



THE **REYKJAVÍK GRAPEVINE**

**Special Issue**  
The City Awards

The Reykjavík

Grapevine City Awards

2022 Best Of

# Reykjavík

## Dining

We ate everywhere in town so you don't have to

## Drinking

Post Pandemic Party Possibilities

## Shopping

Where to spend literally all of your money

## Activities

Done drinking? Try a museum, you philistine!





SKY LAGOON

Get lost  
within the city



Minutes from the City Centre



## AN INTRODUCTION

# Unexplored Post COVID-City

Oh my, what a ride the last two years have been. And what's more, we haven't even grasped the full scope of changes we have incurred. The first thing we have noticed is that people are always confusing years; we still talk about 2021 like 2022 never came. But, thanks to the never-ending march of time, 2022 finally arrived, and what's more, it brought our beloved freedom back.

Now, Icelanders believe we have beaten the virus—or at least we deeply hope so. We no longer have any restrictions in the country and the science seems to indicate that we have gained that longed for herd immunity. But it doesn't mean that everything is over yet. Some of us will still need to wear those dreadful masks on flights and so on. But it's not that much of a burden. We can once again meet at a concert, sweat together and have an unexpected coughing spell in a line. It could be worse.

With this fresh freedom in mind, we have worked hard to put together a brand new Best of Reykjavík so you can find out where to go to eat, drink, have fun and just enjoy yourself. The good news is that Iceland feels ready for a similar tourist boom as before

COVID-19. Even better, travellers who make it here will not only enjoy a slower tourist season in Iceland, like it was at the beginning of the boom, but also better restaurants than ever, and the biggest variety of activities we've ever had.

The COVID-19 era resulted in an unexpected blossoming for restaurants and bars. New ones are popping up everywhere and even for a local, the scenery feels very unexplored. This is the moment to rediscover Reykjavík, or just fall in love with a new city. Reykjavík has everything from a bustling city vibe to the closeness of a village, with a unique atmosphere that you will not find in many other places in Europe.

Icelanders are still crawling out of their hibernation after the virus, still kind of confusing 2022 for 2021—and trying to forget 2020 altogether. But we are getting up to speed, and we have never been as optimistic, joyful (as joyful an Icelander can be, that is) and just overall ready for a summer of exploration.

**Valur Grettisson**  
Editor-In-Chief

# Best of Reykjavík:



## DINING

- + Great falafel and where to find them P:20
- + Post-COVID recovery—the new hot spots in town P:22



## DRINKING & NIGHTLIFE

- + Happy Hours: the cheapest way to drink in Iceland (yes, there is a way) P:29



## SHOPPING

- + Wondering where to get that morin-khurr you've been dreaming of? We got you covered P:33



## ACTIVITIES

- + Self-guided street art: basically the only free activity in Reykjavík P:39

## BEST OF REYKJAVÍK 2022

Summer 2022 Edition by  
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# Farmers Market

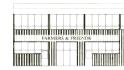
— ICELAND —



OUR STORES IN REYKJAVÍK: FARMERS & FRIENDS

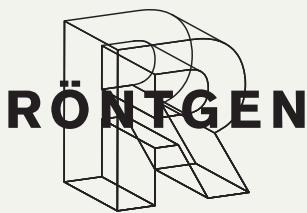


Laugavegur 37



Hólmaslóð 2 / Grandi

[WWW.FARMERSMARKET.IS](http://WWW.FARMERSMARKET.IS)



Hverfisgata 12

**Happy hour / 4–7pm**  
**Beer / Wine / Cocktails**



## THE AWARDS:

# How We Picked the Winners



The word “conclusion” is a little strong in this case. We have argued, fought and interviewed panels, tried blind taste-tests, and, in one case, consulted what we believe to be an oracle. This was not an easy or scientific endeavour.

The best comparison is glíma, or Icelandic wrestling. It's not flashy or well produced like WWE. It's not exactly graceful like Olympic wrestling, especially Greco-Roman. It's two people in weird leather underwear, staring into each other's eyes and trying to hip-check each other while simultaneously attempting an atomic wedgie.

We'll be honest. Some of the winners are just outright winners, but some are a matter of debate and controversy. Like in any other country, there are cliques or special interest groups. The bar most liked by a 22-year-old noise music fanatic might seem a little off-putting to a bespectacled jazz

enthusiast. We're not saying those two groups can't overlap. Maybe they can. Jazz people are good at improvising and noise music definitely needs more fans.

The thing is, this is a guide. It's a work in progress. It's an attempt at letting people know where we think they should go. We didn't all agree on everything, so the runners-up could end up being more palatable to you, and the winners could be your third favourite. Yikes.

If this lack of certainty is too much for you: imagine being the original tourist to Iceland. A wandering tax-evader from Norway who decides to settle on a rock almost uninhabited by animal life. A land that occasionally explodes, with geysers that burst scalding sulphur-scented water from the ground like a cannon ball at Satan's pool party. It's the kind of place where people would invent glíma.

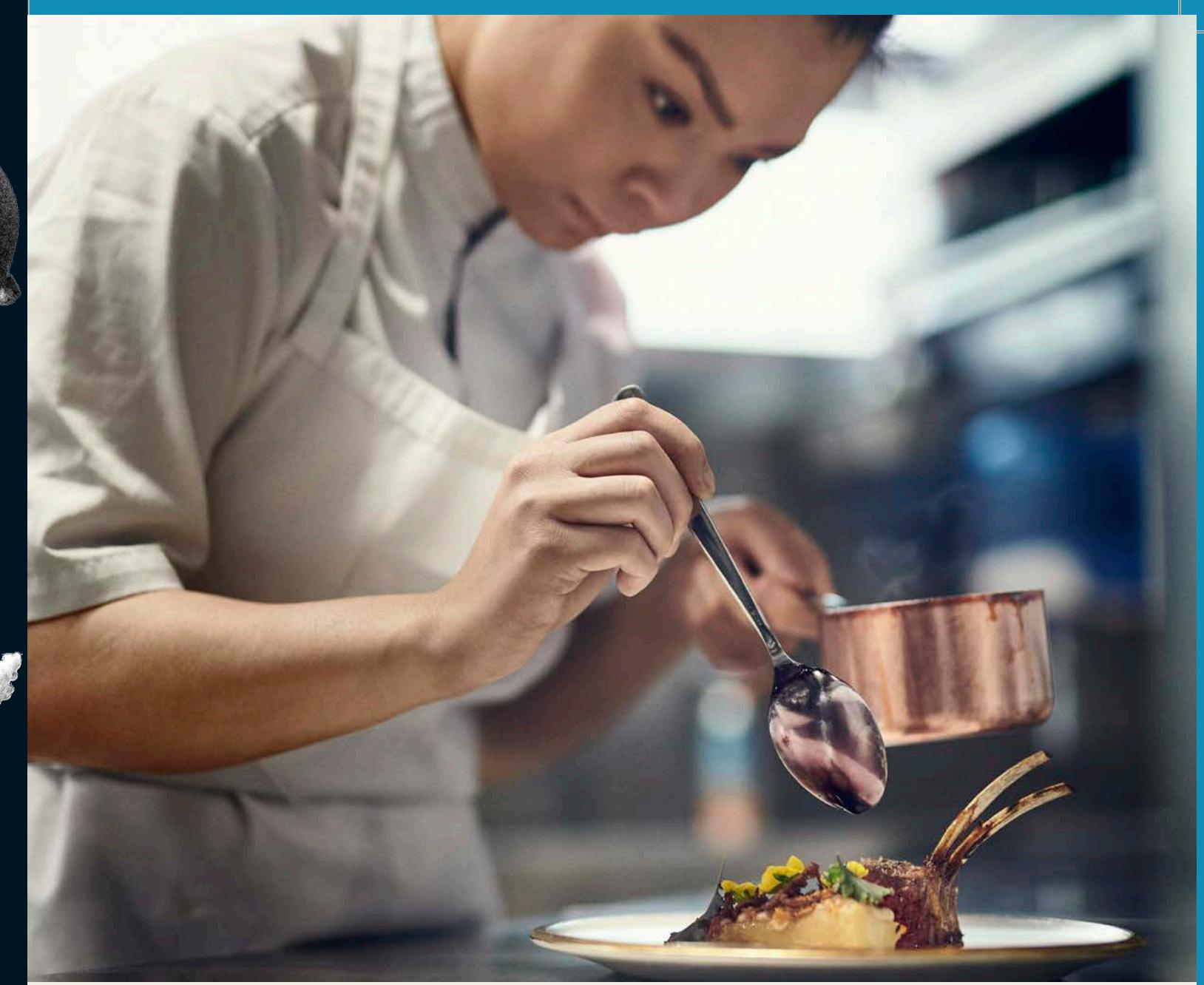
## THE GUIDE-GUIDE

# How To Spot The Winners

Look out for these stickers of recommendation, which we've handed out to this year's winners. They indicate your best option, whether you're looking for shopping, dining, drinking or fun days out in Reykjavík. We at the Grapevine know what's best!

Also, these are the stickers from our previous “Best Of” selections, given to winners from prior years. 🤪





# THE NATURAL CHOICE

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# Dining

## Burgers, bases, breads and bowls

They say that adversity breeds creativity; that adage has certainly held true for Reykjavík restaurants. When we first started to put together the Best of Reykjavík issue it was slim pickings, but over the years, decision making has increasingly become a less-straightforward affair. This has really been one of our most challenging dining editions to put together, as we were spoilt for choice both in terms of quality as well as consistency. Restaurants old and new have a post-pandemic energy about them, and we're delighted to once again grace their tables. We've chomped, chewed and gulped our way around this fine city, all in the name of bringing the very best that Reykjavík has to offer you, dear gourmands.

### Best Burger



### Le Kock

Tryggvagata 14

They are back, and how! The craft burger OG might have slipped off their throne last year but looks like they took the feedback to heart 'cause these burgers have never been better. So much so that, one of the panel quipped, "I eat here so often, my friends think I practically live here." And with good reason—no one toasts potato buns to crisp perfection like they do, or cooks patties to such medium rare goodness. Everything is made from scratch, including the condiments! This is gourmet fast food, with all of the fine dining attention to detail and none of the sacrifice on fun and flavour. Our current favourite? The Trump Tower.

### Runners-Up



#### **Yuzu** Multiple locations

Yuzu continues to enjoy popularity, going by the fast and furious expansion spree they've been on lately. Consistency, the dreaded Achilles heel of Icelandic restaurants, hasn't spared them however. But for the most part, the burgers continue to be a tasty alternative to the simple standard fare with the coriander-sprig, hot sauce and yuzu-mayo combo in the Chilli Cheeseburger still going strong. "It is an excellent grease-fix," confessed one of our panellists.

### Newcomer



#### **2Guys** Laugavegur 105

With their title being a riff on the 5 Guys chain, 2Guys was a burger we were ready to ignore, truth be told. But these are textbook one-handed smashed burgers perfect for a night out with friends. The laid back, nostalgic burgers are served with a touch of humour and a load of charm. Don't believe us? Try the 2 Pac with its sneaky bits of candied jalapeño and crushed Doritos.

### Previous Winners

- 2021: Yuzu
- 2020: Le Kock / Búllan
- 2019: Le Kock

### Best Vegan Burger



### Yuzu

Multiple locations

Yuzu's vegan-vegetarian burgers are miles above their meaty counterparts. There, we said it! The vegan burger is a portobello mushroom, whole, in lieu of a patty, while the vegetarian Beyond Meat burger basks in the warm glow of sesame oil-muskiness and citrusy coriander. Perfect for newly minted vegetarians and meat lovers alike, it's a nice departure from the standard burger, but still faithful to its roots.

### Runner-Up



#### **Le Kock** Tryggvagata 14

"I'm not even vegan, but this is the one vegan burger I always get," quips our panellist. If that isn't high praise, we don't know what is. Unlike the ubiquitous supermarket shelf patty, Le Kock leans into the smashed burger trend with their crispy, lace-edged smoked barley and bean number. That smokiness lends a deeply satisfying note, and the savoury pineapple-ginger BBQ sauce complements it perfectly.

### Fond Farewell



#### **Bio Borgari** Vesturgata 12

For years the brothers behind Bio Borgari have walked the talk of earth-friendly good food—so much so that they even have their own farm supplying the cosy restaurant with seasonal, fresh produce. Their pulse and bean patties are a cut above the rest, and their commitment to excellence is visible in the care that they put into every element of their burgers, from handmade condiments to IG-worthy construction. We were devastated to hear they are closing their shop, but rest easy in the knowledge that they're planning other ventures soon.

### Previous Winners

- 2021: Veganæs
- 2020: BioBorgari
- 2019: Junkyard

### Best Pizza



### Flatey

Multiple locations

Educating a country beyond their diet of pizza-chain pies is no small feat, but that's exactly what Flatey sought to do when they burst onto the scene, and for that we applaud them. Sure, there might be niggling concerns about the dip in quality and service, but overall, they're still the granddaddy of artisanal pizza. The Margherita continues to be a panel favourite; who can argue with milky mozzarella and tomatoes?

### Runner-Up



#### **Plútó Pizza** Hagametur 67

Plútó may not have been the most reliable horse in the pizza race, but after the brief square pizza debacle (the less said about that the better), they have turned things around and are back to slinging sought-after neighbourhood pies. Take-away is best and these NY style pies are all about familiar, comforting flavours. Make like a local and order the pepperoni, dates and cream cheese. Trust us.

### Newcomer



#### **Bakabaka** Bankastræti 2

We've been so blown away by the pizzas at Bakabaka that a furious debate took place about whether they should usurp the top spot right away, instead of waiting in line as a Newcomer. The pizzas here are a feast for the eyes—rolled to perfection with an excellent crust to body ratio. The blistering reveals careful tending to, the toppings are a balanced symphony (get the ramps when in season) and they're, well, tasty as heck. The pizza wars are on, and boy are we here for it!

### Previous Winners

- 2021: Flatey
- 2020: Flatey
- 2019: Flatey

## Best Bakery

### Joint Winners



## Sandholt

Laugavegur 36

"Just walking in there feels so special," sighed one panellist. We agree, Sandholt is all kinds of special. We challenge you to find better laminated viennoiserie or bread as hearty and delicious. Amidst the Scandi fever that has firmly gripped bakeries in town, Sandholt stands tall with its Parisian vibes. If you don't know what to choose, might we steer your attention to the vínarbrauð, generous with custard, or the buttery pain aux raisin, the tropical vibes of the passionfruit-coconut dacquoise and yes, a simple loaf of bread.



## Deig Workshop

Tryggvagata 14

Deig continues to knock our socks off with their play on American classics with a deeply Icelandic twist, all at unbeatable prices. Deig's doughnut version of the kleina—with its hint of lemon and cardamom in the glaze, atop feather-light yeasted dough—is perfect with a cup of joe. The creme brûlée doughnut is another much copied OG and the bagels satisfy many a craving. Unlike other bakeries, Deig's selection is small but focussed.

### Runner-Up



### Brauð & Co.

#### Multiple locations

City-wide chain Brauð og Co has finally managed to get a grip on QC, going by the uniformity across their various branches. The kitchens are experimenting with weekend-only treats (the mango-lime-coconut danish is still going strong) and the smúðurs, though the size of a baby's head, are delicious. We especially like the always-full flask of coffee to-go, a thoughtful detail.

### Previous Winners

2021: Sandholt

2020: Sandholt

2019: Sandholt/Deig

## Best Thai



## Ban Thai

Laugavegur 130

Ban Thai continues to rule the roost when it comes to Thai restaurants—but we can't help feeling that this is a category that could do with a serious shake up (we're looking at you, Mat Bar, with that Northern Thai pop-up). It would have to be stiff competition however, as Ban Thai doesn't seem to rest on its laurels. Just take a look at their website which reads like an admonishment for whatever preconceived notions you may have harboured about the cuisine. Recently, we've enjoyed their smoky grilled pork in a sticky tamarind glaze.

### Runners-Up



### Krua Thai

Skólavörðustígur 21

"Iceland isn't cheap—which should be an opportunity to showcase quality food and produce," our panellist astutely observed. Thai restaurants here, however, are often shorn of that herby, fresh punctuation associated with the cuisine, presumably as a cost-cutting measure. That being said, Krua Thai has long been the local go-to for Thai food. Loyalists swear by their fragrant curries, generous portions and attentive service.



### Mai Thai

Grensásvegur 116

Does Mai Thai make their curries from scratch? Probably not. Do they make the best Pad Thai in town? A resounding yes. But we'd like to take your attention off the noodle dish and direct you to the laab. Mai Thai is one of few places that makes a decent laab, chock full of sliced shallots, fresh mint, coriander and toasted rice powder. We also love the Tom Kha.

### Previous Winners

2021: Ban Thai

2020: Ban Thai

2019: Ban Thai

## Best Chinese



## Fine

Rauðarárstígur 33

Fine may have had a challenging time during the pandemic but their hand pleated dumplings never betrayed the trials of the year. A panel favourite, Fine is a no nonsense, no frills, Sichuanese Chinese restaurant that steadfastly opens Reykjavík's mind's and palates to the regional cuisine. The Mala Chicken is a tingling explosion of flavour, literally, thanks to the sichuan peppercorn. For something simple yet exciting, we recommend the Hot and Sour Potatoes, a classic rendition of matchstick potatoes, best eaten with fragrant rice.

### Runners-Up



### Fónix

Bildshófi 12

If your idea of Chinese food is the pallid fare at Rikki Chan, boy are you in for a ride at Fónix. While the lunch buffet is a cheap, cheerful affair compared to similar spreads across town, here even the usually staid wings are singing with star anise and other aromatics. For vegan and pork dumplings, the fish fragrant eggplant, and 'we-challenge-you-to-find-better' Mapo Tofu, Fónix ticks all the boxes.



### Tian

Grensásvegur 12

Designed like a time capsule of dated restaurant interiors (think red fans and gold lamps), Tian seems intent on being a Western Chinese joint. Except, amongst popular options like Kung Pao Chicken, there's also pillowy steamed buns and dumplings. There's supposedly a mythic secret menu, although we can neither confirm or deny its existence.

### Previous Winners

2021: Fine

2020: Fine

2019: Fónix

## Best Traditional Icelandic Food



## Þrír Frakkar

Baldursgata 14

Þrír Frakkar has held onto a strong sense of Icelandic food culture long before it became fashionable to tout 'Icelandic cuisine' as bragging rights. This cosy, tucked-away restaurant has not let anything sway them from tradition—you'll spot everything from foal, to blackbird, to cod throats to plökkfiskur on their menu. Opened in 1989, the restaurant has been run by chef Úlfar Eysteinsson and his family ever since. A visit to this place underlines that good old-fashioned Icelandic cooking can be all kinds of memorable.

### Runners-Up



### Café Loki

Lokastígur 28

This unassuming cafe has been unabashedly celebrating tradition long before Icelandic food was considered 'cool'. From the classic kjötssúpa to herring and plökkfiskur, everything is a throwback to how the island once ate. For those writing their own tales of bravado, there is fermented shark to be washed down with Brennivín—essential for bragging rights.



### Kaffi Vagninn

Grandagarður 10

Iceland's oldest running restaurant, Kaffivagninn's enviable location by the harbour is best enjoyed on a sunny day, out on the deck, a cold one in hand, a mighty slice of brauð tetra in the other. Portions are very much sailor sized, and the plökkfiskur is a throwback to Amma's place. Other Icelandic classics like fiskibollur are also on offer.

### Previous Winners

2021: Café Loki

2020: Café Loki

**BEST OF REYKJAVÍK 2022**

# Dining

Iceland's not cheap, so it had better be good

**Best Coffeehouse**

## Reykjavík Roasters

Ásmundarsalur, Freyjgata 41

Despite living on a tiny island in the North Atlantic, far from the homelands of Rubiaceae (that's coffee plants to you non-nerds), Icelanders sure love their coffee. This is perhaps best demonstrated by the dominance of Reykjavík Roasters, with their numerous locations around the capital. This ubiquity is no bad thing, however. As you'd expect from the name, RR roasts their own beans and makes a mean cup of joe, as well as serving up some tasty baked goods. In addition, the cafes are cosy and quaintly decorated, without veering into twee-territory.

**Newcomer****Hygge Coffee & Microbakery**  
**Seljavegur 2**

Hygge embraces its namesake's spirit and is indeed a cosy, neighbourhood coffee shop with earthy interiors and a Zen vibe. There are ceramic pieces by Birgitte Munck made even better with their selection of baked goods by Sandholt alumni Þórey Lóvisa. Expect good coffee, a broad choice of teas—we are suckers for their cold Matcha latte (it's not on the menu, but if you ask nicely, they may just oblige)—and homemade kombuchas. With several comfortable nooks, it's also a great space to work from.

**Runner-up****Kaktus Espressoobar**  
**Vítastígur 12**

Unsurprisingly, given the name, the interior of Kaktus is full of various plants and succulents—but don't expect the service to be prickly. This cosy cafe is the perfect spot to meet a friend for a chilled catch up, or settle in with your laptop for a productive work session. The soups and sandwiches are also great and very reasonably priced.

**Previous Winners**

- 2021: Reykjavík Roasters
- 2020: Reykjavík Roasters
- 2019: Bismút

**Best Sushi****Fiskmarkaðurinn**

Aðalstræti 12

Fiskmarkaðurinn has been treating Reykjavík to an Icelandic spin on sushi for over a decade. While we may have a love-hate relationship with 'Icelandic pylsu sushi', Fiskmarkaðurinn delivers a wonderful iteration in its 'Volcano Langoustine roll'—a salmon and cucumber maki roll with langoustine tartare, and just the right sprinkle of shichimi togarashi. Stick to the sashimi on the rocks—with all its dramatic flair—and the sushi, and you'll be a happy camper.

**Runner-up****Fiskfélagid**

Vesturgata 2a

This restaurant may not boast an extensive sushi menu, but what they do, they do with utmost care. Especially popular during lunch, they offer a 'little' and 'big' sushi platter (also a mysteriously named 'French sushi'; what do the French have to do with sushi?) that is ideal for a business or languorous lunch alike.

**Runner-down****Sushi Social**

Þingholtsstræti 5

Sushi Social may have no qualms in borrowing freely from more established institutions abroad. What they do get right however is the local love for sushi, presented in a hyper-local format. During pop-ups and guest chef appearances, they dish out delectable Japanese treats. We still haven't recovered from the magic of the fresh toro nigiri with sancho pepper from a couple years ago. On the regular turntable however is Icelandic sushi in all its glory or as they cheekily call it, 'juicy sushi'. Go on, admit it, it may not be traditional, but it sure is tasty.

**Previous Winners**

- 2021: Sushi Social
- 2020: Sushi Social/Osushi
- 2019: Fiskmarkaðurinn

**Best Vegan Meal****SONO matseljur**

Sæmundsgata 11

Sono overlooks a wild-flower meadow and a spectacular view of the Reykjavík skyline. Languorous and idyllic, the menu too is shaped for slow savouring. The chefs look beyond Iceland for inspiration, while still showcasing seasonal, local produce in all its colourful glory. Foraged herbs, berries, fruits, stems and flowers all feature on the menu, resulting in a fun affair that serves as a reminder that good vegan food goes beyond batter-fried cauliflower.

**Runner-up****Vegan World Peace**

Aðalstræti 2

"This is great casual dining, at throw away prices," gushed one of our panelists. And we agree. No dish seems to be priced over 2,500 ISK at this all-vegan restaurant. Mock-meats act as protein in a menu that is full of hearty bowls of soups, stir-fried noodles and vegan versions of popular Vietnamese and Thai dishes.

**Newcomer****Hnoss**

Harpa, Austurbakki 2

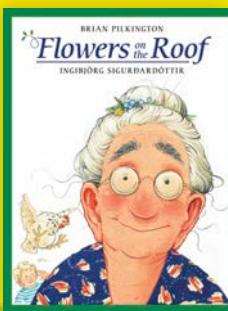
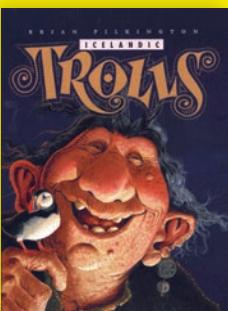
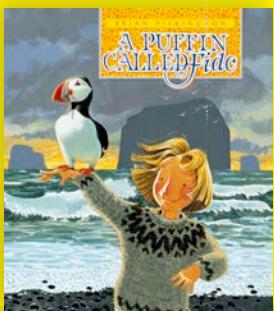
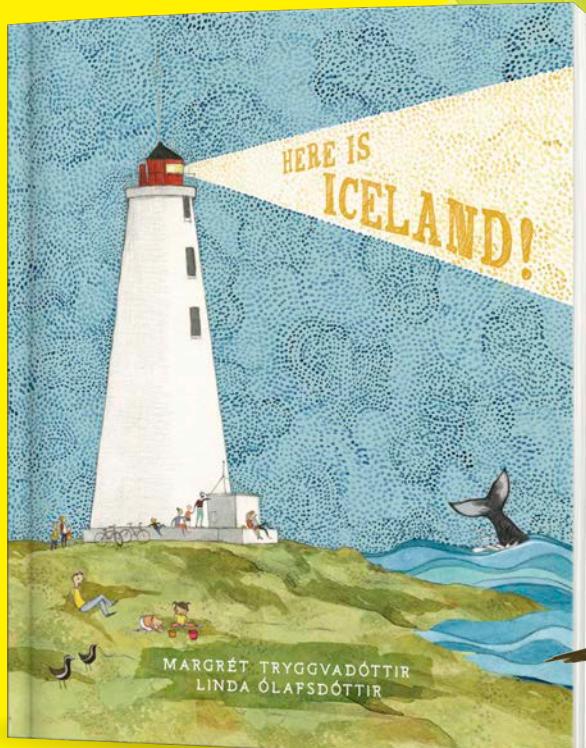
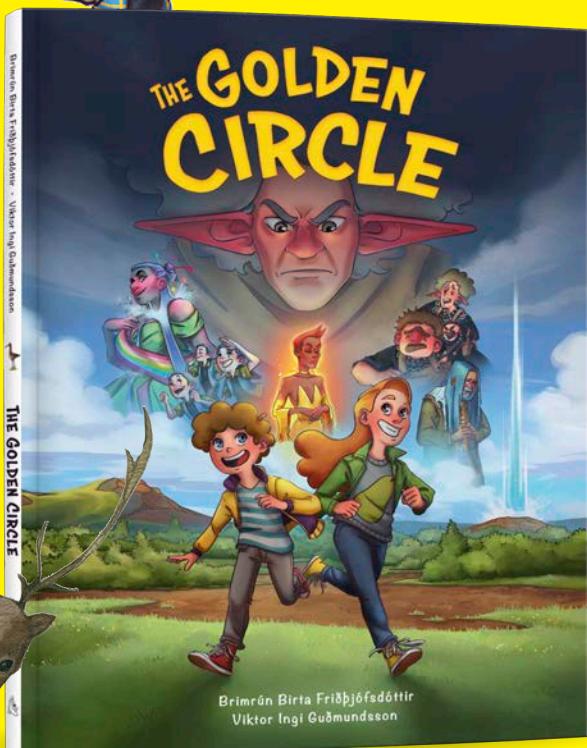
Chef Fanney Dora—of the famed 'smoked carrot' dish at Skál—has opened her first restaurant at Harpa concert hall. Hnoss is a delightful showcase of the big, bold flavours that we've come to expect from Fanney. Hnoss rightfully treats vegetables (often sourced locally) as the stars they are; the falafel salad and the spice-laced lentil dishes in particular are moreish and toothsome. Weekend brunches have something for everyone—don't forget a bottle of crisp Piper Heidsieck to wash it all down.

**Previous Winners**

- 2021: SONO Matseljur
- 2020: Mat Bar
- 2019: Sumac

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## BEST OF REYKJAVÍK 2022

# Dining

From fancy meals to family fun

### Best Goddamn Restaurant



### Skál

Hlemmur Mathöll, Laugavegur 107

They're back! Reykjavík's beloved Michelin Bib recipient Skál may have taken a nosedive during the pandemic, but like a phoenix it has risen to new heights since chef Thomas Lorentzen took over the reins at this hyper-local wunder-bar. It's rare that an entire menu consists of hits, but Skál can boast exactly that. The salt baked beets are a symphony of flavour, while the cod belies the simplicity of its presentation, with each layer offering up a studied contrast of textures and flavours. The cocktail game has also undergone an upgrade with bartender Keli whipping up some magic on the regular. As our panellist summed up, "You think it'll be food hall fare and suddenly you have all these innovative dishes and flavours." Cheers to you, Skál.

### Runners-Up



#### Hosiló Hverfisgata 12

Hosiló embodies Icelandic nonchalance in everything but their food. The phone lines and messages might be left unanswered, but the food continues to deliver big, bold punches of flavour. The restaurant boasts a tidy little menu, the specifics of which rotate regularly. One day, they might take you to Italy or Denmark, on another, they render a sublime Icelandic dish in a contemporary cloak. Clever details, like massaging ribboned celeriac with saffron, hint at a maturity we'd like to see more of.



#### Austur-Indiafélagið Hverfisgata 56

It doesn't matter if you are new to Indian cuisine or a seasoned consumer of curries, this place makes you feel welcome. Whether you're celebrating a milestone, or simply want to treat yourself to dining out done right, dinner at Austur India never disappoints. We recommend the tandoori grilled chicken or the stuffed kulchas.

### Previous Winners

- 2021: Austur-Indíafélagið/La Primavera
- 2020: Sumac & Skál
- 2019: Snaps

### Best Place For A Fancy Meal



### Dill

Laugavegur 59

Every detail at Dill is thought through: the cloth napkins, the stemware, the gorgeous handmade ceramics—heck, even the playlist is curated to the dining room's moods. Dill's circular kitchen philosophy extends to the whole menu and functioning of the restaurant, with the chefs able to tease flavour profiles from seemingly mundane ingredients—including their own kitcen scraps. All in all, Dill continues to be a beacon of fine dining in Iceland.

### Runners-Up



#### La Primavera

#### Grandagarður 20 & Harpa 2 fl.

Dining at La Primavera is one of Reykjavík's simple pleasures. The focus is on quality ingredients, allowed to shine on their own merit without relying on fads of molecular gastronomy, foams or Nordic fermentation. Instead, chef Leifur Eiriksson coaxes intense flavours from only the bare necessities. Primavera is that old school, romantic ideal of what great dining can be and after more than 25 years in the business, they know a thing or two about that.

### Newcomer



#### Tides

#### The Reykjavík Edition, Austurbakki 2

With striking timber coffered ceilings and fluted concrete columns holding aloft the restaurant in a golden glow of warmth, Tides is where everyone wants to be seen. The restaurant is a dream to look at no matter where one is seated. The food started off on safe mode when they first opened, with hidden gems like the whole deboned grilled chicken now making way for a fine dining menu that highlights Nordic cuisine. Don't leave without a stiff martini.

### Previous Winners

- 2021: Dill
- 2020: Dill
- 2019: Austur-Indíafélagið

### Best Family Restaurant

Toddler



### Kaffi Lækur

Laugarnesvegur 74a

Kaffi Lækur has always been popular with families. We love the layout of the cafe, the food menu that is great for splitting with kids, and the patient, reassuring service that understands all too well the challenges of dining out with younger wards. They've recently added an outdoor play space, perfect for summer afternoon visits.

Tween



#### Osushi

#### Tryggvagata 13

Eating out with kids is inherently stressful. At Osushi, young diners don't have to wait for their food at all—which goes some way in explaining the popularity of this place with families. The sushi conveyor belt provides plenty of visual stimulation, piques an interest in all the colourful food on offer and is the perfect blend of small bites, and choices to please both the picky eater and the adventurous mini-gourmand.

Teen



#### Laundromat

#### Austurstræti 9

After a brief hiatus, Laundromat Cafe returned towards the end of 2019. Laundromat offers a cool '50's-diner-meets-maximalist-library vibe, decorated with bright furnishings, maps and colour-coded books. It's great for families in general, but teens in particular like the fun decor, burgers and milkshakes. We especially love their vocal support for breastfeeding, as well as the fact that you can actually do laundry here!

### 2021 Previous Winners

- Kid's choice: Osushi
- Parent's choice: Kaffi Lækur
- Runner-Up: Klambrar Bistro

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## BEST OF REYKJAVÍK 2022

# Dining

Delicious meals ahead

### Best Value For Money

#### Joint Winners



## Deig Workshop

Tryggvagata 14

Deig's 'poor man's offer' is as good as it gets on this abnormally expensive island. For 1100 ISK, you can choose from a handmade bagel with a filling of your choice, any doughnut or pastry from their selection, and a simple drink (coffee, juice or kokomjölk, basically). Even better, they open at 7 a.m., and the offer is valid as long as the bakery is open.



## Chickpea

Hallveigarstígur 1

Chickpea offers great take-away meals and a few seats that are perfect for people watching. A family-run restaurant, they make everything in-house, from the sourdough pitas to the pickled vegetables to the falafel and the kombuchas. We love their soups—nourishing, almost always vegan, and full of texture—for just 1490 ISK (pita and hummus included!). Or if you are hankering for something heartier, you can't go wrong with a falafel wrap (1890 ISK).

#### Runner-Up



crust pizzas and beer, makes this one of our favourite places to grab a slice and see what's current in Reykjavík. The lunch offer for a beer and pizza is only 1200 ISK, or 2000 ISK at other times. A steal, no matter how you look at it.

#### Flatus

Skúlagata 28

Kex hostel is no run of the mill backpacking hostel. A vibrant bar, DJ-sets and live music, plus a kitchen dishing out thin

### Best Brunch



## The Coocoo's Nest

Grandagarður 23

The Coocoo's Nest continues to be the most brunch-y brunch in town. Their award-winning sourdough is put to good use under poached eggs bathed in a silky hollandaise, as wreck-your-bank-account avocado toast, or just simply grilled and served alongside an omelette that feeds six. We kid, but only partially. It's popular for a reason, so it's best to make a reservation. Psst, they serve brunch on Friday's as well!

#### Runner-Up



#### Klambrar Bistro

Fólkagata 24

If you're one of those who turn their nose down at the bottomless brunch madness that has gripped this city, might we nudge you towards Klambrar Bistro. Set in the gorgeous gallery dedicated to the works of painter Kjarval, this sun dappled, calming restaurant dishes out a well-priced, hype free brunch that hits all the right spots. The vegan chicken & waffles are particularly popular, and the space is child-friendly with access to an open courtyard and art room. On a sunny weekend, this is the spot to be at.

#### Newcomer



#### Brút

Pósthússtræti 2

Despite their popularity, weekend brunches in town tend to be pretty cookie-cutter in their offerings. Brút brings to Reykjavík a Nordic-skewed brunch that is at once light, colourful and satisfying. Mounds of delicately dressed salads, tenderly poached fish, hunks of cheese and whole pies and cakes make up the spectrum of offerings. The space is lovely but the layout leaves you feeling a bit like it's a treasure hunt. Nevertheless, this is the brunch Reykjavík has been waiting for.

#### Previous Winners

2021: Sægreifinn

2020: Icelandic Street Food

2019: Icelandic Street Food

### Best Seafood



## Fish Company

Vesturgata 2a

For the definitive seafood experience in Reykjavík, you'd be hard pressed to find a better spot than Fiskfelagið. Their tasting menus are a great way to try the best the waters around Iceland have to offer, from Atlantic cod served Japanese style, to harissa wolf-fish. The sushi platter makes for a great lunch while their fish of the day is usually a generous pan-fried dish with a luscious sauce.

#### Runners-Up



#### Fishmarkaðurinn

Aðalstræti 12

Not quite traditional, Fish Market serves up food that is a treat for your eyes as much as your mouth. The lightly salted cod, a menu staple, has gone through varied avatars over the years and is currently served over a bed of soba noodles, matcha butter and a langoustine sauce. If that isn't tempting enough then choose from their varied sushi menu. Service is attentive and the cocktails are fun. It's the perfect place to take your parents to prove you're a real grown-up now.

#### Newcomer



#### Brút

Pósthússtræti 2

This gorgeous restaurant is all set to shake old hats out of their slumber. Despite being a coastal city, Reykjavík restaurants have rarely offered anything other than the trifecta of cod, salmon and trout. Brút prides itself on being a seafood friendly restaurant and whatever fish you order, be it a crudo or cooked, you are guaranteed it will arrive prepared to perfection. We recommend the sea snails slicked with garlic butter, the local scallops and the fresh skate—which lacks the strong ammonia stench you might fear.

#### Previous Winners

2021: Fish Company

2020: Fish Company

2019: Fiskifélagið

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# Dining

Lunch out or dine in—take your pick

## Best Lunch Place



## La Primavera

Grandagarður 20

There is hardly a restaurant as popular with the luncheon crowd as Primavera, and with good reason. The service is impeccable, the ambience classy and the food, well, it's just excellent. If it is salad you seek, then a delicately dressed mound of bitter and fresh greens dance about crusty bread. After something heartier? The pasta or fish of the day is sure to satiate you. Primavera reads the pulse of its patrons and seems to telepathically know whether you want the whole nine yards with time to spare, or if this is just a valuable pause in your hectic day.

### Runners-Up



#### Hipstur

#### Borg 29 & Höfði Mathöll

If you are looking for a light yet satisfying meal that isn't just an insipid salad or clammy sushi rolls straight from the cooler, look no further than Hipstur. The entire menu is a bright, springy affair. They know their customers well, and are one of the few places where a lunch order means swift service without sacrificing flavour. Heck, they'll even customise your order if you ask nicely.



#### Von Mathús

#### Strandgata 75, Hafnarfjörður

"I bring my clients here," quipped our panelist. And why not? Von is one of a handful of restaurants that understand the 'working lunch' concept so well. Whether you want to spend a few hours, or are strapped for time, the restaurant accommodates both with aplomb. The catch of the day is always a good bet, as are their menu specials.

### Previous Winners

2021: Hipstur

2020: Mimir

2019: Hlemmur & Grandi Mathöll

## Best Take-Away

### Joint Winners



## Ramen Momo

Tryggvagata 16

When the pandemic hit, take-away averse Reykjavík had to do some quick thinking to adapt to its new reality. Ramen Momo upped their 'bring your own container' gig for a Covid-friendly format where all the elements of ramen are individually packaged making for premium at-home enjoyment. Reheat the broth and just assemble the rest. Or, do as our panel confessed—stir-fry the noodles with the toppings, and savour the broth as is for a two-in-one treat.



## La Poblana

Laugavegur 2

Poblana's delicious tacos are based on chef Carlo's family recipes. While we love all of their tacos, we have an especially soft spot for the campechano—a spicy, meaty, cheesy affair. What we like best however, is how well the tacos travel and Poblana carefully packs everything with instructions so you can host your own taco party in the comfort of your own home!

### Runner-Up



#### Fine Take-Away

#### Helluhraun 22, Hafnarfjörður

This Hafnarfjörður outpost of Fine extends its loyal clientele from downtown to the suburbs. In a stripped down to basics industrial area, they dish out a small but well made menu of Chinese classics. Yes there is a 'buffet' to choose from but we are partial to their dumplings and buns and when they do have it, the hong shao rou pork.

### Previous Winners

2021: Ramen Momo

## Best Place To Go With A Group Of Friends

### Joint Winners



## Sushi Social

Pingholtsstræti 5

If you're looking for a fun night about town, Sushi Social is the place to be. The restaurant staff know this only too well and never drop a beat in keeping those drinks and smiles coming all night long. The menu is ideal for sharing—although, who'd want to share something as delectable as the langoustine tempura. Order one—or several—of those colourful drinks with names that recall a tropical holiday to make a fun night even more festive.



## Apotek

Austurstræti 16

Apotek is one of those rare places that go effortlessly from business lunches, to high tea, to pre-dinner drinks, to languorous dinners without skipping a beat. This perhaps explains its popularity with locals and visitors alike—there is something for everyone at Apotek, no matter the time of day. We recommend starting in the lounge with one of their award-winning cocktails.

### Newcomer



#### Selva Restaurant, Latin Food & Bar

#### Laugavegur 12

Decked out in rose gold and fashionable foliage, walking into Selva is an instant indicator of the good times in store. The latin beats are just right, the pina coladas a reminder of a more tropical island life and the food, a curated selection of dishes from Chile, Venezuela and Columbia, are ideal party platters.

### Previous Winners

2021: Apotek



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## BEST OF REYKJAVÍK 2022

# Dining

Rising stars and old favourites

### Best Newcomer



## Brút

Pósthússtræti 2

Chef Ragnar Eiriksson has been through a few jaunts and joints since his departure from Dill. At Brút, he has found his voice and a balance of flavours that appeal to a large cross-section of diners—no mean feat. Brút had a shaky start but quickly found their rhythm. From the extensive wine ‘book’ to the decor and playful graphics, the concept feels well thought-out. Focussed on seafood, the usual suspects only lurk briefly, making way for a showcase of the sea snails, scallops, squid and skate. Despite the emphasis on seafood, we are also partial to the gnocchi (sinful, buttery goodness). If they’d work on the meh dessert trolley (a great idea let down by execution), Brút is all set to knock other establishments off their comfy perches.

### Runners-Up



#### Tides

##### The Reykjavík Edition, Austurbakki 2

Under the vision of chef Gunnar Karl and headed by chef Georg Halldórsson, Tides quickly turned the tides (we couldn’t resist) from safe hotel restaurant to fine dining establishment to watch out for. With a stunning open kitchen that overlooks a plush dining room, independent wine list and cocktails that don’t skew sweet, Tides is proving popular with both hotel guests as well as local diners. We love the Josper Basque grill and the expertise the kitchen wields over it—the grilled arctic char with crispy, smoky skin and coral tender insides is proof of this. The menu showcases local produce in an elevated fashion, and is combined with stellar service.



#### Hnoss

##### Austurbakki 2

Many restaurants have come and gone in the concert hall lobby, but none had the foothold Hnoss already does. Chef Fanney Dóra has crafted a wholesome, moreish menu here that comfortably combines her love for bold spices with her passion for Icelandic produce. This is best expressed in dishes like the delicate shrimp cocktail and the heady miso-glazed celeriac, a dish that will convert even hardcore meat-eaters. Rumour has it that Fanney is also brewing her own champagne blend with none other than Piper Heidsiek.

### Previous Winners

2021: Dragon Dimsum

2020: Makake

2019: Eiriksson Brasserie

### Best Ice Cream

#### Joint Winners



## Gæta Gelato

Aðalstræti 6

Hailing from a line of maestro gelatiere, the Gæta family uses the best Icelandic ingredients, marrying them with top line produce from Italy for an unmissable treat. Piedmontese hazelnuts and Sicilian pistachios are swirled and churned to creamy perfection. Gæta’s crispy, thin cones are coated in chocolate sauce for a surprise ending, and if that wasn’t enough, you can choose two flavours in a single scoop!



## Skúbb

Laugársvégur 1

Nothing quite says live in the moment like a melty cone of luscious ice-cream. Did you know that Skúbb only uses milk from Biobú, an organic local farm? Each scoop at Skúbb is vibrant and intense, whether vegan or dairy (can you even tell which is which?). With a small curated selection that reflects the seasons, this imaginarium of joy churns everything from tomatoes to licorice roots into ice cream.

### Runner-Up



#### Omnom

##### Hólmaslóð 4

Award winning, world famous chocolate brand Omnom now do ice creams! Omnom elevates milky vanilla soft serve to kawaii artform. Sure, they don’t make their own ice cream, but it is a welcome blank canvas for their gourmet toppings and flourishes. Thankfully, they now serve their giant portions alongside a much-needed children’s size, so you don’t have to share your treats with anyone.

### Previous Winners

2021: Gæta Gelato

2020: Skúbb

2019: Skúbb

### Best Tasting Menu

#### Best Tasting Menu



## Óx Reykjavík

Inside Sumac, Laugavegur 28

There is a sense of theatre at Óx, Iceland’s only chef’s table experience. Everything unfolds against a backdrop of chef Þráinn’s grandfather’s restored kitchenette. Old and new commingle gently here, exploding in bursts of brilliance, with deft handling of pristine produce. For non-drinkers, there is a sophisticated juice pairing alongside their wine offering, with house-made kombuchas. Midway through the 16 course extravaganza, you’ll find yourself engaged in banter with guests from across the world, all here creating gastronomic memories together.

### Runners-Up



#### Dill

##### Laugavegur 59

You’d be hard-pressed to find a better tasting experience in Iceland than Dill. Can fine dining and sustainability really co-exist? Chef Gunnar Karl is not just attempting this at Dill, but sharing with us along the way that fine dining can also be ecologically conscientious. The courses are well paced, with a focus on vegetables and nose to tail consumption.



#### Matur og Drykkur

##### Grandagarður 2

Matur og Drykkur has switched entirely to a tasting menu format, bolstering classic, sometimes forgotten Icelandic recipes and presenting them through a modern lens. There are childhood favourites like blood sausage in an entirely new avatar with foraged arctic thyme, and the rice pudding is reinterpreted as a creamy ice cream. Cocktails embody the same spirit. This is a fresh makeover of a much-loved favourite that has firmly cemented its place in Reykjavík fine dining.

### Previous Winners

2021: Óx Reykjavík

2020: Óx Reykjavík

2019: Grillið

# Dining

Delicious, even if you can't pronounce it

**Best Lamb**

## Sumac Grill + Drinks

Laugavegur 28

If you, like us, can't stop singing praises of Icelandic lamb, then you should know that dining on lacklustre cuts of meat drowning in sauce does not do justice to the wild roaming sheep of Iceland. Sumac is one of the few places that cooks lamb with none of that sous-vide nonsense. An unpretentious lamb rib, cooked on the grill, kissed with smoke and licked by flame is pretty hard to top. Sumac serves it with blistered grapes, fried almonds, a splash of thinned down muhammara and lentils. It's a dish you can't get enough of, and thankfully the restaurant hasn't dared to take it off the menu.

**Runners-Up****Kasbah  
Geirsgata 7b**

Walking through the doors into Kasbah you might feel like you've time travelled—and we don't blame you. The gorgeous restaurant brings a slice of Morocco right to the heart of Reykjavík without resorting to clichéd gimmicks. There are several lamb dishes on the menu, but our favourite remains the lamb and prune tagine. Served piping hot, the lamb is fall-off-the-bone tender and aromatic with ground cinnamon. Mop up the sticky juices with the fluffy 'khobz', bread that is baked in house everyday.

**Grillmarkaðurinn  
Lækjargata 2a**

Lamb chops definitely are the photogenic cut of the meat world. Besides the fact that meat cooked on the bone makes for juicier meat and stellar presentation, Grillmarket takes it a step further by sourcing only prime quality cuts from a local farm. Perfectly seasoned and cooked to a delicate pink hue, the marbled chunks don't need even a smidgen of sauce.

**Previous Winners**

**2021:** Sumac Grill + Drinks  
**2020:** Apotek  
**2019:** Matarkjallarinn

**Best Food Hall**

## Borg 29

Borgartún 29

The panel was divided on whether the interiors at Borg 29 were 'campy cool' or 'canteen-y soulless box'. What we could agree on, however, is that this is one of the more comfortable food halls to be at with a wide variety of choices to please most anyone. "Almost every place makes small plates, which is excellent for sharing," observed one panellist. She's right, one can choose from sushi at Umami, to burgers at Yuzu, to grilled meats at Bál to healthy skyr bowls at Svala.

**Runner-Up****Hlemmur Mathöll  
Laugavegur 107**

The OG, Hlemmur Mathöll is a small yet powerful foodhall. Whether it's the curated champagne selection at Kröst, the gastropub take on Icelandic cuisine at the Michelin Bib awarded Skál, hearty Vietnamese pho or some Napoli pizza by Flatey, this is the best place to sample a cross-section of Icelandic restaurant fare without having to worry about reservations and wait lists. Finish off with artisanal Gæta gelato and you're golden, baby.

**Runner-Down****Grandi Mathöll  
Grandagarður 16**

Grandi Mathöll might have fallen out of favour, but things finally seem to be turning around. There is Pronto Pasta which is popular with families and Fjárhúsíð is still going strong with their lamb platters, as is Gastrotruck with their sandwiches. What works in Grandi's favour beyond the food is the magnificent view over Reykjavík harbour.

**Previous Winners**

**2021:** Hlemmur Mathöll

**Best Indian**

## Austur Indía-fjélagið

Hverfisgata 56

What can we say about Austurindia that hasn't already been said? That this is one of Harrison Ford's favourite restaurants, that they've been voted one of top 10 establishments in Reykjavík, or that they are one of only a handful of places that have been in town for almost three decades now? Walking in through the carved, antique doors, one is instantly transported to sunny India. Replete with bronzed teak interiors and soothing music, smiling staff guide you to your table.

**Runners-Up****Gandhi  
Bergstaðastræti 13**

Gandhi went through a change of location during the pandemic but seem to be settling in at their new quarters. We highly recommend the prawn kizhi; even without the customary banana wrapping it is a tender, fiery rendition of the South Indian dish. Vegetarians will delight in their Alu paneer kofta, which are deep fried and simmered in a cashew based gravy.

**Himalayan Spice  
Geirsíða 3**

This family-run restaurant has been serving Nepali cuisine since their Laugavegur days. Post-pandemic however, they are in a new airy location. They seem to have shorn some traditional Nepali dishes in favour of more Indian ones, and while we do miss the Wai Wai chaat, we console ourselves that the Himalayan Thali is as good as ever. Pair this with a round of momos as starters and it's almost as good as a trip to Nepal.

**Previous Winners**

**2021:** La Primavera

**Chickpea**

"A world-class falafel," I'm told, Chickpea never disappoints. The family-run restaurant offers falafel in four types of sandwiches, served either in a flatbread or pita, and in falafel salad bowls, plus there's a soup of the day. While it might be considered a mono-restaurant, Chickpea's falafel definitely wouldn't come across as traditional or boring. The team constantly tries to update the menu, integrating seasonal ingredients or an exotic touch, e.g. mango aioli. Beware: not all falafel sandwiches at Chickpea are vegan—double-check for added dairy. **IZ**

**Mandi**

Veltusund 3b, Reykjavík



Mandi is probably the most popular place in Reykjavík for falafel right now. And there is a damn good reason for that. The falafel is solid, although there are two versions of it. The one for Icelanders that don't like strong food, and the one that is really hot and can keep you warm for the rest of the day. Just ask for that hot sauce and they will serve you right up. **VG**

**GUIDE****Falafel**

**Cheap, cheerful, and chock-full of chickpeas**

Words: Iryna Zubenko, Valur Grettisson Photo: Art Bicnick

*A good falafel is like a hug: warm, hearty, and satisfying. Falafel is the ultimate hangover food and a go-to meal on a night out. And while Reykjavík might not be the falafel capital of the world, the Grapevine team went out of their way to find some of the best examples of this simple comfort food in town.*

**Zorbian**  
Hringbraut 119, Reykjavík

Zorbian is relatively new in the market, but has already made some serious impact on the

neighbourhood of Vesturbær. They offer wonderful falafels as well as more traditional dishes from the Middle East and never fail to deliver a tasty dish. The restaurant is a little bit out of the way of downtown—roughly a 15-minute walk from the centre. The place is cosy and gives you the opportunity to check out the Vesturbær locals while you eat. **VG**

**Arabian Taste**

Laugavegur 87, Reykjavík



Unremarkable from the outside, Arabian Taste serves a selection of Syrian and Arabic dishes, including tasty falafel. You can choose between a falafel roll, Arabian falafel that comes with rice, or a falafel plate with hummus and salad on the side. Hot sauce or not? The choice is yours. Arabian Taste is located right on Laugavegur and is open until 11 PM on weekdays and until 2 AM on Fridays and Saturdays, which makes it a perfect place to stop by before or after going out. **IZ**

**Lamb Street Food**

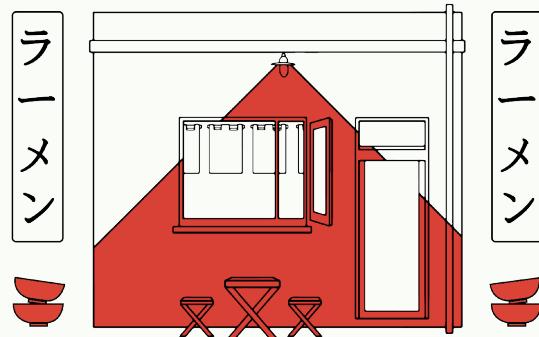
Grandagarður 7, Reykjavík



Despite the name suggesting the opposite, Lamb Street Food offers three options of vegan falafels wrapped in grilled flatbread. Located right at the old harbour area known as Grandi, LSF could be a good option for a lunch break after a long stroll along the seafront. "No place beats this one for value per króna spent"—reads one of the recent LSF reviews, and we know TripAdvisor reviews don't lie. **IZ**

**FIRST RAMEN HOUSE IN ICELAND****FYRSTA RAMEN-GERÐIN Á ÍSLANDI**

Tryggvagata 16, 101 Reykjavík

**ramen | momo**



- 1 Jewellery – *Hlin Reykdal*
- 2 Scented candle – *Rammagerðin*
- 3 Fragrance – *Fischersund*
- 4 The Fuzzy stool – *Sigurður Már Helgason*
- 5 Wool blanket – *Milla Snorrason*
- 6 Headwear – *Rammagerði*



# RAMMAGERÐIN

*Rammagerðin has been selected the best Icelandic design store by the Reykjavík Grapevine 2021 & 2022.*



## Höfuðstöðin

Rafstöðvarvegur 1a,  
110 Reykjavík

Höfuðstöðin is a new art and culture destination that opened recently in Reykjavík. The space will permanently house the monumental installation Chromo Sapiens by Hrafnhildur Arnardóttir, aka Shoplifter—an Icelandic artist based in New York. Höfuðstöðin also includes a cafe and a design store, with most of its furniture made from recycled plastic. **IZ**

## Sirkus

Lækjargata 6B, 101 Reykjavík

OK, it may not be totally new, but it's definitely back in town, at long last. After shutting its doors in 2007, the legendary and beloved Sirkus is now reclaiming Reykjavík nightlife, only this time at Lækjargata 6B. The reincarnated locale hopes to bring back its famous party vibes and acclaim with live music, Mama Rama Indian food, and classic games of darts and pool in the basement. Go experience Icelandic nostalgia at its best. **AP**

## Loo.Koo.Mas

Laugavegur 30, 101 Reykjavík

Sure, donuts are cool, but have you ever had loukoumas? These Greek "donuts"—more accurately described as fried dough, traditionally drizzled with honey, cinnamon and sesame seeds—are a light, crispy, airy treat that you can pick up at Loo.koo.mas. Served with a homespun charm, loukoumas are fried to order, always fresh, and make for a great snack while enjoying some win-



## NEW IN TOWN

# Bustling Pandemic Boom

**Reykjavík is back, baby**

**Words:** John Pearson, Iryna Zubenko, Andie Sophia Fontaine, Valur Grettison

*Although you might have expected COVID-19 to have dampened spirits, it seems like Iceland didn't get the memo. New places have sprung up all over town, from art spaces to restaurants to fancy new hotels and bars. We're not sure where the proprietors got the chutzpah to launch a new venture in the middle of a pandemic, but we sure enjoy reaping the benefits.*

dow shopping. We recommend the chocolate and cream topping—yum! **ASF**

## Lemmy

Austurstræti 20, 101 Reykjavík

This quirky rock 'n' roll joint—named after the late legendary singer of Motörhead—has popped up on the main drag downtown. You can't miss the

lurid cerise signs and windows filled with kitsch and toys from previous decades, guaranteed to draw a nostalgic "Oooooh!" from any passing Gen-Xer. Inside, the bar offers food, live music—often a drummer playing with a DJ—and a snug vibe. And if snugness isn't your thing, Lemmy has outdoor seating for smokers and really hardcore rockers who have JD and coke for blood. **JP**

## Smass

Ægissíða 123, 101 Reykjavík

We know what you're thinking: great, another hamburger joint. But hear us out. A few Icelandic lads ran a burger place in Denmark for a while but moved home only to find out that there was no smash-style burger place in Reykjavík. These guys opened up Smass in Reykjavík, and, in short, it's been a smash hit! This is the place you go to get a real American cheeseburger with a Nordic twist. And man, that Nordic twist is actually...wait for it...smashing! **VG**

## Kaffi Ó-le

Hafnastraeti 11, 101 Reykjavík

If you were born in Iceland in the early 80s, you just might remember the name Kaffi Ó-le. Hearing it may even overwhelm you with nostalgia, memories of lost loves or nicotine poisoning. Kaffi Ó-le was once the name of the local haunt of the young genX cool kids, but is now a slick coffee house next to the Radisson 1919 Hotel. Sounds like the revolution ate its children. Don't fret, GenX never believed in anything anyways. But we can tell you right now, the coffee at the new Ó-le is way better than we used to drink. **VG**

*Find more reviews of new-in-town spots on our website: [gpv.is](http://gpv.is)*



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**BEST OF REYKJAVÍK 2022**

# Drinking

Tipsy or wasted, the choice is yours

It's been two years of off-and-on single-or-double flip-cup-flip-flopping, but as of 2022, bars are officially back in action—and oh, how we needed it! This year was certainly a standout for our local scene. Not only were bar-goers finally safe to sink their extremely appreciative teeth back into the weekly "djamma", but new spots and old classics stepped up to the plate swinging to give 'em what they wanted. So cue the orchestra (and the Opal) as we gather once again to celebrate the best that Reykjavík nightlife has to offer. Because let's be real: Icelanders love to drink. In fact, there is probably nothing Icelanders like doing more than drinking, which could be why this country doesn't have a space program...

**Best Goddamn Bar**

## Röntgen

Hverfisgata 12

The panel's unanimous choice—once again!—was an obvious one: Röntgen. Why? Well, this place has it all. "It's crazy how it's continued to dominate the bar scene in Reykjavík," one panellist raved. "But it's just got so many elements: you can have a meeting there during the day, pre-dinner drinks after work and then head there again hours later for a full-on dance-till-you-die party night. It works for every vibe, which is so rare for a bar." Despite only appearing on the downtown scene a few years ago, the place has already cemented itself among the nightlife legends. We bow down, Röntgen. Wear your crown with pride.

**Runners-Up****Gaukurinn**  
**Tryggvagata 22**

You want a rock concert? They got it. Looking for drag? They got that, too. Comedy? Yes. Burlesque? Totally. Weirdly lit karaoke nights? You fucking bet. Yes, Gaukurinn is a place all its own. This grungy-in-the-best-way haunt offers the most unique lineup in the city, with an ambitious roster of events that you're unlikely to see anywhere else. They also have gender neutral bathrooms and free tampons. Not that that won them the award, it's just cool, is all.

**Kaffibarinn**  
**Bergstaðastræti 1**

Ahh... Kaffibarinn. While many Reykjavík bars come and go, redecorate, rename or put on bells and whistles, Kaffibarinn has stayed the course for almost three decades—because it's just a really good, reliable place. You'll never have a boring night at KB. It's no ordinary watering hole.

**Previous Winners**

- 2021: Röntgen
- 2020: Kaffibarinn
- 2019: Kaffibarinn

**Best Place To Start The Night**

## Jungle Cocktail Bar

Austurstræti 9

It was a unanimous decision for the panel to name Jungle Cocktail Bar as the "Best Place To Start The Night"—a surprise for such a competitive category. "Jungle's vibe naturally caters to an early night crowd. It's stylish and airy, and, of course, they have the most innovative and delicious cocktails in the city," enthused one panel member. "You want a Jungle cocktail to start your night—better than having one later when you can't savour it as much!" The panel also praised the bar's diversity—noting how attendees spanned all ages and demographics. "It's just a crowd-pleaser," another panellist concluded.

**Runners-Up****Stereo**  
**Skólavörðustígur 8**

Stereo—a true hole-in-the-wall, or rather, hole-on-the-second-floor—has a devoted clientele, and for good reason. The trendy haunt overlooks Skólavörðustígur and offers cocktails on tap in a cosy environment. "Not only do they have refined drinks, but the 80s-esque design motifs are beautiful," one panellist raved. "It's calming and sophisticated, just a great vibe."



**Mikki Refur**  
**Hverfisgata 18**

Mikki Refur does it all. The bright café bar has an expert selection of beer, wine and appetizers and a prime location that makes it a great place to start the night—or bring a date. "It's friendly, inviting and a one-size-fit-all place to start a night," our panel determined. "There's something there for everyone."

**Previous Winners**

- 2021: Kaldi
- 2020: Véður
- 2019: Véður

**Best Place To End The Night**

## Kaffibarinn

Bergstaðastræti 1

Let's be real: there's a reason that Kaffibarinn is still here and full of dedicated regulars. At night, you'll find the crowd gets rowdy, the convos get interesting and the dance floor gets sweaty in the most wonderful way. "It's the obvious choice," said a panellist. "Who doesn't have some crazy story from closing time in the smoking area at Kaffibarinn?" The rest of the panel wholeheartedly agreed. In fact, we urge you to ask around so you can be shocked by how many longtime couples met there circa ~4:00 a.m. Hint: a LOT! So yes, for their service to late night amusement and love, KB deserves this award. Bravo, old chum.

**Runners-Up****Kiki Queer Bar**  
**Laugavegur 22**

There's no better late-night dance floor than the pumping upstairs hub of Reykjavík's resident queer space, which plays the greatest dance hits of the past 30 years and attracts a clientele that is ready to let loose. You know, those "OH MY GOD I LOVE THIS SONG" tracks you need to hear late at night? Yes, we mean "Euphoria" by Loreen, and you can bet they'll play it twice.



**Prikið**  
**Bankastræti 12**

Prikið is the bar version of the "I'm going to bed early tonight vs. me at 3 a.m." meme. At 22:00 you'll have a bunch of regulars relaxing at the bar, but arrive at 3:00 and it's Project X. The panel noted that while it certainly caters to a younger audience, their concerts are for the record books. You won't find a crazier crowd than at a rap show at Prikið.

**Previous Winners**

- 2021: Kiki Queer Bar
- 2020: Prikið
- 2019: Kaffibarinn

## Best Sports Bar



### American Bar

Austurstræti 8

For the fifth—yes, FIFTH—year in a row, American Bar is the champion of our sports bar category. For those apprehensive about entering a place called “American Bar”, trust us: this place is more “Let’s take shots to Lynard Skynyrd!” than “Let’s go Brandon!” It’s a friendly place with big screens, a nice selection of beer and—get this—wings! Pro-tip: Don’t be that guy who fights about “soccer” vs. “football”. We all know it’s ridiculous.

#### Runners-Up



### English Pub

Austurstræti 12

If it's football you're hankering for, go to those that know it best: the English. This pub serves up a dark, wooden Anglo-kitsch interior, a long bar with plenty of staff and loads of comfortable seating, and—best of all—a plethora of screens. Make sure to yell loudly and berate players when they miss the penalty—you wanted an authentic pub experience, right?



### Lebowski Bar

Laugavegur 20a

Honour ‘The Dude’ at this laid-back, unpretentious locale that offers the best of both worlds during sports games. Some people will get rowdy; others will stay chill, so you’re certain to find your crowd while savouring a great burger. If you’re feeling fancy, order a White Russian.

## Best Craft Bar



### Session Craft Bar

Bankastræti 14

Where the tourist stream of Skólavörðustígur flows into the tourist river of Laugavegur, you’ll find a haven for fans of craft beer. With its minimal appearance, stainless steel bar backed with dozens of taps and fridges full of beers canned and bottled, Session is a place that, while cosy enough, is made for serious craft heads. Whether you’re hankering for a lip-puckering gose, or an IPA packed with more flowers than a funeral, Session has got your back.

#### Runners-Up



### Skúli Craft Bar

Aðalstræti 9

Reykjavík is overflowing with great beer but Skúli was at the forefront of the craft bar wave in Iceland and the place and its friendly staff—consisting of side-hustling but talented rock musicians—will always have a place in our beer-soaked hearts. If you are looking for a versatile cornucopia of different styles of beers from different breweries, both domestic and “útlensk”, check it out.



### BrewDog

Frakkastígur 8

While BrewDog is an imported concept and does rely heavily on the Brewdog line of beers, they have always made space for every madcap ultra-micro-brewer in the local scene and also bring in a lot of wild brews from around the globe. Consistently popular, this place also benefits from having a very solid kitchen with lots of salty treats to fuel the thirst. Now go fetch!

#### Previous Winners

**2021:** American Bar  
**2020:** American Bar  
**2019:** American Bar / English Pub

## Best Wine Bar



### Vinstúkan Tíu Sopar

Laugavegur 27

Every oenophile—wine connoisseur, for the uninitiated—knows that to truly appreciate wine, it's imperative to find a cosy, inviting environment. Vinstúkan Tíu Sopar has perfected this. “Vinstúkan Tíu Sopar has basically made me a wine person. The bartenders know what to recommend, how to talk to people of all levels of wine knowledge, and they are also just so friendly! I always feel like they’re drinking with me,” one panel member laughed. (Note: They are not).

#### Runners-Up



### Mikki Refur

Hverfisgata 18

Mikki Refur has been around for less than two years, but it's already cemented itself as a consistent pinnacle of wine curation in the city. With an imported selection of natural wines, the place manages to wow both winos and non-winlos alike. Not an easy task and one that should be applauded.

#### Previous Winners

**2021:** Vinstúkan Tíu Sopar  
**2020:** Port 9  
**2019:** Port 9

## Best Place For Cocktails

### Joint Winners



### Jungle

Austurstræti 9

Jungle is backed by a who's-who of Icelandic cocktail maestros who partnered together to open a bar entirely focused on cocktails. They found the perfect fit for it on the second floor of the 1920s building at Austurstræti 9, with its lush leather chairs and considerable ceiling height. This has been decked with tropical arrangements so the end result falls (somehow) comfortably between a tiki lounge and a prohibition speakeasy.



### Veður

Klapparstígur 33

We'll let you in on the Icelandic pun in the name. The name means “weather” and “Veðurbarinn” could either mean “weather-beaten” or “the weather bar”. Anyone who has visited Iceland outside of the four months of sunshine, knows that you need a spot to dip into for an expertly made classic cocktail and a bartender who knows your name. Veður is a new-ish bar but there's something about it which makes you feel like it's always been there.

#### Runners-Up



### Apótek

Austurstræti 16

Apótek is a spacious, upscale restaurant whose cocktail creations have picked up a bundle of local awards. The building's pharmacological past lives on in its name—Apótek means pharmacy—and the cocktail list, which is divided up into categories like “painkillers” or “stimulants,” exemplifies this. We'd recommend the Black Death Negroni and the Stranger Tides.

#### Previous Winners

**2021:** Jungle Cocktail Bar  
**2020:** Miami  
**2019:** Systir

**BEST OF REYKJAVÍK 2022**

# Drinking

Why have just one happy hour when you can have nine?

**Best Place For Live Music****Gaukurinn**

Tryggvagata 22

Cue the confetti and throw your horns up, for once again, Gaukurinn reigns supreme. With dim lights, leather sofas, gender-neutral bathrooms and free tampons, this bar/venue is the preferred hangout for the unorthodox Reykvíkingar. So if you're looking for like-minded peeps in the alt and queer scene, there you go. "They have been so ambitious with their events this year. Have you been watching their schedule?" one panellist asked incredulously. From heavy metal fests to quieter indie shows, this second floor haunt does it all, and many of our favourite Icelandic acts—from Hatarí to Power Paladin—played their early gigs there. "Their karaoke nights are also legendary because people take it so seriously," one panel member laughed. "It's not just drunk women singing Britney. People really perform."

**Runners-Up****KEX  
Skúlagata 28**

Whoever does KEX's bookings deserves a raise—seriously! While they don't have many shows, every one of them is extremely well curated, seeming to have whichever band or group is most talked about at the moment. "Even though it's a small stage, it always ends up being such a nice party," our panel determined. "They really know what they are doing."

**Skuggabaldur  
Pósthússtræti 9**

What gave Skuggabaldur this runner up award? All that jazz, baby! (Editor's Note: We apologise for that terrible, terrible joke.) Anyway, Reykjavík finally has a dedicated jazz venue and the cosy locale serves up the kind of funky, sensual, foot-tapping vibe you need when listening to someone solo on a bass. Their food is pretty good too.

**Previous Winners**

- 2021: Gaukurinn
- 2020: Gaukurinn
- 2019: Iðnó

**Best Happy Hour****Bravó**

Laugavegur 22

Bravó: a dark room with amber-toned light, simple furniture, and cosy bohemian pillows. Their happy hour—perhaps the most prolific in the city—starts at 12:00 everyday and lasts until 20:00 "I feel like it's always happy hour at Bravó, right?" one panel member laughed. Located in the heart of Laugavegur, it's also a prime people-watching spot. Anyway, their dedication to the art of the happy hour must be applauded. Thank you for your service, Bravo.

**Runners-Up****Kaldi****Laugavegur 20b**

If you're looking to drink in a classy, beautiful environment with the crème de la crème of Reykjavík, come to Kaldi. While the later evening crowd can get surprisingly rowdy, coming early means you get to enjoy their fine selection of Kaldi beers—at happy hour prices. They also have a great, heated beer garden / smoking area, which, as we all know, are where the best moments happen.

**Skuggabaldur  
Pósthússtræti 9**

Happy hour is about more than just a good price, it's about the right vibe for that special, early evening drink. Thankfully, Skuggabaldur nails that, and adds a complicated chord progression, just for style. On lazy, sunny afternoons you can't find better, and while Skuggabaldur's happy hour is normally from 17:00-18:00, when the weather is good, they open it up early at 15:00.

**Previous Winners**

- 2021: Bravó
- 2020: Kaffibrennslan
- 2019: Kaffibrennslan

**Best Outdoor Drinking****Joint Winners****Óðinstorg**

Óðinstorg

"Can we use a whole square as an outdoor drinking spot? Because Óðinstorg is really it," said one panel member. "You have good sun, good seating, Snaps, and Bodega. Something about it feels like you're in mainland Europe. It's what the city needed." And so it was decided: Óðinstorg is the best outdoor drinking spot in Reykjavík. The new square, was previously a parking area, but is now an open, airy, designed-for-those-lazy-summer-days paradise.

**Fjallkonan**

Hafnarstræti 1-3

Day-drinking is an art form, and if you're looking for some classy hair of the dog—and to "see and be seen"—look no further than Fjallkonan. Their cocktail list is extensive, their location unbeatable, and you're guaranteed to catch some rays (and some hot gossip). Even when it's cloudy, or one of those terrible 4°C "spring days", you'll still see people sitting and sipping outside at Fjallkonan.

**Runner-Up****Loft**

Bankastræti 7

Loft's slice of sunny terrace overlooking Bankastræti is heads and shoulders above most of the al fresco drinking spots in Reykjavík, not least because it's on the roof. "You feel like you've won the lottery when you're able to get a seat there," one panel member laughed. "When it's nice outside, it's just the most relaxing place to talk with friends."

**Previous Winners**

- 2021: Fjallkonan
- 2020: Petersen Svitán
- 2019: Loft Hostel

①

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## BEST OF REYKJAVÍK 2022

# Drinking

Pro-tip: Try the drinks!

### Best Newcomer Bar



### Húrra

Tryggvagata 22

Ok, is it new? Questionable. But trust us: The panel debated extensively about this, ultimately deciding that since its reopening, beloved Reykjavík venue Húrra has been so monumental and so successful that it deserved the Best Newcomer award. Seriously, it lives up to the hype, continuing its legacy of artsy vibes, good concerts, and raucous weekly karaoke and dance floors. So if you want to mingle with the cool young artists of the city, Húrra is where it's at. BTW: the renovations for the rotating roster of bizarre places that have tried to fill the space over the last few years means that Húrra's previously notoriously grungy bathrooms are now like marble and look like Versace. Flex.

### Runners-Up



#### Lemmy Austurstræti 20

You've got to applaud a bar that chooses a theme and then dials it up to 11. Not only does it have truly OTT decorations and a great playlist, but also live music and DJ/drummer combos from your fav rock musicians in the city. "I love that they went all the way," one panellist raved. "It's cheesy in a tongue-in-cheek way. It's like they Googled "rock bar" and decided to go full force. I love that."



#### Lækjargata 2

"There is always a huge line for this place—always. It's rare to see a bar this new be this popular," one panel member said of the newly opened Auto, which took over the basement of the Hard Rock Café earlier this year. "For those that like the nightclub/table service vibe, this is going to be their favourite place and the only club they go to. It's filled a niche in the scene."

### Previous Winners

2021: Skuggabaldur  
2020: Röntgen

### Best Date Place



### Port 9

Veghúsastígur 9

**The Romantic Date:** Cosy and tucked away with a secretive vibe, Port 9 solves the age-old problem in Reykjavík: where can I go for a date where I won't see a tonne of people I know who will later inundate me with texts about my new paramour? Ah, détendez vous, mes amis, for sitting at Port 9 feels like you're away from the rest of the world and there seems to be an unspoken bond of letting each other be. As one panellist concluded: "If you want actual romance, this is the only place to go." So get to flirting, chums.



### 12 Tónar

Skólavörðustígur 15

**The Casual Date:** 12 Tónar's small bar has managed to fly under many people's radars, despite being one of the most unique spots in the city. "I would feel very cool taking someone here on a date. I feel like just sitting there would provoke conversation," laughed one panel member. "We could relax outside and talk music. It's the perfect place for a low-pressure afternoon date."



### Einstök Bar

Laugavegur 10

**The Tinder Date:** Einstök's new downtown bar is the definition of neutral territory for meeting someone new. "Everyone likes Einstök beer, the seating is nice, and it's super central," our panel determined. "So you can meet, see if you vibe, and if it goes well, you're in the middle of downtown and can head anywhere you want afterwards."

### Previous Winners

2021: Port 9  
2020: Hlemmur Mathöll

### Best Kept Secret



### Luna Flórens

Grandagarður 25

Part flower-child, part spiritual guru with a whole lot of whimsy thrown into the mix, this is the place to go for floral cocktails, cosy vibes, and maybe a slice of vegan cake. As a bonus, you can also grab a loaf of artisan bread next door or walk out with a bag of healing crystals or a rare succulent. And the thing is, you may not think you need a lump of amethyst and a saguaro cactus, but after three of their cocktails you won't know how you ever lived without them. So let your inner hippie free.

### Runners-Up



#### The Reykjavík Edition Austurbakki 2

We know everyone is talking about this place but have you even visited? There are a few areas to drink in Reykjavík's first 5-star hotel—from bar Tolt to the highly praised restaurant Tides—but the whole place will just blow you away with its design and class. You don't have to stay at the hotel or eat at the restaurant—we know it's \$\$\$—but stop by, get a drink, and enjoy amazing view.

### Newcomer



#### Kokteilbarinn Klappartígur 28

We can hardly think of a bar that better fits the bill of "Best Kept Secret" than one that's nestled inside a restaurant, packed inside of a full-sized train car. Inside the restaurant Monkeys, you have a balloon-themed cocktail bar and a champagne train car, which come together for a distinctly Phileas Fogg vibe. Expect bright and fruity drinks with ingredients such as yuzu, passionfruit, roses, shiso and raspberries.

### Previous Winners

2021: 12 Tónar  
2020: RVK Brewing Company

## Best Weekday Bar



### Skuggabaldur

Pósthússtræti 9

A weekday bar is all about atmosphere. You want something lively but cosy, bustling without being jam packed, and above all else, full of good vibes. Skuggabaldur has perfected this delicate combo, with the best of Reykjavík's jazz scene showing up nightly to entertain patrons and make even a Wednesday memorable. Despite only opening last year, the bar has quickly become a favourite with everyone from downtown artists to suburban folk. In the summer, you simply can't beat a glass of wine outside in the sun on their patio.

## Runners-Up



### Gaukurinn Tryggvagata 22

When you want to "party-party" on a weeknight, Gaukurinn—with their stocked schedule of concerts and events—will give you what you need. In fact, their Tuesday karaoke sessions rival weekend nights in terms of raucousness. (BTW: On the weeknights where there aren't any events, the lowkey haunt becomes an ideal place to nurse a beer while reading Kafka or something else appropriately alt.)



### Kaffibrennslan Laugavegur 21

Need to have an after-work meeting with your new art collective? A quick catch up beer with your former roommate visiting from Portugal? Or simply a neutral locale to meet up with your beau from last weekend? Kaffibrennslan works for everyone. Solid location, good prices, and a welcoming, friendly atmosphere. A+.

## New Category



## DRINKING GUIDE

# Get Happy

Clap along if you feel like drinking on a budget!

Words: John Pearson, Kim Wagenaar Photo: Art Bicnick

*In this extortionate city, truly the only way to drink is to be a happy hour aficionado. Here then are our recent picks of the best happy hours Reykjavík has to offer. Download our 'Appy Hour' app to find many more!*

### Lóla Florens

15:00 - 18:00 every day  
Beer 1,000  
Wine 1,000  
Garðastræti 6



Thrift store fans who like the idea of a glass of wine as they rummage should check out this little gem at the corner of Ránar-gata and Garðastræti. When the Red Cross shop in that location closed after some 20 years, friends Íris Ann Sigurðardóttir and Svava Ástudóttir took the opportunity to start a business which recognised the heritage of the charity shop, but with a twist. Íris Ann describes their creation as, "a bit of everything we love... vintage clothing and house decor, good wine, great coffee, savoury pastries from Coccoo's Nest and a bit of witchcraft entwined in the whole thing." JP

### Loft

16:00 - 20:00 every day  
Beer 750  
Wine 900  
Bankastræti 7



Loft Hostel is a big bright place that often presents live music, film screenings and the like to a mixed crowd of young, hip Icelanders and tourists. Loft's terrace is head and shoulders above most of the al fresco drinking spots in Reykjavík, not least because it's high up on the roof. It's a popular after-work choice in good weather and it might get crowded, so arrive early. Happy hour takes place every day from 4pm to 8pm, and every Wednesday is Winesday when Loft offers 20% off wine all day long. JP

### Iðnó

16:00 - 19:00 every day  
Beer 850  
Wine 850  
Vonarstræti 3



Built in 1897 as the city's first theatre, Iðnó has stood the test of time. When the pandemic hit, the historic building, housing a venue, café and restaurant, had to close down. New owners have since settled in and transformed the place back to its original state. The floors have been stripped back and the bar placed where it used to be, providing those who grew up frequenting the old theatre with that sweet, sweet feeling of nostalgia. And for those looking for new energy, their terrace overlooking Tjörnin is the perfect place to soak in those rare rays of sunshine while sipping your happy hour drink. KW

### STUDENTAKJAL-LARINN

1600 to 1900 weekdays,  
1600 to 2100 weekends  
Sæmundargata,  
University of Iceland



You don't need to be a student to get into this gem of a booze basement, tucked beneath the big glass building at Háskóli Íslands. And the reward for finding it is one of the cheapest bar drinking experiences in town, with beer starting at 650 ISK, and wine at 850 ISK during happy hour. Flash a student ID from any university anywhere in the world, and the price of beer tumbles even further. JP

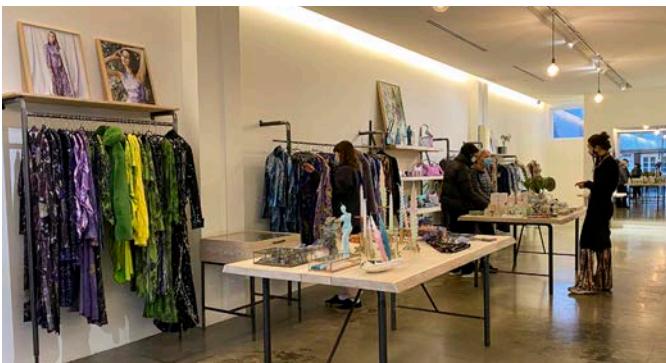
**BEST OF REYKJAVÍK 2022**

# Shopping

## Hey, big spender

Let's be real: there are few things that could temper our love for shopping. Thankfully, our delightful city has kept up with our demand, with the design scene seeming to expand exponentially year after year. This year was particularly prolific—there are too many new stores to name, with many popping up and nabbing not only the talk of the town, but also some of our biggest awards. But after long discussions with our beloved panel members, we are proud to present our winners. So without further ado, here's your essential guide to shopping in Reykjavík. Enjoy—responsibly, of course.

### Best Goddamn Store



### Yeoman

Laugavegur 7

It feels like every year we declare it The Year Of Yeoman, and then every year she blows past our expectations by becoming bigger and better. This year was no different, as 2021 saw Yeoman being donned by international celebrities while also continuing her reign as the primary fashion tastemaker for Reykjavík women. "Both my 14-year-old daughter and my 60-year-old mother would love a Yeoman dress," one panel member raved. "Everything from her own designs to the brands she chooses to put into her store become big in the city, and for good reason—her taste is impeccable. To talk about modern Icelandic style is to talk about Yeoman." Congrats Yeoman.

### Runners-Up



#### Kiosk Grandagarður 35

Kiosk is the nurturing ground for the best and brightest in Icelandic fashion design. Featuring a handful of artists selling their wares at a time, the shopping experience at Kiosk is so personal that you can easily chat with the designer while you try on their garments. Above all else, the shop showcases just how devoutly diverse and fantastic our design scene is. "I genuinely live in fear that Kiosk will close!" one panellist laughed. "It's so important here that I almost feel protective of it. We need this place."



#### Fischer Fischersund

"Fischer is more than just a store, it's an experience," this year's panel determined. Yes, this local favourite is more like a sensory paradise, treading the line between a shop and a design space. From incense and packaging-free shampoo to natural face masks and perfumes, Fischer is memorable above all else. As one panel member concluded: "It's just another world."

### Previous Winners

- 2021: Kiosk
- 2020: Fischer
- 2019: Fischer

### Best Design Store



### Rammagerðin

Skólavörðustígur 12, Harpa, Kringlan

For the second year in a row, Rammagerðin has clinched the gold medal. The store is basically as close to a supergroup of Icelandic designers as you are going to find outside of some weird design-focused comic book multiverse. Go there to pick up everything from Studio Fléttá's hand-stamped candlesticks to Ragna Ragnarsdóttir's ethereal ceramics to Fischer's earthly fragrances to Urð's delectable cosmetics. "They have such a nice palette of Icelandic designers. They are such a good advocate for the design scene here, which must be applauded."

### Runners-Up



#### Epal Laugavegur 7

What an opening! Our panel couldn't have been more overjoyed than to see Epal, the classic Icelandic design store, move to such a lovely spot on Laugavegur. "They are so good at pairing Icelandic designers with (international) ones," one panellist raved. "They also have exhibitions in the basement which are always well curated and interesting. It's a must-stop."



### Best Fashion Boutique



### Andrá

Laugavegur 16

A new store? Winning first place? Well, when something as spectacular as Andrá comes along, we're willing to break with tradition. The boutique emphasises selling quality pieces that are produced in an ethically and environmentally friendly way for women of all ages. "Their curation is stellar," one panel member added. "They have such a good mix of Icelandic and international designers. Somehow, they are filling a niche that we didn't even know we needed. You can already tell that they are going to have longevity and it's rare to feel that so strongly in such a new store." So bravó, Andrá.

### Runner-Up



#### Aftur Laugavegur 45

Aftur was doing sustainable design long before sustainability was even part of the conversation. Helmed by designer Bára Hólmeirs Ódóttir, every one of Aftur's pieces are entirely repurposed, with a punky vibe that makes them ideal for anyone obsessed with the darker sides of street style.

### Newcomer



#### BioEffect Hafnarstræti 19

BioEffect's delightfully curated shopping experience, aesthetic perfection, and inspired design are worthy of recognition, which is why the panel gave them this award, despite not technically being a design store. "They scan your skin and then make you a customised skincare repertoire. It's more than just a shop," said one panellist. "And it's not only the products that are emblematic of Icelandic design, but the store itself, designed by Basalt Architects, reflects the brand."

### Previous Winners

- 2021: Rammagerðin
- 2020: Akkúrat
- 2019: Akkúrat

#### Nebraska Barónsstígur 6

Not to be confused with the US state, Nebraska is another new addition to the scene that blew our panel away with a fantastically curated selection. "This place has so much potential!" one panellist said of boutique clothing store Nebraska. "It's a special feeling going in there. You can tell they are going to become one of the tastemaking stores downtown—or maybe they already have."

### Previous Winners

- 2021: Yeoman
- 2020: Kvartýra No49
- 2019: Yeoman

# Shopping

Stop spending money on NFTs and buy some real shit

## Best Clothing Store

### Joint Winners



## 66°North

Laugavegur 17-19, Bankastræti 5 & More

"66°North makes being warm trendy," laughed one panellist. "In a country like Iceland, that's probably the nicest thing any label has ever done... ever." The heritage brand, which is basically as Icelandic as an old man standing on a porch, staring pensively at a bunch of sheep, is known for their quality, durability, and fashionable design and lasting style. "They stay relevant for a reason. Their team is not only talented, but ambitious," another panel member commented.

## Farmers Market

Laugavegur 37 & Hólmaslóð 2

"Farmers Market is an establishment in Iceland at this point," one panel member confirmed. "When you think of Icelandic fashion, you think of the style they embody" While many brands have claimed the throne of traditional Icelandic style, perhaps no brand has done it so luxuriously as Farmers Market. With references to the past wrapped up in modern silhouettes and opulent fabrics, Farmers Market serves up traditional Scandinavian fashion for the modern age.

### Runner-Up



**Húrra Reykjavík**  
Hverfisgata 18a

"Húrra is my number one for everyday wear. Whatever I need, they are going to have it," said one panellist. "I can trust their taste." The minimalist

streetwear/athleisure store serves up a mixed selection of classic items and trendy cuts from both large brands as well as underground Scandinavian gems.

### Previous Winners

- 2021: Farmers Market
- 2020: Yeoman
- 2019: Yeoman

## Best Second-Hand Store



## Hringekjan

Þórunnartún 2

Let's give it up for Hringekjan for taking the 2022 first prize. Similar to a consignment shop, Hringekjan is a space where people can rent out spaces to sell their own clothes and accessories. It's the most eco-friendly way to keep your closet fresh, which, in light of our current world, is something we should all be thinking about "I don't know how they get such chic people to sell their clothes there," laughed one panel member. "But they do! So if you want something groovy, this is the place to go."

### Runners-Up



## Verzlanahöllin Laugavegur 26

"It's just huge," one panellist raved about Verzlanahöllin, which, similar to Hringekjan, relies on people renting booths and selling their old wares. "They have a good layout and are always clean and organised." The panel also praised the store's Instagram activity, saying that they've seen items posted online that they've then come to the store to purchase.



## Wasteland Ingólfsstræti 5

Walking through Wasteland feels like entering a maze of everything you dream of your closet being, from modern neutral staples to 80s-style statement pieces. For super à la mode downtown Reykjavík looks, this is the go-to. Seriously, Wasteland doesn't follow trends, they set them.

### Previous Winners

- 2021: Wasteland
- 2020: Extraloppan
- 2019: Hertex

## Best Place To Buy A Wool Sweater



## Handprjónasamband Islands

Skólavörðustígur 19

Once again—for the 10,000th year in a row—Handprjónasamband Islands has taken top prize. Stacked from floor to ceiling with woolly goodness, the store offers sweaters in every colour of the rainbow. Every beloved lopapeysa there was knitted in the country, quite possibly by a loving grandma who also makes great kjötsupa and spouts valuable bits of wisdom. Because really, that's the type of vibe you get from this place. How's that for an authentic experience?

### Runners-Up



## Farmers Market Laugavegur 37 & Hólmaslóð 2

For an updated take on the Icelandic sweater, look no further than Farmers Market. Their designs transform the traditional lopapeysa into a fitted and distinctly high-street affair. Pair it with fitted trousers and heels and you'll blend in at any Scandinavian fashion event.



## Magnea Kiosk, Grandagarði 35

MAGNEA takes Icelandic wool to the next level, turning the touchstone material into gorgeous, modern works of art. "MAGNEA takes Icelandic wool and uses it in a new way," the panel determined. "She celebrates the legacy of the material, turning it into something high-end and wearable."

### Previous Winners

- 2021: Handprjónasambandið
- 2020: Handprjónasambandið
- 2019: Handprjónasambandið

## Best Homeware Shop



### NORR11

Hverfisgata 18

This homeware store is so gorgeous that it almost feels like a gallery or set for an elite Nordic drama. With a meticulously curated selection, NORR11 embodies the most delicate elements of Nordic design, full of pieces with such adeptness of form and composition that they almost elicit some ASMR tingles. Yes, it is expensive, but the shop is worth a trip for the inspiration alone. This year, the panel were particularly impressed by the store's collaborations with Listval, which saw a new exhibition by Icelandic artists each month decorating the walls of NORR11.

#### Runners-Up



### Mikado Reykjavík & Pastel Flower Studio

Hverfisgata 50

If there was ever a store you just wanted to live at, it's the Hverfisgata storefront of Pastel Flower Studio and Mikado Reykjavík. In one compact and beautiful location, you can get Pastel's stunning, primal dried flower designs and Mikado's earthy ceramics, refined lighting apparatuses, and more. What more could you want? Seriously, name something.



### Hrim Kringslan

Hrim has a certain je ne sais quoi about it that creates some seriously devoted customers. The store has an eclectic mix of neutral Nordic style design along with some OTT international brands—a combo you don't find in many places. We are fans of their products by Italian designer Seletti, who is as colourful and bright as they come. "Seletti is just the most fun housewares you could buy," laughed one panel member. "Hrim is really good at finding funky stuff like that. I'm always excited to see what they bring in."

#### Previous Winners

2021: Norr11

2020: Kokka

2019: Geysir Heima

## Best Bookstore



### Eymundsson

Austurstræti 18

Eymundsson is a classic bookstore, offering up the newest in Icelandic and international titles. It has the rare characteristic of being perfectly curated for both locals and tourists, so if you're a traveller looking for an illustrated edition of the Sagas, or a Reykjavík kid hoping to pick up the definitely-going-to-be-released upcoming Kingkiller sequel, this would be the place to find it. Notably, they stock all the English translations of the latest Icelandic novels, so next time you read about a cool book in the Grapevine, head there to pick it up. The café ain't bad either!

#### Runners-Up



### Mál og Menning

Laugavegur 18

If you're not sipping a whisky with your beat-up vintage copy of 'Ulysses', then are you even reading 'Ulysses'? Luckily, Mál og Menning has you covered in that department. There, you're allowed to read a second-hand book while nursing a drink, which is probably the only thing about our current lifestyle that Joyce would approve of. Bonus: The interior is seriously spectacular.



### Forlagið

Fiskislóð 39

Forlagið is Iceland's largest book publisher and you can pick up all your favourites at their in-house bookstore—and not only Forlagið titles, but releases from other local publishers as well. We stan a queen that works for the greater good of their industry, don't we? Also, the bookstore is massive. Seriously. Don't go in there during a fire. But if you're reading a good book while it burns, we understand.

#### Previous Winners

2021: Eymundsson

2020: Eymundsson

2019: Bóksala Stúdenta

## BEST OF REYKJAVÍK 2022

# Shopping

Stuff is better than money anyway

## Best Record Store



### Lucky Records

Rauðarárstígur 10

Lucky Records is the one-stop-shop for anything Icelandic music. They've got it all: new titles, CDs, rarities, vinyl, cassettes, second hand 12", 7" sections, you name it! Notably, the store is very much in touch with the local underground. Basically any Icelandic release—no matter how big or small—will be sold there and trust and believe, their shopkeepers will know them inside and out. Yup, their staff is knowledgeable in that terrifying old-school record shop way, but don't be afraid to stop in! You can always just ask them for their favourite new release and then just smile and nod. It's guaranteed to be interesting—and potentially the next mémé.

#### Previous Winners

2021: Lucky Records

2020: Lucky Records

2019: Reykjavík Record Shop

## Runners-Up



### Reykjavík Record Shop

Klapparstígur 35

A place created by music nerds, for music nerds. Reykjavík Record Shop is a curated heaven—a collector's paradise—full of the crème de la crème of music, be it contemporary or classic. They've got a polished vibe to suit the modern audiophile. In fact, it's perhaps a good place to meet a partner if you are looking for a modern audiophile.



### Space Odyssey

Skólavörðustígur 22b

This second-hand hole in the wall has a well-curated selection of new experimental, ambient, and field recordings. It's definitely a niche locale—but if you're into those genres, it'll be the little slice of heaven you tell all your experimental/ambient/field recording friends about. (Most of whom, of course, you probably met inside the store.)



### Smekkleysa SM // Bad Taste

Hjartatorg, Hverfisgata 32

Smekkleysa, located off Laugavegur in Hjartatorg square, brings a sense of danger, coolness and, of course, bad taste back to this city. Their goal is "World Domination or Death", so if your idea of world domination is soundtracked by the Sugarcubes or Mínus, you'll fit in great.



#### SHOPPING GUIDE

## No Stairway To Heaven

Jamming with the city's best musical instrument shops

Words: John Pearson Photo: Christine Wehrmeier

The heart of Reykjavík has a musical beat. In a city teeming with venues and gigs, pretty much anyone you meet who is remotely interesting will be in a band or three. But if you want to be next in the long line of members of GusGus, you're going to need to know where to buy your kazoo. I dropped into four noteworthy music shops to sample their wares, and catch their vibe...

### Tónastöðin

Skipholt 50d, 105 Reykjavík



Tónastöðin is the Reykjavík music shop that knows how to rock, but also knows which end of a cor anglais to blow into. This smart and expansive store houses a huge range of instrument types; several double basses sit on stands just begging to be played, and saxophones on the wall seduce you away from the more standard guitar and piano offerings. Tónastöðin also deals in sheet music and—like Hljóðfærahúsið—has recognised and embraced the burgeoning market in podcast production gear. There is a fantastic percussion room with a huge selection of fun stuff, including a sea drum which hospitable shop owner Andrés Helgason can coax into sounding exactly like the Atlantic surf rolling up an Icelandic pebble beach.

I tried out: one of the double basses. Easy! It's like a fretless bass guitar, just hold the other way up. Erm... right?

### Sangitamiya

Grettisgata 7, 101 Reykjavík



This cosy little store, nestling in a corner house downtown, extends a truly global reach to gather its collection of instruments. The result is a multicultural mélange of acoustic musical objects, united by shop owner Eymundur Matthiasson's belief that music is a powerful way to bring peace and joy into lives. The Sangitamiya stocklist is dizzying; from the simple and familiar, such as castanets, to obscurities such as the Mongolian morin-khuur. But what they don't stock are the standard electrical instruments prevalent in the other three shops on this list, a policy which Sangitamiya uses to distinguish itself.

I tried out: a kalimba, or thumb piano. You've got to be pretty determined to make one of those sound unusual. But I did try.

### Hljóðfærahúsið

Síðumúli 20, 108 Reykjavík



This spacious showroom is probably the biggest instrument shop in the city, and can trace its roots back over a hundred years. Hljóðfærahúsið, (a terrifying Icelandic word at first sight, but it translates simply as "The Musical Instrument House"), is a consolidation of various historic instrument, sound and stage lighting businesses. Consequently it boasts a huge diversity of equipment—from stage smoke machines to pianos—including audio gear for podcasts, a growth area during the pandemic. Manager Jón Kjartan Ingólfsson and his staff are happy to help you find what you need, or just to chat about music.

I tried out: a MusicMan Stingray—God's own bass guitar, and no debate. It growls like a horny tiger.

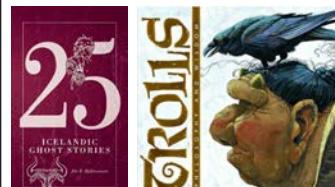
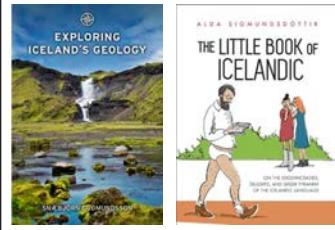
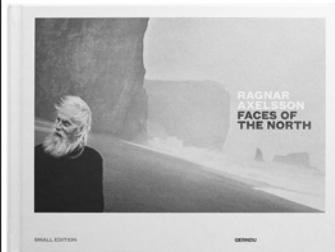
### HljóðX Rín

Grensásvegur 12, 108 Reykjavík



HljóðX Rín came about in 2011 when PA hire company HljóðX took over instrument shop Rín, and the current shop reflects that heritage by carrying a decent mix of rock 'n' roll instruments, amplifiers and general audio gear. Music shops often serve as social hubs for local musicians, a role recently made more important when the pandemic limited opportunities to meet up at gigs. During a chat over coffee at the shop counter with manager Ingvar Valgeirsson, I got a sense of that community as passing musicians dropped into HljóðX Rín to say hi.

I tried out: a beautiful Dimavery MM-501 fretless bass. But where do you put your damn fingers when there are no metal bits to help you cheat? ♪



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## BEST OF REYKJAVÍK 2022

# Shopping

Spend your way to personal fulfillment

### Best Grocery Store



### Krónan Downtown

Hallveigarstígur 1

Not gonna lie, this is our favourite category because wow, discussing grocery stores apparently sparks some really strong opinions! That said, this year's decision was a breeze, as Krónan's downtown location once again—for the second year in a row—was the unanimous choice. "After all the bizarre things that were in that space, it's such a game changer to have Krónan there," one downtown panel member said. "I'm so happy with it. For all of us who live and work downtown, Krónan has given us so much more freedom with our food." The panel also praised its fantastic selection of vegan options—something that's been sorely missed by the other downtown grocery stores. So go cruelty free for dinner tonight. Krónan's got you covered.

### Runners-Up



#### Hyalin Hverfisgata 35

"Hyalin is a place that just elevates the whole of Reykjavík. It makes this city better," one panellist emphasised. This French gourmet shop is already a Reykjavík fixture and a favourite of the panel. Quaint, well-curated, and, above all else, inspirational, it's the type of spot that you stop by just to browse and then leave carting a bottle of the most luxurious imported mustard. This then naturally inspires you to finally learn the intricacies of the condiment and cook up a mustard themed feast which impresses all your friends. And thus—a foodie is born.



#### Melabúðin Hagamel 39

For foodies looking for artisanal deli meats, fresh figs, rare cheeses and all sorts of unexpected, hard-to-find treats, Vesturbær's beloved Melabúðin should satiate your desires. "You can get everything you need, everything you didn't know you needed and if you're lucky, you might even see Björk," said one former panellist. They've since left the panel, but the quote is so perfect, we've opted to re-use it. Hope you don't mind, Melabúðin. You're an oldie but a goodie.

### Previous Winners

- 2021: Krónan Downtown
- 2020: Krónan, Grandi
- 2019: Krónan, Grandi

### Hidden Gem



### Apótek Atelier

Hagamel 39, 107

Apótek Atelier is quite new on the scene, but this small boutique has already made quite a splash, which is why the panel deemed it appropriate to award it the coveted Hidden Gem award. Created by designers Ýr Þrástardóttir, Halldóra Sif Guðlaugsdóttir and Sævar Óskarsson, Apótek Atelier blurs the line between studio and store, functioning as both the designers' workspace, as well as the place where one can purchase their wares.

### Runner-Up



#### Pula Hjartatorg

Commercial galleries—places where one can directly support their favourite local artists (and get some cool art)—are so important to our dear old city. And what's better than Hjartartorg's Pula? In its short time on the planet, the gallery has presented some of the newest, edgiest, and most talented artists in Iceland, from Anna Maggy to Kristin Mortens, always with a focus on elevating those left out of the more famous local galleries. We can't praise this gallery enough, and hope that this award helps to bring it more attention.



#### Listval Hólmaslóð 6

"It's just so well-curated," one panellist said of Grandi's Listval, a multi-purpose art space and store. "They've had a nice mix of very stylish artists and also up-and-comers, so for someone visiting Iceland, it'd be a great place to come and get really well acquainted with the local scene." While Listval is anything but a hidden gem—just a gem really—for those in-the-know of the Icelandic art community, its location far off in Grandi means it's often a missed destination.

### Previous Winners

- 2021: Listval
- 2020: Núllíð Gallery
- 2019: Nexus

### Best Jewellery Shop



### Orrifinn

Skólavörðustígur 43

Known for their sensual, raw, detailed and carefully crafted pieces, Orrifinn is a brand that manages to be at once timeless and distinctly modern. "It's such an experience to go to that black house, look at their gorgeous work and then watch them make it right in front of your eyes," enthused one panellist. "They are an institution," another agreed. "Giving someone an Orrifinn piece really means something here. It's a brand that's full of love for Icelandic design and style."

### Runners-Up



#### Aurum Bankastræti 4

Aurum is just beautiful. In fact, it's rather hard to find a better word for the brand, which takes its inspiration from Icelandic nature and moulds that into delicate—yet sometimes harsh—pieces that are guaranteed to be that piece of jewellery in your collection that everyone comments on. Their works also feel distinctly high end—like a rich widow on her third husband that spends her time wearing pearly claw rings and delicate silver chains. Tell us, what's better than that?



#### Kria Aftur, Laugavegur 45

Based out of the United States, Kria is the brainchild of Icelandic jewellery designer Jóhanna Methúsalemsdóttir and her partner Paul Weil. While their flagship store is in New York, you can shop their sustainably-made and almost witchy works at Aftur. "That's a go-to for me. They make hyper unique pieces that also seem to go with everything," explained one panellist. "They also have a good philosophy, so you feel good about buying from them."

### Previous Winners

- 2021: Orrifinn
- 2020: Orrifinn
- 2019: Orrifinn



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## BEST OF REYKJAVÍK 2022

# Activities

### Get off the internet already!

Reykjavík is bustling with activities, from famous attractions to small hidden gems. And we have busted our balls, pushing ourselves to our physical limits—have you seen how many mountains we hiked?—to compile this list of what you need to do to experience Reykjavík to the fullest (and most authentic). So, here are the winners of our Best of Reykjavík 2022 Activities awards, all of which are recommended by our panel of locals.

#### Best Pool



## Sky Lagoon

Vesturvör 44, 200 Kópavogur

This pool combines three of our favourite things: hot pools, nature, booze and great settings. Wait, that's four things... so scratch out nature. Sky Lagoon is a man-made haven in Kópavogur City, carved out of the rocks with a view to kill for—and it puts all those natural hot pools to shame with its seven step Ritual™. Also, kids younger than 12 are not allowed to enter, which is a plus if you're looking to soak without a soundtrack of children's voices. And did we mention the bar?

#### Runner-Up



### Vesturbæjarlaug Hofsvallagata, 107 Reykjavík

Vesturbær is one of Reykjavík's most bustling areas, and probably the only locale where you could bump into Prime Minister Katrín Jakobsdóttir, artist Ragnar Kjartansson, and a member of Sigur Rós on the same day. The pool is unique in the sense that it offers up pretty much anything you'd need—an outdoor pool, big hotpots, a steam room and a particularly lovely outdoor changing area, which you should take advantage of in the summer months.

#### Newcomer



### Dalslaug Úlfarsbraut 122, 124 Reykjavík

Dalslaug is on the edge of the city of Reykjavík, and all around there is nothing but wilderness. It's so wild actually, that once we saw an owl just flying around overhead, looking for some mice to eat. So, it's a given if you're a Harry Potter fan—we're not actually sure if Hogwarts had an outdoor public pool, but if it did, it would be Dalslaug.

#### Previous Winners

- 2021: Vesturbæjarlaug
- 2020: Vesturbæjarlaug
- 2019: Vesturbæjarlaug

#### Best Artist-Run Gallery



## Gallery Port

Laugavegur 32, 101 Reykjavík

You could perhaps call Gallery Port the dive bar of the Icelandic art scene—and we mean that in the coolest, most in-the-know and loving way. This artist-run space, located smack dab downtown on Laugavegur, serves up gritty, unusual and eclectic art by people who will probably be famous one day (or already are). Stop by if you're looking to enter some David Lynch-directed dimension. Note: It's also one of the few venues where you can buy the brilliant art you see on the walls.

#### Runner-Up



### Kling & Bang Grandagarður 20, 101 Reykjavík

The Marshall House serves up a number of brilliant galleries, but the artist-run Kling & Bang is a true standout. No matter what exhibit or installation they have on the roster, expect something ambitious and unique. Another amazing thing about Kling & Bang is that they play host to not only well-known international creators, but also to up-and-coming talents. The space never ceases to amaze with its provocative, vibrant style and it is for that reason that it continues to be a not-to-miss space.

#### Newcomer



### Höfuðstöðin Rafstöðvarvegur, 110 Reykjavík

Finally something for the influencers. Höfuðstöðin is the most colourful art space you can find in Reykjavík city. Incredible artist (and previous Grapevine cover star), Shoplifter, has her amazing hair sculptures on display in the museum and it's nothing less than spectacular. Be prepared to be amazed.

#### Previous Winners

- 2021: Gallery Port
- 2020: Kling & Bang
- 2019: Gallery Port

#### Best Gallery

##### Joint Winners



## i8

Tryggvagata 16, 101 Reykjavík

There is no way around it: i8 is still the best gallery in Iceland. Over the years, it's given us works from internationally lauded art superstars like Ragnar Kjartansson, Elín Hansdóttir and Olafur Eliasson, putting Icelandic art on the worldwide map and helping it stay there. Although it's a commercial gallery, it's not a stuffy, hoity-toity spot—expect to see conceptual cutting-edge museum-sized displays, rather than conservative and conventionally appealing work.



## Berg Contemporary

Klapparstígur 16, 101 Reykjavík

Berg Contemporary has established itself as the go-to spot for contemporary art in Reykjavík. In their large, beautifully renovated space, lines are blurred between the conceptual, the abstract, the art and the functional with their installations and exhibitions. That may sound complicated, but what we're trying to say is pretty simple: stop by.

#### Runner-Up



### Hverfisgalleri Hverfisgata 4, 101 Reykjavík

Hverfisgalleri consistently impresses with a roster of brilliant exhibitions by young artists like Helena Margrét Jónsdóttir and Davíð Órn Halldórsson, among others. This gallery is (and we cannot emphasise this enough) ambitious. Stop by for the best and brightest of the scene.

#### Previous Winners

- 2021: i8
- 2020: i8
- 2019: i8

## Best Art Museum



### Reykjavík Art Museum

Tryggvagata 17, 101 Reykjavík

Hafnarhús, the downtown branch of the Reykjavík Art Museum, is a cathedral to contemporary art that exhibits a constant conveyor belt of interesting international work. In 2020, they wowed with exhibitions from international heavyweights like Gilbert & George and Shoplifter to up-and-coming Grapevine favourites like Una Björg Magnúsdóttir. Check out their numerous rotating exhibitions as well as their shop—it's the perfect rainy-day destination.

#### Runners-Up



### National Gallery of Iceland Frikirkjuvegur 7

Listasafn Íslands (the National Gallery of Iceland) is a crown jewel in the Reykjavík cultural scene. This is where you go to see our best artists' work, to fill your soul with something that matters or just to cross it off your bucket list. Just because it's the oldest and most distinguished museum of them all, doesn't mean that they aren't still the absolute best in the business.



### Gerðarsafn - Kópavogur Art Museum Hamraborg 4

Gerðarsafn is one of those hidden gems outside of Reykjavík. Located in Kópavogur, the museum offers a fresh take on Icelandic art and gives visitors an opportunity to meet and listen to their artists in their fantastic artist talks. It also has a coffee shop and a delightful garden.

## Best Museum



### The National Museum

Suðurgata 41, 101 Reykjavík

Of Reykjavík's many museums, one stands taller than the rest Iceland's National Museum is a treasure trove of the country's history, covering everything from early culture to clothing, metalsmithing, religion and more. It's well-curated and well-designed, even showcasing contemporary displays that connect to modern cultural waves like football and feminism. Trust us, it's an amazing feat of a museum—somehow making silverware interesting while also displaying a baby skeleton. Creepy? Kinda, but we love it.

#### Runners-Up



### Sjóminjasafnið/Maritime Museum Grandagarður 8, 101 Reykjavík

Life is a salted cod. This is actually an Icelandic saying. So it's pretty evident that Icelanders are first and last a fishing nation, and man, we love the ocean. At the Maritime Museum in the west of Reykjavík you can see how the brave sailors of Iceland have endured in the tough North Atlantic sea. Not only that, the museum is incredibly kid-friendly with a tonne of fun things for wee ones to see and do.



### Einar Jónsson Museum Hallgrímsstorg 3, 101 Reykjavík

If you know where the Hallgrímskirkja church is, you know where the Einar Jónsson Museum is. Einar Jónsson is Iceland's foremost sculptor; there is a good chance that you've already seen his work, as half the statues around the city are his creation. An interesting visit, with a deep history.

## Best Cinema



### Bió Paradís

Hverfisgata 54, 101 Reykjavík

The heart of Icelandic cinema lies at Hverfisgata's Bió Paradís. It's the only arthouse cinema in the country and the premiere destination for those that want to see Icelandic films with English subtitles. In fact, when it closed for a short time, it caused a city-wide panic, culminating in a popular movement to revive it. Thankfully, it's back, and just as great as ever. We are very excited to see what their future holds and hope it includes the cult nights and party screenings the theatre is known for.

#### Runners-Up



### Háskólabíó Hagatorg, 107 Reykjavík

Háskólabíó, located in the west of Reykjavík, showcases worldwide blockbusters as well as local Icelandic films (check online to confirm the availability of English subtitles). It's a cosy location within walking distance from downtown that'll satiate your desire for the whole popcorn-Avengers experience.



### Smárábió Smáralind, Kópavogur

We're fans of Smárábió for two reasons: it's easily accessible by bus and it offers an unbeatable VIP luxury experience, where you can recline on cushy chairs with some room to groove while you munch on your nachos. Seriously—if you're looking for Big Movie Energy, it's here.

## Best Tech Exhibition



### FlyOver Iceland

Perlan

This VR experience took the city by storm in 2019, with as many Icelanders lining up for a bird's eye view of the country as tourists. On this virtual ride, soar over glaciers, mountains, lava fields and more—complete with fresh mountain air and Iceland's varied scents—all from the comfort of an amusement ride seat. Now, no matter the season or weather, you can tell all your friends you saw the Northern Lights.

#### Runners-Up



### Wonders of Iceland Perlan

If stormy weather blows your glacier trip off course, visit the Wonders of Iceland museum in the iconic Perlan. The impressive displays include a man-made ice tunnel, complete with frigid air temperatures and a selfie spot so realistic it'll fool your Instagram followers. In the main hall, projected glacial vistas reveal how fragile these majestic phenomena are.



### Whales Of Iceland Fiskislóð 23-25

Whales Of Iceland consists of 23 life-size models of the gentle giants, from gargantuan blue whales to a 25-metre long sperm whale. Meandering around the hall will give you a new appreciation for underwater life. It's a whale of a time (sorry about that).

#### Previous Winners

- 2021:** Reykjavík Art Museum
- 2020:** Kjarvalsstaðir
- 2019:** Reykjavík Art Museum

#### Previous Winners

- 2021:** The National Museum
- 2020:** The National Museum
- 2019:** Wonders of Iceland

#### Previous Winners

- 2021:** Bió Paradís
- 2020:** Smárábió
- 2019:** Bió Paradís

#### Previous Winners

- 2021:** Wonders of Iceland
- 2020:** Wonders of Iceland

**BEST OF REYKJAVÍK 2022**

# Activities

**Doing stuff is great!****Best Day Trip****Geldingadalur Volcano**

Close to Grindavík

The volcano in Fagradalsfjall was possibly one of the most beautiful natural displays in the world in the past year. The volcano spewed fire and lava for months, before finally petering out in the autumn (or, so we think... keep an eye on the Met office). But the freshly-cooled lava is no less spectacular and is still steaming eerily—the perfect backdrop for an enviable selfie.

**Runners-Up****Guðlaug Natural Pool**  
**Langisandur, Akranes**

Why not swim in the Atlantic ocean? Too cold? We know. But, if you drive all the way to Akranes (okay, it's not really that far), you will find a beach, with beautiful hot pools on two floors, and the roaring Atlantic in front of you. If you're brave enough to take a dip in the sea, you can always warm up again in the pool. It's an incredible experience and perfect for a family day out.

**Reykjadalur**  
**West of Hveragerði**

Reykjadalur is only a 40-minute hike from Hveragerði, which is, coincidentally, a 40-minute drive from Reykjavík. At the bottom of the valley, you will find a beautiful hot river where you can luxuriate like you're in a hot tub at the Reykjavík swimming pool. Pro tip: bring a towel with you and consider wearing your swimming gear under your hiking clothes if you're too prudish to change in public and flaunt it all.

**Previous Winners**

**2021:** Geldingadalur Volcano  
**2020:** Reykjanes Bound!  
**2019:** Snowmobile/ATV

**For A Night Out****Tjarnarbió**

Tjarnargata 12

Tjarnarbió was originally built as an icehouse, but is now the super-cool downtown home of all types of theatre and performance. You can always trust that if something is happening at Tjarnarbió, it's worth seeing. We'd like to particularly applaud them as a venue for Reykjavík Fringe, allowing experimental artists to take a big stage. Bravó, Tjarnarbió. Bravó.

**Runners-Up****R6013**

**Ingólfsstræti 20, 101 Reykjavík**  
Bear with us here: this is not your typical venue. If you're over 40, you might feel odd here—or finally just like home. The minds behind R6013 have held close to 100 events in a basement on Ingólfsstræti since they opened, and it is a vital bloodline between the lively grassroots scene in Reykjavík and, well, reality. Study the R6013 Facebook page for details on their next gig.

**FÚSK**  
**Gufunes, 112 Reykjavík**

A group of visual artists have taken over an old warehouse and changed it into a cutting-edge music and visual arts space. This is probably the most exciting venue in Reykjavík right now; this year, in addition to their annual rave, Buxur, FÚSK are also hosting design festival Rusl (Trash). It's a pretty impressive space and a good opportunity to dive into the grassroots arts scene.

**Previous Winners**

**2021:** Iceland Symphony Orchestra  
**2020:** Iceland Symphony Orchestra

**Best Place To Spend Time With The Kids (Summer!)****Húsdýragarðurinn**

Múlavegur 2, 104 Reykjavík

Húsdýragarðurinn (Reykjavík Family Park and Zoo) is the go-to place for Icelandic families on a nice summer day. It's basically a petting zoo where you'll find everything from seals and horses to reindeer. If you're really lucky, the zoo might be nurturing a falcon or eagle, which you can visit before they're released back into nature. The last time one of our writers went, a bewildered stork was being nursed back to health. The garden also offers an amusement park with a few rides like go-carts, a quaint little boating lake, and a drop tower.

**Runner-Up****Elliðaárdalur**  
**Kistuhyl 4, 110 Reykjavík**

Reykjavík has a lot of small secret hideouts. Elliðaárdalur is of course no small place, but not many travellers manage to find it. There is a beautiful river and a forest and even salmon if you want to catch a fish—though you'll need a licence. But still, what other capital can boast a salmon river smack dab in the middle of the city area?

**Árbæjarsafnið**  
**Kistuhyl 4, 110 Reykjavík**

Hey, here is a newsflash for you nihilistic monsters: the past is cool and really matters. Not only that, it can be incredibly fun and entertaining. Árbæjarsafnið is a unique open-air museum, set up like a small village, with old houses from the 18th century and a good old vibe from the past. The museum is very entertaining for children, and the houses are just something else.

**Previous Winners**

**2021:** Maritime Museum  
**2020:** Húsdýragarðurinn  
**2019:** Tjörnin

**Best Hike****Volcano - Lava field**

North of Grindavík

There are no two ways about it; the hike to the site of the fresh eruption of Fagradalsfjall is no less interesting than visiting the moon. This is a medium-hard hike, suitable for almost everyone in decent physical health. The lava field is just otherworldly, with hot steam from the lava rising up everywhere across a mysterious landscape you thought you'd only see in that fancy documentary on National Geographic. Just be careful—the fresh lava can take up to a year to cool, and even when it does, it's fragile and sharp.

**Runners-Up****Keilir**  
**Reykjanes Peninsula**

Okay, we get it: you're too hipster for the 'basic bitch' version of the volcano hike. Well, if you want to climb an impressive mountain and have the greatest view of all time over the Reykjanes peninsula, you want to visit Keilir. The mountain looks like a picture-perfect volcano from a storybook, despite being one of the few in the area that is completely inactive. From the top you get a view over the surrounding lava.

**Hengill**  
**Hellisheiði, starting point at Hellisheiðarvirkjun**

Hengill is located between Reykjavík and Hveragerði. The hiking route is a day trip through beautiful rocky landscapes and thermal areas, filled with bubbling rivers and even a hot pool. The area offers incredible views all the way to Þingvellir national park and the city of Reykjavík in the distance, as well as the whole of the Reykjanes peninsula.

**Previous Winners**

**2021:** Akrafjall  
**2020:** Mt. Esja

## Best Art Hall



### Ásmundarsalur

Freyjugata 41, 101 Reykjavík

Ásmundarsalur is everything you want all under one roof: theatre, art gallery, coffee house, and even a marketplace for new art made by young and interesting artists in Iceland. It's lively, offers fantastic art and atmosphere, and the house itself is especially beautiful and worth visiting. Plus it features a garden of—and we put this lovingly—unhinged sculptures by Ásmundar himself.

## Runners-Up



### Nordic House

Sæmundargata 11, 101 Reykjavík

Nordic House is a wonderful space, filled with top-notch culture every time. Of course, the focus is particularly on culture from the Nordic nations, but despite this specific remit all of their events and exhibitions manage to feel impressively diverse and inclusive. In addition, the building itself is beautiful and is located not far from downtown Reykjavík in a wonderful nature area, full of bird and plant life.



### Post-Húsið Skerjafirði

Skeljanesi 21, 101 Reykjavík

If you're young, wild, and tired of Hip-Hop, this is the place for you. Póst-Dreifing is a grassroots ensemble that has been the source of Iceland's best indie rock bands of the past five years, with Post-Húsið being their home venue. It's bustling with indie kids filled with unrealistic expectations of the world, and absolute power to them.

## Previous Winners

2021: Ásmundarsalur

## GUIDE

# Reykjavík Street Art Walk Without A Guide

Must-see street art, free and walking distance (for the most part)

Words: Alice Poggio & Iryna Zubenko Photos: Alice Poggio

*Street art in Reykjavík has a lot to offer. From Skólavörðustígur, also known as the Rainbow Street, to numerous murals and graffiti along the shopping street Laugavegur and beyond. Unremarkable buildings, hidden alleyways, and even industrial infrastructure burst with colour here. On one of the (rare) sunny days, we took a stroll to find our favourite street art pieces in the capital.*

### Dream of the ocean

Laugavegur 159, 105 Reykjavík



If in Hlemmur waiting for a bus, you should be able to spot a peaceful vision of blue and green peeking through the grey just up the road. This stretch of Laugavegur street has considerably more noise pollution. Cars consistently zoom past, incessant clanging, blaring, and crashing from nearby construction inevitably manage to drown out your thoughts and irritate you. The piece's mood is a complete contrast to its surroundings, perhaps intentionally. Cool and calming hues invite you to the ghostly peace to be found beneath the waves. Muffled ringing and nothingness. The artist, Raffaella Brizuela Sigurðardóttir, was inspired by an old Persian story from the Bahá'í Faith as well as Icelandic culture and its relationship to the sea. She capably leads you on a journey of visual escape we highly recommend. AP

### Charming chaos

Týsgata 8, 101 Reykjavík



At first glance, Arnar Ásgeirsson's work comes off as eerie and dark. From a distance, the stark contrasts catch your eye, and as you step closer, so much more is revealed. Incredibly minute details, layers of comedy and humour, all wonderfully nonsensical. Arnar embraces chaos and portrays it in a way that draws the viewer in, and makes us feel as comfortable as he is with it. The limited use of colour helps guide our focus to the subjects portrayed. The piece is located on a wall facing a lovely little town square, with plenty of seating areas for you to settle in and enjoy this work of art, which has more than enough to keep you entertained for hours. AP

Check out this map for more street art ideas in the capital area:  
[bit.ly/wall-art-reykjavik](http://bit.ly/wall-art-reykjavik)

## Birds, birds, birds

Óðinsgata 11, 101 Reykjavík



Birdwatching in the centre of the city might be tricky, but we suggest you come and see the colourful piece on Óðinsgata 11 to prove yourself wrong. The artists—Stefán Óli and Arnór Kári—have become active members of the Reykjavík street art scene in recent years. Many of their works bring nature closer to the city, and this one is no exception. Stefán Óli and Arnór Kári are also the artists behind the giant bird mural in Sundahöfn. Another beautiful piece of street art, but quite a walk from the centre—beware! IZ

### Quirky and fun

Bjargarstígur 15, 101 Reykjavík



This vibrant and graphic piece is the result of a collaboration between DABSMYLA—Australian husband and wife visual art duo, and established graffiti artist, Kems. It has been around for ages (since 2016, to be precise), but it continues to brighten up an otherwise slightly grey city on both sunny and gloomy days. It is just a stone's throw away from the previous bird piece. There's a bench nearby, so you can sit down, enjoy a takeaway coffee or whatnot, and contemplate art. Just like you would do in a museum! IZ



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