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ICELANDIC TIMES

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Summer is here and all Iceland is open to enjoy. So, if you want to avoid the fires in Europe, a visit to the pristine, fresh Icelandic countryside, with its unmatched beauty, amazing vistas and unique experiences is the ideal get-away. Explore on your own or take some specialised tours with expert guides in every part of the country.

Iceland is not limited to beautiful nature, however. There is so much rich history to uncover, preserved faithfully through museums presenting the past in a diverse range of presentations. You can step back in time and feel what living in past days was actually like by visiting houses, frozen in time. While Iceland is a thoroughly modern, cosmopolitan society, its history is woven into its culture and life.

Culture, in fact, plays a large part in Icelandic life. Every town and village embraces it and promotes it in every form, from music to painting, cooking to horse riding, hiking to ice caveing and quad bike glacier riding.

In this issue, we feature several art styles and an interview with international artist Harry Bilson. Additionally, crafts from jewellery to fish-leather shoes, artisan knives to fur coats are highlighted here. This is a culturally rich society!

A visit would not be complete without a dip in one of the geothermal baths. There are quite a few and each is unique.

Also featured in this issue are our neighbours: the Faroe Islands and Greenland, both easily reached from Icelandic airports.

One trip here is never enough. Allow yourself time to go out of Reykjavík to the outlying areas and you'll never regret it! Close to the airport, another volcanic eruption is taking place close to the rift of the tectonic plates. Let this be a summer of experiences never to be forgotten.

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.

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

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THE ICELANDIC PHALLOLOGICAL MUSEUM

Visit one of the most unique museums on the planet

The Icelandic Phallogological Museum is one of the most unique museums in the world and one of the most-visited in Reykjavík. The museum contains a collection of more than 300 penises belonging to every species of mammal found in Iceland and scores of foreign species. Visitors to the museum will see specimens belonging to whales, a rogue polar bear, seals and walruses, and specimens originating from many different kinds of land mammals. "The collection began in 1974 and it's been constantly growing," said Þórður O. Þórðarson, the manager of the museum. "We have well over 300 penis specimens and 300 penis themed art and cultural pieces."

History of the museum

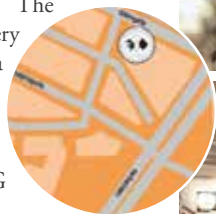
The founder, Sigurður Hjartarson, a historian and teacher, began this collection in 1974 when colleagues who worked at the nearby whaling station in West Iceland began giving him whale penises to tease him. The idea of collecting specimens from more mammalian species was born. Collecting the organs progressed and by 1980, he had collected 13 specimens, four from whales and nine from land mammals. In 1990 there were 34 specimens and, when the museum opened in Reykjavík in August 1997, the specimens totalled 62. In the Spring of 2004, the museum moved to the small fishing village of Húsavík, the whale watching capital of Europe. It

was moved back to Reykjavík in 2011 and opened under the direction of a new curator, Siguður's son.

New and exciting location

"The first location in Reykjavík was great, but we had to relocate because the collection grew and the number of visitors grew as well," said Þórður. "We are now located at Hafnartorg, which is a great area of Reykjavík near Harpa." The museum has undergone extensive changes to improve the visitor experience. There is more space for guests to roam and view the specimens and the technology has been enhanced, with touch screens adding a modernized feel. Another exciting addition has been a phallus-themed bistro where locals and tourists can enjoy food, coffee and beers on tap from local breweries.

A visit to the Icelandic Phallogological Museum is a unique, must-see experience when visiting Reykjavík. The museum, which is open every day from 10:00 – 19:00, is a great way to spend a couple of hours in the capital, and it will be a conversation piece for years to come! - JG



The Icelandic Phallogological Museum
Hafnartorg, 101 Reykjavík
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FlyOver Iceland

Soar above the island on an exhilarating ride

FlyOver Iceland gives you a thrilling bird's eye view over the breathtaking landscapes of Iceland. Located in the Grandi harbour district on the west side of Reykjavík, the experience utilizes state-of-the-art technology, with full motion seating, for a true sense of flight. You sit suspended, feet dangling, before a 20-metre wraparound screen, while the film takes you on an exciting journey across Iceland. To enhance the experience, there are special effects, including wind, mist and scents, making you feel as if you are there.

An unforgettable experience

It's a unique feeling, hanging suspended as you soar through the landscape, feeling a light mist as you glide above a thundering waterfall, laughing and gasping at the dips and speed, and being enthralled by the epic beauty of the island. For many, the experience is more thrilling than expected and it's fantastic to share with your family.

Learn about Iceland's history and nature

Before the flight-ride experience, there are two pre-ride shows that allow you to explore the unique nature of Iceland, as

well as the nation's mythology and history. Before your flight begins, an animated Icelandic storyteller will welcome you into an ancient Viking longhouse. You join him by the light of the fire as he weaves a tale while an impressive shadow-play projection brings it all to life.

The animated narrator then takes you through the second experience, which uses audio, video and music. The guide, Sú Vitra, is a character based on old troll mythology that has been designed by the world-renowned illustrator Brian Pilkington. Sú Vitra guides you through three different acts. The first invites you to feel the power of Iceland's nature, including towering volcanoes, vast glaciers and thundering waterfalls. The next act centres around the first settlers, while the last act shows how Icelanders have made a life on the island, despite the many obstacles.

Relax at the comfortable café

You are welcome to enjoy the onsite café, Kaffi Grandi, where you can purchase snacks, light meals, soft drinks and coffee beverages. Adults can also order from the bar that includes a selection of beers, wines and cocktails.



Fun for the whole family

FlyOver Iceland is the perfect way to spend some time in the heart of Reykjavík with your family. Children aged 12 and under are welcome to join, as long as they are at least 102cm tall. FlyOver Iceland is open Wednesdays to Sundays this summer and the entire experience lasts about 35 minutes. The Grandi area is home to other family-friendly activities like the Whales of Iceland exhibition, as well as shopping and ice cream shops. -JG



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A TASTE OF THAI

Krua Thai serves an enticing cuisine in the heart of the capital city

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 cosy 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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 www.kruathai.is



ANNA MARÍA Design

The influence of the Icelandic nature

Anna María Sveinbjörnsdóttir is an Icelandic jeweller and designer who runs her own jewellery store, Anna María Design, on one of the main shopping streets in the city, Skólavörðustígur 3, in the heart of Reykjavík. Anna María studied both in Iceland and Denmark and has run her own company for more than three decades.

Anna María'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 encompass 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, Mose-agate, Jasper, Basalt and Lava.

When it comes to emphasis and style, Anna María 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 María's designs you can find this extraordinary delicate work, which reminds one of the Icelandic heritage. -SJ



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The one and only GRAFARVOGUR

If Grafavogur, a neighbourhood in Reykjavík, were an independent town, it would be the fourth largest in the country. More than 20,000 people live in the area, in a mixed settlement of single-family, terraced, and apartment buildings.

Development began in the 1990s and is still ongoing. Now, there is even a Vínubúð (the state liquor store). Residents pointed out a few years ago that there was no such store in the city's largest neighbourhood. At the same time, Kópasker, one of Iceland's smallest towns in North Iceland, had one!

Grafarvogur can be broken down into eight smaller districts; Hamrar, Foldir, Hús, Rimar, Borgir, Vík, Engi, Spöng, Staðir, Höfðar, Bryggjuhverfi, Geirsnef, Gufunes and Geldinganes. The last one is the only one still uninhabited, but there are plans for future construction there. The view over Reykjavík and Seltjarnarnes is breathtaking from there. Mount Esja gives Geldinganes, and the whole neighbourhood, good shelter from the cold northern winds.

The Grafarvogur neighbourhood is named after a cove of the same name, which is, itself, named after the now deserted farm, Gröf. It used to stand at the edge of the gorge where Grafarlækur flows into the sea.



Photographs & text: Páll Stefánsson

Looking across Grafarvogur Cove to the Grafarvogur neighbourhood and the Grafarvogur church. It's the neighbourhood's only church and stands by the cove. Mount Esja and Móskarshnjúkar (on the right) can be seen in the background.



The Bryggjuhverfi district stands south of Grafarvogur; you can see Sundahöfn, Reykjavík's large shipping port, across the cove.



Hallsteinsgarður Park in Grafarvogur. It's on a hill east of Gufunes. It has 16 aluminium sculptures by artist Hallstein Sigurðsson, made from 1989 to 2012, and is part of the Reykjavík Art Museum.



Korpúlfsstaðir was originally a dairy farm built by Thor Jensen around 1925. The City of Reykjavík bought the land in 1942, and it is now an art centre, restaurant and facilities for golfers, while Korpúlfsstaðarvöllur Golf Course is on the old farm fields.



A large outdoor recreational area and an amusement park are in the neighbourhood.

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



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FISH HOUSE *by the Harbour*



Fish House Bar & Grill by the harbour in Grindavík, offers not only fish but steaks, great pizzas and burgers, too. The restaurant holds one of the best weekend live music concerts in the country in Gígurinn, 'The Crater', an adjoining meeting hall that groups and businesses can also book. Dining guests can be lucky enough to find themselves unexpectedly experiencing concerts or other events that can turn the evening into an unusual, unforgettable experience. On weekends, as the evening goes on, The Crater, being next to the restaurant, turns into a bar, where locals and tourists have fun together.

Grindavík is one of the largest fishery towns in the country. Fishing vessels unload fresh catches ashore numerous times a day. From there, it is only a few dozen metres onto the dishes in the Fish House. It is not only the Fish House that is well located down by the harbour in Grindavík, the town itself is centrally located in the south of Reykjanes, just a few minutes' drive from the Blue Lagoon and less than half an hour



Kári Guðmundsson

to Keflavik and the airport. It is much less than an hour's drive from the capital area. From Grindavík, it is a very short distance to see the new lava that flowed last year from the Fagradalsfjall volcano, just northeast of the town. What is better is that, after a little time outdoors, experiencing Icelandic nature, you can sit down to a good meal at the Fish House.

The menu at the Fish House is very varied. The fish of the day is always a classic favourite, followed by fish and chips with crispy fresh fish, seafood soup and pan-fried char. Meat dishes on the menu include lamb chops, Haf & hagi or Surf & Turf beef tenderloin with lobster, and lamb steak, a favourite dish of many Icelanders. Then they serve Fish Salad and Chicken Salad, both real burgers and fish burgers and then the volcano, with 140 grammes of beef in Brioche bread. About two dozen pizzas are then on the menu, either to enjoy on site, or to take away.

Fish House Bar and Grill is located at Hafnargata 6, in Grindavík. Meal orders and information can be placed by phone 426 9999. For information, orders or offers for groups it's best to contact by e-mail: kari@fishhouse.is



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Art at the REYKJAVÍK ART MUSEUM

In Kjarvalsstaðir, the Reykjavík Art Museum is now showing the exhibition ‘Heads from Clouds — The Portraits of Jóhannes S. Kjarval’. The painter Kjarval is one of the nation’s greatest and most beloved artists. His paintings and his interpretation of Iceland’s nature have shaped our view of nature, and he takes a major place in the cultural and art history of Iceland.

Kjarval began his career as a painter by making portraits of four CEOs of Landsbanki Íslands. ‘Drawings of Icelandic People’ from 1926 to 1930, however, were a watershed in his career. He won the minds and hearts of the people, and some of these pictures were purchased, his first for the National Art Museum.

Throughout his career, he was sketching, drawing and painting portraits, and over time they become a kind of extension of his view of the natural world. Finally, the Nobel Prize-winning writer, Halldór Kiljan Laxness, in his first art commentary in 1927, says about Kjarval’s portraits of people from the previous year, “The working methods in the portraits ... certify the understanding of a highly educated artist of Icelandic nature”. At this retrospective, ‘Heads from Clouds’, the first to be dedicated only to Kjarval’s portraits of people, one of the main characteristics of Kjarval’s portraits is that they are about people rather than the images. The curator of the exhibition is Aðalsteinn Ingólfsson. The exhibition is open until 18th September.



Jóhannes Kjarval self-portrait



Two Masters, Kjarval's painting of Erró. Both artists have exhibitions at Reykjavík Art Museum. Portrait of Erró, 1948



Kjarval. The Sisters from Stapi, 1948



Kjarval. Retrato de Jón Kaldal, 1917-20



THE JOYFUL WONDERLAND

The Little Christmas Shop that is festive all year round

Anne Helen, owner of 'The Little Christmas Shop' on Laugavegur, Reykjavík's main shopping street, is what you might call a 'one woman wonder'. 20 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 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. —HDB



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SUSTAINABLE ARTISAN KNIFEMAKING IN ICELAND

One of a kind knives that will last you a lifetime

When people think about knife-making, nature and waterfalls are probably the last things that come to mind. However, that is precisely what you find when you visit Páll Kristjánsson's and Soffía Sigurðardóttir's world-renowned sustainable knife atelier. Situated in the idyllic Álafosskvós in Mosfellsbær, only a 15-minute drive from downtown Reykjavík, the atelier offers some of the best knives you will ever own.

Páll Kristjánsson, or Páll as he likes to be called, has been making knives for over 30 years. His craftsmanship is renowned worldwide, but his knives are unique because he only uses sustainable materials. "Soffía and I use materials that otherwise would be thrown away and

give them a new life", Páll says. "Some of the materials we use are birch, rowan, horses' hooves, reindeer antlers, sheep horns and whale teeth." As a result, every knife is one of a kind and made with Japanese Damascus steel or stainless steel from Denmark, Germany and Sweden.

Soffía Sigurðardóttir's artisan kitchen knives are made with only the best blades, which have to be handled with care. She is also the only kitchen-knifemaker in Iceland. "I get inspiration from nature and my surroundings when I'm creating the knives. One colour combination of rust-red and green, I got from a ship in the shipyard in the Old Harbour in Reykjavík", Soffía says.

"Sustainability and the environment are very important to us. No animals are hunted for us. The ram horns and horse hooves come from slaughtered animals, and the ivory comes from beached

whales. If we buy wood, we only buy from specially certified companies in the USA, which can reliably prove that the trees were legally chopped down." Additionally, they get wood from old trees in Iceland that need to be cut down.

It's not only Páll and Soffía who sell their art in the atelier. Páll's brother Bjarni is also an artist. His primary medium is ebony and ivory, from which he carves out small animals and other figures. Just like Páll and Soffía, his materials are sustainably sourced.

Visiting the atelier gives a particular sensation of calmness. It is evident the work done there is done with care. The smell of the different woods and leather of the sheaths, combined with the calm sounds of birds chirping and the waterfall, which is literally in their backyard, makes for an exceptional experience. One which is highly recommended. —HDB



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Text and photos: Reykjavík City Museum

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, drainage of the marshland began in the Reykjavík area. The drained land was allocated for farming under leases with inheritance rights. Grass fields were cultivated on farms and smallholdings in these areas, where animal husbandry and agriculture were established. Such farms played an important role at that time, when dairy products were always in short supply in the growing town of Reykjavík.

With the expansion of Reykjavík during and after World War II and the construction of new districts east of the old town, most of the farms made way for new housing, but in some cases the original farmhouses were integrated into the developments and remain standing among homes of a later period.

One such farm was Eskihlíð. The farmhouse buildings remain standing at the western end of the street of the same name. Watchmaker Magnús Benjamínsson (1853-1942) built a half-stone house here in 1892, which he named Eskihlíð (now Eskihlíð 2-4).

Aerial photograph from 1954. Here we can see some of the farms built in this area in the early 20th century. Information on Háteigur farm and Sunnuboll farm can be found at the corner of Háteigsvegur and Rauðarárstígur. Information on Reykjahlíð farm can be found on Stakkahlíð road.



Around 1915. A digger at the mine that was used to build the Reykjavík harbour. In the far back we can see the Eskihlíð farm to the left of the road. Photo: Magnús Ólafsson

Eskihlíð was, at that time, an alternative form of the placename Öskjuhlíð. The farmstead stood on the north side of the main road that led out of Reykjavík via Öskjuhlíð, known as the Hafnarfjörður Road, and later the Reykjanes Road (now Skógarhlíð). In the first half of the 20th century several houses were built to the south of the road, also known by the Eskihlíð name (Eskihlíð B, C and D). These are no longer standing. In 1911 Ingimundur Guðmundsson (1876-1912) lived at Eskihlíð, where he built a barn at the west wall of the farmhouse, and a cattleshed and stable at the north side. For many years Eskihlíð was a large farm, especially in the time of Geir Gunnar Gunnlaugsson (1902-1995), who bought the farm in 1934 and established a large dairy farm.

Geir extended and altered the old house and built new outhouses – a cattleshed and barn – at the north side. The buildings remain largely as they were in his time. In 1945 the inheritance rights to much of the estate were revoked, when development of the Hlíðar district began. Geir continued to run his dairy farm until the mid-1950s, while building up a new farm at Lundur in Kópavogur, to where he moved in 1961. In 1959 the first Hagkaup store was opened by Pálmi Jónsson in the former Eskihlíð cattleshed. His company would later come to dominate retail trade in Iceland. From 2003-2013 the old farm buildings housed the Fjölskylduhjálpi Íslands (Family aid) charity. In 2004 Konukot was established at the premises, charity that provides overnight accommodation for homeless women.



Dóroddsstaðir in Reykjavík around 1935-1940, now Skógarhlíð 22. Behind is the area where the streets Eskihlíð, Blönduhlíð, Drápuhlíð, Mávahlíð, Barmahlíð and Miklabraut came later. Far away is the residential area Norðurmýri under construction. To the right you can see the farm Klömbrur and Klambrautún. Photo: G. Ásgeirsson's amateur studio



Seen west along Miklabraut, on the left an apartment building at Miklabraut and Barmahlíð under construction around 1945. To the right Rauðarárstígur, Miklatún (Klambrautún) and the farm Klömbrur can be seen on the far right. The National Hospital towering over the houses in Norðurmýri. Bollagata, Guðrúnargata, Kjartansgata and Hrefnugata. Photo: Sigurhans Vignir



Hagkaup store in the Eskihlíð farmhouse 1965. Photo: Jóhann Vilberg Árnason

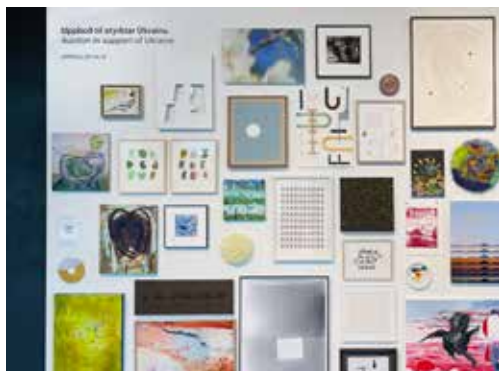
Exquisite gallery OPENS IN HARPA

Listval exhibits Icelandic art

Listval opened an exhibition space in Harpa where beautiful works of art are on display and can be seen through the windows in front of Harpa. Established in 2019, Listval aims to make it easier for people to invest in and access art in Iceland. Listval has helped many institutions and companies choose new works and assisted individuals with their collections and the installation process. The gallery in Harpa opened last year.

Gorgeous gallery

The space intends to create a beautiful and refined setting in the form of art exhibitions and a gallery and provide guests with a memorable experience and insight into what Icelandic art has to offer. The founders of Listval want to create a comfortable atmosphere for visitors, who can receive advice on choosing works, learn about Icelandic art and view books on art. Listval also has an event program where new publications and works will be celebrated.



Harpa is the perfect host

A striking glass structure, Harpa hosts rock concerts, operas, the Icelandic Symphony, and art exhibitions. Designed by Icelandic-Danish artist Ólafur Elíasson, the hall's exterior features individual glass panels that light up during the darkness of winter, sometimes blinking in a pattern or simply changing colors, and the building's waterside location lends itself to lovely reflections. Art exhibitions help attract a more diverse group of guests and bring a new dimension to the guest experience.

Meet the founders

Elísabet Alma Svendsen and Helga Kjerúlf have worked in art and design on various projects, bringing their wealth of

experience, insight and connections with the art scene to Listval. They have been involved in many projects related to art, including gallery operations, publishing, the Venice Biennale and the promotion of Icelandic art internationally.

Be sure to visit Listval in Harpa while visiting Reykjavík. The opening hours are from 12m-6pm on weekdays and 12m-4pm on Saturday and Sunday. You can follow Listval on Instagram at www.instagram.com/listval and view works on www.listval.is.



Listval
 Harpa - Austurbakki 2
 101 Reykjavík
<https://listval.is/>



LYSI

Bringing the healthy living of Iceland to the world



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 wellbeing products to world markets, from fish taken straight from the Icelandic seas.

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 have become known worldwide. As global demand continues for LYSI products, the company has extended its e-commerce operations to reach customers in all geographic markets. -JG

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



LYSI hf.
 Fiskislóð 5-9, 101 Reykjavík
 + 354 525 8100
www.lysi.com



A conversation about the present

INTERVIEW WITH ARTIST HARRY BILSON

Text by Helga Kjartansdóttir

Harry Bilson (b. 1948) receives journalist Helga Kartansdóttir in his studio in Korpúlfssstadir. This is a place where creativity reigns, paintings are scattered around the space, which is both bright and high-ceilinged. Soft classical tunes waft from the radio and the faint scent of incense fills the air. Out of the window you can see Úlfarsfell. “This is my favourite study yet”, Harry informs me while handing me a cup of soothing tea and motioning me to a seat three metres away. I take this opportunity to thank him for agreeing to see me in these last and worst hours of the pandemic. The talk inevitably turns to Covid-19 that is currently shaking the rest of the world, and Harry tells me how the epidemic has affected him.

HARRY: My wife and I have a dog in Cornwall, England, waiting for its owners. Otherwise, the lockdown doesn't bother me, as I'm happy as long as I can paint. The fact that people seem to be bored really makes me sad because now is the very opportunity to do all the things that have been sitting on the back burner. I myself plan to use the time to review my Icelandic, because even though I have an Icelandic mother, I moved to England at the age of five and soon lost my Icelandic.

HELGA: You have a home in both England and Iceland, but have lived in many places in the world over time. Is traveling the world a lifestyle for you?

HARRY: No, it just kind of evolved and is related to the fact that I've been a working artist for over fifty years. I have travelled

and lived around the world for my work, so you could say that the world is my home.

HELGA: You started painting at a young age and are basically self-taught in the art, how did it come about?

HARRY: I've been very fortunate to be able to work purely on art, although my parents did not want me to become an artist. They encouraged me to study economics instead. However, my mind was headed in a different direction. At first, I couldn't make a living from art alone, so I worked in various manual jobs along with my art. Some of these jobs were so tiring that, at the end of the day, I would rather go to sleep than paint. I exhibited in various places but there was one particular place that gave me a breakthrough and that was Bayswater Road in London. People gathered there on Sundays to look at paintings that had been hung on fences along the street. This place gave me the opportunity to meet people from all over the world and create a network. It also opened my eyes to the fact that it doesn't mean waiting for others to come to you, but you need to reach out to others.

HELGA: How would you describe your own art?

HARRY: I've experimented with different styles and gone from hyperrealism to abstract art. I guess I'm known for a certain style today, but I'm not tied to it. I primarily paint what I like, such as contrasts in colours and unusual image structures; along with the fact that humour is never far away. In my mind,

meaning is not something that the artist communicates to the viewer and sits there. On the contrary, I have learned that people interpret my work in so many different ways that I could never have imagined. Over the years, I have, on the other hand, adopted the problem of the titles of my works, and they are more often than not ambiguous. I focus on titles because I see them as an important link between the work, the viewer and myself.

HELGA: Harry shows me some recent work, but it's his latest painting that catches my eye. It is called The Quarantree and shows a dark tree in nature. If you look carefully, you can see two black thrushes at the top of the tree at exactly the recommended distance of two metres from each other.

HARRY: I don't mean to hurt anyone with this piece. However, it has always worked for me to deal with bad things by putting them in a comical context. As strange as it may sound, what is happening in the world today may be that nature is taking control out of our hands because of the trouble we are heading for with all this excess in the production of unnecessary things.

HELGA: Nature has certainly benefited from the governments' various responses to the epidemic, such as the reduction of air travel.

HARRY: Yes, but also anything related to productivity like polluting industries. It is interesting to think that global warming has been reduced considerably in this short time. It was an American scientist named Carl Sagan who asked Nasa to have the



Voyager satellite take a picture of Earth on its journey to the outer reaches of the solar system. It was a brilliant idea as this photograph shows us in black and white how insignificant the earth is in the grand scheme of things and the same can be said about humanity.

HELGA: Possibly it is the idea that man is in control of nature and should therefore use it as he pleases, which is destroying the earth. However, we do not know nature as well as we would like to pretend.

HARRY: The problem is certainly also related to the idea of our importance. An importance that exists even though we have little weight in the cosmic context. Everything is equally important and everything is interconnected. Some people have ridiculous amounts of money or think that they are therefore more important than others and even treat other people accordingly. The reality is that all people have the same weight. Hopefully these hard times will make people realize that fact better.

HELGA: My time with Harry is running out and I have to admit that, when I say goodbye to him, there is a small hope in my heart that after the pandemic there will be an opportunity to build a world that is in better balance with nature. At least I am convinced that his artistic thinking will take us in that direction. For those who want to learn more about Harry's work, you can find it on his website www.bilsondirect.com. The works are for sale in Reykjavík at Galerí Fold on Rauðarárstíg.

INTERVIEW WITH ARTIST HARRY BILSON





The Eruption in MERADALIR



On 3rd August, a little over a year after the eruption in Fagradalsfjall on the Reykjanes peninsula ended, a new eruption began on the mountain, now in the northern part of Meradalir, a kilometre north of the old craters. A strong earthquake, as in the previous eruption, preceded the eruption. The current eruption is

considerably more powerful, with lava flows more than five times greater from the new fissure than in last year's eruption. It is also much longer for hikers to walk to the new eruption than to the previous one. It's now a 7 km long walk that takes three hours, as the terrain is very difficult and rocky to traverse. Children under the age of

12 are not allowed up to the site, as the hike is only for fully fit people. The lava from the eruption could potentially flow over and cut the southern coastal road, which connects Þorlákshöfn, Grindavík and Hafnarfjörður soon. An Icelandic Times / Land & Saga photographer flew over the eruption, capturing these images. Enjoy.

REYKJANES

is more than a volcano



Hvammur, south of Kleifarvatn



Under Valahnjúkur by Reykjanesviti



At Seltún, south of Kleifarvatn

Thousands make their way to the volcanic eruption in Fagradalsfjall every day. A beautiful eruption, which you can get very close to, experience nature and the superpower that lives in the bowels of the earth up close, after a 7 km hike up Fagradalsfjall. But Reykjanes has so much more to offer than a long and rigorous hike to the eruption in Meradalir. The nature at Kleifarvatn and the heat at Seltún, Krýsuvíkurbjarg and Grindavík, a beautiful fishing town just south of the Blue Lagoon. Sandgerði and Garður, with the lighthouse on Garð Peninsula. Reykjanesviti is located in the south and west of the promontory with all the geothermal heat around it. Then, of course, Njarðvík and Keflavík, which form Reykjanesbær, the fourth most populous municipality in the country. Most tourists who visit Iceland also come to Keflavík, because of Keflavík Airport, the international airport that connects Iceland to the rest of the world.



Lava covers a very large part of the Reykjanes peninsula, looking over Dyngnahraun on the eastern side of Reykjanes

Text and photos: Reykjavík City Museum

KLAMBRATÚN PARK



Concert in Klambratún Park in 1988, protesting the apartheid regime in South Africa. Megas and Björk on stage. Photo: Jóhann A. Kristjánsson

The Klambratún Park occupies land in the district of Norðurmýri, formerly divided into small-holdings under copyhold (inheritable perpetual lease). The Norðurmýri marsh was a significant source of peat (for fuel), particularly during World War II, when imported coal was in short supply. In 1925 a farmstead was built here by physician and town councillor Maggi Júl. Magnús. He named it Klömbur after the estate of Klömbur in Vestur-Húnavatnssýsla, North Iceland, where he had family roots. The property was sold in 1934 to Christian Christensen, a Dane who settled in Iceland in 1931 with his Icelandic wife Ólöf Ólafsdóttir. They kept ten cows and sold the milk, which was delivered to people's homes by horse-cart. Christensen subsequently operated an abattoir, a smokery and a meat shop on the farm. The farm buildings were demolished in 1965.



Schoolchildren at work growing vegetables on their allotments in Klambratún fields in 1956

In 1946 the Reykjavík municipal authorities purchased the land, which was then used for allotments where children grew vegetables during the summer holidays between 1948-58. The idea of creating a public park first arose in the late 1950s, and was put into practice a decade later.

The park was designed by landscape architect Reynir Vilhjálmsson. Designed in a modern style, the garden was influenced by Nordic trends. Klambratún Park is a popular place for outdoor activities and social gatherings. Open-air concerts and other events have been held there.

Kjarvalsstaðir, one of the Reykjavík Art Museum galleries, named after the famous Icelandic painter Jóhannes S. Kjarval, opened in the Park in 1973.

The name of Klambratún Park was changed to the grander Miklatún Park ("Great Park") in 1964. The original name was restored in 2010.



Aerial photograph of Klambratún fields in 1949. The farmstead of Klambrar can be seen in the middle of the field



A view over Klambratún field and Öskjuhlíð around 1944. In the centre is the old farmstead of Klambrar, after which the park is named

ÁRBÆR OPEN AIR MUSEUM

Step back into past while exploring these historic buildings

Reykjavík City Museum was founded in 2014 when The Settlement Exhibition, Reykjavík Maritime Museum, Reykjavík Museum of Photography, Viðey Island and Árbær Open Air Museum were combined into one museum.

Árbær was a traditional farm on a hill just east of Elliðaún River. Through the centuries, it was a resting place to and from the entire Seltjarnarnes Peninsula, including Reykjavík. The last inhabitants of Árbær left in 1948, and nine years later, the Reykjavík town council agreed to rebuild the farm. It was decided that a collection of culturally important houses would also get a home there. There are over twenty buildings in the museum today, most of them from Reykjavík's centre. The first house to be moved to Árbær Open Air Museum was Hansen's House, named after merchant Símon Hansen, who built it at Pósthússtræti 15, just east of Reykjavík Cathedral in 1823. The house represents the oldest type of half-timbered House in Reykjavík. Many renowned people lived in the house, such as Jón Árnason, a collector of folklore, Sigurður Guðmundsson, Iceland's first painter, and photographer Sigfús Eymundsson. Sigfús was a pioneer in photography in Iceland, a bookseller, and an enthusiastic seller of one-way trips to North America.

The Árbær Open Air museum is a fun and lively museum. Guðbrandur Benediktsson is the director of Reykjavík City Museum.



It is not difficult to find your way around Árbær Open Air Museum



The original Árbær farm



Hansen's House, the first house to be moved to the museum in 1960, was originally built at Pósthússtræti 15 in 1823



Árbær Open Air Museum is popular among tourists



Árbær Open Air Museum and the church of Árbær, Kópavogur can be seen in the distance



GRINDAVÍK SWIMMING POOL is located in the middle of town, next to the lovely campsite. They have a 25m lap pool, a kid pool, waterslide, hot tubs, sauna, tanning beds and a gym.

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ithrottir@grindavik.is
www.grindavik.is/sundlaug



THE GRINDAVÍK CAMPSITE on Reykjanes peninsula is one of the more organised campsites in Iceland. They have BBQ's, electricity, playgrounds, a play castle, kitchen, laundry room and WiFi.

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FISHHOUSE BAR & GRILL in the romantic fishing village of Grindavík is an excellent seafood restaurant minutes south of the Blue Lagoon. They pride themselves on the use of delicious local produce.

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THE HERITAGE MUSEUM ON GARÐSKAGI, Byggðasafnið á Garðskaga, is located in a museum area by Garðskagaviti Lighthouse in Suðurnesjabær, where there is a beautiful panoramic view in all directions.

Skagabraut 100, 250 Suðurnesjabær
+354 425 3008
byggdasafn@sudurnesjabær.is
Open: May 1. – Sept. 30. 10am – 17 pm



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KRUA THAI IN KÓPAVOGUR is a favourite for many. With their reputation to always deliver fresh, tasty food, both at the restaurant & to your door, it is no wonder they are such a popular choice.

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FEEL ICELAND. Utilizing the treasure troves of geothermal heat, wild fish and health-giving pristine waters has helped this tiny nation in the North Atlantic Ocean survive and prosper since Viking times. Beauty is celebrated from an elemental perspective, taking cues from the land and sea to promote natural wellness.

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TRAVEL IN STYLE WITH HREYFILL TAXI SERVICE

Why not skip the rental car in Iceland and book a taxi instead? Hreyfill taxi offers a personal experience, whether it is to be picked up from Keflavík International Airport or if you want to explore the country. Hreyfill is the largest taxi service in Iceland, as well as one of the oldest, founded in 1943.

Hreyfill is an excellent option if you want to travel to places off the beaten track or even if you just want a more intimate Golden Circle Tour. Longer or shorter trips are also available, and it is possible to book at short notice. The call centre is open 24/7, so there is always someone who can help.

One of the must-go places to visit in Iceland is the Blue Lagoon, near Grindavík. The lagoon is a great place to relax and eat good food, and having a driver and car from Hreyfill takes the whole experience to the next level. There is no need to plan your trip according to a company's coach schedule.

No trip is too short or too long. If you just need a ride to the next street over, Hreyfill is



happy to help. It's possible to order a taxi by phone, via email, through their app or just hail one from one of the many taxi ranks in the city centre. -HDB



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HISTORY AND THE NATURE RESERVE

It is always beautiful at Þingvellir, even in the cold and rain of morning. Þingvellir National Park, Iceland's first national park, was established by law at the 1,000th anniversary of Alþingi in 1930.

Þingvellir National Park, the first national park in Iceland, was established by law during the festival celebrating the 1,000 year founding of the Alþingi, the Icelandic Parliament, in 1930. The law states that Þingvellir and Öxará shall be a protected sanctuary for all Icelanders, and that the protected land shall be the property of the Icelandic nation for life—land that can never be mortgaged or sold. Then, as now, with the future Highland National Park, there were loud protests to protect the land at Þingvellir.

The idea of establishing national parks came west to Europe from the United States, where large uninhabited areas were taken and protected for future generations. However, each year another million tourists visit Þingvellir, as it is a natural and historical jewel that has few parallels in the world. Þingvellir was approved as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2004, the first Icelandic site or cultural monument to gain such status. Yet Þingvellir is only about an hour's drive from the capital area.

Photograph and text: Páll Stefánsson

POLAR DOORS

Sustainable fishing doors

The Iceland-based company serves fishing vessels across the globe

Polar Doors is an innovative company specialising in designing, manufacturing and selling high-quality fishing doors for vessels. The doors are suitable for trawl, demersal, semi-pelagic, and pelagic fishing.

Polar founder, Atli Mar Jósafatsson, has decades of experience building, developing, and marketing fishing doors. Indeed, Atli's 40+ year career started at his father's company J. Hinriksson with its well-known Poly-Ice trawl doors and continued with his own company since 2006.

The company's most recent development, the PLUTO fishing doors, are made from recycled plastic, with up to 80% of recycled worn-out fishing nets made with a rotational moulding process.

It was critical to think outside the box and consider materials other than traditional steel for the doors. "When designing things made of steel, we are limited with the design, bending, rolling and welding and so on", says Atli. "The testing and simulation process gave us a good idea of how to improve the efficiency of the doors.

"We decided to focus on small doors for fishing boats 8-12 metres in length, a fleet of neglected clients, where many still use doors made from wooden boards", he adds.

"The first pair was tested in Iceland on FV Andvari from Vestmanna Islands. Replacing our model of Neptune doors, we gained 25

metres distance between the doors compared with 19 metres with the Neptune doors and more than 20% less resistance.

"During the past two months, three pairs of Pluto 1.1 square metres have been tested on 10 to 12 metres long boats working from south England catching Dover sole. The results have been similar, substantially less resistance with the same or even more distance between the doors."

Focus on sustainability

The quality and craftsmanship of the doors are crucial, as is the company's commitment to sustainability. "Because of the discussion of waste in the ocean, we have developed fishing doors made from recycled plastic", says Atli. "Sustainability is an important focus for us.

"Our mission is to support sustainable fisheries by improving fishing gear technology and restoring biodiversity.

"The hydrodynamic design of the Pluto fishing doors makes it possible to operate at around 20° degrees Angle of Attack, resulting in substantially less resistance and fuel consumption.

"The PLUTO doors are used with no direct impact on the seabed to protect fragile habitats and maintain biodiversity at the fishing grounds."

Polar is a global business working with a very solid network of distributors and service partners around the world.

To minimise carbon footprint and CO2 emission, the PLUTO fishing doors will be produced at a close distance to large markets in partnership with local partners in collecting and recycling plastic waste.



Polar Doors
 Hatun 10c104 Reykjavík
 +354 898 66 77
 www.polardoors.com



Atli Mar Jósafatsson



Go WEST!



Enjoy the Vast Beauty of West Iceland

A trip to West Iceland is perfect if you want to see a bit of everything. Black-sand beaches, hot springs, quiet fishing towns and a glacier accessible by foot await you. The West is frequently referred to as 'Iceland in miniature' as it contains so many interesting landscapes and attractions.

Visit stunning waterfalls

The West is home to some spectacular waterfalls. Glymur, Iceland's second tallest waterfall, is a worthwhile detour before heading further west from Reykjavík. Glymur stands 198 metres high on the Botnsá river, the white water crashing down the side of Hvalfell mountain. The hike to the top can be a bit challenging for some, but it's worth it! The view from the top over Hvalfjörður is quite striking on a clear day.

Hraunfossar is a series of waterfalls streaming over 900 metres out of a lava field. The falls are beautiful to visit in any season and rainbows are frequently seen when the sun breaks through on showery days. There's a neighbouring waterfall very

close by, called Barnafoss. It's a stunning, wide waterfall, with water rushing over a rocky landscape, creating several cascades.

Enjoy Iceland's unique geology

Iceland is paradise for geology buffs. Be sure to take a look at Deildartunguhver, which is considered Europe's most powerful hot spring. It provides 200 litres of boiling—100°C (212°F)—water per second. Visitors will see water bubbling up and splashing against moss and rock, a reminder that Iceland is very much alive with pure geothermal energy.

If you want to get up close and personal with Iceland's interior, visit Viðgelmir, the largest cave in Iceland. With a guided tour, you can explore the beautiful ice formations, including scores of stalactites and stalagmites. It's a fascinating look at Iceland from the inside.

See spectacular Snæfellsnes

The Snæfellsnes peninsula is considered the jewel of the western coast, in part, because the region has a taste of everything,

including a mighty glacier. Snæfellsjökull, the king of Icelandic mountains, lies on top of a volcano situated in the centre of a national park. The glacier's peak reaches 1,446 metres and can be seen from Reykjavík on a clear day. The volcano is considered active, though it last erupted 1,900 years ago.

Meanwhile, the western edge of the Snæfellsnes peninsula is home to Snæfellsjökull National Park and small towns like Hellissandur, Ólafsvík, and Grundarfjörður. Charming fishing villages dot the peninsula and offer ample hiking routes and quirky museums. Other areas of interest include the beautiful rock formations and birdlife of Arnarstapi-Hellnar, and Kirkjufell, one of the most photographed mountains in Iceland.

It's possible to visit all these places in three days and enjoy others along the way, but it is recommended to allot more time to the West for the sheer beauty and uniqueness of the region.

Make sure West Iceland is on your radar for your next trip to Iceland. -JG



DELVING INTO HISTORY

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

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

A Warehouse of Exhibitions

In 2006 an Icelandic couple, actor Kjartan Ragnarsson and news reporter Sigríður Margrét Guðmundsdóttir, decided to dedicate a project to the story of the Settlement. They found a charming old warehouse in Borgarnes in West Iceland and started building up two exhibitions on the brave pioneers who followed their curiosity into the unknown.

Provided with an audio guide available in 15 languages, visitors find themselves in an elaborate labyrinth that displays history in a

really exciting way. Step onto a moving boat and get the feeling of how it must have been to cross the ocean in an open boat! Listen to stories, while figures behind the glass silently watch over you. On the lower floor the exhibition of Saga hero and settler's son, Egill Skallagrímsson, takes you right into the story, with Egill's spirit at your steps.

Transformed through Art

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

-DT/ASF



The Settlement Center
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www.landnam.is



KRAUMA

Geothermal Baths

Experience Iceland's geothermal energy in these soothing hot baths

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 the famous Sagas. In Reykholt, one 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, Egil's Saga, and Heimskringla before his death in 1241. There is so much to see and do in West Iceland and Krauma is perfectly positioned.

Visit Krauma

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



Krauma
 Deildartunguhver, 310 Borgarbyggð
www.krauma.is



INTO THE WILD WESTFJORDS

Discover Iceland “the Westfjords Way”

The Westfjords are an unmissable region of Iceland. Here, you will find steep cliffs with millions of nesting birds, well-maintained hiking paths, quirky museums, and some of the most breathtaking beauty on the island. To explore this beautiful slice of Iceland, there is a convenient new touring route called Vestfjarðaleiðin, or the Westfjords Way. This driving route encompasses a 950 km circle around the edges of the Westfjords and there are eight different types of route experiences to help travellers navigate the region.

Driving highlights

Vestfjarðaleiðin pinpoints locations where the landscape views are impressive and the driving experience is thrilling. Examples include the pass between Hrafnseyri and Þingeyri, the road around Klofningur and the Neshringur loop.

Quirky experiences

Many experiences are unique to Iceland, with unexpected places, museums, and attractions. Examples on this route include the Samúel Jónsson Sculpture, the Museum of Sorcery & Witchcraft and the Sea Monster Museum.



Tours to iconic sites

There are numerous opportunities to tour remote natural spots like the Hornstrandir Nature Reserve, the Látrabjarg cliffs and the Rauðasandur beach. You can spend your time roaming these gorgeous natural sites, soaking in the spectacular scenery.

Getting wet

Water is abundant on the island and can be experienced by bathing in hot pools like Guðúnarlaug, visiting waterfalls such as Dynjandi, or getting into it by kayaking and whale watching.



Taking the air

There are countless sky-high viewpoints where you can marvel at mountains, ascend hiking routes and enjoy skiing in the winter months. Examples include: Bolafjall, Dynjandi waterfall, the experience of flying into Ísafjörður, or hiking the old road to Bolungarvík.

Stories

The Westfjords have a rich history and travellers can explore this through the sagas, visiting longhouses and museums. Examples include: Hnjótur Museum, Eiríksstaðir Viking Museum, Eldsmiðjan Iron making, and the Jón Sigurðsson Museum.

Taste the place

Foodies rejoice, Iceland has so many tasty options to enjoy and the Westfjords is no exception. The Vestfjarðaleiðin route leads you to the best eating places, coffee stops, excellent restaurants and farm shops. Examples include Erpsstaðir Dairy, Tjörhúsið, and Sætt og Salt specialty chocolate. The Westfjords is also home to cosy cafes like Kaffi Sól, Litlibær, and Simbahöllin.

Instagrammable icons

Get your phone ready as there are so many views and experiences that capture the essence of Vestfjarðaleiðin. Examples include: the aircraft at Hnjótur; Garðar BA64 Steel Ship; the red roofed A-frame sheep hut in Arnarfjörður, as well as wildlife like puffins, whales, seals, and Arctic foxes.



Easier to navigate

Vestfjarðaleiðin was created following the opening of a tunnel between Arnarfjörður and Dýrafjörður, an important link between the north and south parts of the Westfjords. The opening of the tunnel ensures the new Westfjords Way will be open year-round as travellers can now avoid the Hrafnseyrarheiði mountain pass, which is unpaved and closed for many months of the year.

In a country full of beauty, the Westfjords may be the most beautiful region of all. Endless coastlines, jaw-dropping cliffs, and spectacular mountain landscapes await those who make the trip. Discover Iceland the Westfjords Way. -JG



BETWEEN Two CLIFFS

Photos & text: Páll Stefánsson

Hornvík Bay in Hornstrandir lies between two of the largest bird cliffs in Iceland, Hælavíkurbjarg to the west and Hornbjarg to the east. In past centuries there were three families' houses in the small bay: Horn, which was abandoned in 1946, Höfn, which was abandoned in 1944, though the rangers' service house is still there at Hornstrandir, and Rekavík behind Höfn, which was abandoned in the same year. Hornstrandir is the northernmost part of Vestfirðir, and was made a nature reserve along with Jökulfjörður in 1975. A well populated community existed there, even though living conditions were very tough, until the middle of the last century, when the whole area was abandoned. There is no road transport to or in the reserve, so walking is the only option to view and explore this area, which is one of the most remote, coldest, and also the most beautiful parts of Iceland. Almost everyone who has been to Hornstrandir agrees on that. Hornvík is the best place to start exploring the area, though it involves both a steep climb and incredibly diverse nature. Whether in its dark cold fog, its calmness or sunshine, there is nothing to compare to it in the whole country. Boat trips into the area, Jökulfjörður and Hornstrandir are available from both Bolungarvík and Ísafjörður.



Hornbjarg



Hælavík Cliff above Hornvík Bay



Hornbjarg lighthouse and weather observation station at Horn below Hornbjarg peak



The Horn house in Hornvík Bay was abandoned in 1946, but is now used as a summer house



VISIT THE GREAT NORTH

Explore the culture, beauty and history of North Iceland

North Iceland is a beautiful part of the country, encompassing breathtaking nature, unique history and some of the best bathing spots in all of Iceland.

Navigating the Diamond Circle

The Diamond Circle is a popular tourist route that covers five key destinations in the north, starting with the picturesque Goðafoss waterfall. In a country full of spectacular waterfalls, what sets Goðafoss apart is the sheer width of these powerful falls. White water surges over the rim, thundering down and crashing into rocks and the water below. Next are the striking blue and green landscapes of Lake Mývatn, followed by the stunning Dettifoss, the most powerful waterfall in all of Europe. Continuing on the route takes you to Ásbyrgi, an enormous canyon full of fascinating rock formations, lush grass, well-maintained walking paths, thriving birdlife, and several bodies of water. The final destination is Húsavík, the whale-watching capital of Iceland, with deep blue seas and several boat departures every day.

Arctic Coast Way

For travellers who have a bit more time to allocate to the north, North Iceland's newest tourist route spans 900 km and has been dubbed the Arctic Coast Way. This route leads travellers on a journey across 21 towns and villages close to the Arctic Circle. The route, which debuted in 2019, is recommended to take 9 days. Along the way, you will see spectacular landscapes of mountains, steep cliffs, charming fishing villages, glacial river deltas and even crossings to islands like Grímsey and Hrísey. For more information on the route, visit www.arcticcoastway.is/en.

Rich bathing culture

Bathing opportunities are plentiful in the north and it is worth visiting as many as time allows. These swimming pools are heated by natural geothermal energy, at the perfect temperature in which to relax and enjoy some conversations with the locals. Icelanders love their pools! There are also fantastic bathing centres for a more extensive experience like the Mývatn Nature Baths and the GeoSea Sea Baths in



Húsavík. For something truly unique, visit the Beer Spa in Árskógssandur. Here you soak in a bathtub filled with beer, water, hops and yeast, an unforgettable soothing experience for your skin.

Don't forget about the wildlife

Getting on a whale-watching boat and viewing the gentle giants up close is an extraordinary experience and there are several harbours in the north that offer trips. You can board whale watching vessels in Akureyri, Dalvík, Hauganes, Hjalteyri and Húsavík to get a glimpse of these spectacular creatures. For seal watching opportunities, be sure to visit Hvammstangi and for puffins, taking a ferry to the island of Grímsey, straddling the Arctic Circle, is highly recommended to spot these iconic birds.



Experience North Iceland's culture

The locals of North Iceland are proud of their history and eager to introduce travellers to their art and culture, which stretches back to the Viking Age. Some museums to put on your radar include the Húsavík Whale Museum, which presents not just 11 real whale skeletons, including a 25-metre-long blue whale but an educational overview of these fantastic beasts. Another museum of note is the Icelandic Herring Era Museum in Siglufjörður, which examines the region's rich maritime history. For those after an interactive experience, the newly opened exhibition, 1238: The Battle of Iceland, uses technology to bring history to life. The exhibition tells the tale of Iceland's dramatic clash of family clans which led to a fatal civil war.

There's something for everyone in the north, whether it's charming towns and villages, well-maintained hiking paths, spectacular bathing centres, soaking in the culture at museums or getting up close to Iceland's wildlife. The North awaits! -JG



KRUA SIAM

Experience Thai Cuisine in North Iceland

In the heart of the largest town of North Iceland, Akureyri, is the Krua Siam restaurant. The restaurant specialises in authentic Thai food and offers fish, meat and vegetarian dishes.

The name Krua Siam means Siam Kitchen and refers to the name of Thailand until 1939. Many Thai customs involve food. It is common for everyone to order a few dishes, which are then shared among the group; it is even seen as bad luck to eat

on your own. It is considered important to not throw away leftovers since it can anger the rice goddess, Phosop. Her role is to make sure everyone has enough to eat and if she becomes angry, it could mean famine for the whole nation!

Krua Siam offers the option to eat in or take away and has offers for 2 and more people. There is a lunch buffet between 11:30 and 13:30 every weekday with many different courses. You can find dishes with everything from pork, chicken, shrimp, fish and, of course, fried noodles and vegetable dishes, as well.

The restaurant is situated smack downtown on the corner of Glerárgata and Strandgata, near to Ráðhústorgið and Hof, the Akureyri Cultural and Conference Centre. It is thus a great place to check out during your travels.

Enrich your palate with a visit to Krua Siam. –HDB



Krua Siam

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 www.kruasiam.is



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The designer Halldóra Eydis is from the nature paradise- Lake Mývatn area. She studied footwear design at London College of Fashion, Cordwainers and started her business in Iceland in 2010.

The collection can be purchased in her small and personal showroom at **Grensásvegur 26, 108 Reykjavík - open every Wednesday, Thursday and Friday from 14-18, or by pre-booked appointments.**

The online store www.halldora.com offers free shipping and deliveries in Iceland and affordable prices on express worldwide shipping.

ONLINE STORE:
WWW.HALLDORA.COM
 Tel: +354 8667960
halldora@halldora.com

TRAVEL TO THE *Edge of the Arctic*

Explore the Northeast of Iceland, the end of the Arctic Coast Way

The northeast of Iceland is home to some of the most exquisite nature on the island, without the crowds. The north is ideal for slow travel, to spend time basking in the beauty of the region, and enjoying outdoor activities like hiking, kayaking and birdwatching. The region offers sweeping landscapes with backdrops of looming mountains, narrow fjords, and curvaceous coastlines. If you're looking for unspoiled beauty, it's all here.



Bárán Restaurant, Þórshöfn in Langanes

Bárán Restaurant has earned the reputation as one of the best restaurants in northeast of Iceland. Specialising in fresh local meat and produce from nearby farms and fresh fish from the local boats, Bárán is a delightful full-service restaurant in Þórshöfn.

Bárán, which features a cosy, warm atmosphere, is open for lunch and dinner seven days a week, something rare for this part of Iceland as the next full-service restaurant is about 150 kilometres away. Guests can enjoy options from a diverse menu, including lamb, fresh fish, burgers, soups, sandwiches, pasta and pizza. There's something for everyone. And if the weather is good, guests can enjoy their meal on an outdoor deck overlooking the serene harbour. For those up for a drink, Bárán has an impressive beer menu from local Icelandic breweries as well as imported beer.



Eyri in Hjalteyri

Nearby Hjalteyri, which is a small village on the western shores of Eyjafjörður, close to Akureyri, has transformed from a fishing town to an artist community. The old herring factory is frequently used as a venue for art exhibitions. Hungry travellers should stop by the Eyri Restaurant, a beautiful eatery with gorgeous fjord views. Eyri serves dishes derived from local meat and produce. In fact, all of the lamb served is from farms within 30 kilometres of the restaurant and the fish comes from Þórshöfn.

Hjalteyri has evolved into an attractive tourist destination over the past few years. There is a food co-op that sells fresh organic produce every two weeks; there's live music on weekends and the hot tub is a hit with locals and tourists alike. Eyri is at the heart of it all with great food and a friendly atmosphere.



Hotel Skúlagarður and Restaurant

Hótel Skúlagarður offers comfortable accommodation for travellers looking to explore two tourist routes—the Diamond Circle and the Arctic Coast Way. The hotel has 17 rooms, all with private bathrooms and, during the summer months, the hotel provides a reception area, restaurant and bar. The restaurant focuses on quality, local ingredients and offers an á la carte menu from 1st June–1st September. The winter months have limited service.

Skúlagarður is located in Kelduhverfi and natural wonders can be found within walking distance of the hotel, including hiking trails, caves and lake Skálftavatn. The location is perfect for travellers exploring the Northeast and discovering some hidden gems along the way.



Sandur Guesthouse in Þórshöfn

Sandur Guesthouse offers charming accommodation in a historically significant house in the town of Þórshöfn. The renovated guesthouse offers an array of accommodation ranging from a single room to a 4-bed family room, all with private bathrooms. The guesthouse is perfectly situated along the Arctic Coast Way, with attractions nearby. The guesthouse owners also offer kayaking rentals and tours that allow you to explore the natural beauty of the area by water.



The Arctic Coast Way

The businesses above are located along the north-eastern corner of North Iceland's newest tourist route, the Arctic Coast Way, which spans 900 kilometres from Hvammstangi in the northwest to Bakkafjörður in the northeast. This route leads travellers on a journey across 21 towns and villages, and along the way you will see spectacular landscapes of towering mountains, charming fishing villages, and glacial river deltas.

Northeast Iceland is often overlooked, but has some of the most pristine, untouched nature in Iceland. On your next trip to Iceland, make sure to spend some time hiking and photographing the Northeast coast. Even during the high season, there's a good chance you won't bump into many other tourists. The Northeast can be your own private treasure. -JG



Geothermal SEA BATHS

Húsavík's unique hot baths



At the awesome GeoSea baths, set on top of Húsavíkurhöfði – ‘Húsavík Cliff’ – bathers 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 GeoSea

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

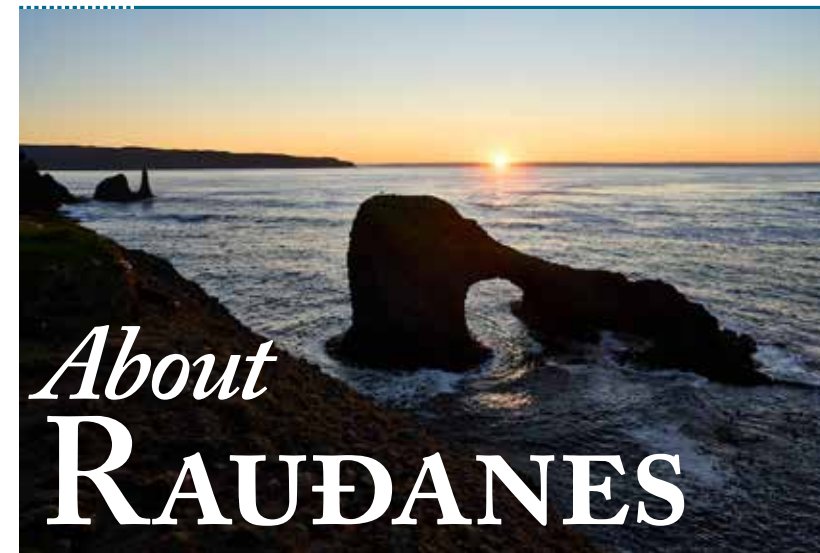
The water in the GeoSea baths comes from two bore holes, one located by the cheese barrel and the other by Húsavík harbour. There is no need to use any cleaning agents or equipment, as the steady flow of water

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.

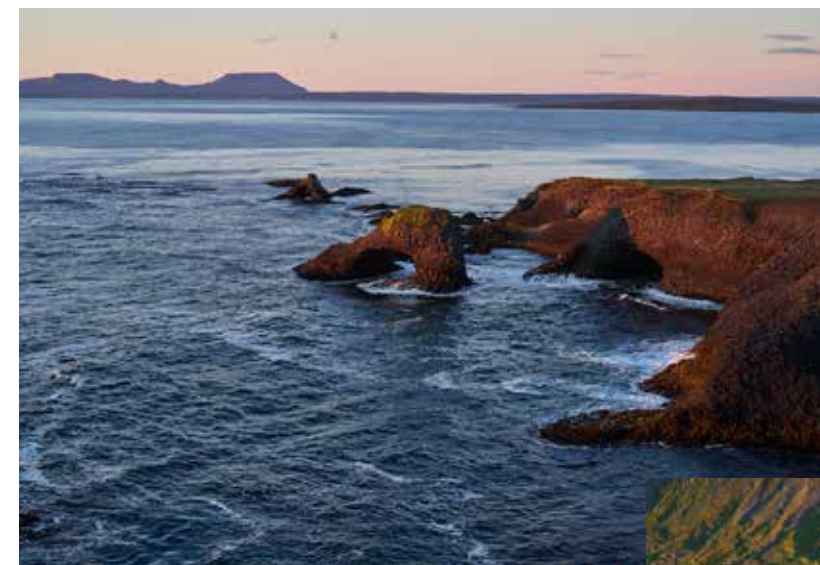
The GeoSea sea baths enable guests to enjoy nature in a unique manner. Thanks to the underground heat, the seawater in the baths is warm and comfortable and the mineral-rich water caresses the skin. While warm sea works its miracles, guests enjoy the spectacular view and health benefits. -JG



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The midnight sun glitters on the surface of the sea, with Gatastakkur in the foreground



Rauðanes, with Langanes in the distance



Kollavík in the foreground, then Rauðanes, and Gunnólfsvíkurfjall in Langanes



Vellir Farm in the shelter of Vidarfjall mountain

Rauðanes Point
on Melrakkaslétta in
Pistilfjörður is a unique
natural pearl.

Around Rauðanes, there is a well-marked 7 km-long hiking trail that runs in a circle, and the trail is both easy and very beautiful to hike. The land is fortified by tall, vertical cliffs, and what makes the hike so special are the unique rock structures just offshore, such as Lundastapar and Gatastak and the sheer cliffs along it.

In the Spring, the precipitous rock faces are covered with seabirds, while most of the puffins are on Stakkatorfa, the arched rock structure offshore. The Vellir summer farm is nestled under Vidarfjall mountain. There is a beautiful view of Rauðanes in the north, in Kollavík, and over Pistilfjörður to Langanes in the southeast.

A photographer from Icelandic Times walked around the headland in the mild summer night. It is 30 km from Þórshöfn to Rauðanes, and 120 km from Húsavík.

AKUREYRI

Heart of the North



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, boat trips, 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 pots, 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.



Visit Akureyri
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www.visitakureyri.is



THE PEARL THAT IS ÁSBYRGI

“Ásbyrgi IS the most beautiful place in Iceland!”, I heard an Icelandic woman say to her friend in the Ásbyrgi store. “I agree 100%”, said the friend, “as it’s very warm outside, quite unique summer warmth and the light last night at Botnstjörn, was quite unique”.

Ásbyrgi is a sheer mountain enclosure in Vatnajökull National Park, in the north of Norður Þingeyjar County, and one of Iceland’s greatest natural wonders. It’s a massive flat rock table mountain that was formed, according to Norse tradition, when the eight-legged horse, Sleipnir, belonging to Odin, the supreme god in Norse mythology, touched the ground for a moment, and left a 3.5 km long hoofprint where Ásbyrgi is now.

Some scientists claim that Ásbyrgi was formed following a catastrophic eruption and subsequent glacial flood of the Jökulsá á Fjöllum River, which flows just east of Ásbyrgi down to the sea in Öxarfjörður. Ásbyrgi is just 4 km from Skinnastaður, 30 km from Kópasker, 60 km from Húsavík, and 560 km from Reykjavík.



The table mountain in Ásbyrgi. There are two people standing at the very top of the edge if you look carefully

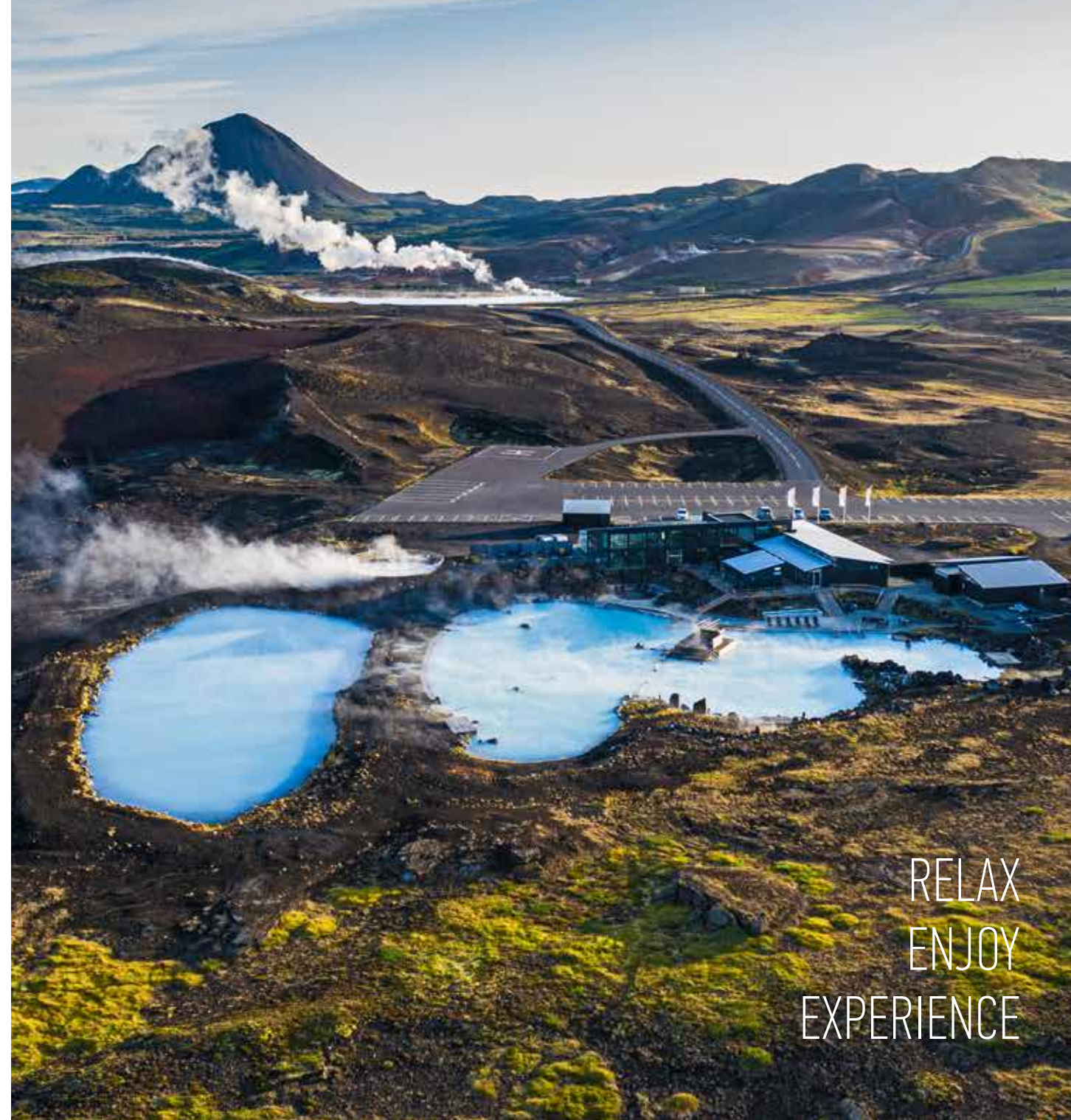


An old sheep barn, converted into a Service Centre of Vatnajökull National Park, at the entrance to Ásbyrgi



Evening light at Botnstjörn pond

Amazing silence, Botnstjörn



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THE BEER SPA

Adventure in Árskógssandur



Bathe in beer, tour a brewery and stay in a cosy hotel in a scenic slice of north Iceland

Iceland is home to some of the cleanest, purest water on earth. Travellers are encouraged to drink water from the tap and enjoy the island's bathing facilities, from hot springs to swimming pools to luxurious spas. For a truly unique experience, The Beer Spa, Björböðin, is an ideal place to visit. Located in the village of Árskógssandur in North Iceland, it's one of the first beer spas outside of Eastern Europe, where the owners got the idea.

The beer bath experience

The owners wanted to focus on providing a relaxing experience for guests to soak in a beer bath for 30 minutes, followed by 30 minutes in a relaxation area. The tubs are made from Kambala wood and can hold up to two people. The beer bath is filled with beer, water, hops and yeast, which creates a soothing mixture for your skin. If you are travelling with children, you'll be pleased that the beer bath has no age limit because the water is undrinkable.

Sample the beer, stay for food and comfortable accommodation

For those interested in some food and drinks, there is a restaurant on-site and Kaldi beer

on tap. The restaurant has a succulent menu to cater to the hungry, ranging from small plates like bacon fries and chicken wings to burgers, steaks and fish and chips. In August, a hotel opened its doors, allowing guests to stay longer in the beautiful part of the north. All rooms have ocean views with the small island of Hrísey in the distance; the scenery is as calm and relaxing as the decor. The hotel currently has five rooms open for staying, and the remaining 11 will be available in the spring. The hotel has a café serving light meals during the day.

Family roots in the beer business

The Icelandic family behind The Beer Spa opened the first microbrewery in Iceland in 2006 and travelled to the Czech Republic two years later, enjoying a beer bath. Returning home to Iceland, the idea started brewing to open a beer spa. In 2017 that dream was realised when The Beer Spa opened in the small town of Árskógssandur, close to Dalvík.

A must for any beer lover is to bathe in beer, savour a pint and enjoy a fantastic view of the fjord from one of the outdoor tubs. Be sure to spend some time in Árskógssandur during your next trip to Iceland!



The Beer Spa

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ICELANDIC WOOL

INSULATION

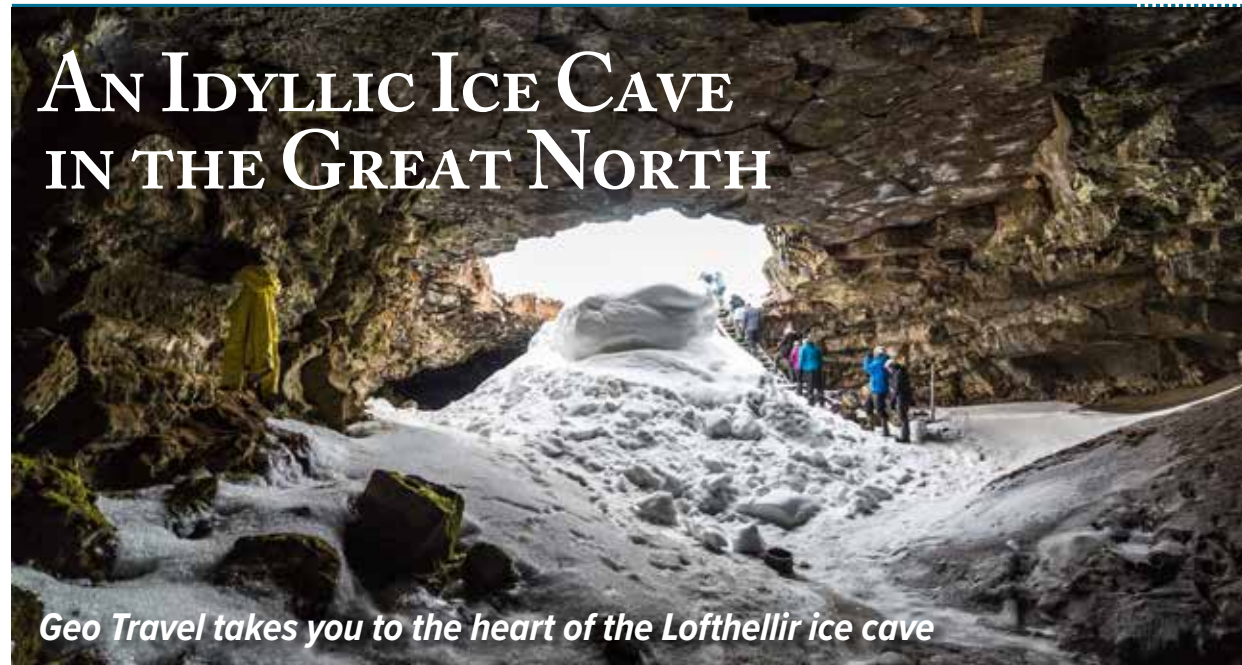
WARM INNOVATION



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ICELANDIC DESIGN
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AN IDYLIC ICE CAVE IN THE GREAT NORTH

Geo Travel takes you to the heart of the Lofthellir ice cave

Embarking on an ice cave adventure in Iceland is a unique, fascinating experience and one that Geo Travel guides take great pride in. “The cave is a lava tube, but it’s different than any other lava tube in the world as it’s a permafrost ice cave”, said Anton Birgisson, co-owner of Geo Travel. “Due to a limited airflow through the cave, a microclimate exists inside the cave where you see enormous icicles that have been formed for hundreds of years.”

What is the tour like?

There are daily tours to the cave year-round. Departing from the Mývatn region, a guide begins the tour by driving through rugged and wild terrain with breathtaking landscapes, including the Hverfjall volcano and the Lúdentarborgir craters. After reaching base camp, you start an easy 30-minute guided hike across a lava field until you reach the cave. After guests have donned the proper equipment

provided (helmet, headlamp and studded boots), you enter the cave and are instantly exposed to the fragility of nature. “It’s an art piece of earth”, said Anton. “There are icicles in there that are 500 years old. It’s really special to turn off the headlamps, and as the icicles melt, they play their own kind of music.”

Ensuring sustainable travel

Lofthellir is a unique cave, and it’s essential to respect and preserve it. “The cave has been here for 3,000 years, and it would be terrible for us to ruin it”, said Anton. “For us, it’s a really special place on Earth. We used to take three or four trips a day to the cave, but we reduced it to one trip a day.” Indeed, only a limited number of tours are allowed, and the goal of the cave project is to offer sustainable tours and preserve it for future generations to explore. Every ticket includes a fee for the protection programme and local landowners.

Assisting in cave research

The Geo Travel cave team is involved in research where Lofthellir is used to understand cave explorations on planet Mars further. “NASA is preparing for human exploration to Mars, where there are a lot of lava tubes”, said Anton. “There’s a team of researchers travelling around the world looking for a similar sister cave to that on Mars. We have been a part of this study for six years.”

Geo Travel is a small, family-run business with a great passion and respect for the nature they show tourists. They also offer tours to Askja, super jeep tours and snowmobile and Northern Lights tours in the winter.



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BIRD PARADISE

In the mouth of the Fáskrúðfjörður fjord lies Skríður island. The island is one big rock made of basalt and acid volcanic rock that rises 160 metres out of the sea. The island belongs to the Vattarnes land and was protected in 1995; it is 530 metres wide and 590 metres long. Over the centuries, there has been a lot of egg harvesting on Skríður, as 18 bird species nest on the island. The birds number in the hundreds of thousands. There are, for example, 300,000 puffins in Skríður alone. It is the most common nesting bird along with the gannet, which started nesting on the island in 1943. Fulmar and black-legged kittiwake are also common nesting birds on Skríður. There is a remarkable cave on the island coast named Skríðhellir. It is estimated at around 4,000 m², 125 metres long, and 80 metres wide at its widest point. Many puffins nest in the cave. Decades ago, fishermen sailed from Skríður and between rowing tours, they stayed in the cave.



Skríður Island in all its glory



Nesting gannets on Skríður



Gannets in flight



The gannet settlement on the east side of Skríður



Looking at Skríðhellir



THE PEARLS OF *East Iceland*

Explore the vast beauty of the East

East Iceland is home to some of the most remote, spectacular nature on the island, with breathtaking attractions and numerous hiking opportunities. The region offers sweeping landscapes with backdrops of looming mountains, narrow fjords, and rugged coastlines. If you're looking for unspoiled beauty, it's here.

There are several itineraries to help you determine the best way to explore East Iceland on www.east.is. Below are some of the highlights of the eclectic east.

Djúpivogur, a town of fewer than 500 people that has a history of fishing and trading dating to 1589, is a recommended place to visit. The picturesque landscape is the backdrop to countless hiking trails, which are free to roam and explore.

Fáskrúðsfjörður is a small village, also with fewer than 500 people, nestled on a long fjord of the same name. It's the most 'French' part of Iceland, as the village was originally a base for more than 5,000 French fishermen, who came every year to fish the rich Icelandic waters. Some settled here in the late 19th century. The village had a hospital, chapel, and cemetery that were built by the French, and both the buildings and the history

remain, as the streets of Fáskrúðsfjörður are marked in both Icelandic and French.

Egilsstaðir is considered the unofficial capital of East Iceland, but don't let that fool you; it's a 'capital' with fewer than 3,000 residents. The quaint town earned its name based on a reference to the nearby Egil's farm, which appears in the stories of the Sagas.

If you're interested in exploring a bit more of the interior, consider a drive through the highlands. There are the hot natural pools at Laugarfell, the towering Snæfell mountain, and the vast beauty of the Vatnajökull National Park.

While surveying the landscape, you will have certainly noticed that trees are a rare sight in Iceland. Hallormsstaður has the distinction of being the largest forest in the country, though it would be considered small by other standards. It stretches along banks of the 35-kilometre-long Lagarfljót glacial lake. It's beautiful to roam among native birch trees that have survived inclement weather and found a way to thrive.

Seyðisfjörður is well-known for its variety of cultural events, its diverse community and the town centre that is adorned with beautiful wooden houses that are quite rare in this



country, as well as the ferry port that brings visitors from Europe with the cars, motorbikes or bikes. Opportunities for outdoor activities are varied in Seyðisfjörður and for those who are interested in hiking, you can find both short and longer hiking trails.

Convenient App

To help you discover and navigate the magic of East Iceland, an app called Austurland, is a valuable resource to get the most out of your trip. Austurland includes information about attractions, hiking trails, swimming pools, as well as discounts, special offers, local secrets,



services and announcements. The Austurland app, which is available for both Apple and Android products, is a great guide to help you find inspiration for places to eat, activities or ways to unwind in the east of Iceland.

East Iceland is often overlooked by first-time visitors to the country, but it has some of the most pristine, untouched nature in Iceland. On your next trip to Iceland, be sure to spend some time visiting, hiking and photographing the east coast and Eastfjords. Even during the high season, there's a good chance you won't bump into many other tourists. The East can be your own private treasure. -JG



A UNIQUE BATHING EXPERIENCE *in the Idyllic East*

Vök Baths offers guests the only floating geothermal pools in all of Iceland



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 a few minutes away 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, 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 small courses. 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% Blond Kellerbier and a 4% 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 the pure 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. -JG



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WHERE THE SUN COMES UP



MJÓIFJÖRÐUR

It is possible to debate whether Klifbrekfossar in Mjóafjörður is the most beautiful waterfall in the country, that nowhere is the fog more awesome than in Stöðvarfjörður, or that the stillness on Eskifjörður is so complete, the silent and majestic mountains are reflected inverted on its mirror-like surface. But one thing is certain that the sun rises in Iceland first in Fjarðabyggð, always.

Fjarðabyggð is the tenth most populous municipality in Iceland, with over five thousand residents in the middle of East Iceland, from Mjóafjörður in the north to Breiddalsvík in the south. Fjarðabyggð was formed in 1998, about a quarter of a century ago, when Neskaupstaður, Eskifjörður and Reydarfjörður merged, followed by Mjóifjörður, Fáskrúðsfjörður, Stöðvarfjörður and Breiddalsvík.

The fishing industry, aquaculture and the processing of marine products are the basic pillars of value creation in the municipality, as three of the larger fishery companies in the country are located in Fjarðabyggð. Then there is Alcoa-Fjarðaál, with its large aluminium smelter, in Reydarfjörður. The third pillar in the municipality is, of course, the tourism industry that has grown and grown rapidly in a short time, as the area is great for seeing and experiencing the uniqueness of Iceland year-round. Even in the winter, there is skiing in Oddskarð, the sight of reindeer in the middle of the

track, and enjoying the Northern Lights dancing above Skrúð, the island east of Vattarnes, between Reydarfjörður and Fáskrúðsfjörður.

The first protected nature conservancy of the country was established in Fjarðabyggð, in Neskaupstaður. The area around the foot of the Nipan mountain was protected in 1972. Since then, Hólmanes, between Eskifjörður and Reydarfjörður has also been designated a nature reserve. The Gerpis area, the easternmost part of Iceland, between Norðfjörður and Reydarfjörður is becoming one of the most popular hiking

areas in Iceland, both because the area is deserted and because it is laid out with great, well-marked hiking trails, which makes it accessible to tourists and hikers alike. The nature and bird life in the area are exceptional.

What makes Fjarðabyggð especially exciting for tourists is its diversity. The tranquillity and beauty of Mjóafjörður is unforgettable, whether you take the sea route from Neskaupstaður or drive over the Mjófjarðarheiði pass. In contrast, Neskaupstaður bustles with energy. There is always life in the town, whether at the



BREIDDALUR



FÁSKRÚÐSFJÖRÐUR



FÁSKRÚÐSFJÖRÐUR



ESKIFJÖRÐUR



REYDARFJÖRÐUR

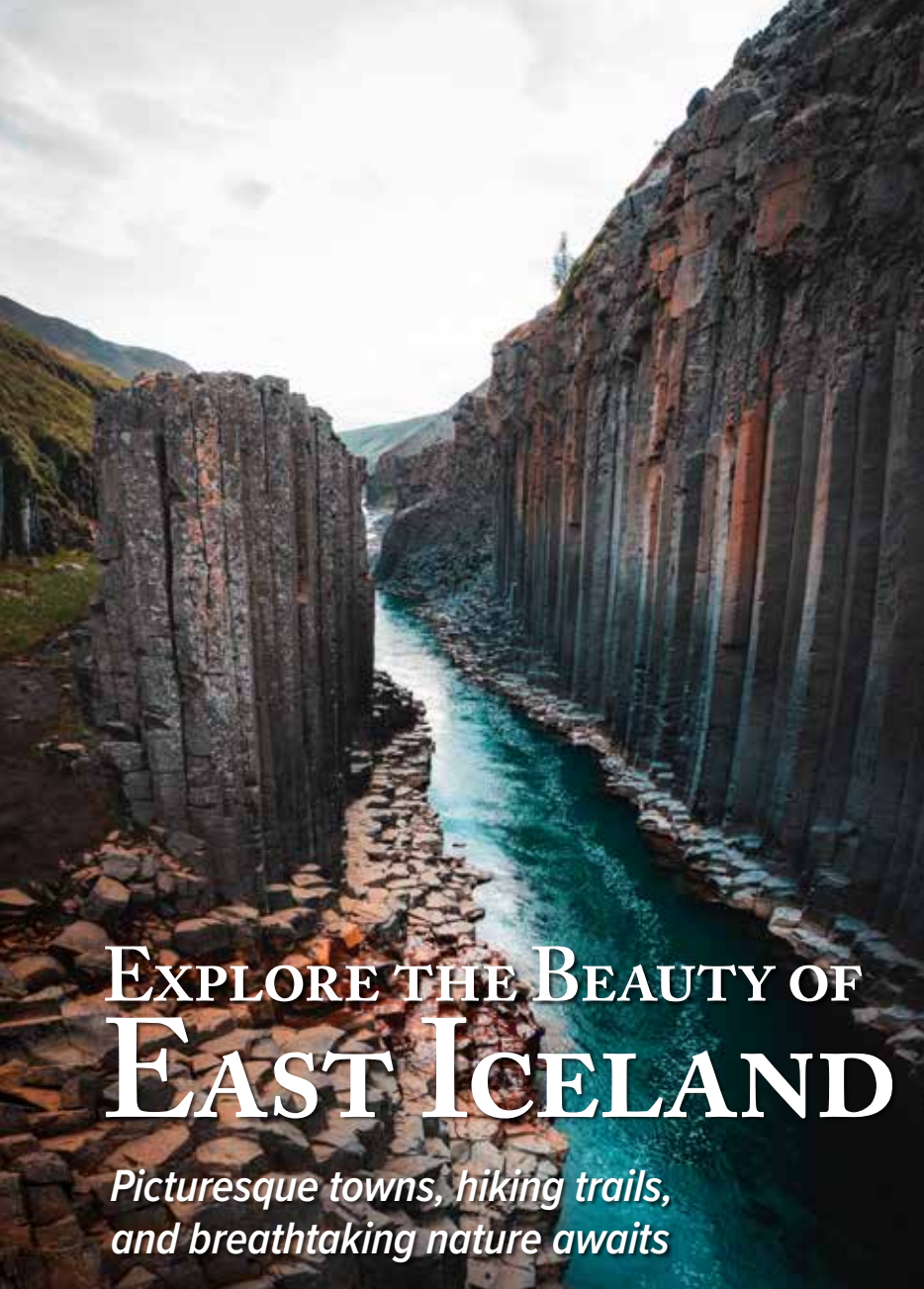


REYDARFJÖRÐUR

museum at the harbour, or around the harbour itself. In Eskifjörður, old meets new charmingly in the fjord, creating a picturesque town. Reydarfjörður is the centre of the action, while at the bottom of the fjord between Vattarnes and Hafnarnes lies the town of Fáskrúðsfjörður, where you have to speak French! In the last century, the town was a centre for French fishing boats, fishing the wild Icelandic waters, as there are very good fishing grounds off the East coast. To the south is Stöðvarfjörður, where most travellers touring the country visit the unique and famous Petra's Stone Collection. Continuing south, in Breiddalsvík is Meleyri, one of the most beautiful coastlines in Iceland, a three kilometre-long beach with the Sæhvammstind mountains on one side and Sátor mountain with its distinctive peak, on the other. To see the sun kissing the land at dawn is stunning while, because Fjarðabyggð is Iceland's most eastern municipality, naturally, most other people still only see a morning glow in the sky.



STÖÐVARFJÖRÐUR



EXPLORE THE BEAUTY OF EAST ICELAND

Picturesque towns, hiking trails, and breathtaking nature awaits

East Iceland is home to some of the most pristine, untouched nature on the island and charming towns with cultural attractions to boot. Múlaþing municipality consists of four villages, Borgarfjörður eystri, Seyðisfjörður, Djúpvogur, and Egilsstaðir, which are can't-miss destinations in the east of Iceland.

Beautiful Borgarfjörður eystri

Borgarfjörður eystri is a gem hidden between spectacular mountains in the east. It is the home of the Atlantic puffin, which can be visited during the summer season. These adorable birds are delightful to see

in their natural habitat. In Hafnarhólmi, guests can get close to the birds, observe them, and get magnificent photos.

Borgarfjörður offers a variety of fantastic well-maintained hiking trails where you can feel connected to nature. As the fjord is the home of hundreds of elves, who knows what one might spot while roaming the beautiful landscape. For those who want to experience the fjord filled with music and people, it is worth visiting during the Bræðslan music festival, which takes place in July every year. Check out borgarfjordureystri.is for more information about the village.

Serene and scenic Seyðisfjörður

Both culture and vibrant atmosphere symbolise the unique fjord Seyðisfjörður. The village buzzes with life during LungA, its annual art festival boasting local and international artists. In addition to the unique festival, it also hosts the LungA School. Exploring the sound sculpture, Tvisöngur combines hiking in beautiful surroundings and engaging art; it is a place where one might be tempted to sing a song or two.

Walking in the fascinating village, down the rainbow street with its cute little coffee houses, market, shops, and restaurants



and into the blue church makes a visit worthwhile. Everywhere is an opportunity to catch breathtaking photos of people, nature, and quirky old houses. Information about nature, attractions, and hiking can be found at visitseydisfjordur.com.

Dreamy Djúpvogur

Djúpvogur is a charming fishing village where heritage is celebrated by beautiful old houses, fascinating museums and the idyllic island Papey. For birdwatching enthusiasts, a visit to Djúpvogur is an excellent opportunity to explore various birds; one can even set up in a birdwatching

hut and wait for the perfect photo moment.

Along the coastline towards the harbour, one can see a stunning art piece which consists of 34 granite eggs; it is a replica of the eggs of the birds which lay eggs around the village. In and around Djúpvogur, one can go hiking or enjoy strolls along the black sand beach or the white sand beach. During a walk, one might lay eyes on reindeers and seals. The village and its surroundings are incredibly picturesque.

A gorgeous landscape is the backdrop to countless hiking trails, free to roam and explore. The 1,069-metre (3,507-ft)



Mount Búlandstindur looms over the town, dominating the terrain. Visit visitdjupivogur.is for more information about the village.

Endearing Egilsstaðir

Egilsstaðir is considered the unofficial capital and the hub of services and shops in the east of Iceland. With its wide range of options for dining, everyone should find what they desire. It is the home to the domestic airport and a connection to the fjords and other interesting places in the area. In Egilsstaðir, one can relax with a drink in hand at Vök Baths or take the family to the local swimming pool, which prides itself on a slide, two hot tubs, a cold tub and a sauna.

Stuðlagil is an extraordinary place, one of the most stunning sights in the east. The canyon has one of the largest numbers of basalt rock columns in Iceland. Stuðlagil emerged from under the river Jökulsá just a few years ago when the river levels fell, revealing this natural wonder. There is a viewpoint where you can marvel at the dark-coloured columns, which contrast perfectly with the clear blue colour of the river.

Meanwhile, Selskógur is a cute little forest within walking distance on the outskirts of the village. It is a tranquil spot where one can walk along the river and listen to its sound blending in with the lovely tunes of the birds living in the area. Also, Egilsstaðir is situated along a beautiful lake called Lagarfljót that stretches 35 kilometres (21.7 mi) long and offers numerous opportunities for hiking and outdoor recreation. These attractions and more can be found at visitegilsstadir.is.

The east is a paradise for hikers, as there are numerous places to roam and experience the breathtaking nature of the region with few fellow travellers nearby. Be sure to check out the beauty and rich culture of the east during your trip to Iceland.



SURVEY THE SCENIC SOUTH

Arguably the most popular region of Iceland that never disappoints



The South is home to glaciers, volcanoes and well-known sights like Þingvellir National Park and the Geysir geothermal region (both on the popular Golden Circle tour), lesser-known gems like Þórsmörk (an area with its own micro-climate), colourful mountains, waterfalls, canyons, and lava-shaped landscapes.

The classic Golden Circle

Encompassing the three most visited sights in South Iceland, the Golden Circle gives you a slice of Icelandic history at Þingvellir, a spectacular view of Iceland’s bubbling geothermal activity at Geysir, and the experience of a roaring, powerful waterfall at Gullfoss. Many travellers visit Þingvellir for its geological significance, offering a rare view of the Mid-Atlantic Ridge, the meeting point of the North American and Eurasian tectonic plates. It’s also home to Þingvallavatn, the largest natural lake on the island.

The next stop on the Golden Circle route is the Geysir hot spring area. While Geysir itself currently lies dormant, its neighbour, Strokkur, erupts every seven minutes or so. Crowds gather to watch as the churning, gurgling pool of hot water erupts into a fountain of boiling water 15-20 metres high. The final stop is at the mighty Gullfoss waterfall, where the Hvítá, meaning ‘white river’, a perfect name for the turbulent white

water, plunges into the deep canyon below. The falls consist of three steps, ranging from 11 to 21 metres, ending in the 70-metre-deep gorge.

The scenic South Coast

The south coast has a bit of everything: waterfalls, black sand beaches, charming villages and vast canyons. Two of the most popular waterfalls, Seljalandsfoss and Skógafoss, stand near the coast, and they are unmissable.

Meanwhile, a stop at Reynisdrangar provides a rare experience before heading to the quaint village of Vík. Reynisdrangar is a cluster of striking basalt sea stacks that jut out from a black sand beach. The stacks sit under the Reynisfjall mountain just outside Vík. It’s popular pastime to climb on the stacks and take photos, then roam the black-sand beach picking up stones and admiring the rock formations. Reynisfjara, from which Reynisdrangar is visible, is probably the most famous black-sand beach in Iceland. The juxtaposition of the white waves crashing on the stark black sand and pebbles is beautiful, with towering basalt columns along the shore next to a small cave.

A lesser-known attraction, Fjaðrárgljúfur canyon, is worth a visit. The canyon, which is believed to have been formed during the last ice age, has been hollowed by the Fjaðrá river, creating narrow walls. The canyon is about 2 kilometres long and about 100

metres deep and visitors can walk on a foot path along the canyon’s edge to admire the view and take photos.

The vast, striking beauty of the Vatnajökull region

The South is home to yet another unmissable attraction, Jokulsárlón Glacier Lagoon. Situated in the Vatnajökull region, the lagoon features massive chunks of ice scattered about, walls of ice jut from the sea, and icebergs of various sizes float on the water. Huge blocks of ice constantly break off the Breiðamerkjökull glacier into the lagoon which, though not very wide, is up to 250 metres deep—the deepest lake in Iceland.

Meanwhile, Svartifoss waterfall is another spectacular site. After a short hike, you can see Svartifoss (Black Falls) waterfall, where thundering white water cascades over striking black basalt rock columns.

A lesser-known gem is Vestrahorn, an area approximately a ten-minute drive away from Höfn. The shore features stunning lava dunes, that are constantly being shaped by the natural forces of water and wind. Down towards the sea, it is possible to get perfect reflections in the wet sand, a favourite for photographers.

South Iceland has something for everyone and is a must-see region. Waterfalls, glaciers, national parks and black sands await! -JG

ON TOP OF THE WORLD *Glacier Jeeps*

The largest glacier in Europe



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: Vagnsstaðir. This is the official meeting place for all Glacier Jeep summer tours. Glacier Jeeps has years of experience conducting jeep, snowmobile and hiking tours on the glacier since 1994. (Bjarney has been helping run the family business since she was 14 years old.) I parked my car and joined them in their sturdy 4WD, which wound its way slowly every upwards on road F985 after a short drive on Route No. 1. The gravel road 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.

It is about a forty minute drive from Vagnsstaðir to the roots of Vatnajökull Glacier 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 base.

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

In case you just don't think a strenuous hike or a thrilling snowmobile adventure is for you, then Glacier Jeeps offers an alternative to see the glacier in a comfortable, specially equipped 4WD and is available year round, weather permitting. Each tour is 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 Vagnsstaðir 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! -EMV



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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 accommodations 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 Hvalsöllum in the middle of Fljótslíð, a picturesque farming district sheltered by three glaciers: Mýrdalsjökull, Eyjafjallajökull and Tindfjallajökull.

Cosy Cottages

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

So Many Choices!

At Hellishólar, there is also a guesthouse and a brand new hotel called Hótel Eyjafjallajökull with 36 spacious and comfortable bedrooms, each with an ensuite bathroom.

A Glorious View of Nature

The views from Hellishólar are, in a word, stunning! In winter, when the Northern



Lights are visible, one has only to step outside the door and look up. The lack of light pollution makes Hellishólar an ideal location for viewing the Northern Lights.

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



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DISCOVER AN ICE-BLUE WORLD

Jökulsárlón Boat Tours on the Jökulsárlón Glacial Lagoon

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

Sail Among the Icebergs

Jökulsárlón ehf has been operating boat tours on the east side of the lagoon for the last 30 years. Sail among the icebergs in a 40 minute amphibious boat tour, or take an exciting one hour Zodiac boat tour that goes further into the lagoon, getting you as close as is safe to the icebergs and the glacier itself.

Coffee with a View

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

The Show of Fire and Ice

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

Located within a few hundred metres of Route No. 1, the lagoon is actually much bigger and deeper than it appears. With an area measuring over 28 square

km (9.6 square miles), you could easily fit the island of Heimaey (in the Westman Islands) into it with room to spare. At over 300m (984 feet) deep, five Leaning Towers of Pisa, stacked one on top of the other, would fit inside the lagoon with room to spare. With the ebb and flow of the tides, sea water enters into the lagoon bringing with it krill, capelin, herring and salmon. Curious seals know where the food is plentiful and can often be seen bobbing along with the currents, swimming in and out between the icebergs and appearing to enjoy the attention from onlookers on the shore. Across the road, near the delta where fresh and salt water converge, you can walk down to the water's edge to witness the rather surreal sight of baby 'bergs' beached on the shoreline. -EMV



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A TASTE OF ICELAND'S WILD & SWEET

Laugarvatn's Lindin Restaurant & Café Bistro

Lindin Restaurant & Bistro Café, located on the banks of Lake Laugarvatn, has a firm foundation of culinary excellence that attracts patrons from around the world. Owner, Baldur Öxdal Halldórsson, pastry and master chef, trained at the Hotel and Restaurant School of Iceland between 1980–1984, received training as a pastry chef at the Culinary Institute of America, New York in 1986–1987, and attended the prestigious Richemont Professional School in Lucerne from 1988–1989, where he developed his interest in the art of chocolate and learnt the secrets behind a great dessert.

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

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 skyr 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 Pingvellir or Lake Apavatn daily.

In the heart of the Golden Circle

Lindin is located in the village of Laugarvatn, right beside the lovely natural sauna, steam baths and pool at the Fontana Spa. The 45 minute scenic drive from



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

—EMV/ASF

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THE HOUSE THAT DISAPPEARED

None 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, and finally succeeded in slowing down the lava flow by cooling it with seawater and thus saved the port. However, when 5 months later, the eruption came to its end, around 400 houses had been completely destroyed.

This volcanic eruption made headlines worldwide, bringing back memories of the Italian town of Pompeii which, in

73 AD, was buried under thick layers of ash and lava from Mt. Vesuvius. Huge parts of that historic site have since been excavated—so people on the Westman Islands rolled up their sleeves and started doing the same.

'Pompeii of the North' deserves its name: 40 years after the disaster some 10 houses have been raised from the ashes, and an impressive museum tops off the excavation site that had been open to visitors since the very first dig.

A Museum as a Mirror

Eldheimar's design is unique, rather ominous, and yet austere. It is an 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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ÁRNESSÝSLA HERITAGE MUSEUM

The history of the Árnessýsla Heritage Museum began in 1953, almost 70 years ago. In the beginning, it mainly held objects from the old farming community, with its emphasis on farming, trade and the fishing industry until mechanization. During these 70 years, of course, the emphasis has changed, and now more emphasis is placed on the daily life and households until the middle of the last century. The museum's first home was in Selfoss, but it was moved to Eyrarbakki in 1995. "Húsið á Eyrarbakki, the oldest house in South Iceland, was built in 1765 and is our main jewel", says Lýður Pálsson, historian and museum director for 30 years. "These beautiful and unique buildings should be enjoyed, as they are, in fact, the main exhibits. Therefore, special emphasis is placed on the history of Húsið – The House – and its cultural significance in recent centuries."

When the merchant Jens Lassen built The House in 1765, Eyrarbakki was probably the

largest trading place in Iceland. This was towards the end of the Danish-Icelandic Trade Monopoly, which lasted from 1602 to 1787. During this period, the citizens of the country were not allowed to trade with other merchants or foreign ships. At the time, it seemed that Eyrarbakki would be made the capital of Iceland, as it had a much larger population than Reykjavík.

Two other museums in Eyrarbakki belong to Árnessýsla Heritage Museum. The Maritime Museum, as Eyrarbakki was, through the centuries, one of the largest trading ports in the country, and Kirkjubær, an Icelandic family home built in 1920, where we go back a hundred years and see how ordinary poor people lived. Both museums are within walking distance of The House.

In The House itself, the summer exhibition of the Árnessýsla Heritage Museum is completely modern, as of the Spring of 2022. Artists from nine countries partially transformed the exhibition spaces of The House with works that were created in Eyrarbakki at the Hafsjór - Oceanus Art Festival, which took place this Spring. This was a collaboration between the museum and artist Ásta Vilhelmina Guðmundsdóttir, the festival's curator.

Does it take time to go back in history and see one of the oldest and most significant houses of Iceland in Eyrarbakki and the other two museums? No, it only takes 45 minutes to drive from Reykjavík, or 15 minutes from the Ring Road from Selfoss. The museums in Eyrarbakki are open every day from 10:59 to 18:02.



Lýður Pálsson, historian and museum director

HISTORY & SKÁLHOLT

Skálholt, with the Hekla volcano in the background

In Skálholt, the land and history come together. When the Icelandic Times / Land & Saga photographer slipped into the barn at Skálholt earlier today, history became so vivid to him. Here was the bishop's seat from the early days and, for centuries, Skálholt was the centre for learning and culture in Iceland from 1056 until around 1850 when Reykjavík took over as the country's educational, cultural, political and financial centre. The largest

church in Iceland prior to the 20th century was built at the episcopal seat in Skálholt during the time of Bishop Klængur Þorsteinsson in 1156, using timber that the bishop imported from Norway with two ships that year. This large and magnificent cathedral burned down in 1309. Skálholt still remained the centre of power in Iceland for over 500 years. The large church that is now in Skálholt was consecrated almost 800 years after the fire,

Photographs & text: Páll Stefánsson



Skálholt church

as in 1956 it was decided to build a new church, which was designed by Hördur Bjarnason and consecrated by Bishop Sigurbjörn Einarson in 1963. Sigurbjörn was the bishop of the Icelandic National Church from 1959 to 1981.

Skálholt is a remarkable place for Icelanders. You can feel it immediately when you park in the forecourt. There is the land and the history. Skálholt is just over an hour's drive south east from Reykjavík.



BUSTARFELL is one of the most beautiful and best kept turf houses in Iceland. Look through the history of farming and changes in lifestyle since 1770. Traditional cakes and coffee at the café.

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THE HÚSAVÍK WHALE MUSEUM is a non-profit organization, founded in 1997. The museum is also running an educational program for children. It is expected that every pupil visits the Children's Whale School at least four times during their schooling.

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BÁRÁN BAR/RESTAURANT in Þórshöfn, northeast Iceland offers local cuisine like fish, lamb, vegetables or for those who dare, whale or Puffin. During summer they also serve breakfast.

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GATEWAY TO *Greenland*



Air Greenland flies to seven Greenland destinations from Iceland

Greenland is known for some of the world's most beautiful and breathtaking landscapes. Towering glaciers sit alongside placid fjords with views of vast landscapes and kilometres of pristine ice. The island's unique culture can be explored through charming museums and restaurants and exciting excursions ranging from snowmobiling to iceberg boat tours. Visitors may feel like they are a world away, but Greenland is more accessible than ever and is a year-round travel destination. "There are so many good reasons to visit Greenland now," says Jakob Nitter Sorensen, the CEO of Air Greenland.

"People should visit to experience breathtaking nature and authentic culture. Just everything is big and impressive and at the same time tranquil and silent. People that live in a busy world and live a busy life can come to Greenland to see something they never saw before and get a touch of something truly natural, something you can't control, the raw nature."

Hub to Greenland

Travelling to Greenland from Iceland is very convenient. Air Greenland offers Keflavik International Airport departure to Nuuk, Ilulissat, Sisimiut,



Jakob Nitter Sorensen, CEO of Air Greenland

Aasiaat, Kangerlussuaq, Maniitsoq, and Narsarsuaq in Greenland. "When visiting Iceland, Greenland is a great side trip," says Jakob. "We're neighbours, so it makes sense to use Iceland as a hub for Greenland. Both countries have so much to offer and complement each other."

Icelanders should consider a trip to Greenland as well, adds Jakob. "You have volcanoes and hot springs in Iceland, but Icelanders love to come here to see the icebergs, glaciers, culture and wildlife," he says. "The people and nature of Greenland appeal to Icelanders."

Authentic culture

"When you experience Greenland, you get amazed at how people have been able to survive here and live and evolve in harsh conditions," says Jakob. "That is reflected in the art and culture of Greenland." There are numerous cultural attractions in the capital city of Nuuk. The Nuuk Art Museum, for instance, is an integral part of cultural life in Nuuk, as it hosts a permanent exhibition, pop-ups and special events throughout the year. Other cultural institutions are in Nuuk, including the culture house, national museum and national theatre.

And there are some surprises to be found along the way. The two-star Michelin restaurant Koks moved from the Faroe Islands this summer to Ilulimaaq, which has a population of 53. Chef Poul Andrias Ziska has taken over the Ilulimaaq Lodge near Ilulissat and will serve just 30 people per night.

Exciting winter activities

Greenland is a year-round travel destination as there are attractions to see and excursions to experience every season. Don't count out the winter months. "The winter is a great time to visit Greenland," says Jakob. "We have a lot of activities like skiing, dog-sledging, snowmobiling and searching for the northern lights. You can even go sailing in the winter."

"Visiting Greenland makes you humble and allows you to get closer to where we come from as humans," says Jakob. "There are still places on the planet that human beings can't and shouldn't control. That's what happens here; the island humbles you."



Air Greenland
Box 1012, GL-3900 Nuuk
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Restaurant Koks



VIBRANT CULTURE IN NUUK



Nuuk Art Museum displays the rich artistic history of Greenland's artists

The Nuuk Art Museum is an integral part of cultural life in Nuuk, as it hosts a permanent exhibition, pop-ups and special events throughout the year. "I would say the art scene is quite vibrant here", said Hanne Kirkegaard, the museum's director. "Travellers should visit Nuuk to see what's going on with Greenlandic cultural scene."

The Museum's proud history

Nuuk Art Museum was a gift from Svend and Helene Junge Pedersen to the people of Nuuk. It opened in 2005 and is found in the former Adventist church, a few minutes walk from the centre of Nuuk. The gift included a collection of art from Greenland, collected by the couple. While the museum started as a private enterprise, it is currently operated by the municipality.

Fascinating works on display

The permanent exhibition, which is comprised mainly of Svend and Helene's collection, includes works by Danish artists, such as Christine Deichmann, J.E.C. Rasmussen, Harald Moltke and Emanuel A. Pedersen. The museum also exhibits a collection of more recent artists such as Simon Kristoffersen, Miki Jacobsen, Buuti Pedersen, Hans Lynge, Anne-Birthe Hove and Pia Arke. It also has an extensive collection of soapstone, bone, wood, and ivory carvings from across Greenland.

Current exhibition

"We change exhibitions three to four times a year in the big exhibition room, and then there are smaller exhibitions in other parts of the museum", said Hanne. "The big exhibitions always have a theme or a solo artist." The current

exhibition centres around artists from Grafisk Værksted, which opened in 1972 and became the Greenland Art School at the end of 1980. Work on display includes various graphic techniques such as lithography, serigraphy, copperplate printing and linoleum printing from more than 30 artists. The exhibition opened on Greenland's National Day, 21st June and can be seen until 2nd October 2022.



Special events

On annual days of importance, such as Culture Night, International Museum Day, and National Day, the museum organises special events where all locals and tourists are welcome.

Travelling to Nuuk

"People should visit Nuuk for the cultural scene", said Hanne. "All the national cultural institutions are in Nuuk, including the Art Museum, the Culture House, National Museum and National Theatre." But for those unable to travel to Nuuk, you can find more information about Greenland's rich culture on YouTube, the Art Museum's website, and social media channels.



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www.nuukkunstmuseum.com



DREAMING OF ICELAND

Glacier Journey's Adventure of a Lifetime

For many, a trip to Iceland is the culmination of dream; a long awaited journey that sometimes takes years of saving to achieve. And once you are finally here, the daunting task of choosing what to do, where to go and what to see begins. The good news is that Iceland is a fairly compact little country and many of the most sought after gems of Icelandic nature, particularly on the south coast, are within easy reach of the capitol.

One of south Iceland's most awe inspiring natural phenomena is the formidable Vatnajökull Glacier that harbours no less than six volcanoes within its icy depths. The vast glacier spans a large portion of the south coast driving route and a visit to the glacier is undeniably one of the top "must-do's" that should be on everyone's bucket list.

Let the adventure begin

Glacier Journey is a local, family run company that offers a variety of year-round snowmobile and jeep tours to the glacier and has received many glowing reviews over the years. Even if you have never had any experience driving a snowmobile,

the friendly guides at Glacier Journey are with you all the way— and learning how to drive a snowmobile is all part of the fun. At base camp you will receive warm overalls, helmets, gloves and a face mask that you can take home with you as a souvenir and then you're off to explore the mesmerising beauty of Europe's largest glacier by snowmobile.

A magical-mystical world of ice

The 15th of November to the end of March marks a very special moment in the year when it's cold enough to go ice cave exploring! Glacier Journey's three hour "Combo Tour" offers you a tremendous opportunity to explore the glacier inside and out. Experienced guides will lead the way into one of the ice caves that form at the edge of the glacier when temps drop down to below freezing and these icy-blue, fairy tale caves are safe to enter. The tour then continues "up top" with a fun-filled snow mobile adventure across the glacier, with incredible views along the whole south coast and beyond.

Small groups and families welcome

Glacier Journey caters to all sizes of groups, from company incentive tours to small groups and personal, private tours for the whole family. Young explorers under the age of eight are also welcome to visit the ice cave accompanied by their parents, of course. It's sooooo exciting!

See you soon on a Glacier Journey tour for the ultimate trip of a lifetime! -EMV



Glacier Journey

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