

Visit Krauma
Geology enthusiasts and spa lovers alike will enjoy a visit to Krauma. You can experience nature from its core while bathing in these unique geothermal baths in beautiful West Iceland. Make sure you pay a visit to Krauma during your visit to Iceland. -JG
Where the Lambs Go Wild

Look for the logo to know you have the genuine Icelandic article

The Icelandic lamb has roamed the hills and mountains of Iceland ever since Viking settlers first brought sheep to the country in the 9th century. Today’s robust breed is a direct descendant of these early animals and genetically identical. Nowadays it wanders all summer long in carefully defined extensive wild pastures in pristine mountainous landscapes under strict agriculture regulations and a quality control scheme which protects the integrity of the breed.

Sustainability

Iceland has always been a leader in sustainability, and remains one of the purest environments in the world. There’s little pollution, and farming is conducted in such a way that preserves the land for future use, incorporating aspects of social responsibility. The wool is a natural product and only eco-friendly energy sources are used in the manufacturing process.

The Wool

The Icelandic wool has kept the nation warm for more than 1100 years with the sheep originally brought here from Norway by the settlers. The Icelandic wool made it possible for the settlers to survive in the harsh northern climate. Due to the isolation and absence of contact with other breeds, the Icelandic sheep still carries characteristics long disappeared from their relatives in neighbouring countries.

In order to endure the cold and harsh arctic climate the sheep have developed several specialities. The fleece is divided into two layers, tog and thel. The tog consists of long and coarse hair with water repellent qualities. The inner layer, thel, is shorter, softer and fluffier providing insulation and warmth. Combining the two provides an exceptional thread for producing clothing that gives warmth in spite of getting wet.

The fleece differs depending on the age of the animal with lamb’s wool being the softest and finest but old rams bearing the roughest. The four basic colours of the Icelandic breed are black, white, shades of brown and grey with numerous combinations and colour patterns, such as badgerface, grey and other bi-colour variations. Although many will admit to having a soft spot for various colour patterns, the white wool is the most sought-after, and therefore the most common sheep colour in Iceland.

The Meat

Flavoured by the wild pastures and raised without any hormones or antibiotics in a pure environment, Icelandic lamb meat is wonderfully lean, flavourful and tender. The distinctive taste is a result of the grass and the aromatic and spicy herbs on which the lambs graze. The taste of Icelandic lamb is unique. The meat is dark, with a bit of a gamey flavour which some have described as being similar to venison. Lamb can differ in taste depending on where in the world it comes from and the conditions and environment the animals are reared in. In Iceland, the lambs live in outstanding conditions which, of course, is very important.

GMO Free

In October 2016, genetically modified sheep feed was banned by the Ministry of Industry and Innovations, making all Icelandic lamb meat GMO Free.

Icelandic Lamb’s restaurant partners promise to offer only quality Icelandic Lamb on their menu, celebrating the diversity and uniqueness of Icelandic Lamb meat.

Look for the Logo

When you see our shield hanging in a restaurant you know that they offer excellent lamb dishes, that does the Icelandic lamb great justice. You can also find the Icelandic Lamb logo on wool and fleece products in Iceland. Only Icelandic design products made out of Icelandic wool are tagged with the logo, making it easier to find authentic Icelandic wool products. Look for our logo while travelling in Iceland for a real Icelandic Lamb experience.

Photo By Peter Fischer
Hótel Laugarbakki is situated in a lovely slice of Iceland, midway between Reykjavík and Akureyri, where travellers can spend time exploring Viking relics, riding horses, swimming and, in the winter, hunting the otherworldly Northern Lights.

Northern Lights viewing
In fact, the hotel is an ideal location for viewing the Northern Lights, which can be seen from September to March. Guests can take just a few steps into the fields surrounding the hotel, far from light pollution and, if the conditions are right, can see the shimmering green and white lights dance and flicker across the sky. It’s such an unforgettable experience!

Comfortable, quality accommodation
Hótel Laugarbakki is all about location and Northern Lights. It’s a high-quality 3-star hotel that is family-owned and decked out in Scandinavian style. It’s clean and comfortable with amenities like free Wi-Fi, flat-screen TV, hairdryer, kettle and toiletries. Guests are also provided a bathrobe to wear to the hot tubs. There is a gym and a restaurant, where breakfast, lunch and dinner are available. Restaurant BAKKI, which emphasises local food purchased directly from farmers in the area, offers an eclectic menu with something for everyone.

At Hotel Laugarbakki, you can count on personal service, comfortable rooms, good food and an ideal location to catch a glimpse of the majestic Northern Lights.

ICELAND FROM ABOVE

Land in creation

Amazing variety and stunning beauty
Bird’s eye view of all the popular places on 128 pages
CD-size – soft cover – Only 170 grams
Available in most bookstores, many hotels and souvenir shops
Known for their welcoming and friendly demeanour, the guides at Stóri Kambur make visitors feel both secure and comfortable, whether they are accomplished riders, ready to gallop at full speed on the beach surrounded by the magnificent nature of Snæfellsnes peninsula, or simply first time riders, whether children or adults.

While Snæfellsnes peninsula’s stunning landscape has captured the imagination of people all over the world, even before Jules Verne wrote his widely known “Journey to the Centre of the Earth” – one must know that it is an endless source of magic. If you are looking to experience the

Groups of up to ten people are perfect and opening hours are from 1 June – 15 September.

full range of the 5 gaits of an Icelandic horse with tremendous views of a glacier, waterfall, beach, and lush green meadows, this is your best bet.

Stóri Kambur also offers cozy studio apartment on the ground floor of the house at Stóri Kambur. The accommodation combines a living room, bedroom and kitchenette in one living space in addition to a bathroom with a shower. The accommodation is suitable for 2-4 people. Beds are made up for two guests, but extra beds can easily be added. The accommodation is self-catering. The view is amazing and the sense of tranquillity is otherworldly.

Despite its humble beginnings as a fish packing plant, or perhaps because of it, Sjávarpakkhúsið is well known on Snæfellsnes Peninsula as one of the top restaurants for seafood dishes. It’s a small, unpretentious place, right on Stykkisholmur’s picturesque harbour, where fishing boats loaded with treasures of the sea moor every evening. The unpretentious décor and a laid-back atmosphere allow the beautifully presented food to take centre stage, as well it should.

It goes without saying that the use fresh local ingredients is a priority at Sjávarhusið as is their emphasis on finding ingenious ways to make use of those elements that would have normally been thrown away cod heads for instance, is something that an older generation of Icelanders remember fondly from their youth. Sjávarpakkhúsið’s peanut and herb coated cod heads are surprisingly delicious and is something that a new generation of Icelanders, as well as tourists are just now discovering.

The use of locally grown organic greens, herbs and flowers that feature prominently on the menu add a splash of artistic and culinary flair to each dish. There are also hearty fish soups, fish burgers and vegan/vegetarian options, as well a few well chosen tempting desserts to round out an exquisite meal in a sublime setting.
WESTFJORDS
Iceland
The arctic fox is an enchanting creature. At some point in the distant past, it travelled across the frozen sea and, in spite of the inhospitable climate, found a home on this small, isolated island. The arctic fox is Iceland’s only native terrestrial land mammal and has been the subject of curiosity by scholars and lay people alike. For this reason, The Arctic Fox Centre was established in the village of Súðavík in 2010, since the fox is commonly found in the area.

Exhibition of the first native
The Centre is located in the oldest house in Súðavík, a 120 year-old farm that was renovated by the local authorities and is situated between what locals call the ‘old village’, destroyed in a devastating avalanche in 1995, and the ‘new village’, built in its stead at a safe distance from the mountain.

The Centre serves as an educational and cultural hub and offers an extensive exhibition on the arctic fox as well as regularly exhibiting local arts and crafts. Its main aim however, is to collect and preserve everything of importance regarding the arctic fox and its long-lasting relationship with man as, surprisingly, fox hunting is the oldest paid occupation in Iceland.

The exhibition is divided into three sections: the biology of the fox, the hunting of the fox and the hunters themselves, this last containing, for example, objects and personal accounts from fox hunters. Other material is presented through written text or video and, of course, there are quite a few stuffed animals. Visitors are guided through the exhibition, which is one of a kind in Iceland and open all year round.

The Centre is a non-profit business, involved in research and studies on the population of the fox. They also offer guidance on arctic fox tours in collaboration with tourist offices as well as believing in and supporting ecotourism in Iceland.

A nice little café at the Centre sells home-baked pastries, light courses and wonderful coffee, which guests can enjoy out on the patio overlooking the beautiful mountains and the sea. The café has open Internet access. On Friday nights, live music is performed in the loft, where it’s nice to sit down for a drink in the cozy atmosphere.

The Centre also has a small boutique selling specially made souvenirs and craftwork.
Explore the North
Star Travel operates tours in the north of Iceland

North Iceland is full of natural pearls and hidden gems and is a treat to all those that make the journey. Akureyri, which is often referred to as the capital of the north, is the perfect place to start your trip in north Iceland. Star Travel, a small family-run company based in Akureyri, offers numerous tours from Akureyri and Reykjahlíð in Mývatn.

Roaring waterfalls
There is so much to see and do in the north, and Star Travel has it covered, including trips to two spectacular waterfalls. In a country full of spectacular waterfalls, what sets Goðafoss apart is the sheer breadth of landscapes, activities along Lake Mývatn, and the soothing Mývatn Nature Baths, which is home to Víti (Hell), one of the best-known craters in Iceland. Víti is huge, about 300 metres 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. Meanwhile, Námaskarð is a big draw for tourists because of its sheer otherworldly atmosphere. The yellow and brown colours of the clay along with the gray mud pools look like a movie scene from another planet.

Magnificent Mývatn
Mývatn is one of the fastest growing tourist destinations in the north. Gorgeous landscapes, activities along Lake Mývatn, and the soothing Mývatn Nature Baths, which have the same type of milky blue water as the famous Blue Lagoon in the south, lure travellers. Star Travel runs tours to Dimmuborgir, which means ‘dark cities’ or ‘dark castles’. It comprises interesting rock formations jutting out of the ground, resembling a fort from an ancient city. The black lava pillars were born from a collapsed lava tube from a large volcanic eruption more than 2,000 years ago. Another popular sight is the Krafla Lava field, which is home to Víti (Hell), one of the best-known craters in Iceland. Víti is huge, about 300 metres 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. Meanwhile, Námaskarð is a big draw for tourists because of its sheer otherworldly atmosphere. The yellow and brown colours of the clay along with the gray mud pools look like a movie scene from another planet.

The beautiful south
Star Travel has not forgotten about South Iceland. The company operates whale watching tours off the coast of Reykjavík, as well as Northern Lights tours in the winter. Catching a glimpse of the Northern Lights flickering and dancing in the sky is an unforgettable experience. For travellers based in Reykjavík who want to see a bit of the countryside, Star Travel has a 4x4 jeep tour of the Golden Circle, where guests can see Gullfoss waterfall, the bubbling Geysir region and Pingvellir national park. Star Travel excursions are worth adding to your To Do list when you visit Iceland!

In the heart of Town

Akureyri

Akureyri, known as the capital of the North, has a charming and tightly knit community with a population that barely surpasses 18,000 residents at the last count. In spite of its small size, the town centre boasts a surprisingly wide 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 Bjökk Eiríksdóttir goes to great lengths to make sure things are running smoothly and guests are well cared for. “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 been recently renovated in a modern Scandinavian style. Spacious and relaxing are two keywords that describe our concept, so that guests can really enjoy their stay.”

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

We want them to come back to a warm and welcoming place and to experience it as their home away from home”, says Helga Bjökk.

Catering to every budget
Acco’s moderately priced guesthouse has 13 rooms in various sizes and formats, some with private and some with shared bathrooms, and an adjoining separate communal kitchen for those who wish to do their own cooking. If you are travelling on a shoestring, Acco 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 delicious, light and fresh meals for breakfast and lunch. Start your morning off right with a cup of Café Berlin’s excellent coffee and celebrate your successful day of sightseeing when you return with a round of drinks. Skál!

www.icelandictimes.com
EAST

Iceland
Visitors are encouraged to step into the bygone era of Iceland’s rural society, where self-sufficiency was essential to survival. On display is a traditional ‘baðstofa’ or communal living/sleeping room, taken from an authentic Icelandic turf house that was inhabited until as late as 1964. Visitors are encouraged to step into the ‘baðstofa’ and experience the nostalgia of life as it was in days gone by.

The museum prides itself, however, on its permanent reindeer exhibition. Found only in East Iceland, the rather shy and sometimes elusive wild reindeer have a mystical air about them and contribute to the area’s sense of identity. On display is a traditional ‘baðstofa’ or communal living/sleeping room, taken from an authentic Icelandic turf house that was inhabited until as late as 1964. Visitors are encouraged to step into the ‘baðstofa’ and experience the nostalgia of life as it was in days gone by.

The exhibition commemorates two of Iceland’s most famous naturalists, Helgi Valthýsson, writer, and Elvar Ólafsson Sigurðsson, photographer and filmmaker. In an effort to shed light on the plight of the Icelandic reindeer, the pair tracked the movements of various herds from 1939 to 1944. Their findings and observations are presented in a series of photographs and films, providing a unique insight into the life of these enigmatic creatures.

Opening hours: 1 June to 31 August Mon–Fri: 11:30-19:00. Sat–Sun: 10:30-18:00. Winter: Thur–Fri: 11:00-16:00

Admission: Adults (18+): 1,000 ISK

A FAIRY TALE HOME
Petra's Stone & Mineral Collection

Petra loved people as well as stones and her passion project became a museum that is open to the public. Her husband, Nenri, passed away in 1974 and on the day of his funeral she decided to open up their home so that those who wished to see the mineral collection could do so. The stones and minerals have been chosen for their beauty and their colours, without regard to their scientific value or monetary worth. However, there are many semi-precious stones in the collection, such as amethyst.

Today, her children run the museum together and continue to add to the collection. Her youngest daughter, Bíókatla, says that she, herself, would prefer not to believe in elves—but maybe her mother had a helping hand when she went around searching for rocks, as she was incredibly lucky.

At first, this was only her personal collection as, for the first two decades, Petra would only collect stones that were within walking distance of her house. As she arranged them in the garden, strangers would pull over in their cars to better see what was going on. Sometimes the children would be sent out to ask the drivers if they would like to come inside to see more stones and have a cup of coffee. Petra spent her entire life collecting rocks, and would sometimes bring her young children along to search for new additions to the collection in the surrounding mountains. She arranged her stones in a garden that would be right at home in a fairy-tale. Petra believed in elves and hidden people and her colourful garden would be the perfect place to meet them. As her children moved out of the house, her stones moved in and the remarkable collection continued to grow.
The Wilderness Center is an authentic and peaceful hideaway, located right on the edge of Northern Europe’s most extensive wilderness.

One can experience the spirit of the past through a variety of services, such as: unique accommodation, local food, exhibitions, horse riding and hiking, day tours, escorted tours and tailor-made tours.

The Center’s tranquil and pleasant location, as well as the distinct choice of accommodation and unique setting both indoors and out, will draw guests into adventures of the past and offer a unique atmosphere.

Delicious food from local ingredients is cooked from scratch in the open home-style kitchen. Cakes and bread are also home-made.

The Center offers a variety of activities and services. One can go hiking along waterfalls, cross the river on a cable-bridge, go horseback riding, rent mountain bikes, go fishing, gaze at the stars in the stargazing hut or visit the creative museum about the history of the Icelandic wilderness, where one can walk into the adventures of the Icelandic wilderness and be touched by the dramatic struggle between the forces of nature and the Icelanders’ fight to survive.

Many different day tours can be made from the Wilderness Center, either self-drive or escorted. For example, tours to Hengifoss, Laugarfell hot springs, Snæfell area, Hafravatnshafrafjúfur canyons and many more are possible.

Multi-day, tailor-made tours can also be arranged, all year around.
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 enjoyed in the area. This region has geological wonders such as the waterfalls of Gullfoss, Háifoss, Skógafoss, Systrafoss and Seljalandsfoss; Geysir; Þingvellir, where the tectonic plates crack the Earth; Europe’s largest glacier, Vatnajökull; the Kerði caldera; world-famous volcanoes 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 fully-developed infrastructure helps you get the most from your trips.
There is an Icelandic expression that says “when you have such a great view, who needs pictures on your walls?” The phrase echoed my feelings exactly as I arrived at Hotel Dyrhólaey for the first time. A breathtaking panorama stretched out before me and far below, a dusting of newly fallen snow covered the Reynisfjall ridge, which suddenly took on new proportions. Bright green fields of cultivated grass lay before me and the blue expanse of water embraced the Dyrhólaey promontory in the distance. I felt as if I could stay here all day, drinking in the fresh air and the outrageously sublime view.

A bit of history
Hotel Dyrhólaey’s owners grew up here amidst all this splendour, and the family can trace its roots back to the 19th century when their great, great grandparents began the business of dairy farming and sheep breeding. As Icelandic society gradually shifted from a largely agrarian society to a more modern one, the need for dedicated hotels became apparent at the time when tourism in Iceland was in its infancy. The family decided to take the plunge and the hotel was born.

A passion for the Northern Lights
If one of your passions in life is to view the Northern Lights in a spectacular location, unencumbered by city lights, Hotel Dyrhólaey is the place to be. The hotel offers a wake-up service should the Northern Lights appear overhead in the wee hours of the morning. The hotel boasts 110 fully equipped standard rooms, spread out over three wings that branch off from the spacious lobby and dining room that make up the hotel’s core. A full bar and an à la carte restaurant opens for guests in the evening, and overlooks the dazzling panoramic view that welcomes you on your arrival.

Surrounded by nature
Hotel Dyrhólaey is conveniently located near many south coast attractions such as the iconic village of Vik, the famous Reynisfjara black pebble beach and sea stacks and of course the Dyrhólaey promontory after which the hotel is named. For horse lovers there is horse riding in the magnificent nature, and for the very adventurous, there are glacier walks and snowmobiling on Solheimajökull glacier—all within a 10 to 15 minute drive from the hotel.

If you are after that special moment in time where mountains, sea and sky converge, enveloped by the sounds of silence, consider a stay at Hotel Dyrhólaey and let the magic begin.
Dreaming of Iceland

Glacier Journey’s Adventure of a Lifetime

F or many, a trip to Iceland is the culmination of a dream, a long-awaited journey that sometimes takes years of saving to achieve. And once you are finally here, the daunting task of choosing what to do, where to go and what to see begins. The good news is that Iceland is a fairly compact little country and many of the most sought after gems of Icelandic nature, particularly on the south coast, are within easy reach of the capital. One of south Iceland’s most awe-inspiring natural phenomena is the formidable Vatnajökull Glacier that harbours no less than six volcanoes within its icy depths. The vast glacier spans a large portion of the south coast driving route and a visit to the glacier is undeniably one of the top “must-do’s” that should be on everyone’s bucket list.

Let the adventure begin

Glacier Journey is a local, family-run company that offers a variety of year-round tours to the glacier and has received many glowing reviews over the years. Even if you have never had any experience driving a snowmobile, the friendly guides at Glacier Journey are with you all the way— and learning how to drive a snowmobile is all part of the fun! At base camp you will receive warm overalls, a helmet, gloves—and a face mask that you can take home with you as a souvenir and then you’re off to explore the mesmerising beauty of Europe’s largest glacier by snowmobile.

A magical-mystical world of ice

The 15th of November to the end of March marks a very special time in the year when it’s cold enough to go ice cave exploring! Glacier Journey’s three hour ‘Combo Tour’ offers you a tremendous opportunity— or many, a trip to Iceland is the culmination of a dream; a long-awaited voyage for the ultimate trip of a lifetime!

Small groups and families welcome

Glacier Journey caters to all sizes of groups, from company incentive tours to small groups and personal, private tours for the whole family. Young explorers under the age of eight are also welcome to visit the ice cave, accompanied by their parents, of course. It’s soooo exciting! See you soon on a Glacier Journey tour for the ultimate trip of a lifetime!

Dine in the Langoustine Capital

Humrahöfnin satisfies the hunger for whole langoustine in Höfn

I celand 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 ‘Hop’ 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 Humrahátið (Langoustine) Festival, 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 Humrahöfnin seafood restaurant, which has been a big success since it was opened over 7 years ago by Anna Porseinndóttir, her brother Ari Porseinsson and their spouses, has definitely earned that accolade.

A menu to entice any connoisseur

A favourite with tourists from the Mediterranean countries, Humrahöfnin 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 Humrahöfnin’s specially selected wines, you are in 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 Humrahöfnin’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 second 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.

For more details visit: www.humarhofnin.is

To try: www.glacierjourney.is

For reservations contact: +354 478 1200

For further information contact info@glacierjourney.is

Ari Þorsteinsson and his wife, Ásgeirsdóttir, with their spouses, have run Humrahöfnin for 7 years. The restaurant is in a beautiful restaurant which has been totally renovated and transformed. 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 second 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.

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The esthetics of Icelandic nature are legendary. People are mesmerised by her beauty, often coming away with a profound sense of having discovered new realms that had hitherto only been found in the pages of books, or seen in the mystical landscapes of film and television. It’s easy to get lost in the profound sense of wonderment that is Icelandic nature. The elements, however, can take their toll, as the wind- and rain-soaked landscapes sometimes force visitors to take shelter. While travelling the south coast road towards Vík, there is one such place in particular that stands out.

Where to imbibe Iceland’s unique cultural aspects

A few hundred metres to the east of the iconic Skógarfoss waterfall lies the Skogar Folk Museum. While the unassuming cluster of buildings is sometimes overlooked by the crowds who flock to the falls, it really should be on the radar of everyone who seeks a more in depth understanding of Icelandic history and culture.

Preserving Iceland’s past for future generations

The museum was founded on the initiative of Thorður Tómasson, a forward thinking Icelander who began collecting as a young teen in the 1930s at a time when modern technology was swiftly replacing a thousand years of a traditional way of life. Realising the importance of preserving Iceland’s unique cultural heritage, Thorður went from farm to farm, writing down the stories and anecdotes of the older generation and collecting thousands of cultural artifacts along the way. It was Thorður’s foresight and enthusiasm that has helped ensure that Iceland’s unique cultural heritage has not been lost for future generations. The museum’s modest admission fee of 2000 ISK gives visitors access to the entire museum complex that is spread out over three permanent exhibitions: the Heritage Museum, The Open Air Museum and the Museum of Transport and Communication, all of which provide visitors with a rare glimpse into the Iceland of a bygone era.

The Open Air Museum

It is without question that one of Skógasafn’s most endearing elements is its open air museum with its beloved collection of 19th and early 20th century turf buildings and wooden houses. The buildings were brought in from surrounding counties and moved to Skógar, where they were restored to their original condition. The small chapel, while new on the outside, is filled with fine relics gathered from churches around South Iceland while the turf houses were a way of life in Iceland for hundreds of years.

The Heritage Museum

Household items, farming and fishing implements, ornate wooden chests, decorative items of brass, silver and gold, as well as traditional clothing and artifacts dating back to the Viking Age are just a fraction of the thousands of items to be found in the Heritage Museum. The centerpiece of the museum is the eight-oared fishing boat, the Pétursey, built in 1855, which was in use in nearby Vík until 1946. The Transport and Communications Museum tells the story of the history and evolution of transport, communication and technologies in Iceland in the 19th and 20th centuries, from the age of the work horse to the digital communication of today. Housed in a large and modern exhibition hall, the Transport Museum also contains an excellent café that serves soups, sandwiches and desserts, and a delightful souvenir shop that offers a variety of local handicrafts and other items not found elsewhere in Iceland.

The museum is located one minute from Skogar Waterfall, just off Ring Road 1, 30km west of Vík and 150km east of Reykjavík. ⏪
**Vestrahorn:**
**A Beautiful Slice of Iceland**

East Iceland is where you find the actual “ice” of Iceland, including Vatnajökull glacier, a giant white spot on the map that is truly breathtaking in person. You can see the glacier descend into black sands and hot streams erupt from frozen banks of ice. The landscape is remarkable with mountains jutting out of the earth close to the sea and sweeping regions like Stokksnes and Vestrahorn. Travellers come from around the world to the region to photograph the pristine, stunning nature in the southeast, including professional and amateur photographers, the Game of Thrones production, and a famous Indian Bollywood film. Apple also visited the region to film some footage for scenery for its product launches. During the winter, this region is especially popular for the chance to see and photography Northern Lights. Watching the green and white lights flicker and dance in the sky is a memorable experience.

Litlahorn, which is operated by a family with deep roots in southeast Iceland, welcomes guests through a variety of businesses, including the Viking Café, a guesthouse, old farm and a horse rental.

**COFFEEHOUSE AND ACCOMMODATION**
Viking Café is a little oasis at the bottom of Vestrahorn near Hofn. The charming guesthouse offers 7 comfortable rooms for travellers and the coffeehouse is operated by a warm and accommodating manager, serving quality coffee, a choice of delicious cakes and pastries, as well as sandwiches and waffles. While the food and service is top-notch, it’s understandable if visitors become distracted by the view. The Viking Café overlooks the beautiful and vast bay of Vestrahorn on one side and Vatnajökull on the other side.

**HORSE RENTAL**
A great way to survey the beautiful surroundings is by horseback. Litlahorn offers a horse rental service overseen by one of the owners, a skilled horse breeder with a passion for the family’s horses. Guests can take a riding tour along black sand beaches close to Hofn. The groups are small (2-5 people) and the 2.5 hour tour offers stunning views while riding a good-natured stocky Icelandic horse, a unique breed. Litlahorn also breeds horses and sells them to customers around the world.

**STONES AND MATERIALS FOR SALE**
Litlahorn provides unique materials for sale from its land. The company utilizes its Stokksnes beach mine, which consists of material that has been carried by the glacier river Hornafjarðarfljót from the Vatnajökull glacier into the sea, where the harshest east coast sea waves have tumbled and smoothed the materials for thousands of years before returning them to shore. The stones and sand are used for stone carpets, bathstones, house sheathing and for asphalt and roads.

East Iceland has something for everyone and the Litlahorn owners are here to make your dream holiday a reality. Seize the opportunity to stay at Vestrahorn during your trip to Iceland!

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This family company operates the Viking Café, guesthouse, old farm and a horse rental.
Vatnajökull National Park is Iceland’s newest protected area, established in 2008. With a total area of roughly 13,200 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, Snæfellstofa and Skaftafellsstofa. Information Centres are situated at Kirkjubæjarklaustur and Höfn. More information at our website www.vjp.is

For more information on Vatnajökull National Park, please visit our website www.vjp.is
At the turn of the millennium, photography was undergoing first slow and then increasing changes. Everything became easier and faster. Pictures could be seen on a small screen on the back of the camera and later they could be developed with editing programs in the digital laboratory. In addition, it was possible to save thousands of pictures in the library of the program that once needed volumes of document files and slides—a true revolution in photography.

Around the same time—in 2001—the company, FREIRAUM-Fotografie, was established. They recognized the growing interest in photography as a leisure activity, not only as a hobby but also as an artistic opportunity for development. But above all, as a combination of “travelling and photography”. In addition to Cuba, Norway and Greenland, Iceland became a place of interest for travellers.

The striking landscape of the island of fire and ice, its natural phenomena, such as geysers and waterfalls and the way of life of its people attracted more and more nature lovers and photographers. In the beginning, travellers mostly came in the summer months to enjoy the midnight sun, but now the winter season is gaining in popularity as well. The mystic Northern Lights are definitely also a decisive factor. Iceland has become one of the most popular travel all year-round destinations worldwide.

Iceland is also one of the leading destinations for the photo tour operator, FREIRAUM-Fotografie. The German company, from Glückstadt near Hamburg (see box), is now a regular visitor during all seasons on the island. In the beginning, the tours were two weeks of travel around the country, but now more time is spent at single areas. “The country simply offers too many impressive motifs,” says FREIRAUM owner, Peter Fischer, who took over the company in 2011. Since then, the photo travel operator has taken an intense development and ranks today among the leading companies in its sector. This can especially be seen at the high number of repeat customers on their tours. Many have already been on ten different tours, while some have even completed more than 20 tours with the operator.

In addition, Lightroom and Photoshop workshops are offered especially for image editing. Most of the workshops are led by Manfred Horender, referent and founder of FREIRAUM-Fotografie. During the workshops and photo tours it is important to learn the rules of classical photography. Estimating the light at the right moment, the structure of the image, graphic design elements and the social interaction with people and their cultures are focussed on.

FREIRAUM-Fotografie is not only one of the largest providers of photo travel, but also, in terms of quality, it is leading in its sector. This can especially be seen at the high number of repeat customers on their tours. Many have already been on ten different tours, while some have even completed more than 20 tours with the operator.

FREIRAUM-Fotografie was founded in 2001 by the photographer and author Manfred Horender, who still works as a referent for the company. In 2010, Peter Fischer joined as a co-shareholder and took over the company in 2011. Since then, the photo travel operator has taken an intense development and ranks today among the leading companies in its sector in Europe.
Dining out at Icelandair’s Hotel Klaustur

Don’t let Kirkjubæjarklaustur’s tongue twister of a name (church-farm-cloister) intimidate you—even Icelanders use its more informal nickname, Klaustur. Armed with this new-found knowledge, consider a visit to the tiny village that has been in existence since the year 1186. Full of interesting history, geology and folk tales, Klaustur is a popular stopping point on the main south road and indeed, one of the only places where you and your car can refuel between Vík and Höfn. Walk-ins welcome, but reservations are always good! Icelandair Hotel Klaustur’s restaurant and bar, which opens from 6:00pm to 9:30pm, is not just for hotel guests; walk-ins are welcome and it’s a great place for a healthy and relaxed dinner. Talented head chef Einar Björn Hallófsson is a keen proponent of the Slow Food Movement and his cooking is a reflection of this philosophy: his new summer menu focuses squarely on making use of a variety of ingredients from small-scale food producers located in the vicinity.

A menu for all seasons
The famed Arctic char is bred right here in a free-flowing stream of oxygen-enriched glacial waters that have been naturally filtered through layers of lava in the nearby Vatnajökull Glacier. The fish, which figures prominently on the restaurant’s menu, tastes something like a cross between trout and salmon, is favoured by many chefs at top restaurants around Iceland.

Tempting your purse and palate with reasonably priced options
The 2017 summer menu offers a tempting range of starters, soups and main dishes and even tasty vegan options such as the mushroom pavé with broccoli salad and carrot paste. For the budget-conscious there are reasonably priced main dishes such as the grilled Klaustur Arctic char with dill hollandaise, baby potatoes, fennel and leeks. Flavourful and local are keywords here as some of the ingredients travel no more than perhaps 5km at most and arrive at the hotel at their peak of freshness.

Speaking of freshness, many of the herbs and greens used in the kitchen are picked fresh daily from the hillsides around the hotel. Slow food at its best!

What to see in Klaustur
Just a few minutes’ walk from the hotel lies a small but beautiful pine forest at the foot of a double waterfall known as Systrafoss (Waterfall of the Sisters). Here you can picnic, hike to the top of the falls or just do a bit of ‘forest bathing’ in this genuinely peaceful location, amidst some of the tallest trees in Iceland. The village was the site of a convent of Benedictine nuns from 1186 to 1550 and both Kirkjubæjarklaustur Abbey and the waterfall and lake (Systravatn) above the village refer to this abbey. Magnificent hikes and day trips to places such as Fjaðrárgljúfur canyon and the Laki Craters are all close by while the unspoiled, jagged peaks of Skæftafell and Vatnajökull Glaciers beckon in the distance.

Loving the new look!
The hotel has been undergoing some recent renovations; a new colour scheme of soft greens and greys and modern geometric patterns grace the café/bar and echo the moss and lava of the surrounding countryside. Extra touches such O’Cocunete bath products in every room, good Wi-Fi throughout the hotel, and a copious breakfast buffet to greet you in the morning are some of little perks that will make your stay just that much more enjoyable. When the weather is fine, (which does happen in summer!), you can enjoy an espresso coffee, or maybe an excellent Icelandic IPA craft beer out on the patio. Hotel manager Sveinn Heiðar Jensson, who received his training in Switzerland, does a fine job with his staff who are friendly, welcoming and attentive to guests’ needs.

Enjoy your visit to Icelandair’s Hotel Klaustur.

-ÓB

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To tourism, Culture and Business Issue 37 • 2018

never returned to the island.

had been evacuated, without any chance

Pouring fountains of lava and ash over

a 2,000 metre-long crevice opened just

the Icelandic mainland. Only hours later

started to shake the small island south of

Italian town of Pompeii which, in 73 AD,

worldwide, bringing back memories of the

destroyed.

Around 400 houses had been completely

months later, the eruption came to its end,

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Heroes Saving a Home

Two hundred brave men stayed in the
danger zone to fight the devastation, and

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This volcanic eruption made headlines

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Italian town of Pompeii which, in 73 AD,

was buried under thick layers of ash and

lava from Mt. Vesuvius. Huge parts of that

historic site have since been excavated—so

people on the Westman Islands rolled up

their sleeves and started doing the same.

‘Pompeii of the North’ deserves its

name: 40 years after the disaster some 10

houses have been raised from the ashes,

and an impressive museum tops off the

excavation site that had been open to

visitors since the very first dig.

A Museum as a Mirror

Eldheimar’s design is unique, rather

ominous, and yet austere. It is an archi-
tectural masterpiece made of volcanic stone

that perfectly mirrors the inexorability and

harshness of nature. Its bearing heart right

in the centre of the building is Gerðisbraut

No. 10, the house that had been situated

on the slope of the lava-spewing volcano.

Having been fully excavated, it displays

life on the day of the eruption and now

serves as a memorial for a lost homeland.

In Eldheimar’s over 1,000m² museum,

visitors are presented multimedia shows

and exhibitions about the Westman

Island’s Eldfell volcano that, in 1973 rose

up to a height of 220 metres out of the

blue, not existing before its eruption.

It was similar to the submarine volcano

that erupted in 1963 and lasted four years

creating the island of Surtsey, south of

Heimaey.

Nature protection laws protect Surtsey

and only scientists are allowed to access

the island for research reasons. The island

is part of the UNESCO World Cultural

Heritage since 2008.

The Eldheimar museum is quite open

in both design and guidance in the

exhibition halls as well as in the café and

shop. It leaves enough space for walking

around and contemplating the natural
disaster and its impacts on the economic

and cultural life of the Westman Islands,

creating respect for the determination of

its fearless inhabitants, who still brave the
elements today.

The House that Disappeared

One of Heimaey’s 5,300 inhabitants

had ever expected that a volcanic

eruption could make them homeless.

But on 23rd January 1973, earthquakes

started to shake the small island south of

the Icelandic mainland. Only hours later

a 2,000 metre-long crevice opened just

outside the town and close to the church,
pouring fountains of lava and ash over

Heimaey’s houses and streets.

Just a 40 minute drive from Reykjavik.

What’s impressive about Thraustalundur is it’s

an unusually well thought-out concept. The

list is long— a spacious and stylish restaurant

with seating for 100, a mini market that

stocks not only the basic necessities of

life (toiler paper, shampoo, milk etc.) but

fresh fruits and vegetables, fresh bread

delivered daily, soft serve ice cream, premium coffee,

fresh sandwiches and even Icelandic

chocolate souvenirs.

On the terrace, comfortable seating

overlooks an enclosed grassy area with

playground equipment for the little ones,

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Going Above and Beyond Around the Golden Circle

Thraustalundur Restaurant & Mini Market

Located on the banks of the gently flowing

Sog river just 10 minutes north of the

town of Selfoss. Thraustalundur is a kind

of one stop shop— stylish restaurant, mini

market, pizza parlour and a family-oriented

place that both parents and kids can really

enjoy.

Heroes Saving a Home

Two hundred brave men stayed in the
danger zone to fight the devastation, and

finally succeeded in slowing down the
lava flow by cooling it with seawater and

thus saved the port. However, when 5

months later, the eruption came to its end,

around 400 houses had been completely

destroyed.

This volcanic eruption made headlines

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its fearless inhabitants, who still brave the
elements today.

Break out the Brunch

No less than four different kinds of brunch

are offered from 11 am to 4 pm on weekends–

the Classic, the VIP Champagne Brunch,

the Vegetarian, and a kid’s brunch. They all

sound scrumptious with tempting options

such scrambled eggs, American pancakes

and maple syrup, Berry boost and Lemon-

Lime skyr mousse, among others.

Whether you’re staying at a nearby hotel,

an Airbnb, or are just on your way around

the Golden Circle, a stop at Thraustalundur is

highly recommended.

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Heritage since 2008.

The Eldheimar museum is quite open

in both design and guidance in the

exhibition halls as well as in the café and

shop. It leaves enough space for walking

around and contemplating the natural
disaster and its impacts on the economic

and cultural life of the Westman Islands,

creating respect for the determination of

its fearless inhabitants, who still brave the
elements today.
While travelling in Iceland during autumn, the weather and the sun’s changing light create a unique atmosphere in the countryside. Famous poet Rilke found appropriate words for this time of contemplation and retreat: “Lay your shadows upon the sundials, and over the isles allow your winds to vent”.

Enjoying Northern Lights
As darkness returns in autumn, the Northern Lights start illuminating the night skies and, as Hotel Borealis is situated far away from light pollution, the darkness makes them shine even brighter. There is nothing like soaking in the hotel’s hot tub after an exciting day as the Northern Lights dance above you!

In Nature’s Heart
Hotel Borealis, just a few kilometres from the charming town of Selvou, offers the serene silence of an elegant countryside retreat while activities and bustling life are on hand a short distance away. The welcomingly neat white houses have been tastefully furnished by blending last century’s Icelandic antiques with modern style and they prove to be so cosy you might never want to leave!

Offering 20 comfortable rooms with bathrooms, cozy bungalows for families and a small villa, Hotel Borealis is able to meet the needs of individuals and groups. The hotel has a special room for conferences and events and ‘Hlaðan’, a renovated barn that is a perfect location for a romantic Icelandic country wedding. Hotel Borealis also serves well as a calm retreat for writing a book or contemplating the magic of the Icelandic changing light. When the autumn sun pours out her golden beams on the heather and red leaves, nearby Pingvellir National Park turns into an enchanted island. Cuddle up in a traditional wool sweater and take a stroll through the famous former site of Iceland’s parliament, discover Gullfoss waterfall and Geysir on a day trip, try golfing on the nearby course or fishing in Lake Úlfljótsvatn. Then, with daylight slowly fading, return to Hotel Borealis for a marvellous dinner, served on antique tables in the spirit of good, old Icelandic hospitality.

The chef prides himself on only using local products such as highland lamb, arctic char from Lake Þingvallavatn and vegetables grown in the area’s greenhouses for his delicious meals.

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 Hövslvöllur in the middle of Fljótsdalshérað, 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 visible, 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!

- DT

- EMV

The Enchanted Island
Hotel Borealis, a Countryside Hotel with Style and Soul

Hellishólar Cottages, Guesthouse and Hotel
A Little Bit of Icelandic Paradise

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A Taste of Iceland’s Wild & Sweet

Laugarvatn’s Lindin Restaurant & Café Bistro

Located on the banks of Lake Laugarvatn, has a firm foundation of culinary excellence that attracts patrons from around the world. Owner, Baldur Ósvald Halldórsson, pastry and master chef, trained at the Hotel and Restaurant School of Iceland between 1986–1984, received training as a pastry chef at the Culinary Institute of America, New York in 1986–1987, and attended the prestigious Richemont Professional School in Lucerne from 1988–1989, where he developed his interest in the art of chocolate and learnt the secrets behind a great dessert.

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

Reykjavik takes you through enchanting landscapes. Laugarvatn is half-way between Pingvellir and Geysir and Gullfoss, making it an excellent choice for a day trip to in one of the most scenic areas of Iceland. You can also stay at any time of year in Laugarvatn at either the Golden Circle Apartments next to Lindin, the Gallerí Guesthouse or the village hostel to enjoy the Northern Lights in winter and the midnight sun in summer and the spectacular views from Lindin’s terrace and garden across the lake to the Hekla and Eyjafjallajökull volcanoes.

Passion for purity and freshness

Passionate about food, Baldur insists on the absolute purity and freshness of all his ingredients. Located in the heart of Iceland’s ‘greenhouse belt’, he can take his pick of the choicest fruits and vegetables grown in the area year round. The restaurant even has its own small kitchen garden, providing a fresh supply of stubahb, chervil, red and black currants. The lamb and venison come from N.E. Iceland and are known for their delicious flavour, fed on mountain herbs. The Arctic char are caught fresh from either Lake Pingvellir or Lake Apanar daily.

In the heart of the Golden Circle

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

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 Vik’s shoreline, with its black sand beaches, Halldór’s Café emphasises the use of only quality ingredients from the locality in their cooking. Whether it be 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 Vik. 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, and winter openings are from 11:00am to 9:00pm. When travelling in the area around the beautiful Vik, be sure to stop at this charming café and get greeted with a welcoming smile and a seductive menu.
Located in the peaceful village of Hella in South Iceland, Stracta Hotel is one of Iceland’s newest hotels, catering for every budget. Built in 2014, the hotel gets high marks for its ability to incorporate a pleasant, modern look seamlessly throughout its well thought out concept and design.

A Room for Every Budget

The hotel encompasses a wide variety of room options—from high-end deluxe suites, each with its own private hot tub and well-stocked mini-bar, right down to budget rooms with shared facilities. There are also studio apartments and spacious cottages, with simple self-catering facilities that are perfect for families with children. Whichever you choose, you can always count on comfortable beds, free access to the hotel’s hot tubs, saunas and wi-fi throughout the hotel.

Northern Lights Prime Time

Stracta Hotel’s prime location, situated far from the light pollution of the bigger towns, allows guests a fabulous opportunity to view the Northern Lights from October through April. Imagine yourself lounging in a cozy hot tub, glass of wine in hand, as the Northern Lights swirl through the skies above. Should the auroras happen to make their appearance while you are sleeping, a wake-up call can be arranged so you don’t miss this experience-of-a-lifetime event!

Healthy Food Choices Abound

Food options and choices are varied at Stracta Hotel. The bar and bistro located on the ground floor is where you can order healthy sandwiches, salads, cakes and deserts, coffee, teas and a variety of wines and spirits. They also offer asian food. Guests will enjoy the panoramic views of the surrounding countryside from the second floor dining room where a buffet style dinner is served every evening.

Health, Wellness and Activities

Experience Iceland via a wide range of activities that can be arranged at the front desk. Horse riding tours, local farm visits, super jeep tours of nearby Eyjafjallajökull volcano or even an exciting helicopter tour over the most famous South Iceland sites are all possibilities. Rental cars are offered at a special price for hotel guests. Fancy a massage or healing treatment? Stracta Hotel is well connected! Local therapists make themselves available to hotel guests and offer massages, meditation, Reiki and cranial-sacral massages. Hotel Stracta welcomes you!

Harmonious Hjarðarból Guesthouse

A Personal Touch in a Special Part of South Iceland

Hjarðarból Guesthouse is a family-owned business situated in a beautiful part of the Ölfus district, which has the feel of being far from the bustle of Reykjavik, but it is just a short drive away. The guesthouse offers 21 comfortable rooms ranging from doubles to family accommodation, and the owners debuted a hot tub facility on the property this past summer that was a huge hit with guests. Taking a soak after a long day of exploring the region is an ideal way to relax and recharge for the next day of excursions.

Delicious Jams

Guests will also find a delicious breakfast buffet with homemade jams prepared by the owner, which is a favourite among guests. Visitors are often thrilled to learn that jams are available to purchase in the lobby, and take a tasty souvenir of their visit home with them.

In addition to a modern building on the property, Hjarðarból has a structure affectionately nicknamed The Old House, which is the first house ever built in the area. This delightful house was built in 1950 and represents the history of the area. The owners are renovating at least four rooms that will be ready by Christmas, focusing on tasteful décor and the comfort of first-time and returning guests.

Consider Hjarðarból Guesthouse for a home-away-from-home experience in South Iceland.

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When the weather is fine you can take your dinner out onto the balcony, or sit outside on the patio below, where you can enjoy the long summer nights. Planning a day out? Why not purchase a freshly-made packed lunch from the bistro to take with you on your journey?

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There are few glacial lagoons existing in the world today and certainly none more awe-inspiring and accessible than the renowned Jökulsárlón Glacial Lagoon, situated at the head of Breiðamerkurjökull outlet glacier on the peerless Vatnajökull Glacier.

Sail Among the Icebergs
Jökulsárlón ehf has been operating boat tours on the east side of the lagoon for the last 25 years. Sail among the icebergs in a 40 minute amphibious boat tour, or take an exciting one hour Zodiac boat tour that goes further into the lagoon, getting you as close as is safe to the icebergs and the glacier itself.

Discover an Ice-Blue World
Jökulsárlón Boat Tours tours Jökulsárlón Glacial Lagoon

Coffee with a View
Enjoy the spectacular view over the lagoon in the small café where you can get homemade soup with bread, fresh sandwiches, cakes with coffee or tea which can be either taken out on the terrace or consumed inside.

The Show of Fire and Ice
The magnificent annual fireworks display over the lagoon can be described without a doubt as one of the most memorable fireworks shows on earth. The event, held annually in late August, starts at 11.30 pm, with proceeds going to Iceland’s volunteer search and rescue organization, ICESAR.

Located within a few hundred metres of Route No. 1, the lagoon is actually much bigger and deeper than it appears. With an area measuring over 25 square km (9.6 square miles), you could easily fit the island of Heimaey (in the Westman Islands) into it with room to spare. At over 300m (984 feet) deep, five Leaning Towers of Pisa, stacked one on top of the other, would fit inside the lagoon with room to spare. With the ebb and flow of the tides, sea water enters into the lagoon bringing with it krill, capelin, herring and salmon. Curious seals know where the food is plentiful and can often be seen bobbing along with the currents, swimming in and out between the icebergs and appearing to enjoy the attention from onlookers on the shore. Across the road, near the delta where fresh and salt water converge, you can walk down to the water’s edge to witness the rather surreal sight of baby ‘bergs’ beached on the shoreline.

Hotel Smyrlabjörg
The Icelandic Country Hotel Experience

Imagine bedding down for the night, under a warm duvet, in the middle of the Icelandic countryside. Here, underneath the vast canopy of the Vatnajökull Glacier, there’s a refreshing quality to the stillness out here in the “middle of nowhere.”

As Icelandic as it gets
Hotel Smyrlabjörg is a working farm where six generations of the same family have lived since 1850. As is typical for many buildings in Iceland, it’s not the outside, but the inside that really counts—spacious rooms with comfortable beds, clean and fresh linens, friendly staff, coffee, tea and hot chocolate to be enjoyed in the common areas and a large, hot breakfast buffet that is served every morning.

Local and fresh
The restaurant at Hótel Smyrlabjörg focuses on fresh, local ingredients and everything is homemade as much as possible. The lamb comes straight from the hotel’s own grass fed herd of sheep, while the potatoes, the beef and the eggs come from nearby farms. Fresh fish and langoustines are purchased directly from the fishing boats that dock in the nearby fishing village of Höfn. Dinner is served in the large dining room that looks out over the vast landscapes that surround the hotel.

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RESEARCHING ICELAND’S PUFFINS

Birdwatchers are delighted when they visit Iceland, as there are more than 300 species of birds that can be seen around the island. Iceland serves as a stopover for birds migrating between North America and Europe. Popular bird species are Gyrfalcons, Great Northern Divers, Harlequins, and Barrows Goldeneyes. However, the birds that have become synonymous with Iceland are the adorable puffins, with their black and white bodies, bright orange feet and colourful red, blue and orange beaks. Puffins are remarkable swimmers and divers, able to stay under-water for over 2 minutes and surface with many small fish in their beaks. While exceptional in water, puffins are known for their uneven landings on land, which is part of their charm. It’s possible to see puffins during the summer in many areas including the Westman Islands, Grimsey, the Látrabjarg cliffs in the Westfjords, Hafnarholmi in Borgarfjörður Eystri, and Papey.

About 7.7 million puffins called Iceland home during the summer months in 2002, but their numbers have dwindled over the last 13 years, at an alarming rate. Now only 3.2 million are estimated to remain.

Náttúrustofa Suðurlands (South Iceland Nature Research Centre) studies Iceland’s puffin population, and reports dire findings. Náttúrustofa Suðurlands was founded in 1996 and has a team of scientists conducting research on environmental and wildlife issues. Erpur has been investigating the puffin population of the Westman Islands since 2007 and has some startling data regarding Iceland’s puffins.

Winter surface sea temperatures remain at current levels or higher. Erpur says, then much of the puffin population of south and west Iceland will disappear in the next 10 to 20 years. “We go around Iceland twice reserves prior to the spring food appearance. The spring bloom is very late but it’s timing in the last warm period is unknown.”

Until now the puffins are feeling the impact. Even when the current warming cycle ends, around 2030, it won’t perhaps be cool enough, depending on the effects of global warming. “The warming is definitely felt in Iceland,” he says. “It makes things happen fast, and the birds are suffering.”

Because of the declining puffin population, the government should consider some changes, says Erpur. “The hunting is unsustainable,” he says. “We need to rethink our management system and base it on scientific measurements and on being sustainable, similar to the fishing industry here. Something needs to be done.”

Puffins impact tourism as well, and that’s something the government needs to consider, says Erpur. “Many people come from all over the world to see Iceland’s puffins during the summer months,” he says. “It’s a big part of business when you think of whale and puffin tours. Puffins are worth more money to the tourist industry alive rather than dead.”

And that goes for restaurants in Iceland. “Seeing puffin on the menu at some restaurants is both embarrassing and sad,” he says. “These birds are important and we’re losing them. There needs to be a shift in thinking to help preserve puffins.” An easy and responsible solution for the government would be to ban the trade of game. 

The puffin chicks are feeling the impact. Even when the current warming cycle ends, around 2030, it won’t perhaps be cool enough, depending on the effects of global warming. “The warming is definitely felt in Iceland,” he says. “It makes things happen fast, and the birds are suffering.”
Icelandic Times is an ambitious magazine, published in five languages, for the multitude of visitors Iceland receives all year round. Icelandic Times emphasizes everything that can be considered Icelandic – the people, the food, tourism, industry and in fact anything that might give visitors a better picture of the country and its people.

As you may know, Iceland has a lot to offer and there are countless individuals and companies who have meticulously laboured for years to make your stay more memorable. Hundreds of mountain trails and caves have been mapped out, dozens of jeeps have been modified, millions have been spent on logistics, and thousands of sweaters have been knitted, just for you.

We hope you enjoy reading about these people and that this magazine will be helpful in making your stay more enjoyable.

Managing Editor and Publisher
In Chinese, French, German...!

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