

Iceland Explorer

September 2001



A SPECIAL WELCOME MAGAZINE FOR VISITORS TO ICELAND

ICELAND EXPLORERS ON TOUR

In addition to folks telling us what a wonderful time they had in Iceland, from time to time they actually share a photo or two with us. Perhaps your thinking about booking a trip to Iceland with us. Since pictures tell the best story of visitors having a good time here are the real photos of the real people who have been to Iceland on an Iceland Explorer Tour. Many tell us they will be back, We would like to share them with you . Enjoy!!



Photos by:
Virginia, Dorothy, Mike,
Mary & Anna

...an Iceland Explorer OOOOPS!!

We have had a number of queries about the COVER of the August Edition of Iceland Explorer Magazine, specifically, can we purchase a copy of the cover photo.

We meant to include that information in the edition but the editor was sound asleep during that part of the process. The answer is yes.

We have obtained photos of the cover from the photographer. They are in a gloss white cardboard frame and are available by contacting the Explorer directly: They are only \$20.00 each mailed anywhere.

Order today by E-Mailing: bobmurray@explorer.is Return instructions will be sent for making payment for the photos.

The Editor

CONTEST !! CONTEST !!

In the true spirit of
“ask and you shall receive”
from Iceland Explorer

there is yet another contest
IN THIS ISSUE

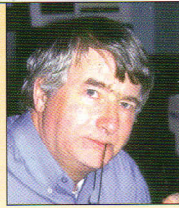
One of the story titles in this issue are the opening words of a song of some years ago.

You tell us the song title and the original artist. The first correct answer wins dinner for two at a Reykjavik Restaurant, courtesy of Iceland Explorer. It doesn't get much easier.

Send your guess to bobmurray@explorer.is from wherever. The winner (if any) will be notified by return E-Mail.

Will we have a winner this time? ...We'll let you know

Iceland Explorer



Time flies when you are having fun. The "official" tourist season is starting to wind down and quite honestly, so am I. It has been an absolute blast welcoming so many people to and showing them around Iceland. I said that to introduce you to one of the articles in this month's magazine, Iceland Explorer's visiting and having fun in the land of Ice and Fire. Pictures are indeed worth a thousand words, and these are the real people and their real photos, not ours. September is round-up time for both the sheep and later for the horses that have been roaming free all spring and summer. The sheep have an appointment with the barber and later some of them with the dinner table.

Enjoy the article on the foods of Iceland. There is also a spot on a very interesting place called the "Garden of Eden. It's in Hveragerði, just a short distance from Reykjavik. (50 KM) Have a look and enjoy this edition of Iceland Explorer. Oh, by the way, it's working vacation time and the next edition of the Explorer will be released on or about October 15th. It will be an October - November edition. We are looking at this year's Christmas - New Years edition being released, November 21st.

Bob Murray
Editor

IN THIS ISSUE

Explorers in Iceland

The Sea-food Diet

Roundup Time

In a Village

...and our usual feature stuff;
a rather impressive lot
wouldn't you say?

EXPLORER. Vol 4, no. 6.

Iceland Explorer Magazine is published 9 times each year and is distributed free of charge to visitors in Iceland. Iceland Explorer is at Visitor Centers, Hotels, The American Embassy, Keflavik NATO Base. It is also on Hopbilar Tour coaches in the summer months. The Explorer is also distributed by mail to tour operators and subscribers in the United States, the United Kingdom, Denmark, Canada and Nova Scotia. Views expressed are those of the writers and not necessarily those of any other agency or person. Iceland Explorer only accepts advertising it deems appropriate.

PUBLISHER: Iceland Explorer H.F.

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Visit our website www.explorer.is.

Circulation: 6,000 copies.

No reproduction in whole or in part is permitted without the express written consent of the publisher.

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Design: Austurvegur ehf / Rafn Sigurbjörnsson.

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Advertising Sales: Bob Murray Sales Manager

Proof reader & Editorials: Bob Murray;

Printed in Iceland by: Prentmet;

Lithos by: Austurvegur ehf.

Cover Photo: Þingvellir September Morning

Cover Photographer Rafn Sigurbjörnsson

Composite design: Austurvegur ehf



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Akureyri: Kaupvangsstræti 1

In a Village Hidden Deep in a Valley

Welcome to Hveragerði, a spotlessly clean, beautifully manicured, quiet and peaceful town nestled snugly alongside the eastern ridge of the Hengill Pass and the Reykjanes volcanic zone. Driving about 40 minutes by bus or car from the city of Reykjavik, you are first treated to the sights of the stark mountain terrain of the Hengill ridge. Reaching the peak of the main road, surrounded by still higher mountains and hills, suddenly, there below it all, is this lush green valley, marked by active geothermal hot spots and dozens of greenhouses. This is the town of Hveragerði. There is a lot to see, and all of it is within walking distance from just about anywhere you wish to park the car. As we mentioned, there are literally dozens of greenhouses with everything being grown in them from exotic plants to rich fresh vegetables.



Perhaps the most famous of all of the greenhouses in Hveragerði, a place where most all the "tour buses" stop, is EDEN. Known as the "Garden of Eden", this very special place has been a first stop on many tours to South Iceland and the "Golden Circle". It started like all the rest, simply as a greenhouse, but with the vision of it's owners toward showing things Icelandic to visitors from around the world. It grew slowly and steadily into the major tourist attraction it is today. Eden has now been in business for some 40 years. It features a greenhouse full of local and exotic plants along with trees from orange to palm trees and lots of other things that grow the world over. It is now also the home of someone we'll call Peter Puffin, and several assorted "Vikings" who will stand still for pictures. Eden's latest addition is something they call the "Lava Giant." We'll call it the worlds largest natural Chia Pet.



Eden has become a "must stop" for visitors and Icelanders alike when passing through this area enroute to anywhere in the southern part of Iceland. It's a great place for a short break be it for coffee and pastries, a fast meal, some shopping for Icelandic woollens, or perhaps just a look around.

The towns' main-street begins at the rotary and travels to a park carved out in the back.



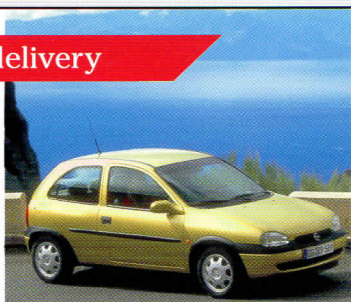
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Hveragerði has every amenity needed for a rich and full life. There's everything from grocery stores to bakeries, clothing stores to banks, a hotel and several guesthouses. A complete and very spacious tourist information center is right off the main street very convenient to the traveller. In back of town if you wish to call it that, the main road splits, one angling left that will take you up into the hills with the church, a school and the towns' government center. The road to the right also "heads for the hills" and passes the town swimming pool. Richly appointed houses dot the rest of the landscape, many with beautifully manicured gardens all along the way.

Carved out in the center of it all is a mountain stream, with its attending waterfall, named Reykjfoss. Here, crystal clear, cool water descends from the mountainous terrain above sliding gracefully over the geothermal fields below and surrounding the area.

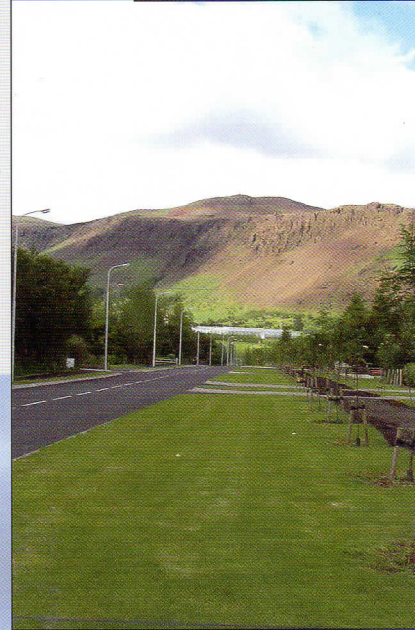
Of special interest is the towns' geothermal center. Lets call it a most beautiful summer park. The park while it appears at the level back of town is actually in the center of town. Shrubs and trees line the park and flowers have been planted everywhere. On a beautifully cool to warm summer day, one could just spend hours walking, reading, picnicking, or just sitting in the park enjoying the peace and serenity that is seemingly everywhere. It is in this park, where the geothermal energy center for the entire town exists and one would hardly notice. It seems hard to believe that in this most magnificently beautiful surrounding that just about 3,000 feet below, geothermal temperatures in the earth approach 200 degrees centigrade, over 400 degrees Fahrenheit. Hence the geothermal steam one sees from various points along and deep in the surrounding hills is really an

earth alive and rich with natural energy to be harnessed as needed.

In the park, one can see several boreholes still in use today and several other interesting sites where many interesting and one very humorous story actually happened. Borehole numbers 2 drilled to a depth of 311 meters (950 feet) in 1959 and number 8, drilled to a depth of 254 meters, (825 feet,) in 1989, are still in use for town energy today. The most renowned of the hot springs is Manndrápshver, "The killer" so named after a man fell into this boiling spring in the year 1906 and died.

The Ruslahver "garbage" hot spring was a dry geothermal hole where in earlier times people used to dump things. In 1947, an earthquake revived this hot hole. It suddenly to spout all the garbage placed there by town residents right back to the owners. We think this might be the classic example of the phrase, "it's not nice to fool with Mother Nature".

All in all, the town of Hveragerði is a must stop for a short or an extended visit to see, enjoy and just perhaps to spend some quality time. It truly is, "A Village in Bloom".





September 2001

BJORK ALBUM TOPS THE CHARTS:



In just a matter of two days after it's release, August 27th, Björk's new album, *Vespertine*, shot straight to number one in France and was headed for the top spot in many countries not to mention Iceland of course. The album is receiving rave reviews, just about everywhere. An Icelandic marketing specialist has also determined that the Björk name is more marketable than all the "ICE" products from Iceland and Icelandair as well. WOW !!

LAKE-NESS MONSTER SIGHTED ??? WHERE HAS ALL THE WATER GONE ???

Lake Kleifarvatn on the Reykjanes peninsula is back in the news once again. It is here that you can see an entire host of wondrous things and now maybe even the rumoured for centuries, Lake-ness monster. First, due to the recent tremors, which seem to occur in spurts especially in the southwest corner of the lake and the major quakes of last year, new cracks have opened up in the lakebed. The water is slowly draining out and those who visit the lake every so often will notice. Then on August 29th it was reported that a possible sighting of the now infamous "Creature of the lake" quite possibly happened. I had been there on the 26th with a visitor and must admit I did not see the monster but did notice how low the water was. The lake boils in one part by the southwest corner and just a few yards from there is refreshingly cool. It's truly amazing and worth a trip to this area. Who knows what you might see!



A JAY, DON & PERRY STORY:



On August 16th a passenger threw a package overboard the Ferry *Norræna* as it approached the dock in the East Fjords of Iceland. Suddenly a man on a jet ski, raced toward the package, scooped it up and raced away. Unfortunately the entire thing had been witnessed by a number of

people with mobile phones. Also unfortunately for the individual the coast guard with the boat was very close by. The chase was on. Once again, most unfortunately for the perpetrator he was chased into a narrow fjord... with only one exit that was also serving as the entrance... ooops!!

The police were waiting with the only road out, completely blocked. Abandoning the Jet Ski the suspects took off on foot but were quickly apprehended by Icelandic police. They had dumped the package somewhere along the way but "sniffer" dogs found it in short order. At last report, they were receiving free room and board at the local lock-up.

CUCKOO FOR COCOA PUFFS:



Iceland has done it again and this time, much to the delight of children, adults and General Mills factories everywhere. The leaders, per capita, of essentially everything, have now added one more notch to their collective and rather impressive string of records. Iceland is now listed as the nation being number ONE, numero UNO, in the annual consumption of Cocoa Puffs. On average, every man woman and child in Iceland consumes two and a half pounds, (roughly two and a half large boxes) of the breakfast cereal every year. When you do the arithmetic; that is rapidly approaching three-quarters of a million boxes of the chocolate cereal, every single year.

Kids are delighted, General Mills is ecstatic, and dentists stand to do very well here too if the trend continues.

A WHALE OF A TALE (TAIL):

Fisherman caught a beaked whale off of Sandgerdi, near Keflavik, on August 8th. Before we go any further with this story, rest assured it WAS NOT Keiko. There was no intent to catch it but the rather curious mammal got all tangled up in their fishing nets and had to be brought aboard the boat. Some \$2,000 dollars damage was done to the nets. The whale was sold to a local fish store for \$153.00 (15,000 Ikr). The store said that the whale would yield about 500 kilos (1100 lbs) of great meat for the barbeque. Maybe for your barbeque, not mine. At any rate, the whale went on sale and they lined up for miles (well almost) to purchase the fresh whale that was on sale. (This is beginning to sound like a Dr. Seuss story) When the store saw the line that came all at one time they rationed the sale of the whale to 5 kilos per customer. It sold out faster than Lens crafters makes glasses; just about an hour.



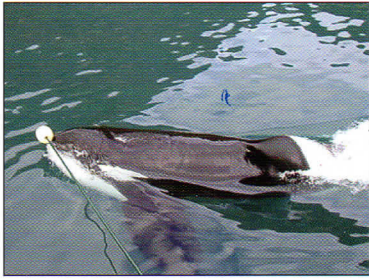
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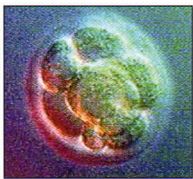
SPEAKING OF KEIKO:



Our favorite whale is back in the news once again this month and is of concern to his caretakers, known as Ocean Futures. Seems that KEIKO is apparently still not terribly interested in joining up with the other orca whales in the area to travel free except for very brief periods. After

these "close encounters" the other Orca's swim off together and KEIKO comes back to his, (for whales anyway) rather luxurious, certainly neat pen apartment for a free dinner and swim around alone. The pods of other Orca whales are heading away from Iceland for the winter months and KEIKO seems to be very happy where he is. The three-year project to re-introduce KEIKO to the open ocean is in serious doubt and meetings are being held almost as you read this to decide what to do. We think KEIKO has been telling them for three years now but no ones been listening.

ICELANDERS WILL NOT BE CLONED:



Iceland is now officially on record along with most other countries to date in being firmly against the cloning of human beings. Citing that the entire envisioned process as a dangerous journey into uncharted waters and science, Iceland joined the other members of the European Union going on record against cloning of humans.


ENTRY FEE FOR ICELAND'S NATIONAL PARKS??

Well, anything's possible when politicians and money are used in the same sentence. On a recent "fact finding" mission to Canada an idea was born about the "possibility" of charging an entry fee to at least some of Iceland's National Parks in the future, especially the more popular ones.

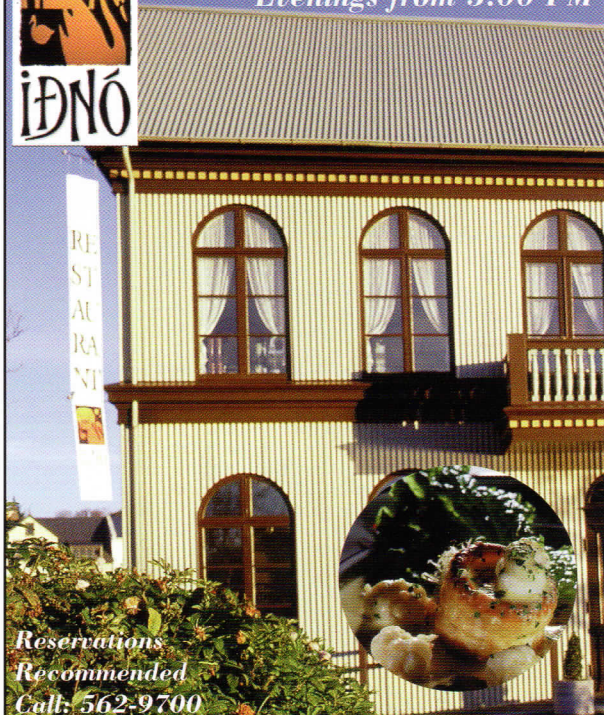
Of course in Canada, entry areas and boundaries are well hidden by an abundance of trees.

That would not necessarily be the case here. Fences would become an eyesore of sorts in a natural beautiful setting and the expense of fencing off a place such as Thingvellir for example might be overwhelmingly be expensive. It is however being "studied" and we can only hope this "study" will take a few dozen years.





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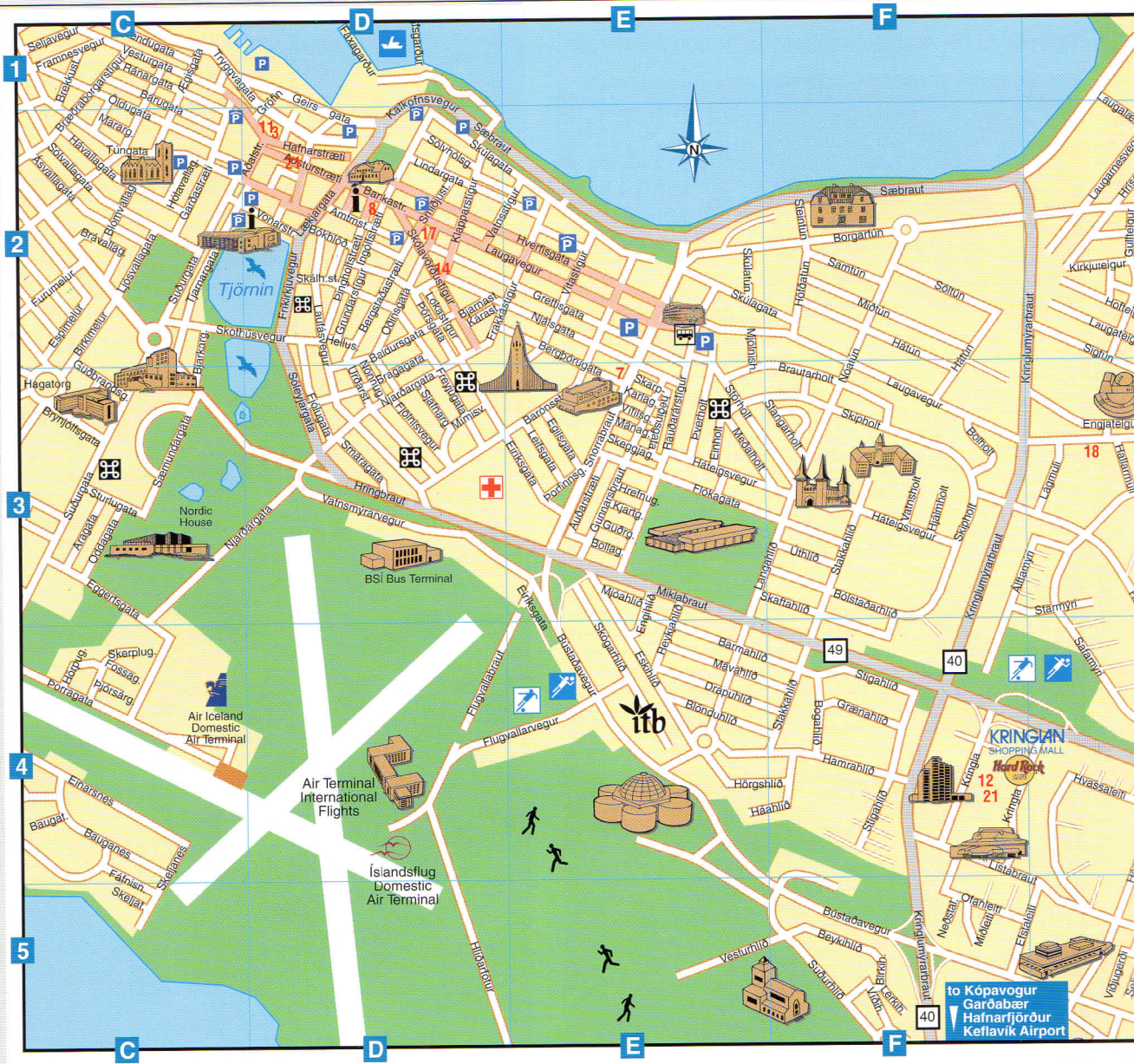
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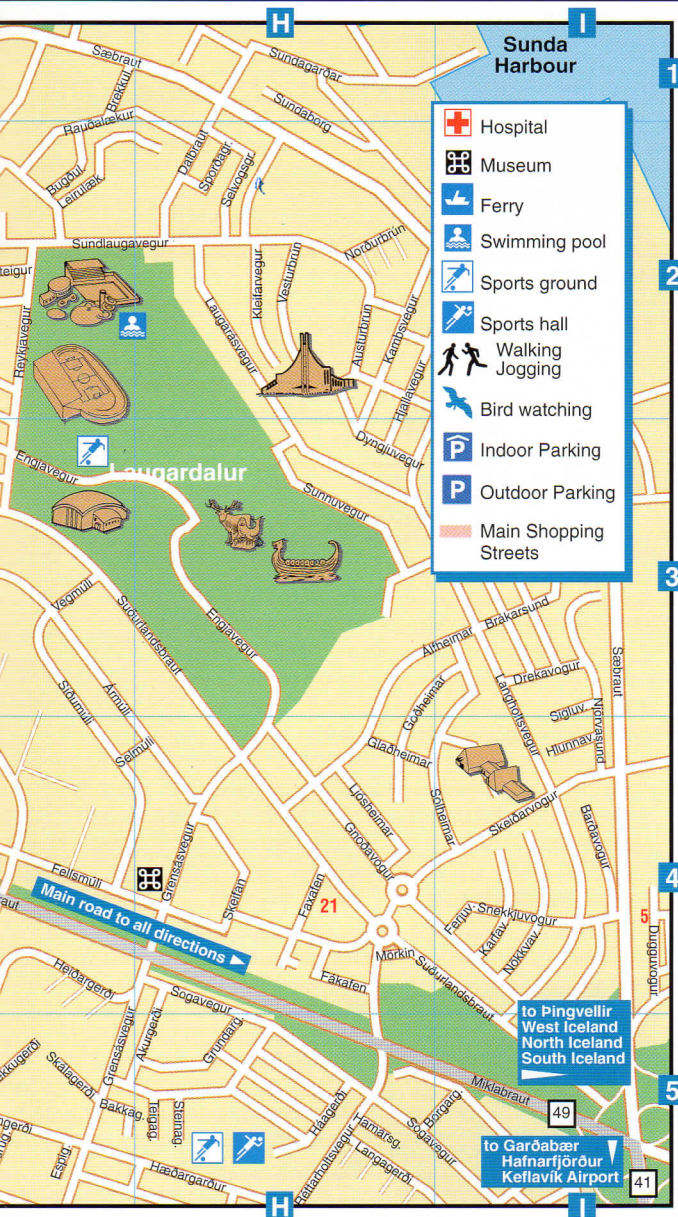
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- J** Nissan Patrol 4WD
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or comparable



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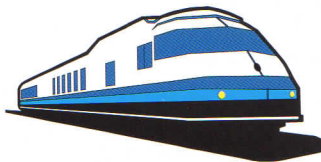


Flashes



HOT STUFF AS OF September 2001

THE "A" TRAIN SHUFFLE.. MAKE THAT... SHUTTLE:



Talk has surfaced once again about a high-speed train between Reykjavik and the Keflavik International Airport. The city engineer and Reykjavik energy have published a profitability study and

report on the construction of such a train. The report says that such a train would be profitable... over time. Construction of such a train is now envisioned to be between 18 and 20 BILLION Icelandic kronur. About four years ago as we recall, it was estimated at around nine billion. At the moment, there seems to be many questions needing answers before this "project" ever gets off the ground, but you never know. Most people needing to get to the airport from the capital or from the airport to anywhere travel by private car. That figure includes group privately rented tour busses. There is also an excellent fly-bus service meeting all flights to and from ALL hotels and of course taxi service. Oh!!, the biggest question we got when we asked around was WHY? We'll keep you posted

KEIKO TO WINTER IN WESTMAN WONDERLAND:

JUST IN: SEPTEMBER 1st



Keiko the "killer whale" and Hollywood star will according to spokespersons at Ocean Futures, be wintering in the Westman Islands. His deadline to swim free and return to the wild this year, has now passed. Most of the whales; especially the Orca species to

which Keiko belongs, have started their migration south for the winter months. Keiko has decided not to join them.

A story in the last issue of the Explorer reported that Keiko was showing reluctance to re-join his species and swim free, preferring the situation he now has. The next report from his caretakers thought he might decide to go free. These reports have gone back and forth all summer long. Essentially, nothing has changed.

In the very latest report "Free Willy" will spend the winter in the Westmans. Of course further meetings will be held, (they are probably being held as you are reading this) to decide what to do with Keiko in the future, like next spring. It seems someone rented his place to a proposed salmon farm. Ladies and Gentlemen... place your bets. We say Keiko still really prefers people. He might even think he has become one after some 20 odd years. He is quite happy where he is. He has free rent, care and food. He is not stupid.

Camp Outs, Cook-outs, Hoedowns & Round-ups

It's September and time for range riders all over Iceland to once again take to the hills and the plains for the annual sheep and horse round-ups. These are great fun to watch and even more fun to participate in... if you are a cowboy at heart. Each September beginning around the 10th as a rule, it's time to saddle-up the trusty Icelandic steed and head for the designated area of responsibility and start bringing in the sheep. They've been out and about several months, nursed their young and grown a thick rich coat of new wool. They are ready for the barbershop or in this case the sheep barber.

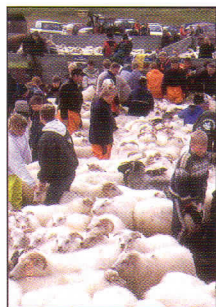


Round-ups in Iceland are for the most part, complete family events. Everyone from the youngest to the oldest, male and female has a job to do and a role to play and one is just as necessary and as important as the other. Even the family dog, in these cases the trained and trusty sheep dog plays a very important and integral role in a successful roundup. Fathers

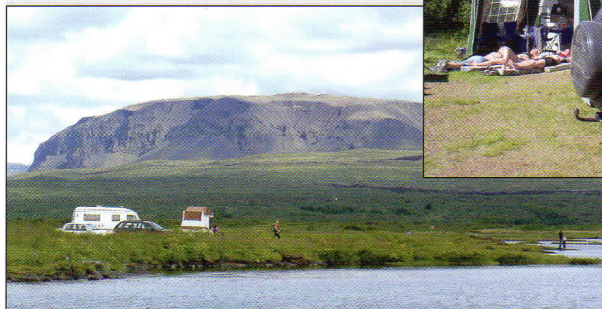
and sons naturally depending on age will spend the day in the saddle doing their task of rounding up the sheep from hither and yon, in the hills and the plains in a given area. Once this is in progress, the family sheepdog is responsible to keep strays in line or lines from straying. Every once in awhile, one comes upon the independent sheep, who may have independently decided, he is not quite ready to come on home. The sheepdog generally wins 100% of the time



The younger members of the family get limited saddle time as well depending of course on their level of expertise on horseback. The very young have a role too and that will be in the pen perhaps helping to sort them all out. Since over the summer months sheep may have decided to wander, and some quite lengthy distances, these round-ups generally produce animals belonging to several farms and ranches, again some from many miles away. They are all clearly marked and branded so are readily identifiable. This makes the rancher with a mobile phone in today world considerably more efficient. One call and the owner will come to claim his animals and perhaps bring some he might have rounded up as



well belonging to the caller. It's all very efficient. The women of the house might prepare the evening meal from the farmhouse, the bunkhouse or right out on the prairie around a roaring campfire. On the prairie, evenings are spent telling stories, singing songs and in general just having a good time. Even the sheep join in with the baying from a not to distant pen sometimes blending in with the chorus... so, if you are in Iceland, travelling in the hills or the interior, the southern plains, in fact just about anywhere except in the center of the city, you might happen upon one of these roundups. If so, remember the story, stop, sit a spell and have a look.



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September Spells Summer Seasons Swan Song

Night is now falling on a regular basis. In fact it's right at the very end of every day. However, it will still take until the end of the month of September to get near what you might find in the USA this time of year with Daylight Saving Time still in effect there. Here in Iceland the days shorten by an average of SEVEN minutes each and every day now. At the beginning of September we experienced over fourteen and a half hours of daylight. By the end of the month we will be down to eleven and a half. Winter is on the way.

DAY & DATE:	SUNRISE:	SUNSET:
Wed. Sep 5th, 2001	6:25 AM	8:30 PM
Wed. Sep 12th, 2001	6:45 AM	8:05 PM
Tue. Sep 18th, 2001	7:02 AM	7:45 PM
Editors Birthday	7:05 AM	7:42 PM
Sun, Sep 23rd, 2001	7:15 AM	7:27 PM
Fri. Sep 28th, 2001	7:31 AM	7:10 PM
Sun. Sep 30th, 2001	7:36 AM	7:03 PM

We spoke of the fact that their could have been a "TRACE" of snow in August, but true to form, that didn't happen. September is a different story. We will probably see snowflakes somewhere in the local area. This is the first of the fall months when there could actually be measurable snowfall. It hasn't happened in September for the last several years. Even then it was on the very last day of the month, when just a few flakes fell from the sky. We are due... but will it be this year?

MWR TOURS: September 2001

The tours listed here are for the exclusive use of the military and civilian personnel assigned to the Naval Air Station at Keflavik Iceland. All tours depart the NATO Base Tour Office at the dates and times indicated. Many of these same tours or special versions thereof, are still available at the Tourist Information Centers in Reykjavik or right from your hotel lobby by simply making arrangements with them. Minimum participation may be required for a specific tour to operate.

Iceland Explorer will run day tours to most any destination in Iceland with a minimum or three participants. Call Iceland Explorer at 868-1922 or E-Mail us at, info@explorer.is if your party cannot be accommodated on a particular tour desired.

Saturday, September 1st:	SOUTH SHORE TOUR	0900
Sunday, September 2nd,	HORSEBACK RIDING TOUR	1200
Labor Day Weekend 1-3 Sept	VIK-GLACIER LAGOON TOUR	1000
Saturday, September 8th, 22nd,	GOLDEN CIRCLE TOUR	0900
Sunday, September 9th,	WHITE WATER RAFTING	1130
Saturday, September 14th,	THORMORK TOUR	0800
Sunday, September 16th,	DEEP SEA FISHING	1730
Fri — Sun: Sept 14-16th,	WEEKEND IN AKUREYRI (Foliage Tour) 1800 / 14th	
Sunday, September 23rd,	REYKJAVIK CITY TOUR	1000
Friday, September 28th	VIKING FEAST	1900
Saturday, September 29th	WEST ICELAND TOUR	0900
Sunday, September 30th,	OCEAN KAYAKING	1300

Here are the statistics for September for those of you planning a visit here, perhaps already here or those just thinking about it. It is a lovely time of the year to come, actually.

Ave Temp: 46°F or 8°C	Very nice for fall
Max Temp: 64°F or 18°C	Downright nice y'all
Min Temp: 23°F or -5°C	Chilly cold air mass
Ave Wind: 14 K or 16 MPH	Moves about the grass
Max Wind: 81 K or 93 MPH	Will put you on your...
Ave Rain: 4.4 Inches	The rain returns to the west
Max Rain: 10 Inches	Waders here might be best
Ave Snow: Trace	Flakes in the air, from on high
Max Snow: 3 Inches	White lawns we see, as we sigh



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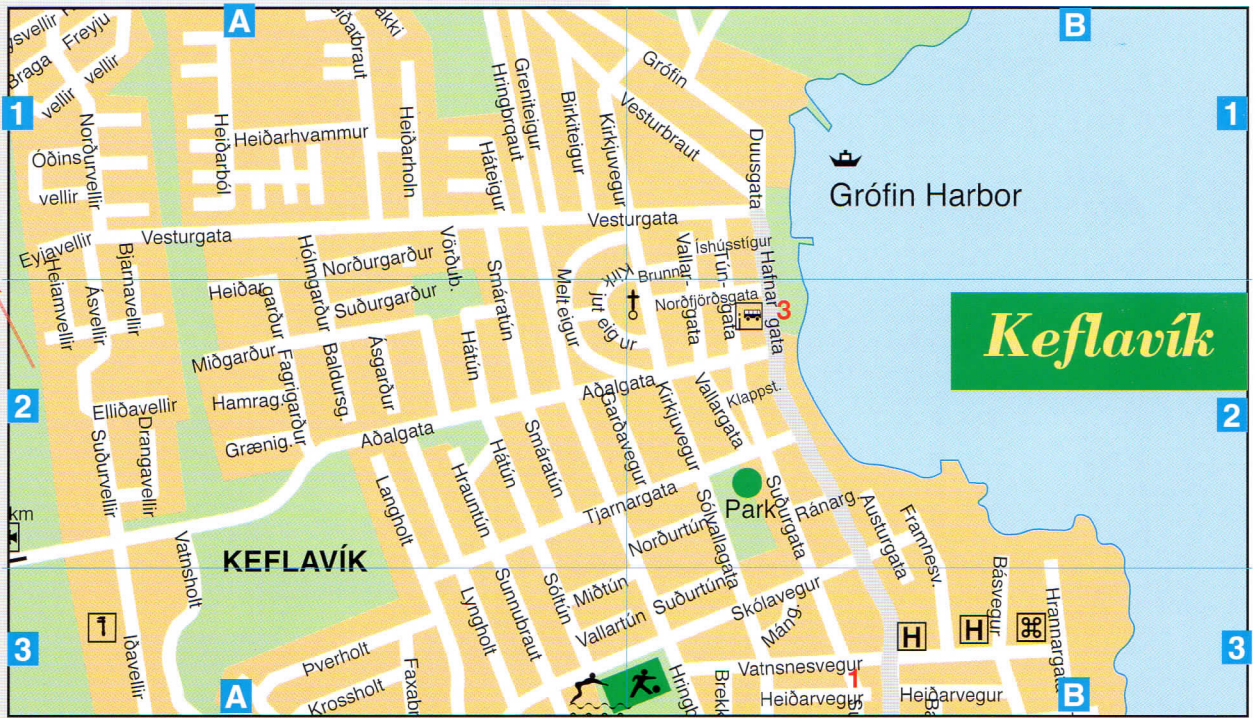
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The see-food Diet

It is absolutely no secret that Iceland has without doubt the best and the freshest seafood on the planet. The cold North Atlantic rich fishing grounds around Iceland have for centuries been the countries best natural resource. Indeed, fishing accounts for about 70% of Iceland's exports around the world.



Yet, one of the major questions, frequently asked by people contemplating a trip to Iceland is, "What do you all eat up there... would I like it? The answer is you bet and once here the people who partake in just about any restaurant you can think of in town are startled, amazed and pleased by not only the presentation but by the freshness and quality of the food everywhere they go.



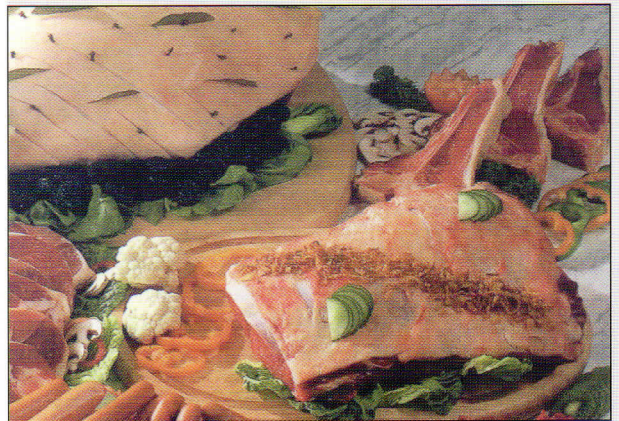
Before I moved here permanently, I knew how good the food was so if that were to be the single motivation for relocating here, it was enough. Shortly after arriving I began to partake. I started on what we will call a See-Food Diet...meaning when I saw food, I'd eat it. There are some who believe that I am still on it.

To become a Master Chef in Iceland one must attend a combination of 6 years formal school training in the culinary arts and two years internship in a formal restaurant environment. Unlike some tourist destinations of the world particularly with seasonal help, it is not enough to be able to identify the kitchen know how to tie the apron in the back. Icelandic chefs are among the world's best and have the awards to prove it.

Obviously, while pizza is not one of the basic food groups, more pizza is consumed in Iceland per capita than anywhere else in the world. Just recently Cocoa Puffs made the most per capita of the breakfast foods. Whatever happened to pancakes and oatmeal?

When it comes to any food group or product, Iceland also is proud to certify some if not the most strict standards in production and control from the care and feeding of the animals, the catching and processing of fish, and the care and control of all food products. The very strict standards also apply to anyone and everyone associated in any way with the food industry.

In future issues we will feature products that are unique to or specially made in Iceland. For now though, there is one thing you can be absolutely sure of. When it comes to a meal in Iceland, you can rest assured that you will be dealing with top quality, controlled under the strictest standards of cleanliness and handling. The fact that when you receive it at your table your not quite sure whether to photograph it or eat it, just adds to the entire concept of it simply just doesn't get any better than here.



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ICELAND EXPLORER TOURS

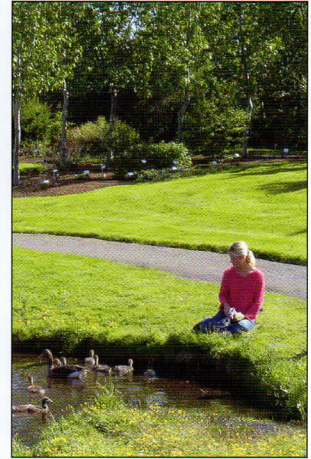


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