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Rafn Sigurbjörnsson is an Icelandic photographer who has it as his passion to document Iceland. This is one of his pictures from Landmannalaugar.. Landmannalaugar is a place in the Fjallabak Nature Reserve in the Highlands of Iceland. It is at the edge of Laugahraun lava field, which was formed in an eruption around the year 1477. It is known for its natural geothermal hot springs and surrounding landscape. Landmannalaugar is a truly rare area, both geologically and aesthetically is made up of windswept rhyolite mountains, a rock type that creates a full spectrum of dazzling colors on the mountainside. Shades of red, pink, green and golden yellow all change their tone, keeping in movement with the sun rays and creating an area of wilderness that resembles no place else on earth. Landmannalaugar is primarily known for its natural geothermal baths, hence its name "The People's Pools". For centuries, Landmannalaugar has served as an area of shelter and respite for weary travelers who use these soothing springs as a means to relax after tiring excursions.



Documenting Iceland with photos and videos

Jón Heiðar, the editor and janitor at Stuck in Iceland Travel Magazine, 3 years ago

About six years ago, I interviewed Icelandic photographer Rafn Sigurbjörnsson about his Icelandic photo book series called 'Wild Iceland – the untouched nature'. The eight-book series was created in less than one year. Rafn has not in any way stopped documenting Iceland with photos and videos.

The best website if you want to immerse yourself in Icelandic visuals

His [website](#) is probably the best place to start if you want to immerse yourself in Icelandic visuals. You can [download free photobooks](#) from Iceland and view a vast range of photos from Iceland for free. Rafn offers his fans [stock photos for sale](#), and if this is not enough for you Iceland fans out there, he regularly publishes impressive drone footage from Iceland on his popular [YouTube channel](#). He even creates the music featured in the videos! I have to say that even if I have spent almost nine years publishing content related to Iceland, my efforts pale in comparison.



Shipwreck in Mjóifjörður

Hey Rafn, thank you for taking the time for the interview. You certainly have not slowed down documenting Iceland since we spoke last time. What drives you?

My fascination with Icelandic nature and geologic diversity is endless on this small beautiful island. It does not matter where you are – the beauty is there. There is always something new to see; even if I come to the same place, again and again, it's different each time. The light, weather, etc., change the place constantly, so it's always a new place and new photographic motives to be found. How can this not drive me on?



Ice caves are temporary structures that appear at the edge of glaciers. They look wonderful from the inside. The waterfall melts a hole into the glacier while the ponded water drains towards lower elevations by forming long ice caves with an outlet at the glacier's terminus.

What are your favorite Icelandic places to photograph or film, and why?

Yes, I have often been asked this question, and I have thought about it a lot. I always come up with the same answer and "It's the spot that I'm on that moment." Beauty is so relative, and the value of beauty is so different. It's often just a question of seeing the beauty that surrounds you, and if you succeed - then it's the most beautiful place you've ever seen and been to.



Stjórnarfoss waterfall in Iceland.

Stjórn is a river that has its origins in Geirlandshraun. Making its way over the hills into a canyon, the Stjórn River becomes an amazing waterfall called Stjórnarfoss which can be seen from the bridge below it. From there, the river flows northeastwards to the lowlands where it merges with Geirlandsá River, becoming the Breiðbalakvísl River on the east side of Stjórnarsandur until it reaches the Skaftá River.

You never enter photo competitions. Why is that?

There are many reasons why I do not participate in photography competitions. Most of the competition rules are similar, you waive the rights to your photo, and the contestant can use your photo without your consent almost anywhere and anytime. For companies, this is an affordable way to get images in the cheapest way possible. They are even looking for something special in the image that best suits their advertising purpose. Still, you pay an entrance fee. I have developed a certain style of photography that does not suit everyone. If I am satisfied with the result, I'm the winner.

More photographers are staying away from photography competitions

Photography is often of an emotional nature, and you can't expect another person to have the same feeling as you for the subject as they were not on the scene. I can not expect a judge to look at thousands of pictures to choose the right one. They are too tired and bored to be able to choose the right one. My opinion is that if you are happy with the photo you took, then you are the winner. Others do not have to like them.

More and more professional photographers are moving into this thinking, and I find it interesting and understandable.



Puffin lands at Látrabjarg cliffs in the Westfjords of Iceland.

Your YouTube channel is a source of excellent drone footage from Iceland. What advice would you give to those who want to film with a drone here?

Iceland is an endless source of beautiful places. You can stop anywhere and get excellent drone footage. Respect the privacy of the individuals and follow the Icelandic rules on Drone Flight. PS. Iceland is much more than the [ring road](#).



Raufarhólshellir cave is approximately 1360 meters long. It is the fourth longest cave in Iceland and the longest outside of the Hallmundarhraun lava field in the Borgarfjörður region. The cave formed as a lava tube during the Leitahraun eruption, which occurred east of the Bláfjöll Mountains about 4600 years ago.

Can you share what kind of drone and equipment you use in documenting Iceland?

I'm using [DJI Mavic 2 Pro drone](#) with filters from Kase, [Canon EOS 5D Mark IV camera](#), and 7D as a backup. I also use the following equipment: [Canon EF 16-35mm f/2,8 II USM](#); [Tamron SP 24 - 70 F2,8 USD](#); [Canon EF 70-200mm f/2,8L IS II USM](#); [Canon EF 100 - 400 f/4,5-5,6L IS USM](#); [Canon EF 100mm f/2,8 Macro USM](#); [Manfrotto Tripods](#); [Kase Filters](#) (Wolverine 100 x 150 - CPL, ND, GND, CGND, RGND and lot of other stuff. It depends on what I'm doing.



The bright dancing lights of the aurora are actually collisions between electrically charged particles from the sun that enter the earth's atmosphere. The lights are seen above the magnetic poles of the northern and southern hemispheres. They are known as 'Aurora borealis' in the north and 'Aurora australis' in the south..

Auroral displays appear in many colours although pale green and pink are the most common. Shades of red, yellow, green, blue, and violet have been reported. The lights appear in many forms from patches or scattered clouds of light to streamers, arcs, rippling curtains or shooting rays that light up the sky with an eerie glow.

You have offered photography tours in Iceland for a long time. What advice can you give people going to Iceland for the first time?

Don't try to explore Iceland in 7 days. Take your time in designated areas and enjoy what you see. It takes years to explore this small island. Iceland is bigger than that. In fact, you could easily get "Stuck in Iceland."