7th Arctic Circle Assembly
The Power of Geothermal Energy
Unique and Healthy Bathing Pools
Experience Spectacular Iceland
Art and Craftsmanship in Action

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With his legendary concentration and 45 years of experience, our Master Watchmaker and renowned craftsman, Gilbert O. Gudjonsson, inspects every single timepiece before it leaves our workshop. All the watches are designed and assembled by hand in Iceland. Only highest quality movements and materials are used to produce the watches and every single detail has been given the time needed for perfection.

At JS Watch Co. Reykjavik, we're committed to providing a personal quality service and we pride ourselves on the close relationships we have with our customers. We're always happy to assist and we provide a friendly and reliable service where our customers speak directly to the designers and manufacturers of the brand.

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Next year, 2020, looks to be an exciting year, like 2019. We now publish in five languages: English, German, French and the Icelandic Land & saga as well as our Nordic Times magazine. The publication stands out among magazines in Iceland, serving its nationals as well as over 2 million tourists visiting the country annually.

China celebrated the 70th anniversary of the People’s Republic in October 2019 and Iceland Times dedicated its autumn edition to the Chinese people and the strong relationship between the two countries.

There is a saying in China that if you can’t walk on the Moon, go to Iceland and over 100,000 Chinese tourists did just that in 2019. Chinese airlines will start scheduled flights to Iceland via Helsinki and Nordic Times will be available to passengers on board and the Nordic Times to passengers flying solo into Helsinki. We are expanding our network in China, with our own platform on WeChat social media and working with Alipay, the world’s most popular mobile phone payment solution with 900 million users, putting Iceland on the Chinese people’s travel wish list.

To Chinese tourists, Alipay handles more than 70% of Chinese mobile phone payment solutions to Iceland and over 100,000 Chinese tourists did just that in 2019. This keeps close relations with Europe through the European Economic Area with Chancellor Angela Merkel and President Hans Walter Steinmeier visiting the country.

We interviewed Germany’s Ambassador on the close relationship between the countries. In 2019, Iceland welcomed Vice President Mike Pence, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and Secretary of Energy Rick Perry from the United States. Also this year, Iceland welcomed India’s President Ram Nath Kovind.

Einar Th. Thorsteinsson

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Icelandic language

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

Use your QR code reader application on your smartphone or if needed the QR codes. QR code reader applications can be downloaded from all major smartphone stores.
Former President Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson opened the 7th Arctic Circle Assembly in front of a packed house at the Harpa Reykjavik Concert Hall and Conference Centre in the second week of October. The Assembly has become the largest international gathering on the Arctic and places former President Grímsson among the leading international statesmen of this century. The Assembly is closely followed in capitals around the world. Indeed, President Trump sent his Energy Secretary, Rick Perry, to Reykjavik and John Kerry, former Secretary of State, received the Arctic Circle Assembly Prize. Both addressed the Assembly with powerful speeches, though exposing the divide that is now evident in American politics.

“We are deeply grateful to you and others that, through your participation, we have been able to maintain the momentum of our growth. It is indeed a collective responsibility to ensure peace and stability in the North Atlantic and prevent the area falling prey to misguided political wrestling”, Jakobsdóttir said. She mentioned Iceland’s chairmanship of the Arctic Council. Iceland had put focus on green solutions, people and communities of the Arctic and the marine environment.

She said that latest scientific researches clearly indicate that climate warming is even greater than forecast; with melting of arctic ice and rising sea levels. The Arctic heating is twice the global average. “Scientists cannot pinpoint at what point the melting of the ice of Greenland or West Antarctica becomes irreversible but it will become irreversible unless we do something about it. The fact that the Arctic is heating at twice the rate of the global average should be alarming to all of us. Many of us will live to see an ice-free Arctic... Everywhere around the world, young people have been demonstrating for months... We should listen carefully to the many groups of young people who skip school to gather outside our parliaments week after week, month after month. They demand action from the politicians and the politicians need to be aware that the solution to the crisis needs to be just. We need to be mindful of the fact that wealthy countries have contributed most to climate change but tend to be most immune to its effects. One hundred companies are supposed to be the source of more than 70% of greenhouse gas emissions since the late 1980s. Furthermore, as recently revealed, 20 fossil fuel companies can be directly linked one third of greenhouse emissions,” President Mikael Jakobsdóttir said.

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The Arctic: A priority in Finland

Finland’s Prime Minister, Sanna Rinne, said that the Arctic is a priority in Finland as it is for the European Union. He mentioned Greta Thunberg and the impact that she had made with her powerful speech in New York. “I don't know if there was a single person in this room who was not touched by the fiery eyes of Greta Thunberg in New York. I know I was. She looked into the cameras and said that we had stolen her dreams and her childhood and betrayed them. “How dare you”, she asked. I don't. Do you?”, asked PM Rinne.

Greenland: Not for sale but open for business

Greenland’s Prime Minister, Kim Nielsen, opened with the statement that his is the world’s biggest island, 2 million square kilometres, 20 times the size of Iceland; 52 times the size of Denmark. “Our country is centrally located between the two superpowers,” PM Nielsen said. Three airports and a harbour were being built in Greenland and an open for business. Greenland’s Prime Minister, Kim Nielsen, opened with the statement that his is the world’s biggest island, 2 million square kilometres, 20 times the size of Iceland; 52 times the size of Denmark. “Our country is centrally located between the two superpowers,” PM Nielsen said. Three airports and a harbour were being built in Greenland and an open for business.

Three airports and a harbour

PM Nielsen said that three airports were being built in Greenland and an international harbour had been built in Nuuk, the capital. A century ago mail had been distributed with kayaks but now mail travels by the speed of light with the internet. Climate change affected people’s lives and wildlife: it is becoming increasingly more difficult to predict animal and marine movement. Plastic is to be found in fish, whales, mammals and birds. “It is the responsibility of us all to take care of the environment wherever we live. We must keep in mind that we have borrowed this planet from our descendants,” PM Nielsen said.
A voyage of a crown princess and two crown princes

Swedish Crown Princess Victoria told the Assembly of a voyage she and her two uncles, Frederik and Haakon, crown princes of Denmark and Norway took aboard the icebreaker, Odin, to Svalbard in the year 2008; little more than a century after her father, King Oscar, had sponsored Fridtjof Nansen on a ship named Fram. “The three of us are not only colleagues but we are also family,” Victoria said. They had spent four days at Svalbard and scientists had demonstrated the climate changes to them. They had seen the effects of forests fires in Siberia 2,000 kilometres away; the rise in temperature and pollution. “Yes, the Arctic is a global issue demanding global action,” she said.

A year later they had gone with the coast guard ship, Einar Mikkelsen, to study climate change in Greenland and the effects on the people. “I believe that the three of us were all well aware of the dangerous effects of climate change. However, seeing for myself and talking directly with those affected was a very strong emotion. It opened my eyes to the complexity and also to its global nature, seeing how melting ice affects animals and peoples all over the world,” Crown Princess Victoria said.

1 Scientific discussions of the Arctic at the Assembly.
2 US Secretary of Energy Rick Perry.
3 Katrín Jakobsdóttir, PM of Iceland.
4 Guðlaugur Þór Þórðarson, foreign minister of Iceland.
5 There is growing concern for the welfare of the Arctic.
6 Kim Kielsen, PM of Greenland.
7 Antti Rinne, PM of Finland.
8 The 7th Arctic Circle Assembly was held in 2019.
10 Dmitry Atrikhin, Governor, Yamalo-Nenets.

US Secretary of Energy Rick Perry’s message

US Secretary Rick Perry started his speech by congratulating the Icelanders on their 75th Anniversary of Independence. In fact, the US was the first nation to recognize Iceland’s Independence. Before him, Vice-President Mike Pence and Secretary of State Mike Pompeo had made visits to Iceland, demonstrating the shift in US policy in the High North. Rick Perry said that he had visited the geothermal firm HS Orka, from which the US could learn much. In Alaska, Perry said, there were endless opportunities and unprecedented climate research was being carried out. The US had taken steps to open Alaska’s North Slope in a responsible way. There were plenty of opportunities in the Arctic. “By any measure, the Arctic is brimming to Arctic progress. I see US geo energy liberate, not subjugate, the world,” Secretary Perry said. More than 1.5 million people are residing in over 1,500 communities in the Arctic. They depend on locally generated power, largely micro grids. The challenge is to develop local knowledge and train individuals so they can better serve their communities. Perry said that one key principle is behind all US efforts. “We believe that the key to energy progress, to economic progress, to environmental progress is to allow the power of innovation to become the driver of progress. The US has an incredible story to tell of innovation. America is the second biggest producer of wind and solar energy. We are reviving our coal and oil industry and following decades of independence or, should I say, dependence on volatile regions for oil and gas, the US is now the world’s number one producer of both these energy resources. We are now an exporter of oil and gas, exporting to 36 countries in five continents. By next year we will become a net oil exporter,” Perry said.

Greenhouse emissions dramatically down

The secretary said that from 2005 to 2018, while energy production rose, US net greenhouse emissions fell dramatically, with the reduction especially strong in the power sector. Energy greenhouse emissions fell by an even greater amount. “Today we are leading the world in reducing those emissions, proving that we can both grow the economy and protect the environment. And once again, innovation is behind these astounding achievements. Innovation allows us to reduce and lower emission gas. Rather than driving out these forms of fuels, innovation allows us lower these emissions while growing,” Perry said.

The US sees the Arctic nations becoming leaders in computing. In 2020 the Arctic Super Computing Summit will be held in Iceland, making way for the next super-computing revolution.

“Innovation is key to Arctic progress”

“The North belongs to the Free
Towards the end of his speech, Secretary Perry talked about countries seeking to “dominate the Arctic from the outside”. He was talking about China, no doubt. “I look to the future. I see us successfully resisting those countries seeking to dominate the Arctic from the outside. Nations that neither share our democratic values nor our record of environmental stewardship. I see us unleashing energy and progress to liberate nations from dependence on those same countries which would use their powers from the outside, their energy in particular, as a geo-political weapon. I see US geo-energy liberate, not subjugate, the world,” Secretary Perry said and pledged that the US would share in energy with people all across the world and that tomorrow belongs to the North and the future belongs to the free. “What is true for the US is true for every free country in the Arctic region. I firmly believe that, given the right policies, the innovative innovation of free peoples can unleash unprecedented progress. That is why I can’t wait to see what the future holds for the US and for the Arctic region,” said Secretary Perry.

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Iceland’s Key to Success

Foreign minister Guðlaugur Pórarðarson’s address to the Assembly

Iceland chairs the Arctic Council this year under the leadership of foreign minister Guðlaugur Pórarðarson. In his address to the Arctic Circle Assembly, foreign minister Pórarðarson said that Iceland emphasises four areas: Arctic, marine environment, green energy and sustainable fishing. To assess the situation, he mentioned that the decision to start the process started more than 20 years ago when the journalist for the negative piece of the story had flown out the day after the protest, after the journalist had flown out the day after the protest. The journalist had flown out the day after the protest.

Search and Rescue

He stated that search and rescue activities in the Arctic and the North Atlantic Ocean were extremely challenging and that Iceland, along with other nations, is looking to establish a search and rescue cluster in Iceland. "The opening up of the Arctic sea routes and the ensuing growth in marine traffic demand that we increase cooperation within individual Arctic states in search and rescue capabilities. This is needed if we are to be able to respond quickly and effectively to environmental and maritime accidents," the minister said.

The poor and brave

He said that, in only a century, Iceland had come a long way. A century ago, brave icelanders would have thought that heating the households of Reykjavik using geothermal district heating was a thing of the future. In the mid-seventies Iceland regained control of its fishing grounds and for several years of learning, Iceland had come up with the quota system for responsible and sustainable fishing. As a consequence of hydro- and geothermal energy and sustainable fishing, Iceland’s standard of living rocketed.

The smart Bio revolution

"Some Icelandic companies have successfully managed to completely eliminate biomass waste from living marine catches. Only a few years ago this idea would have been thought revolutionary but today it is only considered smart. Innovators and researchers in a small town in north of Iceland make a produce out of shrimp shells that prevents inflammation in the body. This process started more than 20 years ago when a TV journalist filmed polluted waste under a fishing factory that nobody made use of. Instead of scolding the journalist for the negative piece of news, the fishermen looked themselves in the mirror. Today this product is sold overseas and has enabled highly educated people to return and find jobs in their old hometowns. In fact, some are returning from the big metropolises of the continents. Another entrepreneur in a fishing town near Reykjavik produces collagen from fish. Just to explain and demonstrate, collagen is supposed to make your keep young looking. And as you can clearly see, I take it every morning. I would say that these examples represent sustainability at its best in Iceland and lay the foundations for a thriving sector and society. Using every gramme of a cod or a shrimp, in a way, represents a ‘back to basics’ way of thinking, as well as being a very modern way of thinking. It says that wastefully is unacceptable. The sustainable use of natural resources has transformed Iceland from one of the poorest countries in Europe into one of the most affluent states in the World. And that in only one century," foreign minister Pórarðarson said.

Kerry’s Arctic Prize and rousing speech

Former Secretary of State John Kerry is entitled to his own opinion but you are not entitled to your own facts. There is no point in returning. I take it every morning. I will tell you why we are not winning. We are not winning when overfishing is said to cost $8 billion a year in lost revenues. There are over 500 Dead Zones where life simply cannot exist because there is no oxygen. 50% of the oceans we breathe comes from the ocean. You want that equation to change? In 2050 there will be definitely more plastic in the ocean than there are fish. This is not a future challenge. It is happening now. Mr Kerry said.

After his speech President Grímsson handed former Secretary of State John Kerry his award, warmly greeted by the appreciative audience at the Harpa Reykjavík Concert Hall and Conference Centre.
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The Icelandic Geothermal Model is changing China

Arctic Green Energy’s joint venture with China’s Sinopec has become the world’s largest and fastest growing geothermal district heating company which is revolutionising China at a time of global warming

By Halldor Halisson, Icelandic Times

A Piece of History

In 1930 the people of Reykjavík – ‘Smokey Bay’ – began to use hot water coming from the ground to heat their houses. The tiny capital was given its name when the first settlers saw the steam rising from hot springs. Coal burning pollution had become a massive problem, so the locals were turning to the hot water to heat houses. Iceland was poor and isolated out at the furthest point in the North Atlantic. In the mid-thirties, Austurbæjarskóli, an elementary school in Reykjavík, became the first building to be heated with geothermal energy.

In August 1941 during World War II, Winston Churchill visited Iceland after meeting President Roosevelt to sign the Atlantic Treaty. During his visit to Iceland, Churchill put up the V-sign for victory for the first time. At that point, the Nazis ruled Europe, bombing London and English cities, while Japan ruled Asia and Nazis ruled Europe, bombing London and Iceland, Churchill put up the V-sign for the future. He visited Reykjadal – Smokey Valley – to the East of the capital where they were drilling for hot water. It was only natural to tap into it. The locals use had been limited basically to swimming in warm water pools and the women washing their laundry in the warm water around the country. That had been about it.

As houses were heated with the hot water, Reykjadal became the cleanest capital of the World. Little did they know that their drilling would springboard Iceland to the top of the world of geothermal energy. It would take time but slowly and surely the tiny nation progressed, though the road was quite bumpy at times.

Industrialisation based on green energy

There are two main methods of harnessing geothermal energy. High temperature Geothermal with over 150° Celsius has traditionally been harnessed to generate electricity. The other method, the direct use of the geothermal water, is perhaps even more important and has been used for everything from house heating, to greenhouses, aquaculture and tourism.

In the late sixties – fifty years ago – Iceland was in a deep economic crisis as the herring had failed to migrate into the Icelandic waters from the Norwegian Sea. Thousands of Icelanders migrated overseas, mostly to Sweden, but to Canada and Australia as well. Iceland was in the custody of the World Bank. However ambitious industrialisation plans started then. Today, Iceland is the world leader in geothermal energy. Electricity generated from geothermal sources is now responsible for over 35% of Iceland’s primary energy generation, with the rest of the primary energy generated from hydroelectric. Iceland was, until recently, the only country around the globe that generated 100% of its primary energy from renewables. Now Costa Rica has become the 2nd country of this prestigious club.

Higher life expectancy

Since that time the geothermal district heating systems of Iceland have reached over 95% of all heated areas in the country. Geothermal is the only renewable energy that does not require batteries of some sort and therefore the only renewable suitable for heating and cooling cities, since there are no batteries that can handle such tasks. As Icelanders soon discovered, geothermal has brought many benefits to the environment, public health and the economy. Older Icelanders will still remember the smog that covered Reykjadal on still winter days and the pollution that accompanied the import and burning of coal to stay warm. Medical studies have shown a higher life expectancy materialising with the elimination of coal. Respiratory disease cases dropped fast. On the economic front, Iceland is now saving significant amounts of foreign currency that would have been required to replenish the coal supplies needed previously every winter.

Arctic Green Energy’s partnership with Sinopec

In 2006 Enex China – which became Arctic Green Energy – was originally established by Reykjavík municipality Power Company and partners. This effort was a direct result of former Chinese President Jiang Zemin visiting his Icelandic counterpart Ólafur Ragnar Grimsson, who showed him the Icelandic geothermal infrastructure. The mission of the new company was to export Iceland’s success and leadership in geothermal energy. The company in China was still small when Sinopec – the world’s 3rd largest company – acquired the Chinese partner in 2009 and Haukur Harðarson acquired Enex China in 2011.

The prospects were grim but changes were coming. Churchill marvelled at the locals’ use of hot water which, he believed, was a sign for the future. He visited Reykjadal – Smokey Valley – to the East of the capital where they were drilling for hot water. It was only natural to tap into it. The locals use had been limited basically to swimming in warm water pools and the women washing their laundry in the warm water around the country. That had been about it.

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Sinopec Green Energy was founded with the Chinese side holding 51% and the Icelandic side 49%. Milestone agreements for the rapid expansion of the partnership were signed in Reykjavík by the chairman of Sinopec Group and Arctic Green Energy. The signing was witnessed by Prime Minister Johanna Sigurðardóttir and Katrín Jakobsdóttir who, in 2018, became Prime Minister in Iceland, along with Premier Wen Jiabao on the Chinese side. President Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson who, in 2018, became President in Iceland, introduced the concept. The geothermal solution, as one of the more important parts of the global green energy transition, is not only a viable way to take down the pollution-spewing chimneys but the most effective weapon in the global fight against air pollution and climate change.

Mr. Harðarson points out that approximately half of all energy generation is for heating. Cities consume 70% of all energy consumed and most of that is for the purposes of heating. As an example, when the energy use of an average home in the Northern hemisphere is studied, we find that over 80% is only for heating and hot water. The lights and the various electric appliances are only responsible for under 20%. “It goes without saying that it’s a huge challenge to reduce carbon energy heating in our homes. That however is the way forward and Iceland’s expertise has proven to be crucial,” Harðarson points out.

Phenomenal success

Sinopec Green Energy’s success in China has been phenomenal; in fact, it has been revolutionising China just as geothermal energy revolutionised Iceland. SGE has become the world’s largest geothermal company and has drilled over 520 wells and started operations across 60 cities and counties in China; mostly in Hebei, Shangxi, Shanxi, Shandong and Tianjin and is now working on Xiongan; China’s first “smog free city” emerging as a global showcase of sustainability.

“President Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson’s role in building the geothermal relationship between Iceland and all of Asia cannot be overstated,” says Haukur HanBárson and continues. “As a head of state, he stood out among his peers as a man of vision and passion, with a strong credible voice for environmental affairs, long before it became fashionable. He has carried this torch with him to his new role as chairman of the Arctic Circle, the global platform on Arctic Affairs. For us and our partners, the Arctic Circle Assembly has become our central and preferred platform when it comes to signing milestone agreements or sharing with the renewable energy world our work in China and elsewhere on the Eurasian continent.”

China’s geothermal revolution

Sinopec Green Energy operations have reduced CO₂ emissions dramatically. It’s the first geothermal company in China to apply large scale re-injection and owns some of the most valuable patents in the industry, including re-injection technology patents. SGE has close to 50 million square metres of heating capacity, serving more than 2,000,000 customers with 399 heat centres – all in just a few years. Sinopec Green Energy has proven that the most effective way of reducing air pollution and greenhouse emissions is to replace coal driven district heating systems with geothermal energy; Sinopec Green Energy is expanding to other branches of renewables in addition to geothermal. Geothermal will, however, as the only renewable available 24/7 and needing no battery storage, remain the backbone of such multiple renewable energy systems. Thus, Iceland’s expertise and leadership in geothermal and clean tech has been extremely beneficial to China.

SGE leadership in China is not only in its market share (about 40%) but also in having shaped the industry. Its projects in Xiongan are now the official showcases for harnessing geothermal energy for district heating and geothermal exploration. The company was the first geothermal company globally to get carbon trading accreditation by the UN. It was the first to introduce large scale geothermal re-injection of used geothermal brine and is today owner of over 50 patents. The green energy potential has really been a surprise and the first officially recognised smog free city in Xiongan New Area outside Peking will be a benchmark for the future. China is emulating Iceland’s miraculous rise to good effect and is itself being revolutionised by the Icelandic model.

The Icelander living in Saigon

The man behind Arctic Green Energy, Haukur Harðarson, and his family have been living in Saigon, Vietnam since 1992 with intervals, this time since 2008. Harðarson is educated as an architect. One of his last projects in Iceland was the Stock Exchange building in Reykjavík.

Arctic Green is based in Singapore and is working assignments in Vietnam, Singapore, Kazakhstan and moving into Europe and Central Asia, working – as in China – with local partners.

Icelandic firms excluded

Arctic Green Energy and partners have received project loans from the Asian Development Bank but, as Iceland is the only country within the OECD not being a member of the Bank, Icelandic engineering companies can’t be involved in projects financed through the Bank. “This is a strange situation and is keeping some of our partners, the brilliant Icelandic engineering companies, out of projects funded by the Bank. I strongly recommend to policy makers in Iceland that they resolve this and thereby support the growth of this valuable export industry,” Harðarson says.

Haukur Harðarson and the President of Iceland Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson

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Iceland sits on a hotbed of renewable geothermal energy that, in part, powers the island. Iceland is one of the top 10 countries in the world in terms of geothermal installed capacity, with approximately 20 percent of the country’s electricity coming from geothermal energy. On a per capita basis, Iceland is the largest producer of geothermal energy. Travellers can learn about this fascinating energy source at the Hellisheiði power plant, which is just a 30-minute drive from Reykjavík. Visitors can opt to take an hour-long guided tour through the facility, learning about how Earth’s heat can be sustainably harnessed.

Important power source
ON Power, which operates Hellisheiði, supplies half of Iceland with its electricity and half of the Reykjavík area with its heating. The process isn’t easy, but extremely worthwhile. Geothermal energy plants generate power by drilling holes about 2,000 metres deep into the Earth’s crust. They tap into groundwater that has met with bedrock that was heated by the Earth’s mantle. The water reaches a temperature of about 300°C, and the steam from the heated water powers turbines to generate heat and electricity.

Iceland’s unique location
Geothermal energy is most productive at the meeting of the tectonic plates that make up the planet’s crust, which means that Iceland’s location is ideal as the island sits on the meeting place of the North American and Eurasian tectonic plates. What Iceland lacks in terms of fossil fuels, is more than made up for in renewable geothermal energy. In Iceland today, about 90 percent of homes use geothermal energy for heat, and Iceland is the only country in the world where 100 percent of its electricity comes from renewable energy.

A focus on the environment
ON Power is not only focused on providing heat and electricity to Iceland’s inhabitants. In fact, ON Power is committed to eliminating vehicle emissions in Iceland and the plant has been working on infrastructure for electric vehicles and charging stations. Carbon neutrality is a big focus, with ON Power executives believing that geothermal energy could be used for realistic and sustainable energy solutions. Just one example is their CarbFix project where CO2 is converted into minerals to prevent it from reaching the atmosphere.

Travellers are encouraged to visit the plant and learn about how Iceland, and ON Power, are trying to take on the challenge of climate change through renewable sources. Stop by Hellisheiði on your next visit to Iceland.

– JG

ON POWER: Hot in Iceland
Geothermal energy is on display at an interactive exhibition at Hellisheiði power plant
Free Trade
European
Iceland first with China

The Agreement was signed by the then Minister for Foreign Affairs of Iceland, Össur Skarphéðinsson and the Minister of Commerce in China, Gao Hucheng.

Mr. Hucheng and Mr. Skarphéðinsson during the official visit of Icelandic Prime Minister, Jóhanna Sigurðardóttir to China.

The geopolitical importance of such a bilateral trade agreement.

Historical Agreement

The geopolitical importance of such a Free Trade Agreement with Iceland is historical, as it is China’s first FTA with a European country. In the aftermath, China signed an FTA with Switzerland which, like Iceland, decided against joining the European Union. The third country to decline EU membership, Norway, has not signed a Free Trade Agreement with China due to political disputes, although both countries have a vested interest in concluding a deal.

Iceland’s foreign minister mentioned several areas of cooperation, among them drilling for oil in the Dragon Area in the High North of Iceland. He especially mentioned the Sinopec Group regarding the Dragon Area. However, it seems that Sinopec has shelved plans to drill for oil north of Iceland at this point.

The Group, along with the Icelandic Arctic Green Energy company, owns the world’s biggest geothermal company. The Chinese government is planning geothermal heating in 400 cities. China’s commerce minister had mentioned the Northern Polar Route, which might turn out to be the most economical shipping route between Asia and Europe. Both ministers hailed the success of Sinopec Green Energy:

Author: Hallur Hallsson

Effective & natural products

Iceland is one of the cleanest and untouched places on the earth. Feel Iceland food supplements are made in Iceland with premium ingredients and, of course, Iceland’s unique glacial water. They are made under strict quality control and contain no additives and are non-GMO. Feel Iceland’s products are intended to replenish the body’s natural resources, so consumers will always feel their natural best.

Feel Iceland Collagen

Icelandic Marine Collagen is the focus ingredient in the Feel Iceland supplements. Feel Iceland Marine Collagen is a unique, enzymatically hydrolysed, low molecular weight collagen made purely from Icelandic fish that is caught in the wild in the clean Atlantic Ocean surrounding Iceland.

Amino Marine Collagen

Amino Marine Collagen is ideal for people from who want to maintain healthy and youthful looking skin and reduce joint pain from the inside out.

Amino Marine Collagen is hydrolysed collagen powder that can be mixed into a beverage or food of your choice.

Joint Rewind – Joint therapy

Joint Rewind Joint Therapy is a formula developed to help maintain proper joint function and support healthy cartilage tissue. The formula provides an effective combination of marine derived chondroitin sulphate and collagen found in cartilage, ligaments and tendons.

Age Rewind – Skin Therapy

The founders have not forgot about your skin. Feel Iceland produces capsules for those that want to improve skin appearance and maintain healthy, youthful skin. The capsules contain a unique blend of marine collagen, hyaluronic acid and vitamin C.
Keflavik
Duty Free

Duty Free Iceland provides a great shop window on almost everything Icelandic from sweet treats to unique spirits to natural skincare products. As 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 beers, wines and spirits to natural skincare 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, unsweetened 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 Björk 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.
Árær Open Air Museum

The Árær Open Air Museum is a treasure. The museum, which was founded in 1957, gives visitors a visual sense of Reykjavík’s past. The site comprises a village-like collection of more than 20 houses, each of which is a separate exhibition. Visitors learn how Reykjavík developed from a few isolated farms into the capital city of Iceland that is home to more than 120,000 people. During the summer months, staff members are clad in period costumes that are quite charming and fun. The museum is suitable for all ages and includes a playground and a toy exhibition where children can play freely.

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.

The Reykjavík Maritime Museum, which is located in the old harbour, focuses on exhibitions that show the importance of fish to the nation. Today, Icelanders fish on modern trawlers, but in the old days, fishermen regularly put their lives at risk on primitive boats in order to feed their families. 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 City Museum

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 Árær Open Air Museum is only a 15-minute drive from the city centre. The ferry to Viðey Island leaves from the Old Harbour in downtown Reykjavík.

Viðey Island

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 unspoiled 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, Áegissíður harbour and Skarfabakki harbour. Please visit www.videy.is for the ferry schedule.

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, 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.

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Family Friendly Fun

Reykjavík City Museum is family friendly and all museum sites have something that caters to children. For example, the exhibition “Come and play” at Árær Open Air Museum offers a fun treasure hunt for kids during their museum visit. The Settlement Exhibition has a special family corner where children and parents can have a fun time together. The Reykjavík Maritime Museum offers a fun treasure hunt for kids during their museum visit.

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The north hall contains what may be called festive flowers, i.e. cut flowers, gifts, both from himself and others. Lastly, the south hall is where we find Kjarval’s works and, in his last years, his floral fantasies, where faces and creatures are interlaced with flowers in paintings and sketches.

The artworks are divided into three main groups in the three exhibition halls. The centre hall contains floral landscapes and images from wild Icelandic flora. This includes works where Kjarval first grapples with wildflowers, mainly heather. In his sketches, common plant species are often recognisable, and these kind of sketches can be viewed in the display cases. Landscape and flowers are intertwined in Kjarval’s works and, in his last years, he painted landscapes of the mind, a grey world, illuminated by flowers. The north hall contains what may be called festive flowers, i.e. cut flowers, potted plants and flower baskets, artwork which Kjarval created as his own work. His selection is intended to create a coherent exhibition rather than a historical overview of Kjarval’s floral works.

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Ásmundur Sveinsson
Under the Same Sky –
Art in Public Spaces
19.01.2019 Opened
16.02.2020 Closes

The sculpture garden at Sigtún is dedicated to the works by Ásmundur Sveinsson (1893-1982). It is also the point where the exhibition, ‘Under the Same Sky’ extends its view to some of the numerous outdoor pieces that the recent sculptors have created and installed in Reykjavík and around and outside Iceland. The works in the exhibition are more meditative in comparison to the outdoor sculptures: smaller in scale, made of different materials, and three-dimensional studies to the enlarged works that Ásmundur realised in the end.

Art in public spaces is one of the museum’s programme highlights in 2019. During the year, works by five artists will be featured at separate times in the exhibition ‘Under the Same Sky’ together with Ásmundur Sveinsson. These artists are Sigurður Guðmundsson, Brynhildur Fuggerstidtjóttir, Jóhanna Eyfells, Helgi Gíslason and Ólöf Nordal.

Ásmundur Sveinsson was born in 1893. He grew up in the countryside, in Dalir, and started his art studies with sculptor Ríkarður Jónsson at the age of 22. He later studied art in Denmark, then Sweden and finally in Paris, France. Ásmundur is one of the pioneers of Icelandic sculpture. Upon his return to Iceland, he built two houses where he lived and had his studio. Reykjavík Art Museum now runs a museum dedicated to his work in one of them, Ásmundarsafn in Laugardalur. Ásmundur sought inspiration in Icelandic myths and folktales, and in the forms of nature. Later, he became preoccupied with various technological novelties of the 20th century. Ásmundur was a prolific artist. His work can be seen in public places around the country, and this is in accordance with Ásmundur’s beliefs that the art is not meant for the chosen few, but a part of the everyman’s daily life. Ásmundur Sveinsson died in 1982, at the age of 89.
Erró was one of the first Western artists to adopt the legend and images of Mao Zedong. Between 1972 and 1980, Erró painted the ‘Chinese Paintings’ series – over 130 paintings which tell the story of a great leader who travels around the world. Each painting, like most other paintings by Erró from 1964 onwards, is based on a collage where Erró matches two images of different origins against each other: Chinese propaganda posters and Western tourist pictures from famous places. Erró pictures Chairman Mao and his comrades on a triumphant tour around the world, but in reality Mao only made two trips out of China, both times to attend the Communist Party Convention in Moscow. The ‘Chinese Paintings’ series is fiction, where the staging and the presence of Mao in various locations is a sarcastic reference to the wave of Maoism which seized groups of Western artists, intellectuals and politicians following the student riots in Paris in May 1968. The series objectifies both the utopian dream of the future and the fear of the Chinese Cultural Revolution spreading around the world.

The Chinese Paintings made Erró famous internationally. The exhibition in Hafnarhús contains paintings, collages and engravings from the Reykjavík Art Museum’s collection.
Iceland is an idyllic place to create for some artists, with its striking landscape and quirky culture that lends to endless inspiration. Natural wonders include active volcanoes, gurgling geysers, and vast glaciers, while there seems to always be a colourful cast of characters among Iceland’s 360,000 inhabitants. Harry Bilson, an artist who was born in Reykjavik in 1948 to an Icelandic mother and British father, and grew up in London, currently calls Iceland home.

Harry is a master of colour whether he’s capturing the dark subtleties of Icelandic life or the gentle power of the ‘Bower Bird Lady’. Nature is a theme never far from his paintings and prints as ‘Last Leaf Leaving’ painting features a family in a barren Icelandic forest with a gorgeous blue owl soaring above. The contrast of colors and brushwork is beautiful.

Lifelong painter

Harry began painting at an early age as he was a terribly creative child. His talent was recognized immediately and at the age of six, he won an international Exhibition of Children’s Art competition in Prague. At the age of 19 he became a full-time professional, who was self-taught, self-propelled and completely self-supported. He has painted ever since, honing his craft and finding inspiration around the world.

International Artist

He has lived and worked in several countries including Australia, China, USA, Canada, Ireland and he now happily resides in Iceland. Harry has shown his work in numerous solo and group exhibitions around the world, including the US, South America, Japan, Australia and Europe. He continues to travel and exhibit worldwide.

Those interested in purchasing Harry’s should email him at harrybilson@googlemail.com or shop locally at Galleri Fold in Reykjavik.
To tourism, Culture and Business issue 43 • 2019

Videos

Aurora Reykjavík’s latest addition are
its 360° Virtual Reality displays. The center is the unique creation of
four enterprising young Icelanders – all photographers and Northern Lights
enthusiasts – who recognized the need for
such a place: a kind of one-stop shop
for all things Northern Lights.

Located at Grandi, the old harbour,
the Northern Lights Selfie Booth
will dazzle visitors.

Opening hours
Every day
09:00 – 21:00

A Unique Experience

Soothing Sights and Sounds

Northern Lights Photo Simulator
Capturing the Northern Lights with your
own camera can be challenging, but, at Aurora Reykjavík, you get taught by the
experts: bring your camera and try the
right settings at the Northern Lights Photo Simulator.

Northern Lights Selfie Booth
A photo of yourself under the Northern Lights is probably the best souvenir you
can bring back from Iceland. No matter the season nor weather, Aurora Reykjavík
has you covered.

In the exhibition you will find an entertaining selfie booth – have fun looking all fabulous under the Northern Lights!

Tour booking, camera rental and the best advice for your own hunt
Looking for the best tours, the most
impressive display of clothing, jewellery,
photography, and wooden knitwear by
some of Iceland’s most creative designers.
The theme? You guessed it.

Stay for the drinks
Sólon, which has a daily happy hour from
15:00-18:00, has an impressive wine menu,
where you will find wines from most of
the world’s renowned vineyards. Wines are featured from Italy, Chile, Spain, New
Zealand, and Australia. For beer enthusiasts, you will find on tap beer from local brewery
Kaldi, as well as Egils Gull, Brío, Tuborg, and enjoy drinks in a hip, yet comfortable
atmosphere.

Hot coffee and choice gifts
In the exhibition you will find an
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Whether you’re a longtime fan or a complete newbie to the whole ‘Dude’ subculture, Reykjavík’s Lebowski bar delivers in spades. Named after the 1998 film The Big Lebowski, it’s like stepping back in time and into the movie itself. The walls are plastered with memorabilia connected to the film and an eye catching three-dimensional bowling lane runs the length of the east wall. A retro American diner, replete with ‘50s style bar stools and sleek counter tops doubles as a dance floor from 11pm onwards when things really get hopping!

Mouthwatering burgers and fries are served daily from 11am to 10pm and do check out the ‘Burger of the Month’ for some innovative takes on the classic burger. A milkshake to go with that? Of course, you sexy thing!* Upstairs you will find additional space where private parties can be held, as well as a large terrace that’s a great place to sit when the sun is shining.

Lebowski’s secret sauce
It’s the music at Lebowski Bar that has the sweeping power to transport you back in time and serves as the primary vehicle to get you that blast from the past and good times vibe. Every night from 9pm onwards, DJs crank out carefully chosen ’50s through ’80s classic rock that sets the mood and definitely pulls the room together.

24 versions of the White Russian cocktail
Lebowski Bar’s popular happy hour, (daily from 4 to 7pm), offers reasonably priced drinks ranging from Icelandic craft beers to draft beers, from mainstream cocktails to an entire menu devoted solely to the legendary White Russian that the film made famous. The bartenders get creative with drinks such as El Duderino, Jack Treehorn, Green Toe, and The Other Jeffrey Lebowski – all named after characters or scenes in the film. Be on the lookout for the ‘White Russian of the Month’ specials.

The Comeback Kid
Although The Big Lebowski was not initially well received by critics or the public when it first came out, times and attitudes have changed. Now, twenty-one years later, the film has developed something of a cult following and a new, younger audience is finding resonance.

In keeping with the main character’s laid back, down home personality, Lebowski Bar is a ‘come as you are’ place to unwind and relax from the rigours of life. The Dude would approve. -EMV

Lebowski Bar
20a Laugavegur, 101 Reykjavík
+354 552 2300
www.lebowskibar.is
info@lebowskibar.is

Ye ah Man, The Dude Abides

At Downtown Reykjavík’s Lebowski Bar

Lebowski Bar
20a Laugavegur, 101 Reykjavík
+354 552 2300
www.lebowskibar.is
info@lebowskibar.is

‘You Sexy Thing’ refers to one of Lebowski Bar’s signature milkshakes.

* Refers to one of Lebowski Bar’s signature milkshakes, named ‘You Sexy Thing’.
64° Reykjavík Distillery: Quality Crafted Spirits

An independent distillery with unique spirits and liqueurs

64° Reykjavík 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.

Reykjavík Distillery’s Einiberja (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° Reykjavík Distillery spirits, to design fantastic cocktails.

- JG

Reykjavík Distillery
+354 695 1008
info@reykjavikdistillery.is
www.reykjavikdistillery.is

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

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

The Woman’s Touch
For her part, Soffía, who has worked under Palli’s tutelage for several years, has created a line of beautiful professional kitchen knives and 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.

Custom-made
Should you have your own design ideas or materials that you would like to use, Palli and Soffía are happy to work with you to produce a custom knife made to your specifications. More information can be found at their websites listed below where you can browse their collections and even special order online.

Walk-ins Welcome
Palli and Soffía’s workshop can be found at Álafossvegur 29, 270 Mosfellsbær. Opening hours are 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 stop in for a chat.

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

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, Snorralög in Reykholt, at Rammagerðin at the Keflavík International Airport, and directly from Guðrún. More information can be found on Facebook: Arkart-leatherdesign.
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
It’s an elegant hotel, located in what can be perhaps called the most quintessential neighbourhood of Þingholt, with its quiet streets and quaint 19th century timber and corrugated iron clad houses. Since its opening in 1965, the 4-star hotel has attracted many of Reykjavík’s artistic, social and political vanguard, and continues this tradition by supporting local artists and events as a part of its ongoing mission.

A permanent art collection
The hotel houses the largest privately owned art collection in Iceland and features numerous works by several of Iceland’s most cherished late 19th century and early 20th century artists—Johannes Kjarval, Jón Stefánsson, and Ásmundur Sveinsson along with works by notable women artists of the same period—Kristín Jónsdóttir, Gerður Helgadóttir and Júlíana Sveinnsdóttir. The walls of 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. Nearly 500 works of art are scattered throughout the hotel and are numbered and catalogued for easy reference. Hotel guests, as well as restaurant patrons are invited to book a guided tour (known as The Art Walk) of the ground floor art collection.

The Geode Effect
As with many Icelandic buildings, Hotel Holt’s façade belies its rich interior; marble floors and gilded antiques grace the hotel lobby. The events hall contains brilliant works including three impressive bronze sculptures by Jón Benediktsson which were commissioned for the hotel in commemoration of the return of the Saga manuscripts to Iceland from Denmark in 1971. The adjoining “Kjarval stofa” (or Kjarval’s living room) is a wonderfully quirky room where an early Kjarval black and white sketch from his studio that covers the walls from floor to ceiling.

The lay of the land
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 it goes without saying—comfortable beds throughout. Standard rooms are cozy and comfortable and then there are 4 spacious suites and 8 junior suites, all with king size beds. Fourth floor rooms are all equipped with balconies where you can enjoy fabulous views of the city beyond.

The Holt Bar
The plush armchairs are upholstered in rich, tawny leather; the portraits on the walls are pure Kjarval—delightful and playful. Taking centre stage, an imposing stone fireplace, lit every evening, makes this possibly the coziest... and the classiest bar in Reykjavík. Behind the counter, an impressive collection of craft beers, wines and spirits stand ready to liven things up. Tempting snacks, amuse-bouches and fish of the day are also available at the bar.

Where the visual arts meet the culinary arts
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, known for its classical cuisine incorporates Icelandic culinary creativity into its distinguished menu. 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 17 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 greets your eye as you enter the room.

The Old Library
Relax in the old library with its beautifully preserved collection of leather bound volumes including Icelandic poetry, the Sagas and even a Bible from 1728. Hotel Holt is located in Bergstaðastræti 37, five minutes’ walk from the main streets of Laugavegur and Skólahverfisgata and within easy walking distance to Hallgrímskirkja Church and the Old Harbour area.

-EMV

The Quiet Elegance of Hotel Holt
A Hotel of Distinction

Hotel Holt
Regístratun: 02.10.2010
Tel: +354 552 2300
www.holt.is
holt@holt.is

Hotel Holt is located in Bergstaðastræti 37, five minutes’ walk from the main streets of Laugavegur and Skólahverfisgata and within easy walking distance to Hallgrímskirkja Church and the Old Harbour area.

-EMV
The World’s Most Exclusive Watchmaker

Iceland used to be known as “Europe’s Smoke Screen” 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 God. 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 All-Icelandic Wool Shop

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

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

We wear a volcanic ash

Iceland’s watches 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.

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 God. 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.

From home to market

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

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 shop 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. JK knitting is your hobby, there is a world of warm designs just waiting for you.

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

Visitors can have their purchases shipped to them and they can also order from the website. That includes the patterns, wool, needles and accessories, not just the clothing.
Iceland 4x4 Car Rental

We Specialise In Your Adventure

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 jeeps 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? How about you explore the “wilds” of your own backyard? Set your eyes instead to the horizon amidst 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.

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www.icelandictimes.com
The Sea Baron is a harbourside restaurant that serves up some of the freshest fish in Reykjavík, in a cozy atmosphere. The restaurant features a simple menu of their signature dishes—lobster soup and grilled fish on spears. Guests can enjoy shrimp (king prawn), scallops, salmon, blue ling, tusk, redfish, sea trout, halibut, whale steaks, whale samples, vegetable skewers and potato skewers, among other dishes. This local eatery is a favorite among tourists and locals alike!

A Rich History
The Sea Baron was founded by a former fisherman and Coast Guard chef, Kjartan Halldórsson, whose nickname was the Sea Baron. Kjartan honed his skills for years, creating an array of dishes, including his lobster soup. His recipe gained fame around the world, earning it the title of ‘the world’s greatest lobster soup’. He loved to experiment with food and took old recipes to make meals that have established his reputation around the world. While Kjartan passed away a few years ago, his legacy continues under the current owners, married couple Elísabet and Daði, who shared with Kjartan a passion for quality food, fresh ingredients and top-notch service.

An Authentic Seafaring Experience
The Sea Baron is popular with local fishermen who sailed for many years from Reykjavik as it is filled with memorabilia donated by old sea captains and their families that fill it with a character all its own. The decor includes handmade model sailing boats, pictures of ships of the past and stuffed birds, which fill the second floor’s walls. While enjoying your food at the polished tables, cushioned fish barrels and seafaring decor, the Sea Baron is an authentic experience leaving you with treasured memories of your trip to Iceland and a satisfied appetite.

An Authentic Seafood Experience
The Sea Baron serves outstanding fish meals

An Ecclectic Array of Food
In addition to fresh fish on skewers and lobster soup, the Sea Baron offers some local delicacies for the brave to sample, such as whale steaks, shark, and brennivín, which are served everyday. Shark samples are tiny mouth-sized pieces (not a full meal) and a shot of brennivín is available upon request. For those after something unique during the Christmas season, Skata (fermented skate) is served the first Saturday of December and then everyday between Dec 17-Dec 23.

Seafood lovers cannot go wrong at the Sea Baron, whether it’s for fresh cod or salmon on skewers, a bowl of scrumptious lobster soup, or more specialty cuisine like fermented fish. Stop by the Sea Baron on your next trip to Reykjavík! -JG

Reykjavík’s Thermal Pools

Thermal pools and baths in Reykjavik are a source of health, relaxation and pureness. All of the city’s swimming pools have several hot tubs with temperatures ranging from 37˚ to 42˚C (98˚–111˚F). The pools are kept at an average temperature of 29˚C (84˚F)

Admission
Adults 1000 isk. Children 160 isk.

www.icelandictimes.com
Isortoq: Stefán the reindeer farmer

The biography of Stefán Hrafn Magnússon in South-Greenland

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sortoq: Stefán the reindeer farmer is the biography of the Icelander, Stefán Hrafn Magnússon, by the Icelandic journalist and writer Svava Jónsdóttir. Stefán has lived a truly adventurous life. He spent all the summers during his childhood and teenage years at his grandparents’ farm in West Iceland. His dream was to become a farmer and his interests were, among others, the stories of explorers. He wanted to experience what they had experienced. In his mind, the Arctic was an adventure; the Arctic is where the Northern Lights, the Aurora Borealis, reign on winter nights.

At 15 years of age, Stefán went to Greenland for the first time – alone – and, over the next years, he went there several times and got to know the country that, at the time, was decades behind compared to the living standards in Iceland. After Stefán graduated as an agromomist, he moved to Norway at 19 years old to work as a reindeer herder for the Sami people in an environment where you could imagine that time had stood still for centuries. He worked at a cattle ranch in Canada and he studied reindeer husbandry in Sweden, where he also worked as a reindeer herder. Then he moved to Alaska where he taught reindeer herding and horsemanship and worked as a reindeer herding advisor. His life was like that of a cowboy in the movies.

Stefán then moved to Greenland and, for the past 30 years or so, he has been a reindeer herder on a huge piece of land in South-Greenland. His farm is called Isortussua (meaning ‘Great muddy water’ – referring to the glacial silt carried down from the bottom of the glacier in Greenland). The Greenland ice sheet can be seen from his farm and is within 5 km walking distance. A few years ago, an Icelandic angling company built a luxurious camp on his land in cooperation with Stefán, where people from all over the world come to hunt, fish or hike. From mid-August one can admire the Northern Lights and, considering the clear cloud-free nights in South Greenland, the probability of experiencing the Northern Lights is very high. Since the nearest town is 100km away, there is absolutely no city light contamination.

In the book, Stefán tells about his life before and after he moved to Greenland, his adventurous life, the challenges, the accidents, the animals, the nature, the global warming that affects his business and, of course, he talks about Iceland. Stefán’s story is unique. It’s the story of a man who followed his dreams and who is still living his dreams today. It’s a unique life for a modern man in the West – a story that Stefán and the author would like people across the world to hear. Who knows – perhaps publishers in other countries would be interested in publishing the story of this extraordinary Icelandic adventurer.
Reykjavík’s culinary charm is quite impressive for a small city, with a growing number of choices to suit all tastes. While there are traditional Icelandic restaurants serving fresh fish and tender lamb dishes, there are also fantastic restaurants specialising in food that you may not expect to see in Iceland. For instance, Krua Thai features classic and inventive Thai food in Reykjavík.

Impressive Menu

Quality ingredients, friendly service and a comfortable environment make Krua Thai a favourite among locals and travellers. The menus feature many of the staples you expect to see such as savoury spring rolls, tasty rice and noodle dishes, and glorious plates of Pad Thai. Main courses include delicious options like Pad Grapow, which is a fried dish with chilli and basil leaf in oyster sauce, served with rice and either chicken, pork, beef or lamb. There are also soups and salads on the menu. There is truly something for everyone.

Vegetarian-friendly dining

Non-meat eaters will feel more than welcome as Krua Thai has a large vegetarian section that is big on flavour. For instance, guests can enjoy vegetable noodle and rice dishes, as well as fried vegetables with tofu in oyster sauce, and a spicy vya salad served with rice.

Central location

Krua Thai at Skólavörðustíg 21a, is conveniently located in the heart of city centre, and is a delightful location for a meal. It has a cozy atmosphere and friendly staff who are eager to ensure you have an ideal dining experience. It’s the perfect place for a meal after some time exploring museums, shops, and cafes in the trendiest and liveliest part of Reykjavík. If you want to spend the evening in at your hotel or guesthouse, you can order food to take away, and with delivery. Delivery is available daily until 21:00. -JG

Krua Thai
Skólavörðustíg 21a, Reykjavík 101
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A Taste of Thai

Krua Thai serves an enticing cuisine in the heart of the capital city.
To our tourists, culture and business issue 43 • 2019

www.icelandictimes.com

Winter Tours

Reykjavík Excursions:

W kurios to the Northern Lights, Reykjavík Excursions’ South Shore catch a glimpse of the beautiful auroras.

colour and intensity, delighting all those offers an array of exciting winter tours, often look like they are putting on a show just for your pleasure. The green lights flicker and dance in the sky, changing colour and intensity, delighting all those who get a glimpse of the mysterious phenomenon. Reykjavík Excursions offers an array of winter tours, including a guided Northern Lights hunt from mid-September to mid-April, where a guide will drive you to the best areas to catch a glimpse of the beautiful auroras.

Spectacular South Shore Adventure

Reykjavík Excursions’ South Shore Adventure is the ideal tour for nature lovers interested in Iceland’s unique beauty. An experienced guide will take you along the south coast of Iceland, one of Iceland’s most scenic and popular regions, as far as the charming village of Vik, which is surrounded by steep, beautiful bird cliffs.

Along the way, there are stops at the breath-taking Seljalandsfoss, where you can have the unique experience of walking behind a waterfall, seeing through it like a curtain. The jaw-dropping and much-photographed Skógafoss waterfall, with its impressive 60-metre drop is another stop along the tour, along with the Reynisfjara black sand beach. The 10-hour tour, which is available all year, also provides stunning views of glaciers, the black sand coastline and impressive rock formations. If you would like to have an extended south coast tour, Reykjavík Excursions offers a tour that includes some of the above sites as well as a stop at the gorgeous Jökulsárlón Glacier Lagoon.

The classic Golden Circle

If you ask a local which tour you should take if you want a taste of Iceland, they will most likely say the Golden Circle tour. Encompassing the three most commonly visited sights in the South, the Golden Circle gives you a view of Iceland’s bubbling geothermal activity at Geysir and the roaring, powerful waterfall at Gullfoss. The sights are postcard perfect, especially in the soft winter light. Visitors will get a slice of Icelandic history at Þingvellir, often referred to as the site of the world’s oldest parliament. However, geology buffs will be awed to see the craggy mid-Atlantic fault line that passes through Pingvellir. You can literally plant one foot on Europe and the other on North America.

The Reykjavík Excursions’ tour also includes a visit to the popular Friðheimar greenhouse cultivation centre, where visitors can learn about delicious, pesticide-free tomatoes that are grown with the aid of the geothermal heat. It’s a fascinating and tasty stop, as guests are regularly given samples.

A Memorable Experience

Whether you are seeking a glimpse of the majestic Northern Lights or would rather enjoy a visit to the famous Blue Lagoon, which includes transportation and entrance, be sure to check out tours offered by Reykjavík Excursions. The company also operates the Flybus, which brings you to and from your flights at Keflavik International Airport. Their dedicated team, from customer service representatives to tour guides, is committed to making your trip seamless and unforgettable. -JG

Experience the warm, rich flavours of Nepal at Himalayan Spice

Himalayan Spice is a Nepalese restaurant in downtown Reykjavik that serves a mix of foods based on Nepal’s cultural diversity and geography. The bright and inviting restaurant opened in 2018 and has quickly become a favourite of many locals and tourists alike. As the only Nepalese restaurant in Reykjavík, Himalayan Spice adds greatly to the diversity and flavour of the food scene in the capital city.

An authentic experience

The way the meals are prepared and served at Himalayan Spice is completely traditional and the staff take great pride in keeping the food and the atmosphere of the restaurant authentic to Nepalese culture. Nepalese food comprises a variety of cuisines due to the more than 26 different ethnic groups who inhabit the country. The key for Himalayan Spice is to use a wide variety of organic spices and fresh ingredients that make their meals healthy and delicious.

Himalayan Spice’s menu offers a diverse array of dishes that will satisfy your palate. While perusing the menu, you may be hard-pressed to decide what to order as the options are plentiful, for meat-eaters as well as vegetarians. Guests can choose from the extensive Tandoori section, choosing from lamb, chicken, salmon, or a mix of meats that were tenderly charred in the restaurant’s Tandoori oven. Other delicious options include chicken tikka masala, a host of curry dishes, chicken chow mein, and Himalayan noodle soups. One of the most popular entrees on the menu are the momos—bite-sized dumplings made with either lamb, chicken, or vegetables. The dumplings are either fried or steamed and are served with Himalayan chutney.

A unique dining experience

Himalayan Spice and its style are a completely new and different concept in the city of Reykjavik. The staff want to do more than serve their customers quality food, they want guests to savour the richness of the spices and the uniqueness of the flavours. The owners are also committed to keeping prices on the lower end to ensure that guests can have a delicious, yet affordable, meal in the heart of Reykjavik. -JG
Anne Helen, owner of ‘The Little Christmas Shop’ on Laugavegur, 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 handiwork 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.
Special Tours: Wildlife Adventures

Special Tours have over 20 years of experience in providing a great variety of wildlife adventures at sea from Reykjavík. The company offers a wide selection of whale watching tours that are operated year-round as well as puffin and sea angling tours in the summer and the original Northern Lights by Boat tours in winter. Special Tours focus on providing comfort and exceptional service while ensuring they protect and respect the environment. Having a highly skilled and friendly crew as well as an experienced guide on every tour is sure to make for memorable experiences.

Northern Lights by boat
Special Tours were the first company to offer the popular Northern Lights by Boat tours in Iceland. Hunting for the Northern Lights from the sea is an amazing experience. Sailing from the old harbour in Reykjavík to watch the aurora borealis dancing in the sky is something you’ll never forget! Special Tours are known amongst passengers and partners for its ambitious and hardworking team, aiming for great adventures on each tour and for every client. They go the extra mile!

Special Tours App
In 2020, Special Tours will be publishing a free multilingual app in five languages—English, Mandarin, Spanish, French and German. The app will have all the information you need for your Northern Lights by Boat, Whale Watching or Puffin Watching tour with Special Tours. The app will include detailed information about everything you may expect to see on your tour such as whales, Northern Lights or birdlife.

Whales of Iceland
For something special on land, Special Tours’ sister company, the Whales of Iceland Exhibition, displays 23 life-size whale models, multiple interactive information displays and videos, including soothing whale sounds and underwater ambient lighting. Whales of Iceland is a dreamy adventure for the whole family. Please note that when traveling with Special Tours, you receive a discount on admission. Please look out for your Whales of Iceland add on when booking your tour. -JG

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Ægisgarður 13, 101 Reykjavík
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Radisson Blu Saga Hotel
ENJOY AN IDEAL STAY AT THIS CONTEMPORARY 4-STAR HOTEL

Radisson Blu Saga Hotel is a modern four-star hotel, close to the National Museum, National Library and University of Iceland. The hotel is perfectly located in a quiet and easily accessible neighbourhood, only a few minutes from the picturesque Reykjavík pond and the bustling city centre, with its great variety of restaurants, cafés, and shops.

Radisson Blu Saga has been known as one of the key hotels in Reykjavík for decades, offering quality accommodation, business-friendly meeting rooms, wireless Internet access, and room service. Two on-site restaurants provide you with a good range of food choices. A casual restaurant where you can enjoy a range of local and international dishes, Mimir Restaurant is a vibrant eatery located on the first floor of the hotel, that cooperates with local Icelandic farmers who source the best seasonal ingredients directly from the Icelandic nature. Alternatively, you could dine at Grillid, an elegant top-floor restaurant, which has long been one of Reykjavík’s finest and famous for its beautiful panoramic views over the capital city.

The hotel is ideal for conferences and meetings and Radisson Blu offers state-of-the-art facilities, making the hotel suitable for all types of events. Other facilities include a fitness centre open 24/7, a hair and beauty salon, a butcher shop and complimentary parking around the hotel. -JG

Urta Islandica
A LITTLE TASTE OF ICELAND

Iceland is one of the world’s purest countries. Its unique nature is not only beautiful but also tasty. Urta Islandica has managed to capture the nature at its best and found a way to harvest and preserve it in beautiful artisan herbal salts, teas, syrups & jams. The herbs and berries grow wild around Iceland and are handpicked every year. Urta Islandica has used old wisdom of folktales and innovated to create many of its products.

Behind Urta Islandica is a family who want to utilise and share their knowledge of the pure Icelandic nature. The Urta family company is based in Hafnarfjörður and Keflavík’s Unesco Global GeoPark where creation and packing takes place.

Urta Islandica uses pure organic Icelandic sea salt to create various flavours to complement food, but the salt is marinated or blended with Icelandic herbs and berries. For instance, their famous Black Lava salt is the perfect finish to all dishes. The Red Lava salt goes very well on everything that needs just a little taste of Iceland, especially roast chicken or French fries and you will love the Kelp and Garlic salt on baked potatoes or bread with butter. The Blueberry and Liquorice salts have been used to pep up cocktails and desserts.

Urta Islandica’s herbal tea line is impressive with teas including Birch, Arctic Thyme and their famous 100% Bilberry tea, but they are packed into teabags for daily use. If you enjoy sweets, you will love Urta’s range of syrups all made with organic sugar and wild harvested herbs and berries like crowberry, thubarb, birch, and rowanberry. If you are looking for a tasty jam, it will be difficult to pick just one. Try their Traditional Caramelized Rhubarb jam, along with the divine Wild Blueberry and Red Currant jams, especially as a topping on their unique Black Lava Crackers which are made from Icelandic barley and herbs.

There are so many ways to incorporate these delightful gourmet products into food and drinks. For a simple treat, consider the delicious syrups for homemade almond creations, mixed with Birch syrup and Arctic blend salt. These can be made into all sorts of cocktails, both alcoholic and non-alcoholic. For instance, an easy non-alcoholic cocktail is made with Arctic Thyme syrup, with soda water and lime.

All products are handmade and hand packed. They can be purchased online, at Urta Islandica’s shops and in shops around Iceland. Urta Islandica also offers customised labels for all kinds of occasions; company meetings or weddings. It’s the perfect food souvenir or a gift from Iceland.
The story of LYSI is one of vision and innovation. In 1938, two Icelandic brothers formed LYSI as a small cod liver oil producer. The demand for lýsi – cod liver oil – was already high in Iceland, due to the need for vitamins A and D. LYSI began by offering the oil to Icelanders at home. During World War II, LYSI began exporting to the US and UK. As research into the benefits of omega-3 fatty acids increased, the demand for LYSI’s products continued to rise. The company placed research and product development at its forefront and has since grown considerably. Today, LYSI offers a suite of fish oil and Wide range of products

LYSI has recently introduced ‘Lýsi Life’, a line of products that combine an omega-3 base with other functional supplements; a focus on the brain, heart, skin, joints, eyes, bones and pregnancy, along with the fundamental liquid cod liver oil. The products include active ingredients such as antioxidants, marine collagen, calcium, folate and hyaluronic acid. Packed with omega-3 fatty acids, LYSI’s cod liver oil is key to development and unlocks the potential of the brain, the central nervous system, and the immune system. Vitamin D is essential to build strong, dense bones, while contributing greatly to an optimal immune system. LYSI will continue launching their series of novel health products to fit all diet and nutritional needs in early 2020.

Impressive technology & facilities
LYSI continues to invest in its operation to ensure the highest quality products, opening advanced production plants in 2005 and 2012, as well as an expert in-house laboratory. With the latest technology, the LYSI production process meets consumer demands for high purity products. The processes have been specifically designed to minimize the oxidation of the oil and to remove taste and smell in the final product by natural means. Quality is a vital factor in LYSI’s business.

Strong values & social responsibility
LYSI is committed to sustainability, with core values that reflect social responsibility. The company’s ethos is in the spirit of sustainability and respect for nature, exploiting the whole raw material in its entirety and throwing nothing away. Thus, LYSI makes by-products from the remainders of the primary production, creating value out of every part. LYSI uses energy from renewable resources – geothermal and hydropower – while guaranteeing effective waste management and maximizing the raw materials used within production. LYSI has also invested in plastic recycling, and the company is committed to these operations.

Trusted brand at home & abroad
LYSI has been a recognised part of the Icelandic market for decades, making it a well-established and trusted brand. In fact, it’s a tradition for every Icelander to take cod liver oil from childhood. The brand extends abroad as well, as its health benefits are well known worldwide. As global demand continues for LYSI products, the company has extended its e-commerce operation to ensure the highest quality products, opening advanced production plants in 2005 and 2012, as well as an expert in-house laboratory. With the latest technology, the LYSI production process meets consumer demands for high purity products. The processes have been specifically designed to minimize the oxidation of the oil and to remove taste and smell in the final product by natural means. Quality is a vital factor in LYSI’s business.

The products can be purchased online at www.lysi-life.is

Bringing the healthy living of Iceland to the world

The influence of the Icelandic nature

A nna María Sveinbjörnsdóttir is an Icelandic jeweller and designer who runs her own jewellery store, Anna Maria Design, on one of the main shopping streets in the city, Skólavörðustígur 3, in the heart of Reykjavík. Anna Maria studied both in Iceland and Denmark and has run her own company for more than three decades. Anna Maria’s design is pure, timeless and modern at the same time. She stresses exceptional attention to detail and craftsmanship and has eye for the smallest detail.

The jewellery is both for women and men and encompasses silver, gold, white gold, Icelandic stones as well as precious stones like diamonds. In the store, you can find one of the biggest selections of jewellery with Icelandic stones in the country like Agate, Moss-agate, Jasper, Basalt and Lava.

When it comes to emphasis and style, Anna Maria mentions free and organic forms based on the Icelandic nature. Iceland is surrounded by the Atlantic Ocean and its waves inspire the jeweller and much of her jewellery where you can see the forms of the waves on rings, necklaces, bracelets or ear-rings.

Filigree represents a delicate form of jewellery metalwork usually made in silver and is well known regarding the traditional Icelandic women’s costume. In some of Anna Maria’s designs you can find this extraordinary delicate work, which reminds one of the Icelandic heritage.

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Anna María’s designs you can find this Icelandic women’s costume. In some of Anna María’s designs you can find this Icelandic women’s costume. In some of Anna María’s designs you can find this Icelandic women’s costume. In some of Anna María’s designs you can find this Icelandic women’s costume. In some of Anna María’s designs you can find this Icelandic women’s costume. In some of Anna María’s designs you can find this Icelandic women’s costume. In some of Anna María’s designs you can find this Icelandic women’s costume. In some of Anna María’s designs you can find this Icelandic women’s costume.
Fur store and workshop

Feldur is a family-run fur brand that specializes in the design of high-quality fur products. The shop and workshop is located in the heart of Reykjavík where you will find a wide selection of our fur products. Inside you can also see the furrier at work, altering and repairing old fur garments giving them a new life and style. “We believe in the quality and durability of fur as a material that can last a lifetime”.

- **Feldur**
  - Tel: +354 588 0488
  - Mail: feldur@feldur.is
  - Address: Snorrabraut 56 - 105 Reykjavik

**Fur store and workshop**

- **Feldur**
  - Tel: +354 588 0488
  - Mail: feldur@feldur.is
  - Address: Snorrabraut 56 - 105 Reykjavik
Dine at Elegant Bambus Chinese Restaurant

Located in the heart of the financial district, Bambus offers authentic Chinese cuisine.

Iceland is a dream destination for travellers, as you spend your days surveying the gorgeous landscapes of vast glaciers, bubbling geysers and towering mountains. After a full day of sightseeing, you will want to relax over dinner and enjoy the company of your fellow travellers. Bambus Restaurant in Reykjavík is Iceland’s largest Chinese restaurant, catering to both Asian and Western guests. Bambus serves Asian fusion cuisine and is located near Reykjavík’s business district.

An inventive menu with classic flavours

As the number of Asian travellers to Iceland increases, Bambus Chinese Restaurant has become a must when visiting the capital city. The restaurant owners have built up quite a reputation in the financial district in Reykjavík for excellent Chinese cuisine, and are committed to maintaining the highest standards. The dishes feature fresh ingredients with a contemporary flair. The food is in the hands of top chefs who bring their vast experience from Europe and Asia to Bambus’ kitchen. You will find Icelandic-inspired dishes like steamed Icelandic langoustines with garlic and butter to taste of Iceland.

Set Your Sights on Shopping

Before leaving Iceland, you will of course want to spend a little time shopping for gifts for friends and family back home. Borg Gallery is an independent high end store focused on fashion and everyday luxury lifestyle, offering the finest quality of both men’s and women’s fashion, accessories, outdoor clothing, skincare and health products. You will find local brands like 66° North, Feltur, and Tílupar, as well as international wares from designers you know and love like Ugg, Ecco, and Holzweiler.

When you’re travelling to Reykjavík be sure to stop by Bambus Asian Cuisine for unique and delicious food is in the hands of top chefs who bring their vast experience from Europe and Asia to Bambus’ kitchen.

ICELANDIC TIMES

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www.icelandictimes.com
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.

A PIONEER

Biologist Eyjólfur Fríðgeirsson 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 Islensk Hollusta, aiming at the use of natural Icelandic products in their own taste and freshness. Eyjólfur is a pioneer in his field in Iceland. He was the first one to revive the idea of using seaweed as a dried snack. The country is rich in natural resources when it comes to nutrient. His task was to reawaken folk knowledge about how to harness these gifts of the earth. The idea proved to be a success, and today his knowledge about how to harness these gifts of the earth. The idea proved to be a success, and today his knowledge about how to harness these gifts of the earth. The idea proved to be a success, and today his knowledge about how to harness these gifts of the earth. The idea proved to be a success, and today his knowledge about how to harness these gifts of the earth.

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 nutritious food. By adding seaweed to your daily diet, you can be sure that you are consuming a rich bath salt, or treat yourself with Icelandic Herbal. Homemade sauces, juices and jams made from traditional materials are a treat. Pamper your body with traditional Icelandic products in their own taste and freshness. Islensk Hollusta is an excellent contribution to your cuisine and a perfect gift.

Iceland. Spiced Salt (a seasoned salt made according to ancient materials) is a kind of salt made from unspoiled Icelandic waters. 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 nutritious food. By adding seaweed to your daily diet, you can be sure that you are consuming a rich bath salt, or treat yourself with Icelandic Herbal. Homemade sauces, juices and jams made from traditional materials are a treat. Pamper your body with traditional Icelandic products in their own taste and freshness. Islensk Hollusta is an excellent contribution to your cuisine and a perfect gift.

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The Blue Lagoon's Home Town

Grindavík

20 minutes from Keflavík International Airport and 40 minutes from downtown Reykjavík, the village lies just beyond the mountains that serve as a backdrop to the Blue Lagoon. Who knew? Drive past the large fishing port, between the mountains and in just 5 minutes or less, you have arrived in Grindavík!

Hiding in plain sight

If you love exploring new places and especially those little advertised spots that you had no idea even existed, the fishing town of Grindavík is for you. Located just 20 minutes from Keflavík International Airport and 40 minutes from downtown Reykjavík, the village lies just beyond the mountains that serve as a backdrop to the Blue Lagoon. Who knew? Drive past the large fishing port, between the mountains and in just 5 minutes or less, you have arrived in Grindavík!

The Blue Lagoon's Home Town

Despite its small town feel, Grindavík boasts a relatively large population of just over 3000 inhabitants, many of whom can be found working in the fishing industry in one capacity or another. The large fishing harbour is second only to Reykjavík. Here visitors can witness the fish being landed on the docks and sample fresh fish dishes served up by the many fine restaurants that take full advantage of their proximity to the ocean.

Reykjanes UNESCO Global Geopark

Besides the obvious advantage of having the Blue Lagoon right on it’s doorstep, Grindavík is also perfectly situated for those who come to the Reykjanes Peninsula to witness the geothermal and volcanic activity that the area is known for. Designed a UNESCO Global Geopark in 2015, the peninsula is home to many important geological formations, many of which can be found nowhere else in the world. With 55 geosites to visit, there is something to suit every budget—from food trucks and fast food joints to high-end fine dining establishments. The local supermarket is well stocked with everything you’ll need for doing a spot of home cooking. Relax in the town’s geothermal pool, send postcards from home while exploring the Reykjanes Peninsula.

Home base Grindavík

It goes without saying that Grindavík offers visitors a variety of options for accommodation—from modern camping facilities, to cozy guesthouses and quiet hotels. For eating out, there is something to suit every budget—from food trucks and fast food joints to high-end fine dining establishments. The local supermarket is well stocked with everything you’ll need for doing a spot of home cooking. Relax in the town’s geothermal pool, send postcards from home while exploring the Reykjanes Peninsula.

All in all, Grindavík makes for an attractive and convenient home away from home while exploring the Reykjanes Peninsula.
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 Rauðsgil, which originates in what was 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 Reykjavík, 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 Centre to get a taste of Iceland’s most notable historical sites, you can stop at the Icelandic Goat Centre before visiting Snorrastofa, dedicated to Snorri Sturluson, one of the most famous and important figures in Icelandic literature. Snorri penned the Edda, Egils Saga, and Heimskringla before his death in 1241. There is so much to see and do in West Iceland and Krauma is perfectly positioned.

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.

-KG
Langjökull

A couple of hours from Reykjavik is the mystical Langjökull – ‘Long Glacier’ – Iceland’s second largest glacier. It covers an area of about 950km² and rises to between 1200-1300m above sea level. It rests on a massif of Hydlochatte Mountains formed under ice and water. The south-western part of the ice cap is called Geitlandsjökull – ‘Glacier land of goats’ – which rises to an elevation of 1400 metres. To the south of Geitlandsjökull and separated from the main ice cap, is the smaller 1350m high Þórisjökull. According to legend, it was named after Þórir, the troll who lived in a green valley in the pass between the two glaciers. Until recently, what lay beneath the surface of the Langjökull glacier had been a mystery, known only to a small group of scientists and glaciologists.

The magnificent ‘Blue Ice’
In 2010, daring pioneers had a vision – ‘Parliamentary Fields’ – or the capital, Reykjavik – ‘Smoky Bay’. Their mission was to see the magnificent ‘Blue Ice’ which is buried deep beneath 1200-1300m above sea level. It rests on a massif of Hydlochatte Mountains formed under ice and water. The south-western part of the ice cap is called Geitlandsjökull – ‘Glacier land of goats’ – which rises to an elevation of 1400 metres. To the south of Geitlandsjökull and separated from the main ice cap, is the smaller 1350m high Þórisjökull. According to legend, it was named after Þórir, the troll who lived in a green valley in the pass between the two glaciers. Until recently, what lay beneath the surface of the Langjökull glacier had been a mystery, known only to a small group of scientists and glaciologists.

To make the journey inside one of Iceland’s frozen giants is truly a once-in-a-lifetime experience. To venture down the world’s largest man-made ice tunnel is surreal. Then there is driving a snowmobile across the surface of the glacier, which is amazing – and basically where the adventure began, as the locals really started exploring Langjökull 50 years ago when Neil Armstrong was walking on the Moon; ‘One small step for man, one giant leap for mankind’.

To venture onto the glacier on a snowmobile on a beautiful summer or winter day – which you can do twice a day, all year around; – with such a spectacular view, is really out of this world; almost like being on the moon and looking down on the Earth. Follow that with going inside the Glacier. Can it get better than that?

Where everything is ‘cool’
Everything is ‘cool’ about the journey into Langjökull Glacier as visitors travel in giant trucks from the days of the Cold War, when they served as NATO missile launch pads aimed at the Soviet army. It’s ‘cool’, whether you make the journey from nearby Húsafell – ‘Ridge of Houses’, the National Park, Pingvellir – ‘Parliamentary Fields’ – or the capital, Reykjavik – ‘Smoky Bay’.

There are daily tours out of Reykjavik towards the glacier through the beautiful Lava Field, with its extravagant waterfalls created out of the lava, and Europe’s most powerful hot spring, Deildartunguhver – (translation impossible) – which provides 180 litres/sec of 100° hot water!

World’s first monument to an ex-glacier
We live in the days of global warming and just recently, it was discovered that the Ok glacier just west of Langjökull is Iceland’s first ‘ex-glacier’. This summer a monument was erected, the world’s first monument to a glacier that has fallen victim to climate change. Over the next 200 years, glaciologists expect all of Iceland’s 400 glaciers to disappear.

Iceland’s Mightiest Lava Cave
After the journey into the glaciers, there is Iceland’s mightiest and one of world’s largest Lava Caves, Víðgelmir – ‘Wide Elf’ – just shy of 1600 metres long with amazing features, including wonderful clava stalactites and stalagmites of amazing colours and formations, diversity and grandeur lurking in the depths of the Earth. In fact, Gelmir was the Elf of Nargarth, a character in Tolkien’s Silmarillion. Gelmir rode forth against Morgoth but was captured and slain. The Lava Field was formed during a destructive volcanic eruption in the 10th Century which originated from under Langjökull Glacier. The Lava Cave tour into Víðgelmir is family friendly, thanks to lighting and the new 300m walkway.

Spectacular landscape, rich history
Pingvellir is intrinsically part of Langjökull as the glacier’s underground streams feed the picturesque Pingvallavatn – ‘Lake Pingvellir’ – Iceland’s largest natural lake. At Pingvellir, nature is tearing Iceland apart in a spectacular way, on the borders of the European and American Tectonic Plates, strikingly seen in the landscape.

People simply love taking tours from Pingvellir over the rugged Highland Road of Kaldidalur – ‘Cold Valley’ – to the top of Langjökull at Klaki Base Camp by the ice cave. There are not many places in the world where you experience such breathtaking contrasts of majestic landscapes of Ice, lava and rich history. Pingvellir is the birthplace of the world’s first National Parliament and birthplace of Christianity in Iceland in the year 1,000 AD.
Leir 7 is a clay workshop and a gallery on Snæfellsnes. They are located in the old part of Borgarnes.

Engeblindagavík Restaurant is situated in the old part of Borgarnes. With northern shelter and a stunning view over the bay, you are sure you have an exquisite dining experience in this unique house.

Stykkishólmur Swimming Pool is located in the middle of town. It has a water slide, hot pots, a children’s pool and is a cold pot too.

The Volcano Museum is the collection of Dr. Haraldur Sigurðsson’s 40 years of studying and researching volcanoes and volcanic rocks all around the world, both on land and in the ocean floor.

The Icelandic Eider Center is a small museum on the ground floor of the Norwegian House. The Museum is dedicated to the education about eiders down farming then and now.

Sjávarborg Guesthouse is next door the Engeblindagavík Restaurant, another excellent vintage house but this one hosting a newly renovated guesthouse with a view to take your breath away.

Salmone is a beautiful country hotel in west Iceland, next to Hvítá glacial river. The hotel has free WiFi, laundry facilities and the hotel also has a wonderful restaurant highlighting local produce. kirjubóli 2, 320 Reykholti +354 430 3100 hotela@hotela.is

Hotel Glymur Restaurant offers traditional Icelandic food and international cuisine. The dining hall has an excellent view over Hvítáfjörður, making the dining experience astounding for all seasons.

HÍ is a beautiful country hotel in west Iceland, next to Hvítá glacial river. The hotel has free WiFi, laundry facilities and the hotel also has a wonderful restaurant highlighting local produce. kirjubóli 2, 320 Reykholti +354 430 3100 hotela@hotela.is

Krauma Spa gets its water from Europe’s most powerful hot spring called Deildartunguhver. The geothermal water is mixed with cold water from the glacier Ok to create the perfect spa temperatures.

Krauma Spa +354 555 6066 kraumaisa@krauma.is krauma.is/en/

Hótel Glymur is located in the gorgeous fjord just north of Reykholt. A hotel with everything you need for a wonderful country stay with a stunning view over Hvítáfjörður, the whale fjord.

Láki Tours is Grundarfjörður is just south of a huge Herring zone that attracts Orcas in big numbers when the season is right which makes whale watching from Grundarfjörður an excellent choice for Orca lovers.

Lakartours, Orcas are often seen yearly in the season, into early July. Sperm whales are most common between April to June. Late summer Pilot whales make themselves known, sometimes in big pods of hundreds together.

The Norweigian House was built in 1832 and was the first, full size 2 storesy wood-frame house in Iceland. The wood was imported from Norway hence the name of this building that now is a regional museum.

The north side of Grundarfjörður is a picturesque fishing village. The hotel has free WiFi, electricity.

The library of water is an installation art piece by Roni Horn consisting of huge glass tubes with water collected from different glaciers around Iceland. The art piece is found in the old library in Stykkishólmur.

The Icelandic Eider Center is a small museum on the ground floor of the Norwegian House. The Museum is dedicated to the education about eiders down farming then and now.

Engleblindagavík Restaurant is situated in the old part of Borgarnes. With northern shelter and a stunning view over the bay, you are sure you have an exquisite dining experience in this unique house.

Library of Water is an installation art piece by Roni Horn consisting of huge glass tubes with water collected from different glaciers around Iceland. The art piece is found in the old library in Stykkishólmur.

Litafjallsafn, is the collection of Dr. Haraldur Sigurðsson’s 40 years of studying and researching volcanoes and volcanic rocks all around the world, both on land and in the ocean floor.

SEATOURS operates two ships. One is the big ferry between Stykkishólmur and Westfjords with a stop in Flatey. The other is a fast catamaran which tours the different islands in Breiðafjörður.

The library of water is an installation art piece by Roni Horn consisting of huge glass tubes with water collected from different glaciers around Iceland. The art piece is found in the old library in Stykkishólmur.
Villimey

Top quality organic products made from unique selected Icelandic herbs

Villimey is an Icelandic organic herbal company based in the Westfjords, one of the most remote parts of Europe, where both nature and ocean are extremely pure. Its products are hand-picked and then hand-made from start to finish using top quality production processes.

All the products are 100 percent organic, containing specially selected Icelandic herbs. These are the healthiest herbs that are gathered in peak condition. Because of the climate, the herbs grow slowly, which makes them more effective.

Villimey has received an International Organic Certification. Independent Icelandic research shows, for example, that Villimey’s production of herbal salves and ointments meets the strictest requirements for hygiene and quality practices. Some Icelandic doctors, including plastic surgeons and other hospital staff such as at Burn Units, recommend the products.

Villimey’s products range from ointments for baby rash to sore joints and itchy feet as well as products that beautify skin and heal wounds.

No product is put on the market unless it has been tested and used for from four to five years.

Villimey ships all over the world. The company’s products will probably be sold in Taiwan and Russia in the near future.

Strandgata 44, 460 Tálknafjörður
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www.villimey.is/en/

Villimey ships all over the world. The company’s products will probably be sold in Taiwan and Russia in the near future.
The dozen inhabitants in 1786, clinging to the side of Eyjafjörður, Iceland’s longest fjord, probably never imagined their brave struggle would ultimately result in a town of almost 20,000 people with all the services of a major city.

Akureyri is not as big as any of the world’s cities but it provides all the features and services expected of a big city in a very compact form, so that everything is available within a short distance.

Take, for instance, winter activities like skiing. The family-friendly slopes are under 10 minutes from the airport and the hotels. Likewise, the horse riding tours, bird watching—to name a few—are all so close, you can almost touch them. You name it, it’s close by. The weather, with its combination of crisp, dry snow and Northern Lights, makes a holiday here memorable.

**Cultural Centre of the North**

When it comes to culture, Akureyri has it all: museums, art galleries, international exhibitions, conference facilities, music venues, music of all genres, theatre and cinemas showing the latest films. It has well over 20 restaurants, covering both Icelandic and international cuisine, with top chefs who create their own innovative cuisine. There is an abundance of cafés, each with their individual speciality.

For groups and individuals, Akureyri offers such a wide range of activities, events and opportunities, it maximises the time available. There are a multitude of tours covering every interest from flying to caving, from fishing to the Hidden People, walking to whale watching.

**Sports of all kinds**

Sport activities are very popular in the North and many sports are represented in this dynamic community. We have already mentioned the ski slopes, but other popular facilities are the big skating rink, football fields and recreational areas ideal for running, hiking and downhill biking.

The geothermally-heated swimming pools, with their hot pools, jacuzzi and awesome water slides are open—and very popular—all year round.

The Arctic Open Golf championship is played on the most northerly 18-hole course in the world, just outside the city under both snow-covered mountains and the midnight sun. You can hire clubs if you need them and relax in the club house afterwards.

**See the Sights**

Akureyri is also a service base for many of the most important tourist destinations in North Iceland. From here, you can visit Mývatn, Dettifoss—the most powerful waterfall in Europe, the islands of Hrísey, and Grímsey, straddling the Arctic Circle; see craters and boiling mud pools and, in fact, reach all the pearls of the North in under 2 hours. If you are planning your visit, then it’s recommended you check out the Arctic Coast Way with all its wonders. www.arcticcoastway.is.

**Easy Access**

Flights from Reykjavík airport take just 35 min. Scheduled buses drive twice a day between Reykjavík and Akureyri. The trip from Reykjavík to Akureyri takes about 6 hours, although in the summer time you can choose a longer route over the highlands if you wish to turn your trip into a journey rich with sights and natural beauty.

The city bus service is free in town. Every type of accommodation is on hand, from 4-star hotels to camp sites.
At the awesome GeoSea baths, set on top of Húsavíkurhöfði – ‘Húsavík Cliff’ – bathing guests view a majestic range of mountains to the west, old oak fishing boats silently sailing Skjálfandi Bay, the Puffin and Flatey Islands, the Arctic Circle on the Horizon and the serene town of Húsavík, with its majestic wooden Church. Húsavík, the whale watching capital of Europe, with its population of 2,500, is one of Iceland’s main tourist attractions. Simply magical and unmatched anywhere else.

Health benefits of GeaSea
The geothermal heat north of Húsavík has been well known to residents, who have used it for bathing and washing for centuries. Drilling for hot water at Húsavíkurhöfði in the mid-20th century revealed water that turned out to be hot seawater, too rich in minerals to be suitable for heating houses. Instead of letting the hot water go to waste, an old cheese barrel was installed at Húsavíkurhöfði. There, Húsavík residents could enjoy the health benefits of bathing in hot seawater. Many suffering from skin conditions such as psoriasis have found relief by bathing in the water, which is at an optimal temperature of 38°-39°C.

The bore holes provide purity
The water in the GeoSea baths comes from two bore holes, one located by the cheese barrel and the other by Húsavík harbour. There is no need to use any cleaning agents or equipment, as the steady flow of water from the bore holes, between the pools, over their edges and into the sea ensures that the water stays within the limits stipulated by health regulations.

The GeoSea sea baths enable guests to enjoy nature in a unique manner. Thanks to the underground heat, the seawater in the baths is warm and comfortable and the mineral-rich water caresses the skin. While warm sea works its miracles, guests enjoy the spectacular view and health benefits.
Mývatn is one of the most popular tourist destinations in the northeast, luring travellers with gorgeous hiking trails, rich birdlife, activities along Lake Mývatn, and the soothing Mývatn Nature Baths. The region has been shaped over time by punishing volcanic eruptions and it’s the ideal place to soak in the rugged landscape, with its vast lava fields, gigantic craters, and towering mountains.

Bathe Among Striking Nature
A perfect start to exploring the region is stopping by the Mývatn Nature Baths. The bathing experience is heavenly, as you soothe your skin and relax every square inch of your body. The views of the landscape are striking, with the volcanic crater of Hverfjall and the edge of Lake Mývatn in the background as well as nearby roaring waterfalls, volcanic craters, and black lava rock pillars.

A unique experience, great for your skin
The milky-blue water, which measures a deliciously warm 38°C, comes from the National Power Company’s borehole in Bjarnarflag. The water reaches a boiling temperature of 130°C when it arrives in the basin next to the lagoon, but it cools significantly before being filtered into the beautiful man-made hot spring. The bottom of the lagoon is covered by sand and contains a large quantity of minerals. Because of its chemical composition, vegetation and bacteria are not a problem. There is some sulphur in the water, which is beneficial for skin problems such as eczema and psoriasis, and the Nature Baths also have a natural steam bath that derives steam directly from the earth.

Numerous sightseeing opportunities
There is so much to see and do in the Mývatn region. After your time at the Nature Baths, jump into your rental car and discover Dimmuborgir, which comprises interesting rock formations jutting out of the ground, resembling a fort guarding an ancient city. The black lava pillars were born from a collapsed lava tube created by a large volcanic eruption more than 2,000 years ago. Also nearby are the Krafla lava fields, which are home to Víti, 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 hydrologic forces. 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 grey mud pools, make it look like a movie scene from another planet. A path loops around the region; be sure to stay on it for safety reasons, as the mud pools can reach temperatures of 100°C.

The Mývatn region is perfect for independent travellers who prefer to roam in their own time, and the Mývatn Nature Baths are simply a must when in the area. Experience the beauty of North Iceland and be sure to pre-book and stop by for one of the best bathing sites on the island. Mývatn Nature Baths is open all year round.

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**Mývatn Nature Baths**

**Jarðböðin við Mývatn, 660 Mývatn**

**+354 464 4411**

**info@jardbodin.is**

**www.myvattnaturebaths.is**

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**Bathe Among Striking Nature**

**Relax in the Mývatn Nature Baths’ geothermal waters**

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**Soak in the Amazing Scenery**

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**www.icelandictimes.com**

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GUIDE TO THE AREA AROUND LAKE MYVATN IN NORTH ICELAND

Follow us to find out about an educational program for children.

In 1997, the museum is also running four times during their schooling.

For innovative seafood, its positive service & sustainable farming. They also make their own ice cream. For the ice cream & restaurant they only use local produce when possible.

Voguland 4, 765 Djúpivogur

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+354 478 3882
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+354 861 3677
www.vikingcafe.is/coffehouse-and-accommodation/guesthouses/KF

VIÐ VOGINN is a cozy little restaurant in Djúpivogur in East Iceland. Every weekend they have home-cooked style lunches together with fish & chips, sausages and sandwiches. 34 outside and enjoy the view near the fjord.

Voguland 2, 765 Djúpivogur
+354 478 8860
brunhvikt@brunnholl.is
www.brunnholl.is

+354 464 1210
www.geosea.is

GEOSEA, Restaurant by the harbour in Húsavik, is an all year round family run restaurant in the centre of Seyðisfjörður. A family guesthouse with facilities for disabled and fully equipped kitchenette and bathroom. Everything is a walk away.

Austuravegur 18-20
765 Seyðisfjörður

hello@vok-baths.is
+354 470 9500
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+354 478 2577 – 892 0944
www.vok-baths.is

VÖK BATHS is in East Iceland is series of geothermally heated pools in the Unnstofa lake ("Trout lake"). They also have a restaurant, outdoor and indoor heated and open air and spa and a coffee shop. They always serve delicious sandwiches, suculent pancakes, cakes and waffles.

Vökgarðsleikhúsið, 765 Djúpivogur

rekibaths@rekibaths.is
+354 479 5007
www.rekibaths.is

HIÐKVATHLAUG is a small Hiking tour operator in East Iceland. They organise tours every month, all year round and their knowledge from hiking is second to none. They can cater for all ages and levels.

Wildboys.is

+354 777 5007
info@wildboys.is
www.wildboys.is

NORD MARINA GUESTHOUSE is located a walking distance from the most beautiful landcape of East Iceland. A perfect little guesthouse by the sea where you can sit and watch the views, you can stay in one of their rooms, cabins, apartments, cottages or big groups. They can cater to all visitors to East Iceland.

Sagatrail.is/en/museums/1997

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Vök Baths is an exciting new geothermal bathing facility where guests can enjoy two heated floating pools among the beautiful scenery of Lake Urriðavatn. Situated just 5 kilometres from Egilsstaðir, Vök Baths is an ideal place to relax while sightseeing in East Iceland. The brand new baths, completed in the summer of 2019, take their shape from the ice-free patches on the lake ice, created by the bubbling hot springs in the lake.

Harnessing the power of geothermal energy

There are many advantages to the Land of Fire and Ice, and one is the abundance of natural, renewable geothermal energy. The baths are gloriously warm, soothing your skin and muscles while you’re enjoying the pristine nature of the region. The pools, whose water is so clean and pure it has been certified as drinkable, are especially welcome to the area, as East Iceland is home to few hot springs, compared to other parts of Iceland.

Bathing facilities and changing rooms

In addition to the floating pools there are two on-shore hot pools, and an outdoor pool bar. A steam bath and cold tunnel equipped with a cool mist shower inside is just about completed. The indoor shower facilities and changing rooms are comfortable with nature-inspired designs. There are private showers and lockers to store your belongings while bathing. You can rent swimsuits and towels at the baths if you did not bring your own.

Enjoy an onsite café, restaurant and bar

Housed inside the facility, the café-restaurant offers a delicious array of soups, salads, cakes and fresh-baked bread. All ingredients are sourced locally, and chefs work closely with neighbouring farms for local, seasonal produce. The Infusion bar also serves an impressive selection of complimentary teas made from local herbs, brewed with the natural hot spring water.

Using the hot water from Lake Urriðavatn, Austri, the local brewery, produces a 4.5% Blond Kellerbier and a 4.5% Session IPA especially for Vök Baths from this special hot water. If you would like to enjoy a drink or two while bathing, there is a pool bar so you can relax with your drink while soaking in crystal clear waters surrounded by the unique Icelandic nature.

Strong commitment to the environment

The creators of Vök Baths have a deep respect for the environment and are committed to upholding excellent standards of sustainability in every aspect of their business. When it comes to maintaining the pools, the bar and restaurant facilities, employees make a determined effort to avoid all use and disposal of plastic, where possible, and packaging is organic and recyclable. Additionally, all the wood furniture and features at Vök are made from ethically sourced trees raised in East Iceland.

Be sure to stop by Vök Baths during your next trip to East Iceland and partake of a special bathing experience.
This family company operates the Viking Café, guesthouse, old farm and a horse rental

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 photograph the Northern Lights. Watching the green and white lights flicker and dance across the sky is a memorable experience.

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

Coffeehouse and accommodation
Viking Café is a little oasis at the bottom of Vestrahorn near Höfn. 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 Höfn. 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 Hornafjarðarflót glacial river 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, 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!
The weather report was looking good—a full day of sunshine ahead of me and temperatures above 10°C. I was on my way to a face-to-face encounter with the world’s 3rd largest glacier, the mighty Vatnajökull. This trip would mark a couple of firsts for me—my first time ever to set foot on a glacier, and my first time to travel by snowmobile. Needless to say I was really excited!

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

Thirty minutes and 830 metres above sea level later, we arrive at Jökulsar, Iceland’s highest restaurant and owned by Glacier Jeeps. Jökulsar will serve as our base camp where we suit up with boots, warm overalls and helmets for the snowmobile excursion. Now it’s time to test drive the snowmobiles. I am a little hesitant at first and Kristján shows me the ropes. It looks easy enough but I decide that I prefer to let him drive over the glacier with me sitting safely behind him on this ‘skidoo for two’, at least until I get a better feel for it. ‘Off we go over the wild white yonder, climbing high into the sun’ to paraphrase an old song, with cloudless blue skies above us and the wind in our faces. Further along we stop and dismount, to take in the magnificent panoramic views over the glacier, the Atlantic Ocean and the town of Höfn far below in the distance. I felt like I was on top of the world and it was truly a cause for celebration!

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

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

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

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www.glacierjeeps.is
For years it was known as Icelandair Hotel Klaustur, but as of January 2019, the newly rebranded Hotel Klaustur has struck out on its own, bringing change and excitement to the little town of Kirkjubæjarklaustur, South Iceland.

Off the beaten path
You may be tempted to whizz right on by this quiet village of only 500 souls, but this quintessential Icelandic community is the perfect place for those who are wanting to get a feel for the real Iceland. Lying just off Road #1, Kirkjubæjarklaustur, or simply Klaustur as the locals call it, is ideally situated as a base from which to explore the panoply of Icelandic natural phenomena that surround the village in every direction. Of special interest is the breathtaking Fjaðrárgljúfur Canyon located just 15 minutes’ drive from the hotel.

A modern look for a new brand
Many of the rooms have undergone recent refurbishments and with a total of 57 modern rooms to choose from, you’ll be spoiled for choice. The superior rooms, including a suite dedicated to the contemporary Icelandic artist, Ernö, all come with free access to the local sports centre. Located just metres from the hotel, the sports centre boasts an outdoor pool, hot tub and gym. Extra touches such as l’Occitane bath products in every room, wifi throughout, as well as a copious breakfast buffet to greet you in the morning are some of the well thought out details that will make your stay memorable.

A relaxing colour scheme of soft greens and grays and modern geometric patterns grace the ground floor café/bar, echoing the moss and lava of the surrounding countryside.

Our insiders suggested itinerary
After a good night’s sleep, it’s time to explore. Pack in a day of activities and sightseeing at unparalleled locations such as the beautiful Jökulsárlón glacial lagoon, Skaftafell National Park and Europe’s largest glacier, Vatnajökull, all less than 2 hours drive from the hotel. In the evening, Klaustur Restaurant awaits your return with a hearty dinner before you retire for the night.

Spend day 2 closer to home with a visit to the village of Klaustur - full of interesting history, geology and hair raising folk tales. 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 Kirkjubæjar 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.

The next day, take your time returning to Reykjavík and be sure to visit the black sand beach at Reynisfjara, the Dyrhólaey promontory, as well as Skogafoss and Seljalandsfoss waterfalls.

Local Specialties
Klaustur Restaurant and bar, located on the ground floor of the hotel, is well known for its Arctic char specialties which is raised in the village in a free-flowing stream of oxygen-enriched glacial waters that have been naturally filtered through layers of lava in the nearby Vatnajökull. The fish, which figures prominently on the restaurant’s menu, is favoured by many chefs at top restaurants around Iceland. Also worth mentioning is the Icelandic langoustine and baked Icelandic skyr, both local specialties that are brilliantly served at Klaustur Restaurant.

Every summer, Klaustur Restaurant’s talented chefs create an inspiring seasonal menu whose primary ingredients come from small-scale farmers and producers in the area. Flavourful and local are keywords here as some of the ingredients travel no more than perhaps 5 km at most and arrive at the hotel at their peak of freshness.

When the weather is fine you can enjoy your morning coffee out on the terrace or in the evening, try one of our Icelandic craft beers or one of our fruity mocktails from the new summer menu as the midnight sun dips beyond the mountains.

Hotel manager Sveinn Heiðar Jensson and his team look forward to welcoming you this summer at Hotel Klaustur. See you soon!
Stracta Hotel Hella
A New Hotel on Iceland’s South Coast

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 tub, 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 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 desserts, 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.

When the weather is fine you can take your dinner out onto the balcony, or sit outside on the patio, 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?

Healthy, 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.

Mecca of Icelandic Wild Game
Baldur took over Lindin Restaurant in 2002 which has become known as the ‘Mecca of Icelandic wild game’, with its lamb, fish, seafood and game caught in the wild. His menu is seasonal and features exotic dishes that can be made from reindeer, goose, duck, cormorant, guillemot, puffin, minke whale or pan-fried arctic char. Always on the cutting edge, you can be sure of finding new and exciting additions to his dessert menus such as his delectable chocolate mousse with raspberry sauce, with watermelon pieces and white chocolate foam and his bilberry dey mousse with crow berries and rhubarb.

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

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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 Reykjafjörður takes you through enchanting landscapes. Laugarvatn is half-way between Pingvellir and Geyser and Gullfoss, making it an excellent choice for a day trip to one of the most scenic areas of Iceland. You can also now stay at any time of year in Laugarvatn at either the Golden Circle Apartments next to Lindin, the Galleri 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.
Hellishólar Cottages, Guesthouse and Hotel

A Little Bit of Icelandic Paradise

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

The sprawling Hellishólar property is located 17 minutes from Route 1, near the village of Hvolsvöllur in the middle of South Iceland, and offers a perfect base from which to explore South Iceland. From the road to the town of Höfn on the east corner of Iceland.

Cozy 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 wonderful refreshments.

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 bathrooms. In a cosy, old-fashioned style, you are offered accommodation in a working farm house, guests have front row seats over Eyjafjallajökull and Tindfjallajökull. A Glorious View of Nature

A view from Hellishólar is, 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!
Nothing 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.

In less than one hour all the inhabitants had been evacuated, without any chance of saving their belongings. Some people never returned to the island.

Heroes Saving a Home
Two hundred brave men stayed in the danger zone to fight the devastation, creating respect for the determination of its fearless inhabitants, who still brave the elements today. -DT

A Museum as a Mirror
Eldheimar’s design is unique, rather ominous, and yet austere. It is an architectural masterpiece made of volcanic stone that perfectly mirrors the inexorability and harshness of nature. Its beating 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 Eldfjall 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. -DT

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THE HEILISHÆÐI PLANT
is 20 minutes away from Reykjavik that has a modern exhibition of how harness geothermal energy with multimedia shows in English, French, German, Spanish, Chinese & Japanese.
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located 4km outside of Reykjavik, please to all the hot springs in Hengill area. A family run guesthouse where barns & haytowers have been converted to a guesthouse.
Hjarnarból, 881 Ölfus +354 567 1045 info@hjarnarból.is Hjarnarból.is/

THE HOUSE THAT DISAPPEARED
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