

TOURISM, CULTURE AND BUSINESS

ICELANDIC TIMES

ISSUE 25 • 2015



Bon Voyage Sea Baron!

Rare Total Solar Eclipse

Island Luxury

Catch the Northern Lights All Year Around

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When it comes to the weather, this winter has been one of the most diverse in the memories of even the most experienced Icelanders. There have been storms and even tempests in abundance—to the point that it has even caught the eye of the international media. There have also been lots of beautiful calm winter nights and an unusually high number of sightings of the spectacular Aurora Borealis, which have sported the most beautiful colour variations seen in years.

Regardless of the unpredictable Icelandic weather, travellers should find a wealth of exciting and unique

activities provided by the numerous travel companies who strive to make your vacation as memorable and pleasant as possible – despite the capriciousness of the weather gods. For those who prefer a quieter holiday, there are also plenty of options encompassing relaxation and indulgence in various forms. And the business section of this magazine can provide excellent reading to the open minded opportunist who is always on the lookout for openings to be seized.

We hope you find this magazine filled with interesting content and helpful information, and that your holiday meets your expectations in the best possible way!

- Edda Snorradóttir

Contents

| | | |
|---|---|--|
| The Greater Reykjavik Area 6 | Fire under the Snow 29 | Celebrating 30th year of operation 47 |
| The World's Most Exclusive Watchmaker 8 | Digital Art, Paintings and Sculptures 30 | North Iceland 48 |
| The Fine Art of Knifemaking 9 | What's Cooking at the Tin Can Factory? 31 | The Old Post Office 49 |
| Greenland Charms 11 | Catch the Northern Lights All Year Around 33 | Akureyri Heart of the North 50 |
| Leather Designer 12 | Business Insider: Not just Fire and Ice 36 | East Iceland 52 |
| The Joyful Wonderland 13 | Island Luxury 38 | Rare Total Solar Eclipse 54 |
| The Brave Get the Best 14 | Landsvirkjun - Renewable Energy 40 | Reserved Luxury 57 |
| A Changing of the Seasons 16 | Connecting the World 42 | South Iceland 58 |
| Getting Juiced in Iceland 17 | West Iceland and the Westfjords 44 | Eat At The Source 60 |
| A10 Deluxe Bed and Breakfast 19 | Discovering Iceland's Wild West and Beyond 45 | Discover an Ice-Blue World 61 |
| See the Northern Lights 20 | Gamla Kaupfélagið 45 | The House that Disappeared 62 |
| Snorkeling and diving in Siifra 22 | Iceland's First Settler 46 | A Delightful Experience in Stokkseyri 63 |
| Experience Makes the Difference 24 | | Refreshing Vik 65 |
| Iceland's Delicious Golden Circle Tour 26 | | |

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|--|---|---|
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Icelandic language

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

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

How to make use of QR codes



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A VIBRANT URBAN MARKET

And a Wholesome Restaurant Choice for Lunch

A visit to LIFANDI Markaður organic grocery is a truly sensory experience. The shop's inviting atmosphere is enhanced by warm textured wood, the scent of exotic spices and the gentle flicker of candles in the restaurant. Judging by the rush at lunchtime, LIFANDI Markaður is very popular with locals seeking fresh and wholesome fare, served with a smile.

Eat Like a Local

Shopping in LIFANDI Markaður will invariably make you hungry, so it's a good thing that the grocery portion of the store is partnered with a casually chic restaurant which prides itself on using the highest quality raw ingredients available. The reasonably-priced menu changes daily, and chefs are encouraged to improvise so that each dish incorporates the freshest foods on hand that day. Every menu includes an enticing vegan or vegetarian option as well as meat or fish dishes, and ingredients are listed so that anyone with allergies or intolerances can enjoy their meal without worry. For folks on the run, LIFANDI Markaður provides delicious sandwiches, wraps, and energy bars, as well as hot takeout meals, all ready in biodegradable or compostable packaging. Even the takeout utensils and smoothie cups are made of corn plastic, so eating on the go can be both fast, flavourful and environmentally friendly.

Newly Opened Breakfast Bar

On weekdays from 7:15 to 10:00am, LIFANDI Markaður offers several scrumptious breakfast options including greek yogurt with fruit, chia pudding, and scrambled or poached eggs along with grilled tomatoes, halloumi cheese and fresh sour dough bread, baked inhouse daily. An organic oatmeal buffet is also on hand, with all sorts of tasty toppings. A



The Traveler's One Stop Shop

Centrally located in Reykjavik at Borgartún 24 and in walking distance from downtown, LIFANDI Markaður provides tourists and locals alike with one of the widest varieties of certified organic and ethically sourced products in Iceland. Whether stocking up on supplies for your holiday apartment or grabbing food to take on the road, travellers can be sure to find an impressive range of the highest quality natural products—everything from fresh produce and baked goods to cosmetics, baby food and bulk organic nuts and dried fruit. Foodies will appreciate the many locally produced Icelandic specialties which include birch and angelica teas, lupin-infused juices, sea salts, organic lamb and creamy cheeses. Visitors to Reykjavik will discover that maintaining a healthy lifestyle away from home is easy at LIFANDI Markaður—the 'living market' for people who really like to live well. -MJA

power breakfast wouldn't be complete without LIFANDI Markaður's own Green Thunder smoothie, packed with mango, spinach and an energising burst of ginger.

LIFANDI Markaður is open until 8:00pm during the week, and its wonderful staff promise their clientele exciting and nutritious choices for breakfast, lunch and dinner.




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THE GREATER REYKJAVIK AREA

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



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

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

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

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

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



Clubbing in downtown Reykjavik
 Photographs complimentary of the Marketing office of Reykjavik, www.visitreykjavik.is

THE WORLD'S MOST EXCLUSIVE WATCHMAKER

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

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

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

The choice of connoisseurs

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

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

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



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

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

Relying on reliability

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



Wear the volcano

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

- ASF





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 www.jswatch.com





THE FINE ART OF KNIFEMAKING

Bringing an Ancient Viking Tradition Into the Present

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



Icelandic Artisans at Work

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

collector's items, they sometimes enjoy fierce bidding between collectors on the internet.

The Woman's Touch

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

Iceland.

Custom-made

Should you have your own design ideas or materials that you would like to use, Palli and Soffía are happy to work with you to produce a custom knife made to your specifications.

More information can be found at their websites

listed below where you can browse their collections and even special order online.

Walk-ins Welcome

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

-EMV



Palli the Knife Maker
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GREENLAND CHARMS

Mystic Gifts From the Wild

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

Sealskin Design to Keep You Warm

Tuneful music from Greenland takes you on its wings while you explore the well laid-out shop with its range of hats, incredibly soft gloves, designer bags and elegant sneakers. For hundreds of years, sealskin clothing has helped the Inuit to survive Greenland's arctic cold, and it continues to do so today. Women in Greenland still wear sealskin trousers, in extraordinary contrast to the delicate bead necklaces you see displayed in the glass display cabinets. These colourful necklaces are traditional women's jewellery, and can be used to embellish both a décolleté as well as worn over warm clothes.

Nature's Masterpieces

Ravens' hand-crafted items originate from Kulusuk, a small island off the East

Greenland coast where a group of native artists, solely men, transform natural materials into unique masterpieces—traditional items like carved amulets, rings and backscratchers. The selection of aesthetically carved knives comes with high quality blades from the famous Danish knife maker Poul Strande. Chefs, cooks and knife aficionados will surely not

leave the store empty handed once they see the traditional women's knife known as an 'ulo', which can be used for anything from cooking to skinning—a gem in every hunter's collection!

Guardian Spirits

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

Spirit Charms

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



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LEATHER DESIGNER

Ladies handbags, earrings and necklaces

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

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

Guðrún graduated from the Royal School of Architecture in Denmark in 1986. After working at an architect’s office, she started her own business.

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

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

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

- NHH



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THE JOYFUL WONDERLAND

The little Christmas shop that is festive all year round

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

In the Land of Eternal Christmas

Anne Helen, a genuine aesthete, says she has always had somewhat of a Christmas

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



figures, like the thirteen Yule Lads and the Christmas Cat.

Anne Helen loves 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.

- HP

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THE BRAVE GET THE BEST

The Sea Baron's Fish Meals Attract Visitors from All Over the World

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

The Sea Baron in True spirit

A former fisherman and Coast Guard chef, Kjartan Halldórsson, also known as the Sea Baron, is the master of unusual fish dishes. His lobster soup, for example, has gained fame around the world, earning it the title of 'the world's greatest lobster soup'. While he never revealed the secrets of his recipe, that has never stopped the restaurant from being filled every day with aficionados. He entered the



restaurant business by chance. One day, when standing by his boxes of fish, some foreign visitors asked if he could prepare some fish for them. Spotting an opportunity, he ran to the nearest hardware store to buy a grill—and was in business! His visitors were invited to dine in his shop in this improbable restaurant. Word quickly spread and soon he was shifting his boxes out to make room for tables and chairs.

He took the unusual and created delicious meals that no one else had thought of. He took old recipes, some of which sounded revolting, and made meals that have established his reputation around the world.

The Passing of the Sea Baron

Kjartan, the Sea Baron, recently passed away but his legacy will surely live on. A few years



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

Dining as a Seafaring Experience

Kjartan's restaurant is popular with the fishermen who sailed for many years from Reykjavik. It is filled with memorabilia donated by old sea captains and their families that fill it with a character all its own. Handmade model sailing boats, pictures of ships of the past and stuffed birds fill the second floor's walls, where groups of up to 35 can celebrate together. Eating at the polished tables, sitting on cushioned fish barrels, surrounded by paraphernalia of the sea, it is an experience that will leave you with both good memories, a satisfied appetite—and perhaps, a rather shocked mind that you would actually have eaten fermented fish and that it tasted so, so good. Moby Dick on a Stick (minke



whale on a spear) for example, is a play on words with great impact, delicious and stirring—as are the great variety of other fish spears with a mix of cod, blue ling, salmon, trout, lobster and giant shrimp, to name a few. Also worth mentioning is an Icelandic specialty dish, available at noon on Thursdays, a combination of fermented fish. On the first Saturday of the month they offer skate with heaps of hamsatól (fried fat), potatoes and rye bread with butter. This delicacy is only available from 1st September – 30th April. For desert, as a true Icelander, one should enjoy grjónagrautur—or rice pudding of sorts, often served with raisins and cinnamon flavoured sugar.

Bon Voyage, Sea Baron!

The Sea Baron will be missed dearly by all who knew him. His heritage will live on and there is no doubt that his recipes will continue to warm the bellies of both Icelanders and travellers alike for generations to come. This man has surely put his mark on the restaurant landscape and changed the way we perceive a grand dining experience.

- ASF



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A CHANGING OF THE SEASONS

Welcome to the enticing and inviting Café Haiti

In Spring, when the weather starts steadily warming up, Café Haiti serves as one of those cosy, unpretentious places where you can pop in for a snack and enjoy an excellent cup of coffee from beans roasted every morning right on the premises.

Here you can start your day early with a hot latte or cappuccino, along with a freshly baked croissant or two, for this is one of the

few places in the downtown area that opens for breakfast at 7am and doesn't close until 11pm. There is an enticing array of home baked cakes and pastries should you feel the inclination for a little something sweet.

The laid back atmosphere is also a favourite with locals for lunch—quiche, fish and vegetable soups served with freshly baked

bread are offered. Try the smoked salmon on toast, or the always fresh 'catch of the day', fished right from the waters of Faxaflói Bay. A steaming bowl of 'plokksfiskur', a traditionally Icelandic fish stew, is just the thing to warm you after an afternoon of whale watching at the Old Harbour. Café Haiti is great place to do some 'people watching', for it's as popular with tourists as it is with Icelanders. You might even spot a well known Icelandic celebrity or two while you're at it. Enjoy!

- EMV



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JOE & THE JUICE GETTING JUICED IN ICELAND

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

A Winner Is Born

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

Whew! Hot!

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

Flavour, Nutrition and Hydration

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



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

Size Matters

Joe & the Juice uses a unique blend of coffee beans that have been specially cultivated in South America. There's no extra charge

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

Where to Get Juiced in Iceland

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



Joe & The Juice - Iceland

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Lebowski BAR

Laugavegi 20a, 101 RVK, 552 2300, lebowskibar.is

A10 DELUXE BED AND BREAKFAST



Located just 5 minutes from the Keflavik Airport

Photo: Eva Björk

A10 Deluxe BnB is family-operated in a residential area within walking distance of different restaurants, pubs and shops. Many people are surprised to realize that this is no ordinary Bed and Breakfast but more of a home-style boutique hotel.

Personal Tour Planning

Free buses operate throughout the day, so visitors can tap into the local culture. However, they can also receive personalised tour planning with an American-based travel agency located right in the building. Each tour has been tested, so they know the offers and will help plan each excursion.

A Perfect Place to call Home

In a clean, comfortable, domestic atmosphere, the two owners, mother and son, work



flight, you can take a homemade snack with you.

The Beauty is in the Details

Prearranged transportation plus extra amenities such as free WiFi, a Jacuzzi and the Northern Lights Hall, where guests can meet and mingle, are a feature of A10 Deluxe BnB, which is a non-smoking house.

The beautifully decorated rooms range from small cosy bedrooms to larger rooms with private bathrooms. - OAB

together to provide personal, family-style service. For example, the mom prepares the meals, while the son organizes trips. The beds are very comfortable with crisp linens. Each room is meticulously maintained while retaining a tranquil home-style ambiance.

Complimentary breakfasts are served between 7-10am but, if you have an earlier



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SEE THE NORTHERN LIGHTS

Reykjavik Excursions Gives You the Experience You Want

Icelandic nature is spectacular and amazing. Whether you come in the summer months or in the winter time, there is always something unique to see. While it is thrilling to see the long black beaches and lava fields during the summer time, the fields and mountains bathed in white snow is an experience on its own. One of the biggest attractions during the winter are the Northern Lights which often look like they are putting on a show for your pleasure.

Warm Baths and Cool Lights Tour
In this amazing tour, you leave BSÍ bus terminal for Laugarvatn Fontana. Fontana offers open-air hot pools and steam baths which have been enjoyed by the locals for hundreds of years. The facilities at Fontana have been newly

rebuilt and now have pools in different sizes and temperatures. A local-style buffet will be on offer where you can fill up your energy with delicatessen. After the soothing soak and energising food, the hunt for the Northern Lights begins.

Horse Theatre and Northern Lights Tour

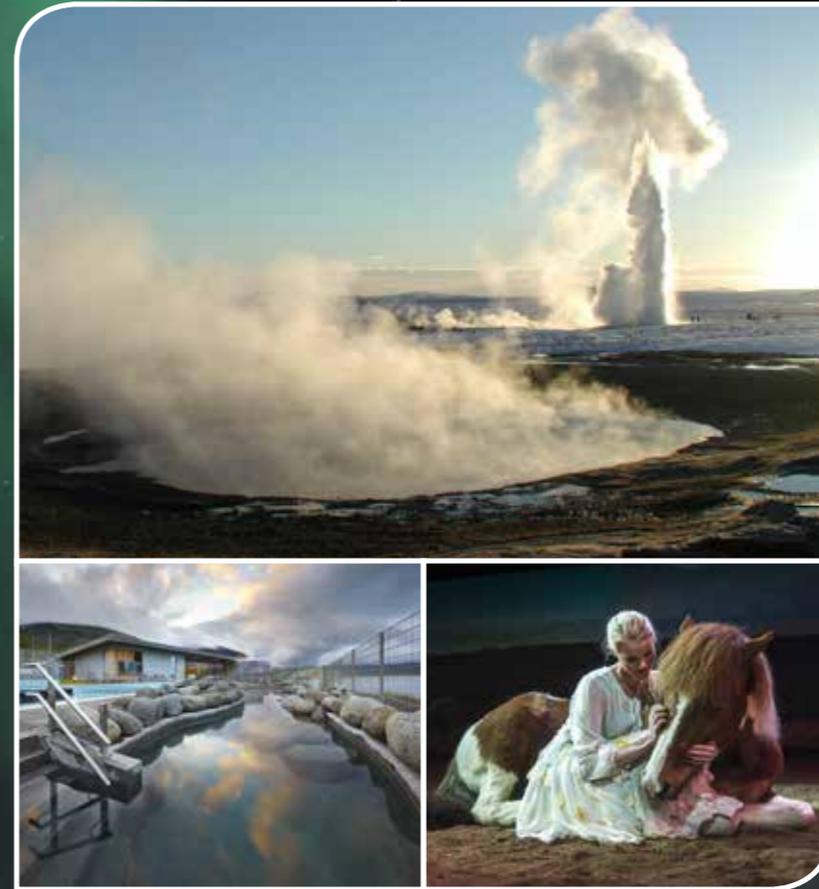
For equestrian lovers, it is possible to combine their love for horses and the outdoors in the Horse Theatre and Northern Lights Tour. In Fákasel near Hveragerði, which is in the southern part of Iceland, you will see Legends of Sleipnir. It is a fifty-minute long multimedia theatre with Icelandic horses and performers. The show brings to life the story of the Icelandic horse and

its unique relationship with humans by weaving together theatre, history, mythology and music.

Traditional Icelandic meat soup, made of lamb, potatoes, carrots, swedes and white cabbage, and other vegetables, is offered after the show. Having enjoyed the warm and filling soup, you will go and hunt the Northern Lights.

Highlands Northern Lights Tour

For the more adventurous, a Northern Lights tour in the highlands near Langjökull, glacier is available. From BSÍ, a guide takes you to Efsti-Dalur through Þingvellir where you will have the opportunity to buy food at a cosy farm restaurant. After that you drive towards Langjökull. On the tour, you will be able



to see one of the most unusual places in the world, learn about local nature, the Northern Lights and the glacier. Because the tour is in darkness you get to experience the country in a completely different way.

While on the tour itself, your guide will regale you with stories of the local area and history of the land. It is important to be in good form and dress well because it can get quite cold near and on the glacier.

Northern Lights Tour

In this original Northern Lights tour no two tours are the same. The destination varies depending on the expectation of where the best place to view the lights is. The sky is often lit up in a breathtaking dance of colours ranging from green to purple. The accompanying guide will tell you all about the aurora borealis on the tour. If you do not see any lights on this tour, you can rebook the tour.

Golden Circle Tour

For those who do not want to travel during the night-time, there are a few other tours available. The most popular is the Golden Circle Tour which takes you to the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Þingvellir, the famous waterfall Gullfoss and the geothermal area of Geysir in Haukadalur valley.

Þingvellir National Park is one of the most historical sites in the country. It lies in a rift valley that marks the crest of the Mid-Atlantic Ridge. The site is bathed in colours of the rainbow during the summer and fall, but in winter draped in a white veil.

The beautiful waterfall Gullfoss gets its water from Hvítá river, the origins of which lie in Langjökull glacier, and falls down into a deep canyon. From certain viewpoints, it looks as if it falls into an abyss.

Geysir geothermal area looks like a painting by one of the famous painters. The site is named after the famous geyser which is now dormant. A smaller geyser, called Strokkur, erupts every eight minutes and is a sight to see.

Whatever the season, there is always something to see in Iceland, but the Northern Lights are a phenomenon that everyone should see at least once in their lifetime.

-HDB



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SNORKELING AND DIVING IN SILFRA

The clearest water between two continents

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

Silfra - the earthly ordeal

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

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

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

Pure water, pure drama

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

Clearwater's Credence

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

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

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

Diving with the pros

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

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

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

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

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

- DT



Diver in Silfra Lagoon



Diver touching Two Continents

Snorkler in Silfra Cathedral



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www.dive.is



EXPERIENCE MAKES THE DIFFERENCE

The ITB travel - Iceland Tourist Bureau opens the door to all Iceland has to offer

Visiting Iceland can be the experience of a lifetime, so you want to get it right. There are so many options. You can book everything yourself or use an agent; go by yourself or with a group; take your own car, rent one, go with a tour operator or have a driver. Then there is the question of where to stay and for how long.

Knowing the answers to all the questions that come up in planning a trip to a country you've never been to and only know a limited amount about is really a challenge.

If you are a travel agent booking for clients and your reputation depends on their having a good experience, it can be all the more stressful and challenging.

The best solution is to have someone 'on the inside', someone in the know, able to offer the answers to all your questions. This is where ITB travel - Iceland Tourist Bureau's almost 80 years of experience, from its founding in 1936 and being the only official bureau for most of that time, stands out.

Tailored to your needs

For a travel company planning charter flights for groups or companies, ITB travel - Iceland Tourist Bureau has solid links with the airline companies. If you want to bring a group, ITB travel - Iceland Tourist Bureau can work with you to organise everything from airport pickup to catching the flight home - and everything

in between. Their knowledge of every aspect of the Icelandic tourist market places them in a unique position to advise, to help you plan and get the best rates. Their fluent, multilingual staff offer ideas and alternative suggestions, which you can then offer your groups, so they can get the most out of their visit and go home with a great experience to share with others. This is especially important for you if you're coming with a group of family or friends, which is an increasingly popular holiday idea. It makes all the difference to have someone in Iceland working with you to make that experience happen. They only work with qualified suppliers - people they know personally, and whom they know will deliver.

They take it personally

Perhaps you've been on a group tour where you felt you were herded from place to place, with little freedom or flexibility in your schedule. ITB travel - Iceland Tourist Bureau gets personally involved in the details. Whether you are in a big group or coming by yourself, whether you're backpacking or want a luxury service, the fulfillment of your aspirations is their personal concern - and you feel that. They offer a personal touch from the outset, often coming up with innovative solutions you probably didn't even know existed.



The Luxury option

You want a luxury, chauffeured SUV, helicopter tours, snowmobiling on the glaciers, and bathing in remote hot pools under the midnight sun? No problem. No business is too big - or too small for personal attention.

The nature, the people, the culture

Iceland offers a different kind of holiday. It's a country for people with an interest in expanding their horizons. You probably wouldn't choose it as a destination if you only wanted to bake on a beach for days on end and return home as red as a tomato.

ITB travel - Iceland Tourist Bureau doesn't

tie you in but will do their utmost to help you see the landscape, the nature and experience the people and culture at any time of the year, taking you to places and enjoying the company of its people in ways that might be quite difficult for you to do otherwise. Celebrating seasonal festivals in Iceland, like Easter, National Day, Christmas, New Year or Þorrablót will provide an unforgettably inspiring experience, leaving you with the feeling that you have spent your holidays well.

- ASF



Iceland Tourist Bureau

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GRAY LINE ICELAND'S DELICIOUS GOLDEN CIRCLE TOUR

The Perfect Tour for Food Lovers

If this is your first time visiting Iceland, then Gray Line Iceland's 'Delicious Golden Circle Tour' could well be your tour of choice. For me personally, I can't think of a better way to spend a day—pairing the magnificent scenic sites of the Golden Circle, Þingvellir, Gullfoss and Geysir with visits to some surprising new food destinations.

All Aboard!

The tour departs from Gray Line Iceland's main office, just across the street from the

Harpa concert hall. Our driver/guide Bjarni happens to be a guy who really knows his stuff, which he delivers in almost flawless English. On the drive out of the city, Bjarni fills us in on some historical facts and figures and in just a couple of minutes we are already passing the beautiful little town of Mosfellsbær with a snow covered Mt. Esja looming large in front of us.

First Stop - Þingvellir

We then turn towards the home of the world's first parliament at Þingvellir,

where we get a chance to explore a bit on foot, walking right by the towering cliffs that form a part of the Mid-Atlantic Ridge and marvel at the expansive views across Iceland's largest lake, Lake Þingvallavatn. After a brief stop for a welcome coffee/tea break at the small Þingvellir café, we head out again, our little van taking us over the scenic routes of Þingvellir National Park, and onwards to our next stop, a leisurely sit-down lunch at Efstidalur farm.

Lunch at Efstidalur Farm

The family-run concern is a working dairy farm that has been operating for over a century, but the brand-new restaurant that overlooks the cow barn itself is the place to be for a wonderful 3-course meal. Presented and served by the farmer's daughter herself, the meal's highlights are hands down the delicious platter of grilled meats: trout fished from nearby lakes, succulent chicken from a local farm and farm-raised beef and lamb that were to die for.



A Look at Gullfoss and Geysir

After lunch we go onwards through the village of Laugarvatn. In the distance, the white plumes of steam from the oft-erupting Strokkur geyser come into view, just as we enter the Geysir geothermal area. But first, a look at the must-see Gullfoss waterfall, just 5 minutes away. In winter, Gullfoss takes on its robe of winter-white ice that makes it all the more impressive.

Fabulous Friðheimar - a Tomato Grower's Paradise

Turning south towards the village of Reykholt, our next destination is the warm and brightly lit greenhouses at Friðheimar. We are given a short yet interesting talk about the whys and wherefores of geothermal greenhouse horticulture, and then we get a chance to taste Friðheimar's own products. Have you ever heard of green tomato jam with cinnamon and lime? How about cucumber salsa or a dessert sauce made with cherry tomatoes and strawberries? No? Well now you have and all

these products and more are available only at Friðheimar. Fabulous!

Turning Back the Clock at the Icelandic Farmhouse

We push onwards to the Icelandic Farmhouse in Selfoss—one of the last remaining and beautifully preserved turf farms in Iceland. It's a fascinating glimpse of the type of housing that most Icelanders lived in right up until the end of World War II. After a brief introduction, we gather round for a taste of Old Iceland—the daily fare that every Icelander remembers from their childhood and still enjoys today. Our samples are just the cutest bite-sized pieces—dried fish with butter and dulse (a type of iodine-rich dried seaweed), hangikjöt with laufabrauð (smoked lamb and 'leaf bread'—the traditional Christmas food is still a wildly popular dish), flatbrauð (flatbread) with sheep paté, and a sweet and healthy hot drink made from lichen called fjallagrös. It's all quite different to what you and I are used to, but very tasty! Finally, we visit the renovated turf house for an eye-opener into the cozy home life of Iceland's recent past.

An evolving cuisine with a bright future

The last rays of light linger in the western sky as we head over Helliðshéið heath and back to Reykjavík. It has been a day well spent, full of sights that only Iceland can deliver, but also an intriguing glimpse of Iceland's culinary past and its continuing evolution right into the present.

Well done, Gray Line Iceland! - EMV



Gray Line Iceland

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FIRE UNDER THE SNOW

Under the mountains behind Reykjavik lies a hidden power

The columns of steam, rising high into the sky, are clearly visible from the capital. Deep below the mountains, the earth is still burning hot and today, that heat provides a source of warmth and electricity for all the capital area.

The Geothermal Energy Exhibition on the Mountain

Just about a 20 minute drive by car, Sterna line or Iceland Excursions - Gray Line



Iceland coach, the Geothermal Energy Exhibition on Hellisheiði makes a fascinating and educational visit at any time of the year. In many ways, it is even more spectacular in the snowy winter months, providing such a contrast between the conditions on the surface compared to those below ground.

This is the newest and largest geothermal plant in Iceland and Orkusýn provides a rare look into the one of the world's most powerful clean energy resources. Multimedia displays and experienced guides explain how Iceland has become a leader in this form of clean energy and you can get a close look at its production.

Refreshments are available in the café while books and DVDs about geothermal energy are to be found in the souvenir area. If you would like to get a better understanding of clean energy, this is the best place to visit. - ASF



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DIGITAL ART, PAINTINGS AND SCULPTURES FOR EVERYONE

Reykjavik Art Museum Offers a Diverse Spectrum of Art

Reykjavik Art Museum is spread over three different museums in the city. There is Hafnarhúsið, Kjarvalsstaðir and Ásmundarsafn. In Hafnarhúsið you can find contemporary art. New developments in art are shown through varied exhibitions of Icelandic and international artists.

Kjarvalsstaðir mainly serves well established Icelandic and international artists. The museum offers a permanent exhibition of key works by one of Iceland's most beloved painters, Jóhannes S. Kjarval. Ásmundarsafn is dedicated to the works of sculptor Ásmundur Sveinsson but it is possible to see works by him around Reykjavik.



HAFNARHÚSIÐ:

Cory Arcangel: All the Small Things

(31 January – 12 April 2015)

In late January a solo exhibition showing works by the young American artist Cory Arcangel opened. Despite being in his thirties he has already made a name for himself in the art world. He combines digital technologies with art and manipulates drawings, sculptures, photographs, and videos with digital tools. All the Small Things features both new artwork by Arcangel and a selection of earlier works which he has tweaked especially for the exhibition. The exhibition stretches through the gallery and includes the cinema, performance, the web and the museum gift shop.



paintings are gaining stronger foothold in the artworld worldwide.

KJARVALSSTAÐIR:

The Pulse of Time *(17 January – 15 March 2015)*

In Kjarvalsstaðir you can see Einar Hákonarson's retrospective span the artist's career for over 50 years. The works shown were chosen carefully to show the artist's evolution. The title of the exhibition is also the title of one of his paintings which evokes Einar's desire to keep his finger on the pulse of time. Einar studied in Valand Academy in Göteborg, Sweden. After he moved back home he has been a prolific artist and has shown his work regularly while also teaching art and taking part in public debates on current affairs.



ÁSMUNDARSAFN:

The Water Carrier: Mountain+Woman

(21 February – 26 April 2015)

The exhibition commemorates the centenary of Icelandic women gaining the right to vote under a royal decree of 19 June 1915. The Water Carrier, the iconic sculpture by Ásmundur Sveinsson will be the focus and theme of the exhibition. It will also include, in addition to The Water Carrier, a selection of Ásmundur's other sculptures and works by seven other artists.

There is something for everyone at the Reykjavik Art Museum, and always something interesting to see. *-HDB*

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 www.artmuseum.is

HAFNARHÚSIÐ:

Just Painted 1 *(6 February – 19 April 2015)*

The exhibition gives an overview of paintings by eighty-five active Icelandic artists. Because of its size it is in two parts with one being shown in Hafnarhúsið and part two in Kjarvalsstaðir, which opens 28th of March. An overview of this size has never been presented before here in Iceland but



WHAT'S COOKING AT THE TIN CAN FACTORY?

Language, Culture, History, Food and Fun

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

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

The Reykjavik Walk

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

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

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

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

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

Meet the Natives

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



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

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

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

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

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CATCH THE NORTHERN LIGHTS ALL YEAR AROUND

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

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

A Unique Experience

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

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

Soothing Sights and Sounds

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



Hot coffee and choice gifts

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

Setting the record straight

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



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Rafn Sig



NOT JUST FIRE & ICE

Investment Opportunities in Iceland

When thinking of foreign investment opportunities, a small island nation in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean may not necessarily be the first location that comes to mind, but the fact of the matter is that Iceland has quite a lot to offer.

Iceland's economy is considered quite advanced and was, for example, ranked 23rd on the 2014 Index of Economic Freedom and operates within the European and Scandinavian regulatory framework and quality standards. Iceland's relatively low corporate taxes and incentives for foreign direct investment provide evidence for this, with the current corporate tax rate at 20%, compared to the global average of 23.57%.

Competitive Green Energy

The country itself and its people are what truly set it apart. The country's strategic location, midway between Europe and North America, has obvious benefits. As the demand for sustainable energy in the world increases, Iceland's abundance of hydro and geothermal energy resources provide multiple opportunities for energy dependent industries looking for competitively priced green energy. The people of Iceland are known for their willingness to pursue innovation and for overcoming obstacles. Iceland maintains a highly skilled and educated workforce with a flexible labour market.

Tourism Boom

Iceland is currently in the midst of a tourism boom where the increase in tourists has been on a steady rise for the last few years with a predicted increase of visitors of over 20% in 2014, resulting in close to one million annual visitors. Given this growing increase, coupled with strong political and business support and the relatively short development of Iceland's tourism industry, the opportunities are seemingly endless. Iceland's location works to the industry's benefit, along with the plethora of incomparable natural phenomena and Iceland's strong cultural identity.

The tourism industry has so far been focused on a select few sites, which leaves many exciting locations and activities open for exploration. Iceland's high tourist season is also getting longer and tourist visits are spread more evenly throughout the year, which in turn creates new seasonal opportunities for tourism operators. High-end services and accommodation are also in great demand, leaving potential investors with countless ways of meeting the demands of more affluent tourists who are looking for upscale services and accommodation.

-VAG

ISLAND LUXURY

Exclusive apartments in a prime area downtown with spectacular views



In 2006, no-one imagined these would be the last luxury tower blocks to be built right downtown. Positioned so that the noise of the city would not be audible on the shores of Faxafloi Bay, with views stretching out across the ocean to snow-covered mountain ranges beyond and, in the other direction, an equally dramatic panorama of the city, these are apartments that are much sought-after by foreign investors and local residents alike.

How often can you walk out of your apartment and, in 5 minutes, be sitting in a theatre, cinema or restaurant right downtown? Or take a stroll along the shore to the world famous Harpa concert hall and conference centre just 500 metres across the road?

Vibrant and safe

Unlike most of the world's major cities, Iceland has a very low crime rate and no-one would think twice about walking around

its vibrant centre, filled with fascinating art and culture, entertainment, shops, coffee houses and restaurants covering a wide range of both Icelandic and international cuisine. Healthcare centres, schools and kindergartens are also within a very close vicinity.

There is frost-free, secure underground parking for each apartment. The walking areas around the tower entrances are heated to keep them clear of snow and ice in winter. A superintendent oversees the security and maintenance of each tower.

These are the tallest apartment towers in the country. When the first of the 18-floor towers were built, they were quickly snapped up, so undoubtedly, the last two towers in the project will be equally as popular. In this final phase, a total of 77 apartments are being constructed, though some have already been sold even before the building stage.

Take a tour

With a range of different sizes available - from 80m² to a two-floor penthouse over 300m² in size, there are apartments to meet the needs of everyone. To take full advantage of the views, the windows stretch from floor to ceiling. The company has selected the strongest and most long-lasting Protec windows, having them imported from the manufacturers in Denmark. Underfloor heating has been installed, so as not to interrupt the view with unsightly radiators and each apartment is air-conditioned. The balconies offer a spot to relax and enjoy the beauty of the panorama in the fresh air, with glass panels under the railing to maximize the view.

The interiors are designed by one of Iceland's top interior designers, with a choice of colour schemes and surfaces. Slipstone, a higher quality stone than granite, has been chosen for the surfaces and is also available in a variety of finishes.

As one would expect in quality apartments of this type, they have been designed for soundproofing, fire protection, for security and the future. Fire alarms are built-in and connected to a central system.

Making your house your home

While still at the building stage, there are a wealth of custom options available that can be incorporated for purchasers of the apartments. Wall surfaces, flooring, kitchen and bathrooms can all be custom designed.

In planning for future options, the design of the wiring, for instance, takes into account the advances being made in home automation, so that buyers may install their system of choice at their own convenience.

A home with a history and a future

This part of Reykjavik has a fascinating history, with the first structure being built around 1800, turf houses giving way



to timber around 1900 and the Skuggi website gives a dramatic portrayal through photos from different time periods, providing a perspective on the past. The website also provides a panoramic view like the inhabitants of the towers can expect to see and a detailed overview of the project.

Iceland is the advanced hub of a fast-developing region with excellent fast and efficient communications between the continents, powered by green, renewable

energy, independent of fossil fuel price fluctuations and pollution. With the countryside only 15min away, sport and relaxation are close at hand, making for a healthy, invigorating lifestyle.

Whether you might be thinking of a new home, a pied de terre for the times you visit the country or you are looking for an investment opportunity, the Skuggi development provides a unique moment to own a property in what is undoubtedly the best location in town in respect of easy access to the Reykjavik's centre, the countryside and spectacular views of both city and nature. Nothing like it will be built again, according to the city's current plans.

- ASF





LANDSVIRKJUN – RENEWABLE ENERGY

Iceland is the ideal location for Data Centers

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

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

Physical security

Iceland is on top of the list when it comes to physical security according to the World Economic Forum. The country's network of power plants and transmission systems built to service the aluminum industry provide extensive redundancy and reliability. In addition, Landsvirkjun produces all its power using renewable sources, enabling their customers to operate without being affected by fluctuations in fossil fuel availability and with a positive environmental impact.

Price security

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

Carbon security

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

hedge against carbon tax regimes, but also the basis for a clear competitive advantage in today's environmentally conscious global market.

The ideal location for data centers

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

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

- SF



Landsvirkjun

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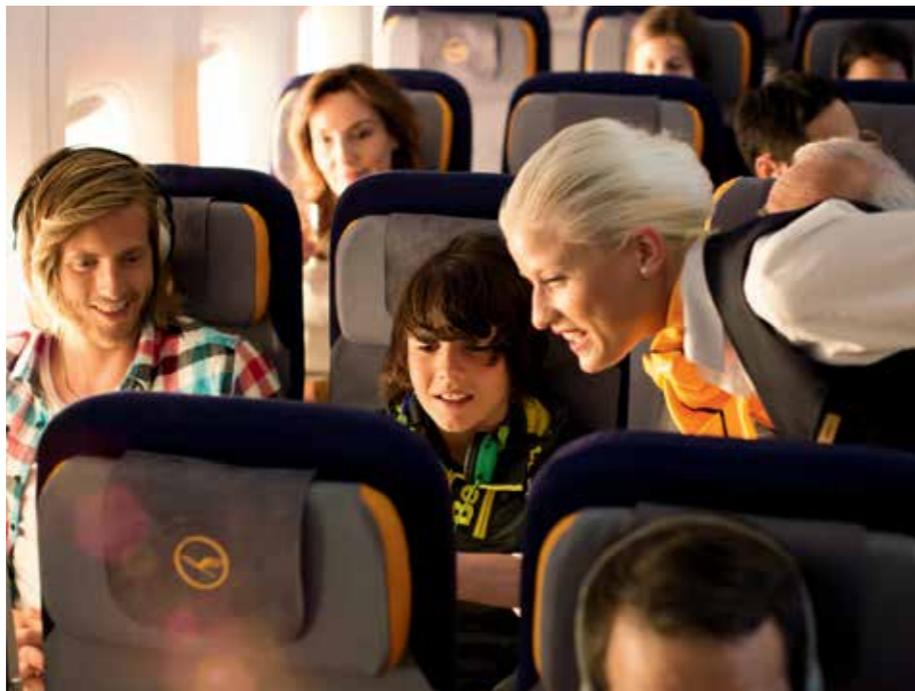
LUFTHANSA STARTS OPERATIONS IN ICELAND CONNECTING THE WORLD

One of Iceland's charms is undoubtedly its remoteness, which has unfortunately also meant that it has been more difficult and costly to reach—up until now that is. This summer German airline Lufthansa will launch a three times a week non-stop service between Reykjavik and Frankfurt and once a week between Reykjavik and Munich—thus fully connecting the northern island to the rest of the world.



Christian Schindler.

Lufthansa's Regional Director for the United Kingdom, Ireland and Iceland, Christian Schindler, says that flights to Iceland are in high demand and he sees Iceland as an attractive destination in the long term. "We are delighted to be able to offer non-stop flights via our biggest hubs to Iceland," says Schindler.



Iceland in High Demand

For travellers from all over the globe reaching Iceland has never been easier, as the Lufthansa network offers connections to 190 European and intercontinental locations, amounting to a total of 76 countries served. Schindler furthermore says that the new connections are timed in such a way that passengers from Europe, Middle East and Asia can transfer comfortably in Frankfurt and Munich.

Schindler says that at the early stages of planning only two flights a week had been scheduled, which had to be increased to four, as they were booked almost immediately. "Iceland is definitely a hot spot at the moment. The landscapes, geological phenomena and not to mention the fantastic food make it a very popular destination. We see this as a long-term project and our plans are, at first, to extend the summer period and then even possibly to offer year-round flights," says Schindler.

Competitive Prices

Schindler says he has great faith in the service Lufthansa is offering. "People will always have the need to travel and to do so they need quality options. We are a modern full-service carrier where everything is included, including meals and luggage and we offer highly competitive prices," says Schindler.



The service between Reykjavik and Frankfurt starts on May 2nd and runs until September 26th. It will operate on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays with a mixed Airbus A319/A320 fleet, offering business and economy class. Flights between Munich and Reykjavik will operate on Sundays.

-VAG

Information on bookings on their website www.lh.com

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

Westfjords

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



Photographs complimentary of the Marketing Office of West Iceland, www.west.is

WEST ICELAND AND THE WESTFJORDS



DISCOVERING ICELAND'S WILD WEST AND BEYOND

Wild West Tours Iceland



Travelling around Iceland is an incomparable experience where at almost every turn you are confronted by one new breathtaking view after another. And it is precisely for this reason that touring the country in a luxury 4x4, driven by the people who know the lay of the land, is one of the best possible ways to experience Iceland.

Flexible and Personable

Wild West Tours is a small, family-run company that prides itself on its flexible and personable super jeep tours to some of Iceland's best-known attractions, as well as to some of its best-kept secrets. The family specialises in personal and tailor-made tours, crafted to meet your needs and timetable.



Variety Is Key

A variety of ready-made tours to many of Iceland's top locations include the Golden Circle Tour, Landmannalaugar, and the South Coast. If you love waterfalls, then the beautifully scenic Waterfall Circle Tour is a must.

Off the Beaten Track

Should you prefer something out of the ordinary, Wild West Tours offer several dazzling, off-the-beaten-track tours to places that are well away from the crowds, such as the Snæfellsnes Tour. Touring Iceland in comfort and security with knowledgeable drivers/guides at Wild West Tours is the way to go. *-EMV*

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GAMLA KAUPFÉLAGIÐ

Restaurant and Bar in Akranes



Gamla Kaupfélagið in Akranes (The Old Cooperative) is a really nice restaurant and bar in the small town of Akranes. Less than an hour's drive from Reykjavík, along Highway 1, you will find this historic old town by the beautiful west coast of Iceland. Please drop by for fantastic food and service at modest prices in a really nice setting.

Perfect Location

Akranes is a very popular tourist destination, and all the travellers with their tents and campers make this a really merry place during the summer. Gamla Kaupfélagið is located in the heart of the old town of Akranes, which puts it within walking distance of all the major lodging and camping places. The restaurant is also a bar and a café, and there



is outdoor seating for those beautiful summer days. The weekends are made special with extended opening hours and live music.

Multicultural Menu

The menu has everything from a simple kids' menu and traditional European food, to Mexican and Indian food. You can have your regular sandwiches, pastas and pizzas, hamburgers and steaks. But there is also a surprising variety of dishes available, including soups, dedicated gourmet dishes for vegetarians, and various Mexican and Indian dishes. This impressive menu is complemented with a good selection of beverages and desserts, and a healthy dose of hospitality. *-SF*

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ICELAND'S FIRST SETTLER

Find the furtive little arctic fox in Súðavík in the Westfjords

The arctic fox is an enchanting creature. At some point in the distant past, it travelled across the frozen sea and, in spite of the inhospitable climate, found a home on this small, isolated island. The arctic fox is Iceland's only native terrestrial land mammal and has been the subject of curiosity by scholars and lay people alike. For this reason, The Arctic Fox Centre was established in the village of Súðavík in 2010, which is well fitting since the fox is the area's distinctive animal.

Exhibition of the first native

The Centre is located in the oldest house in Súðavík, a 120 year old farm that was renovated by the local authorities and is situated between what locals call the 'old village', destroyed in a devastating avalanche in 1995, and the 'new village',



built in its stead at a safe distance from the mountain.

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

The exhibition is divided into three sections; the biology of the fox, the hunting of the fox and the hunters themselves, the



Images by © Þóður Sigurðsson

last mentioned containing, for example, objects and personal accounts from fox hunters. Other material is presented through written text or video and of course there are quite a few stuffed animals. Visitors are guided through the exhibition, which is one of a kind in Iceland and open all year round. The Centre is a non-profit business, involved in research and studies on the population of the fox. They also offer guidance on arctic fox tours in collaboration with tourist offices as well as believing in and supporting ecotourism in Iceland.

A nice little café is run at the Centre, selling home baked pastries, light courses and wonderful coffee which guests can enjoy out on the patio, overlooking the beautiful mountains and the sea. The Café has an open Internet access. On Friday nights, live music is performed in the loft, where it's nice to sit down for a drink in the cosy atmosphere. The Centre also has a small boutique selling specially made souvenirs and craftwork. -HP

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CELEBRATING 30TH YEAR OF OPERATION THIS YEAR

Same management from the beginning

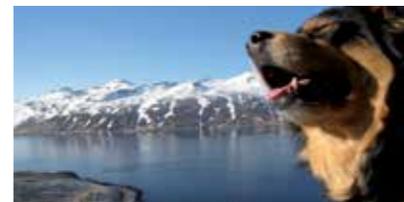
Untouched nature and interesting history are among the attractions of Djúpavík at Strandir. In this remote part of Iceland, a special breed of people found a way to live off the land and, when all the fjords were filled with herring, it became an important player in the hunt for the 'silver of the sea'. Now it is a paradise for walkers and nature lovers who come to Hotel Djúpavík from early spring till autumn.



Old factory and dormitory

Hótel Djúpavík was established in 1985 when Eva Sigurbjörnsdóttir and her husband Ásbjörn Þorgilsson decided to cultivate guests rather than fish. "We had planned to start a fish farm but were unable to get a loan," says Eva. "We had bought the women's dormitory along with the old herring factory and the hotel started there."

Most guests stay at Hótel Djúpavík in search of a nature experience. Many walk from



one fjord to another but others use cars, kayaks or boats to get from place to place. Eva and Ásbjörn provide guidance and advice on what to see and how to get there along with comfort and rest after a long day's exploration.

A Historical Exhibition

The Herring Factory is now the site of Djúpavík's Historical Exhibition, where old photographs and texts lead viewers through the life and times of people in this quiet cove at the edge of the world. There are guided tours provided daily at 10am and 2pm. - JB

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Iceland BackCountry
 Travel

Summer in the North is characterised by the midnight sun. You can play golf, go seal and whale watching, horse riding, hiking, swimming, fishing, river rafting, bird-watching, camping or simply enjoy the disparate forms of nature. The region wears a different coat in winter, when you can ride horses on the frozen lakes in Mývatn under the Northern Lights or ski the slopes just minutes from Akureyri town centre. Northern Iceland is probably Iceland's most diverse region—in every sphere. Nature varies from the mystical area around Mývatn Lake, a birdwatching paradise, to the awesome horse-shoe canyon of Ásbyrgi, the thunderous waterfalls at Goðafoss and Dettifoss, Askja's calderas and volcanoes, or islands like Drangey, to name a few. The region is bursting with vibrant history, just waiting to be enjoyed. Museums are found in almost every town, with fascinating insights into fields such as the seals at Selasetur in Hvammstangi or the Whale Museum in Húsavík to the turf house of Glaumbær farm in Skagafjörður. Then Skagaströnd, home to the Museum of Prophecies is known as the country music capital of Iceland. In Hjaltadal valley in Skagafjörður is Hólar, formerly the episcopal see and site of the first printing press. Siglufjörður hosts the Folk Music and Herring museums. Blönduós has several museums, as does Akureyri, the largest town of the north, along with its art galleries and rich culture.

Photographs complimentary of the Marketing office of North Iceland, www.northiceland.is



NORTH ICELAND



THE OLD POST OFFICE

Jóa Guesthouse connects people and places

In Ólafsfjörður, on the Troll peninsula, a cherry-red heart is beating for guests and travellers. Jóa Guesthouse, in the middle of this beautiful North Iceland town, can easily be found, due to its bright red colour. Once having stepped inside, you don't want to leave.

The town's old post office has been renovated brilliantly by a young couple, Bjarkey and Helgi. They offer six elegant rooms on the first floor, all of which are furnished with a different type of wooden floor, that refer back to the old times and

which have gained much attention. You will find brand new comfortable beds, basins, closets, and, of course, free WiFi. Dark curtains in front of every window will guarantee a good sleep even through bright Icelandic summer nights. The two bathrooms on the floor are fully equipped.

A Breakfast for exploring

When you wake in the morning and open your curtains, you will enjoy the amazing panorama across the bay. Then, to start

the day off right, you head downstairs into Kaffi Klara, the just recently opened book-café, where guests are served a delicious buffet breakfast to get ready for their day.

If you need any help with your plans or directions, you can find any assistance you need at the desk.

It is like the old post office has come to a pulsating new life as a place for connecting people and places. -DT



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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 18,000 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 horseriding 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—at the peak of their cycle—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. Cafés, each with their individual speciality abound, while local micro-

breweries and farms offering food tasting are a fascinating addition to the food scene.

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.

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



Easy Access

Flights from both Keflavik international and Reykjavik airports take just 40 min. Scheduled busses drive twice a day between Reykjavik and Akureyri. The trip from Reykjavik 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. Naturally, every common form of transport is available: car, bike, boat, horse, ATV, plane rentals. Every type of accommodation is also on hand, from 4-star hotels to camp sites. -ASF

Akureyri has it all and an outgoing friendly welcome, too.

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 island of Hrísey, with its powerful healing energy and Grímsey, straddling the Arctic Circle, see volcanos and boiling mud pools and, in fact, reach all the pearls of the north in under 2 hours.



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EAST ICELAND

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



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



It's oh so quiet.



VISIT EAST ICELAND
www.east.is / #easticeland

ICELAND ON THE 20TH OF MARCH 2015:

RARE TOTAL SOLAR ECLIPSE

A fantastic opportunity to visit Iceland is coming up. Ever more travelers are choosing to visit Iceland in the winter months in order to experience the glaciers and the snow covered highlands in all their glory, and to see the magnificent Northern Lights. On Friday, the 20th of March 2015, visitors will also be able to enjoy what is likely to be a once in a lifetime event for most people: a total solar eclipse, where the Moon will totally block all sunlight and turn day into night for a few minutes.

A Rare Opportunity

A total solar eclipse occurs on average about once every eighteen months somewhere on Earth, but only once every

360 years or so in any given location. A large part of our little planet, however, is either covered by ocean, or is generally inaccessible for most people. You are therefore not likely to witness such a rare event unless you seize the day when the opportunity presents itself. The eclipse on the 20th of March will only be seen as a perfect total eclipse (100% coverage) in two locations, which happen to be either impractical to get to or almost impossible to get to: the Faroe Islands in the Atlantic Ocean, and the Svalbard islands in the Arctic Ocean. Iceland is the perfect alternative because it is easily accessible and it will offer an almost perfect solar eclipse experience - the Moon will cover 97.5% of the Sun when observed from

Reykjavik, and well over 99% when observed from the south-east coast.

Convenient and Safe

In case you need to travel between the American continent and Europe, Icelandair makes it easy for you to have a long weekend in Iceland with its Stopover in Iceland deal, which allows you to stop for up to a week without additional airfare. The local travel agencies can arrange for hotels, as well as guided tours that will bring you to the best locations for experiencing the solar eclipse event. This way you will be provided with the proper equipment to view the eclipse. It is not safe to look directly into the Sun with bare eyes or normal sunglasses; you need special glasses to safely view the eclipse.

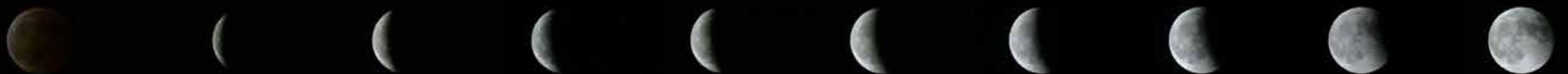


Total Solar Eclipse Explained

Each new lunar month starts with a New Moon lined up approximately between the Earth and the Sun. It does not block (or eclipse) the Sun because it appears

slightly above or below the Sun. The side facing the Sun is lit up while the front facing us receives no light, and the New Moon is therefore invisible to us. But twice a year, the New Moon can

potentially line up perfectly to block the Sun. Partial eclipses are most common, but they do not provide the awesome blackout experience of the rare total eclipses. - SF



Moon eclipse stages



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RESERVED LUXURY

Hildibrand Hotel is for the fastidious aesthetic and the seriously passionate about food

Hildibrand Hotel is a brand new, state of the art, apartment hotel in Neskaupstaður, a small fishing village in one of Iceland's remote Eastfords. The hotel is located in what was the town's old Co-Op store, built in 1948, which has now been completely renovated. It offers both double rooms and luxury apartments, all bright and beautifully decorated in warm colours with classic art and quality furniture. The house sits by the sea and every room has a view over the fjord where whales are spotted almost daily and the surrounding wilderness offers endless opportunities for outdoor activities and exploration.

Local food—tradition meets creativity

Hildibrand is way more than just a pretty package and the hotel restaurant, the Co-Op Bistro, is without a doubt the cherry on top of the cake. The area has a long tradition of fishing and farming and Hildibrand is passionately dedicated to local products and working in the spirit of the slow-food philosophy. Everything is made from scratch

with fresh ingredients, using nature's treasure trove and the knowledge and skills of past generations to create original dishes of the utmost quality. The bistro serves breakfast, lunch and dinner and offers fish and wild game in addition to traditional bistro food with Hildibrand's own personal twist.

Everything you need for a dreamy picnic

Next door to the hotel, in the town's former dairy plant, Hildibrand runs a local gourmet workshop called The Milk Shop. There they produce a variety of gourmet food products made from ingredients from all over Iceland and overseas. To name just few of the offerings, there are fresh delicatessen and takeaway food, from sushi to sandwiches, masterfully handmade Icelandic chocolates and a selection of Icelandic specialities such as dried fish and fermented shark. A visit to The Milk Shop is essential for all food enthusiasts travelling in the area. The fresh offerings are on display in the hotel lobby.

Aside from providing guests with an additional option to dining in the restaurant,

The Milk Shop specialises in the making of dreamy, custom made picnic baskets for travellers who plan to experience the stunning nature in the Eastfords close up. Ask around in the hotel lobby and be sure to receive helpful information on the natural treasures that the Eastfords are noted for.

The Eastfords are a magnificent area, partly desolate, rich in wildlife and strikingly beautiful. A stay at Hildibrand is destined to be one of the highlights of your visit to Iceland. During the day, you can walk or sail into one of the nearby fjords, fish or go for a horse ride, Hildibrand even runs its own catering service and will happily prepare you a picnic or a lunch box for your day. This is a place to dwell in, to take your time and enjoy. The reward will be handsome, without a doubt.

-EMV



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SOUTH ICELAND

South Iceland has a long list of sights and activities



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

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

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

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



Photographs complimentary of the Marketing office of South Iceland, www.south.is

EAT AT THE SOURCE

Dine on Delicious Langoustines at Eyrarbakki's Rauða húsið



A visit to Iceland is not complete without a visit to the birthplace of the Icelandic lobster industry. Here, you can indulge in a feast of the finest Icelandic seafood at the Rauða húsið (Red House) restaurant, found in the picturesque seaside village of Eyrarbakki. In this beautiful red house, a short drive from Reykjavik, langoustines are served in a charming atmosphere amidst a rich and well-preserved history.

Now a tranquil village, Eyrarbakki was once an important trading centre in Iceland. Many of its houses were built in the early 1900s and the village maintains that turn-of-the-century charm and atmosphere.

Iceland was late to discover this seafood delicacy. Lobster fishing was born off the shores of Eyrarbakki in 1954. In fact, it was not till then that the Langoustine was discovered to be not only edible, but delicious, too!



Care is taken to maintain the sense of history within the restaurant. The red house boasts beautiful original wooden floorboards dating back to 1919.

Arrive by noon; a hearty bowl of langoustine soup will set you up for the day.

Serving a variety of delicious fish and meat dishes, the restaurant's cuisine is a

mix of international and Icelandic foods, all featuring local ingredients. Choose an evening of indulgence and you can savour the Catch of the Day, consisting of two different seafood dishes. The lamb dishes are absolutely delightful. Pair a bottle of fine wine with any of the menu's offerings and cap it off with one of the Rauða húsið's signature desserts.

Enjoy a walk around the village either before or after a meal at the Rauða húsið. The walk could continue along the beautiful black beaches only few minutes away from the village. A relaxing stroll by the water makes the visit complete. -ASF



Rauða Húsið

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DISCOVER AN ICE-BLUE WORLD

Jökulsárlón Boat Tours tours 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 25 years. Sail among the icebergs in a 40 minute amphibious boat tour, or take an exciting 1 hour Zodiac boat tour that goes further into the lagoon, getting you as close as is safe to the icebergs and the glacier itself.

A Waffle with a View

Enjoy the spectacular view over the lagoon in the small café where traditional Icelandic waffles with rhubarb jam and whipped cream are served throughout the day, as well as homemade soup with bread, 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 approximately 24 square km (9.2 square miles), you could easily fit the island of Heimaey (in the Westman Islands) into it with room to spare. At over 250 m (820 feet) deep, four 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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THE HOUSE THAT DISAPPEARED

The Eldheimar Volcano Museum on the Westman Islands

None of Heimaey's 5,300 inhabitants had ever expected that a volcanic eruption could make them homeless, when 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 the 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.

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A DELIGHTFUL EXPERIENCE IN STOKKSEYRI

Icelandic Times checks out Fjöruborðið Restaurant

Chef Eiríkur Þór Eiríksson was busy pouring drinks when we arrived. The well known song *Vorkvöld í Reykjavík*, (a Spring Evening in Reykjavik) was playing softly in the background. A table of tourists who had spent the day exploring a glacier with a guide, talked animatedly over dinner in the front room. The low slung building with pleasantly creaky wooden floors, once serving as the search and rescue building of Stokkseyri, is now one of the most popular lobster restaurants in Iceland, with over 45,000 patrons dining there in 2014.



15 tons of lobsters can't be wrong

Fjöruborðið's website says that some 15 tons of lobster are used annually to make its famous soup, aka langoustine soup. Hmm...impressive statistics but does it really live up to its reputation? After all, there are many fine restaurants right in the capital, so is it really worth the 45 minute drive over a mountain in sometimes dubious weather conditions? Yes! I am happy to report that the soup was sublime. And just forget the word soup, how pedestrian! Chef Eiríkur informs me that it is, in fact, a classic bisque de langoustine.

Whatever name you go by, it was delicious and I would have happily eaten another bowlful had I not needed to move on to

taste everything else that was set before me: lobster tails that were perfect in themselves, homebaked bread with various dipping sauces and if, per chance, you are not partial to sea food, there is a wonderfully tender roasted fillet of lamb served with baby potatoes and red wine sauce that is excellent. A crisp salad made with local produce was refreshing and nicely complemented the seafood and meat dishes. Right on cue as soon as we had finished the lobster tails, our attentive server brought a warm wet cloth for our, by then, messy hands, which was much appreciated.

From the outside, Fjöruborðið appears deceptively small but in fact, it can seat

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

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

- EMV

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IT'S ALL ABOUT LOVING IT

Picture hunting in Iceland with the professional photographer Rafn Sig,-

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

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

Small groups, big chances

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

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

Like-minded travelling companions

This professional photographer's pictures have been published all over the world. He likes to share his passion for travel with like-minded people. He offers customized, all year round photo trips and workshops range from a day to a fortnight long. When you join him in his adventures, he might have a few more secrets to share.

Treasure Hunting

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

Rafn Sig,-

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Day tours / Photo and Photo Workshop tours / Winter Aurora and Ice Adventure



REFRESHING VÍK

Halldór's Café satisfies locals and travellers alike

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

chicken. Deserts include home-baked cakes and ice cream from a local farm. Originally, Halldór's Café was a general store, built in 1831 to meet all of the needs of Vík. Today, it continues to satisfy patrons with its menu, which has something for every taste, with a local produce, where possible.

Halldór's Café supports artists with a rotating display of local talent featured on its walls, and serves up steaming cups of coffee and cake, ideal for meeting and greeting old friends or new acquaintances. Halldór's Café is open all year round. In the winter time the opening hours are 12:00 to 21:00. -KB



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