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Cover Illustration: Siggí Odds (siggiiodds.com)

Editorial | Anna Andersen

# Welcome To Our Sixth Annual Best Of Reykjavík Issue!

## Anna's 45<sup>th</sup> Editorial



As we were accenting the i's and crossing the ð's of our annual 'Best of Reykjavík' issue, a Facebook friend of Reykjavík Grapevine's threw a bit of criticism our way that absolutely bears mention and further discussion.

In response to one of the many "what's the best X" in Reykjavík inquiries we posted last week, specifically one regarding sushi ("Have you been to Sushisamba? Is it the best sushi in Reykjavík? Why/why not?"), one of our FB friends wrote the following: "This is getting quite boring. I remember the days when RG was full of interesting articles on social issues and music, now it's just a whore for the tourism industry ('have u done this, have u been there' etc. which is advertising in disguise). :p"

It turns out he suspected that the sushi question and others that preceded it were merely veiled advertisements for the various restaurants and bars around town—that we had decided to forego publishing interesting articles about music and social issues in lieu of pay-for advertorials and Facebook statuses.

He went on to retract this comment after we explained that we were just doing a bit of research for our annual BEST OF REYKJAVÍK issue, as we have every year since 2009. However, the sentiment he voiced with regards to Iceland's tourism boom seems to be a fast growing concern among some locals. As the tourism season reaches its apex, one often gets the sense that we Icelanders are conjuring up yet another bubble, that we are becoming tangled in a sort-of tourism Gold Rush frenzy. Thus, one can't help but imagine that our BEST OF REYKJAVÍK issue might be perceived differently by healthy sceptics today than it was just five years ago.

The slow but certain erosion of morals that such bubbles inevitably bring—coupled with our very recent experience of life within a bubble—furthermore explains why some might construe the Facebook post in question as a paid endorsement. Not only that but the increasingly blurred lines between advertisements and editorial content in the current media landscape admittedly do not give the public a lot of reason to have

faith in their media and its honesty. Indeed, whether it's the result of a tourism Gold Rush or not, brazenly selling ads disguised as editorial content is apparently standard practice. Why just this last week we got an email from a local publication with their advertising rates, including an offer to buy an article about our company to be marked as 'umfjöllun' ("discussion") for the low low price of 34,000 ISK (with a gratuitous Facebook and Twitter post).

Do know: we have never sold content, and we never will. None of our articles are pay-for, and our sales team has no dominion over editorial content (all we do over here in editorial is make those poor guys' lives extra hard). As we state in our magazine masthead, "You may not like it, but at least it's not sponsored (no articles in the Reykjavík Grapevine are pay-for articles. The opinions expressed are the writers' own, not the advertisers).

Finally, despite the fact that tourists read us—after all we are an English language magazine in Iceland—we don't actually think very much about that when putting together an issue, aside from striving to provide context for the unacquainted reader. It didn't come up in any of our heated discussions about best hamburgers, pizza and swimming pools either—not even about the 'Best Day Trip From Reykjavík.' It admittedly tickles me a little to think that we might be sending tourists all the way to Mjódd to go to the movies, but the places and things we picked are what we—those of us who live in this city—genuinely think are the best.

In fact, this issue is about celebrating all of the things that we love, the things that make life in this city so great. It's perhaps the one issue of the year that is free from any kind of negativity (except for my editorial this time! Sorry!). Like usual, we had a lot of fun putting this together, and we hope it proves useful and that you maybe even discover somewhere or something new and exciting.

Music | Free



Grísalappalísa's

"Nýlendugata-Pálsbæjarvör-Gróttá"

Download the FREE track at [www.grapevine.is](http://www.grapevine.is)

This frantic and irreverent song is the band's very first single off of their new album, 'Rókrétt Framhald' ("Logical Progression"). The lyrics focus on a person sneaking out of their home and going on a wild ride through Reykjavík, and in typical Grísalappalísa style, also highlight the banality of life in the city. The chorus in particular drives the point home that nothing is new under the sun, counting up the things the protagonist sees, such as grey skies, empty streets and neon lights, before ending with "et cetera." The instrumentals further accentuate the contrast between the band's two singers; Gunnar Ragnarsson's manic verses come off more aloof and Baldur Baldursson's stoic segments more rhythmic and classically poetic. As wonderful as the song will sound from your speakers, you should really go see the band play it live—after all, we awarded Grísalappalísa the "Go See Them Play Live As Soon As You Can Award" at our last annual music awards.

## Tourist Of The Year

Our 2014 Tourist Of The Year competition is already underway and we already have many good entries. Italian Melissa Rota argues that she should be the winner of the contest as she read the works of Jón Kalman Stefánsson, Halldór Laxness and Einar Már Guðmundsson, as well as the Sagas before travelling here, saying: "When I arrived in Iceland I thought I was dreaming. I made the Landmannalaugar trek to enjoy the majestic nature of this fantastic land." If you've travelled to Iceland in 2014 and think you should be the lucky winner of a free trip to Iceland, head on over to [www.touristoftheyear.is](http://www.touristoftheyear.is) and submit your travel story.

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## Sour grapes & stuff

### Most Awesome Letter of the Issue

Hello Grapevine!

I am a wedding photographer from Richmond, Virginia, and I'm travelling to Iceland in late August to do some shooting. I'm super stoked about exploring your wicked beautiful country and doing all the amazing things you write about in your magazine. I am planning a couple styled shoots while I am there and I am looking for different vendors. I'm hoping you may know some awesome folks, or have some recommendations for me. I'm first off looking for 2 or 3 super rad couples. Maybe they are already married, or just seriously in love, but I want to track down some hip kids who want to get their photos taken being all ridiculously in love and shit, and get paid! Secondly, I'm trying to find some great stylists and/ or florists. I would SO appreciate any direction or help you can give me with this. You can check out my work on my website, [www.ashleighhobsonrva.com](http://www.ashleighhobsonrva.com), or my most recent published shoot on Green Wedding Shoes Blog, <http://greenweddingshoes.com/eclectic-celestial-wedding-inspiration/>  
Thanks so much!!

Best,  
Ashleigh Hobson

Dear Anna,

we just spent two weeks in iceland, and I very much liked to read your paper. It gives one much information about Icelandic society a visitor hardly could get so fast otherwise.

Iceland's not only good for proposals (you see, I really read your journal) but also for a silver wedding journey. As it was really, really beautiful, I dare to ask you for a favour:

Two days before we left home, on Tuesday 8th of July, our camera got lost, between 17:50 and 19:00 on bus No.1 between Hamraborg and MR or on the way from there through Austurstraeti and so on to Volcano House. We don't know if it fell out of the anorak or rucksack pocket or if it was stolen (pickpocketed). But in it, there were all the pictures we took, including the one of us between two glacier tongues at our 25th wedding day.

We went three times to Hlemmur Lost&Found, we reported it to the Police

and Barón-Hotel, were we stayed, but to this time, there is no news about it.

May we ask you to "alarm" your readership and maybe to forward this matter to Morganbladinn or another widely spread paper? Since one says that in Iceland everybody knows everybody (see Hildur's personal account in issue 9) I very much hope there is a chance to at least get the memory card with all the photos on it if not the silver-coloured Canon Power Shot S 110 in a retro-style light-brown leather case itself.

Please, please help us.

Yours sincerely  
Martina + Hariolf Mosthaf, Freiburg i.Br., Germany

**Guten Tag, Martina and Hariolf!**

**First, may we congratulate you on 25 years of the kind of adventurous mar-**

Well, hey there, Ashleigh-

You're stoked about visiting Iceland and we're stoked about your enthusiasm. Unfortunately, being curmudgeonly writer-types who often hang about with other curmudgeonly writer-types, we don't have any great leads for you on happy couples, stylists or florists. HOWEVER: we have great faith in our readers and believe that we've got to have at least a few who are "rediculously in love and shit" or at least know someone else who is. So with any luck, you'll be awash with messages from stylish lovers shortly.

Amorously,

The Grapevine.

**riage that finds you celebrating your silver anniversary between two glacial tongues in Iceland. We wish you many more happy travels together in the future.**

**We're sorry to hear that you lost your camera (we'll assume it was lost and not stolen), but you're right: it is not outside of the realm of possibility that someone here found it and can return it (or at least the memory card) to you both. (We once had a friend whose debit card was found on the side of the road in the countryside. The finder drove the card all the way to Reykjavík—several hours away—to return it.)**

**So, dear readers, if you found Martina and Hariolf's camera or can return the memory card (no questions asked), please email us at [grapevine@grapevine.is](mailto:grapevine@grapevine.is).**

**Optimistically,  
The Grapevine.**

#### YOUR PRIZE FOR THAT MOST AWESOME LETTER OF YOURS IS: TWO FREE MEALS AT THE ICELANDIC HAMBURGER FACTORY

Dear reader. We love you very much, especially those of you that write us letters all the time. In fact we love you so much that we keep trying to reward you somehow for writing us those letters. They entertain us, and they keep us informed of what our readers think. That is a pretty great deal. Now. Whoever wrote this issue's MOST AWESOME LETTER gets a prize. And it's a pretty great one. Yes, not one but TWO delicious hamburger-style meals at the wondrous ICELANDIC HAMBURGER FACTORY, which is an Icelandic themed restaurant that specializes in huuuuuge and mouth-watering burgers to fit every occasion (we recommend the lamburger, unless you are a vegetarian. Lamb is not a vegetable). And if you for some reason didn't write this issue's MOST AWESOME LETTER don't panic. Their tasty burgers aren't that expensive, and you can always try for a MOST AWESOME letter later. Just write us at [letters@grapevine.is](mailto:letters@grapevine.is)



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Best of | News



In reviewing the past year in news, you will see certain patterns emerge: certain public figures, events and topics that seem to ignite social media and office break room conversations for days, weeks or even months. Arguments are had, alliances are formed, and people are unfriended over these very stories. These are news trends that never really go away; they just change form and come back to pay repeated visits, for better or for worse. Let Grapevine take you back over the past year to savour the delectable banquet that is the very best the news has had to offer.



**Best Love-Hate Relationship:**  
*The Progressive Party & The Media*

Ever since the Progressives came to power (again) barely over a year ago, they and the media have been locked in a tempestuous symbiosis so strong you can hardly imagine the one surviving without the other anymore. The Progressives will, depending on when you talk to them, either accuse the media of “bullying”—a word they may be deliberately overus-

ing to sap it of all meaning—or personally thank them for getting them seats on Reykjavík city council for all the negative press they got. We the media, in turn, ensure that they never stop getting any attention. Why would we? It’s worked out well for both of us.



**Best Animal Story:**  
*Hunter The Lost Dog*

It’s no secret that we love animal stories here, and this one was pretty epic. Hunter is an American border collie that

somehow extricated himself from his travel pen on a conveyor belt at Keflavík International Airport and made a break for it. Hunter’s owners offered a 200,000 ISK finder’s fee and Icelandair have promised two plane tickets to the person who delivered the dog back to the airport. For days you couldn’t scroll through an Icelandic news website without seeing those big, doleful eyes looking up at you. Amazingly, Hunter made it all the way to Þórshöfn, a few hours’ drive from the airport, where he was found completely unharmed. There was even a video of the owner-and-dog reunion. In a news cycle where animal stories include harpooned whales and castrated pigs, this was a heart-warming reprieve.



**Best Comedy Gold Mine:**  
*Prime Minister Sigmundur Davíð Gunnlaugsson*

Remember that love-hate relationship? Part of the “love” part is that Iceland has for a Prime Minister a man who will invent or (more charitably) confuse the facts, sometimes citing specific figures without any evidence for his claims, seemingly unaware that there are people listening to him, some of whom might check up on whether what he says is true or not. Sigmundur Davíð doesn’t possess the political savvy to re-word or backpedal when proven wrong; instead, he lashes out at his critics for the crime of criticising him. A few days later and the cycle begins anew. A public figure this consistently wrong would be more amusing if they weren’t actually leading the country. But hey, you take your comedy where you can get it.



**Best Reason To Hate This Country:**  
*The Ministry of the Interior*

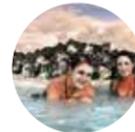
The case of Tony Omos is the kind of thing that makes “only in Iceland” come to mind. There are government ministers in Nordic countries who have resigned over using the wrong credit card or getting a friend a low-level NGO position. Not Iceland! Here, you could keep your job as the head of a ministry despite being subjected to a criminal investigation, with police searching computers and

phones until they find that at least one of your direct assistants is strongly suspected of having deliberately fabricated disparaging claims about an asylum seeker, written them up as memo, and then hand-fed that memo to select members of the press. Why? Because that’s Iceland.



**Best International Mis-reporting On Iceland:**  
*Gálgaheima*

We would be the first to admit that even we play up certain stereotypes about Iceland and Icelanders, but this story is a perfect illustration of sacrificing the actual news for the sake of said stereotypes. The Gálgaheima Lava Fields, a subject of paintings by legendary Icelandic artist Johannes Sveinsson Kjarval and legally protected in 2009, got slated to have a series of residential roads carved through them last year. A few brave souls went to the site of planned construction and lay down in front of the machines, only to be dragged away by police, setting off a legal battle that has lasted half a year. The story abroad? They were trying to save elf homes from destruction. We can understand why the Gálgaheima story by itself might not be the stuff of international headlines, but add a little elf magic and presto! It’s a quirky story about quirky Icelanders being quirky!



**Best Basket For All The Eggs:**  
*Tourism*

Remember about ten years ago when we couldn’t stop writing about what an amazing financial miracle Iceland was? How it seemed like everybody and their grandmother was trading bonds or starting an investment company, the money was just going to keep on coming, and anyone who doubted our methods or stability was just a jealous hater? Happy days are here again! Only this time, the people giving us money are coming here, too. Time and again, the rush of one company or group of landowners to capitalise as much as they can off of tourists is met by other Icelanders who warn that maybe we’re getting too greedy. Those people, my friend, are jealous haters.



**Best Whale-Related Story:**  
*Hvalabjör*

Sure, the current back-and-forth between the US and Iceland over whale hunting is intriguing, but the introduction of Hvalabjör—“whale beer”—seemed like it was deliberately calibrated for maximum rage inducing amongst anti-whalers. Replete with claims from the brewery that drinking the beer would make one “a true Viking” (and what does that even mean, by the way?), the “whale” in Hvalabjör was mostly dried and powdered whale bits in quantities so minute they likely had no effect on the flavour whatsoever. This didn’t stop anyone from pointing out that the whale bits may have been years old, or come from the less savoury parts of the whale. The Hvalabjör story took an issue that has been and is a very divisive one, for our readers included, and provided some much-needed and entertaining cartoonishness of oblivious self-parody.



**Best Public Figure:**  
*Jón Gnarr*

Big surprise here, eh? Still, it would be deliberately obtuse to ignore Jón Gnarr’s impact. The media has followed his political career from comedy-as-protest in the form of satirising the self-aggrandising nature of politics, to a politician (although Jón himself would almost assuredly disagree with the job title) in the scope of international focus. He has continued to represent the better nature of our country—its tolerance, friendliness and individuality—while maintaining his humility. Even though he’s left city hall after just one term, bear in mind that he’s the first mayor of Reykjavík to even last a whole term in the past 30 years or so. Whether he makes another run at politics again or not, Jón Gnarr has definitely been one of the most refreshing public figures Iceland has had in a very long time.

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Iceland | For Dummies

# So What's This I Hear About Iceland Being The 17th Best Country In The World?

WORDS BY Kári Tulinius

ILLUSTRATION BY Inga María Brynjarsdóttir

Something called The Good Country Index was published recently. It is a list of 125 countries ranked according to how much good they do in the world, from Ireland at the top to Libya at 125th. As a marketing stunt, it was brilliant, generating a few hundred thousand news articles around the globe. It was, predictably enough, conceived by a marketing guy who, even more predictably enough, paid someone else to do all the hard work. You can take a wild guess at which one got most of the media attention.

**The guy who did all the work?**

No. But let us salute Dr. Robert Govers for all his hard work on what is essentially an idiotic concept dreamed up by someone who wanted to create a global moral league table. Dr. Govers did the best he could, given what he was asked to do, namely work out statistically how much good a country does in the world.

**That doesn't seem like such a bad idea.**

Bad ideas often seem good. Milk is good, lemon is good, so you try squirting a little lemon in your milk. Not only do you end up with curdled awfulness, but also everyone you tell about squirting lemon in milk assumes this is a euphemism for something.

**Which is just like creating statistical models and applying them to moral issues... how?**

Because you end up with a curdled, useless mess. The index is a collection of thirty-five datasets, some of which make sense, for example how much hazardous waste a country exports. Some are really arbitrary, like how many Nobel Laureates are born in a country. No really, the birthplace counts.

**If you think that measures what makes a good country I've got some shares in a Nobel Prize Laureates' sperm bank to sell you.**

Furthermore, they claim not to be pass-



ing judgment. The only reason to create a ranked list of countries and call it "The Good Country Index" is to pass judgment.

**Besides, what kind of low self-esteem nobodies cares about meaningless lists?**

Icelanders care about these ranked lists of countries. When the country ranks in the top places for gender or social equality, that fits with the self-image of Iceland as a nation without class difference or gender bias. If Iceland had been the top country on the list of good countries, there would have been much backslapping, as Icelanders like to think they are at worst harmless, and at best a force for good. Being in the top 20 is not so bad.

**In America they have a saying, second place is just first loser.**

So by placing 17th in the Good Country Index we are twelfth loser. Wait... is that right? Oh well, Iceland never places very high on ranked lists of which countries are best at maths. Iceland ranked at

number 1 in the "Current Contributions to Planet and Climate" section, though data on Iceland was missing for three out of the five indicators for that category. Of course, the list that Iceland most wants to rank high on is the list of countries that matter in the world.

**You should get a marketing guy to make up a list, call it the "Countries That Matter Index" and put Iceland on top.**

For a brief while Iceland mattered on the world stage. Well, that is exaggerating it slightly, but Icelanders felt like Iceland mattered and self-image is all that really counts. It all began with Björk and Sigur Rós and people travelling to Iceland to listen to awkwardly-dressed teenagers mumble into microphones and strum badly tuned guitars. Then came the banking miracle, which was less a case of turning water into wine than how to turn a nation's gold into a pie in the face.

**Everybody loves a clown.**

During the financial crash Icelanders felt

like they mattered, insofar as the person everyone points and laughs at because they pried themselves in the face is surely the centre of attention. Then there was the first gay prime minister in the world, popular crime writers and, the country's crowning glory, shutting down a quarter of the planet's air traffic with a volcano. Okay, so the nation does not really have any control over the volcano, but world media came to Iceland and their struggles to pronounce Eyjafjallajökull caused general merriment.

**Don't get cocky, the Welsh turned unpronounceable place names into an artform long before anyone settled Iceland.**

See, it is hard to compete when you are a nation of 325 thousand people. Probably it is best for Iceland to stop worrying and settling down for a life of restful obscurity. Otherwise there is the risk of turning into the country equivalent of the kid who drinks lemon-curdled milk in cooking class to get attention.

## What's The Best Thing About Reykjavík In One Or Two Sentences?

**Högni Egilsson, musician (GusGus, Hjaltalin, among others)**

I can't answer that question in one or two sentences.

**Dagur B. Eggertsson, mayor**

The weather, obviously.

**Hilmar Magnússon, head of Samtökin 79, Iceland's Queer Association**

The harbour area. It has this fascinating mixture of culture and the industry. Most of what's happening in Reykjavík, in terms of development, is happening in the harbour area. It's close to downtown, but it's rough. It's peaceful, but rough.

**Unnsteinn Manúel Stefánsson, singer of Retro Stefson**

The best thing we have in Reykjavík is our swimming pools. In Portugal, where I was born, the whole town would meet up and unwind at the pub after work, and that's where you'd hear what's up, but in Iceland, only young people go out straight after work. If you want to catch up with people, you do it in the hot tubs at the swimming pools. That's where everyone hangs out. It's a sort of social centre.

**Elín Eyþórsdóttir, singer in Sísý Ey**

Perhaps the clouds. They are my favourite thing about Reykjavík. Swimming. Gay rights. Many rights others don't have.

**Jón Pétur Þorsteinnsson, guy walking down Laugavegur**

Life standards are pretty good.

**Steinunn Eva Óladóttir, bartender at Lebowski Bar**

I think everyone's very friendly.

**Alda Sigmundsdóttir, author and blogger**

The first thing I think of is Gróttá with the lighthouse, in Seltjarnarnes, near the golf course. It's a really nice place to go for a walk, and just y'know, hang out and bicycle and to be outdoors. AND there is a little hot tub that's carved into a rock. It's just be-

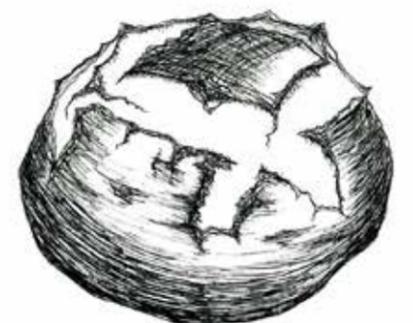


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Hot | Dogs

# Pylsuspjall

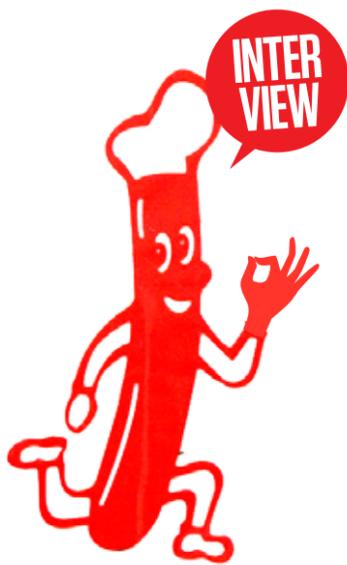
1. Hot Dog Chat
2. A Brief Conversation Held With Strangers Holding Sausages

Words and photos by Arnulfo Hermes

## Today's Topic:

## The Best of Reykjavík

Welcome to our sixth edition of Pylsuspjall, a feature in which we accost strangers at the Bæjarins Beztu hot dog stand and ask them questions. This time we brave the shitty weather to ask them what they like about Reykjavík.



**What's your name?**  
Zhang Xiauying

**Where are you from?**  
Beijing, China

**What do you do for a living?**  
I just graduated from medical school, so I'm going to be a doctor in China.

**What do you think makes these hot dogs so good?**  
I'm not sure. The place just showed up when I googled Reykjavík, so I came here to try them.

**Are these the best hot dogs you've ever had?**  
I really have no experience with other hot dogs, so I can't say.

**Describe Iceland in three words.**  
Rainy. Beautiful. Cold.

**What's the best day trip from here that you've been on?**  
I went to the Golden Circle and Blue Lagoon, but I liked the Golden Circle best. The natural beauty was something I hadn't seen before.

**What's the best thing you've bought here?**  
A wool coat.

**What's the best bar you've been to?**  
Actually, I didn't go to any bars! I came here for a meeting so I didn't have time for drinking.

**What's the best thing you've done so far while here?**  
Eating at the Perlan. You can see all of Reykjavík while eating great fish.

**What's been the best thing about your trip?**  
The nature, especially the Golden Circle.



**What's your name?**  
Rúnar Þór Friðriksson

**Where are you from?**  
Iceland

**What do you do for a living?**  
I'm a truck driver.

**What do you think makes these hot dogs so good?**  
They're just good. Always have been.

**Describe Iceland in three words.**  
Shitty weather. Isolated island. Beautiful landscapes. [Yeah, nope. Not three words.]

**What's the best part about being an Icelander?**  
I have no idea.

**Growing up in Iceland, what was the best part about being a kid here?**  
I got away with a lot of shit.

**What's the best-kept secret of Reykjavík?**  
Geirfinnur. He's a guy who was supposed to have been killed 30 or 40 years ago, but he was never found. [He's talking about Iceland's best-known criminal case known as Guðmundur og Geirfinsmálið ("The case of Guðmundur and Geirfinnur"). It is also possibly Iceland's best-known miscarriage of justice for the six suspects involved.]

**What's the best bar to go to?**  
The Icelandic Rock Bar, because they play rock and roll and there aren't a lot of stupid drunks.

**Where's the best place to people-watch?**  
Probably Hlemmur square. There are a lot of interesting characters who walk by there.



**What's your name?**  
Peter Brofman

**Where are you from?**  
Charleston, South Carolina [USA]

**What do you do for a living?**  
I'm a veterinarian.

**Do you like cats or dogs better?**  
Cats ["Wait, why?" exclaims his friend.]

**What do you think makes these hot dogs so good?**  
Not the mayo, so I'm gonna have to go with the honey mustard. [By mayo he means remoulade.]

**Describe Iceland in three words.**  
Cold, windy and rainy.

**Are these the best hot dogs you've ever had?**  
No.

**What are the best hot dogs you've had?**  
Anywhere in New York City, but especially at the Yankee Stadium.

**What's the best day trip from here that you've been on?**  
Our hike from Skógar to Þórsmörk.

**What's the best thing you've done so far while here?**  
Our hike. The awesome views made it the best.

## What's The Best Thing About Reykjavík In One Or Two Sentences?

fore you get to the lighthouse nature reserve. It's behind the place where they store fish.

**Arnþjótur Sigurðsson, musician**  
The first thing that comes to mind is the beautiful mountain range that encircles the whole of Reykjavík. It is simply astonishing on a good day. I don't think it's a coincidence that people decided to move here, that is before all the ugly houses came here. Second, it's how small the city is, but that's also a flaw. You're very quick to get from place to place, but in the process you get tired of being in one place for too long.

**Saga Garðarsdóttir, actress**  
What's best in Reykjavík? Squid at Reykjavík Marina, going to Þríhnjúkagígur crater and swimming in the Vesturbær swimming pool. Kaffi Haiti is also best, as is sushi at Sakebarinn, and then going to church on Sundays, and having wild sex everywhere!

**Snorri Helgason, musician**  
The people—it's unbelievable how many good people there are in Reykjavík. All of the smartest and brightest people I know live in Reykjavík, and they are just one phone call away from coming over and helping me with whatever I'm working on.

**Vilborg Davíðsdóttir, novelist**  
The downtown streets are the best things about Reykjavík. Laugavegur, Skólavörðustígur and Lækjargata are constantly buzzing with activity, and it's always great hearing all the different voices and languages spoken by the people exploring the city. Even though I was raised in the Westfjords, I can't imagine living outside of 101 Reykjavík where you are a stone's throw away from so many great cafés and restaurants.

**Þorbjörg Þorgilsdóttir, actress**  
I'm very interested in the developing area in Grandi, with new places like the Cocoo's Nest, Valdís and Hús Fiðrildana (an antique shop). I like to spend time there, and would spend more of it if we'd ever get a proper summer...

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# Við Erum Best! ✌

But you don't have to  
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WORDS BY Larissa Kyzer

PHOTO BY Skari



At last count, there were 326,340 people living in Iceland. That's .0045% of the world's population and while it isn't really a competition, this has created a bit of an inferiority complex among some Icelanders who, as Grapevine writer Oddur Sturluson put it, "find it nothing short of scandalous that their small, unarmed country doesn't have as much political pull as some of their larger, more powerful neighbours." To compensate, Oddur argued, Icelanders "invented something brilliant in its simplicity and devastating in its effectiveness...The Per Capita Record." This, he explained, is "quite simply when Iceland does something noticeable, compared to how small it is."

After years of yelling into the void about its phenomenal per-capita accomplishments, however, Iceland seems to have finally gained the world's attention and gotten the recognition that it has always known it deserves. Report after report has declared us The Best (or The Almost Best) at all sorts of exciting things. So just in case you've missed the headlines, we've collected some of Iceland's more impressive records and unprecedented accomplishments below. Við erum best! ("We are the best!")

## BEST! Ancient Bivalve!

In 2006, scientists on a research expedition off the north coast of Iceland dredged up an Arctica Islandica (or Ocean Quahog) that they believed to be an astonishing 405 years old. Named Ming in reference to the great Chinese dynasty during which it was 'born,' the elderly clam was recorded by Guinness World Records as being the world's oldest mollusc. In 2013, however, the scientists discovered that their prior estimate had been off by just over 100 years: Ming was actually 507 years old. "Was," that is, because they killed Ming when they opened it to confirm its age.

## BEST! Attitude Toward Tourists!

In 2013, Iceland was ranked #1—just ahead of New Zealand and Morocco—for

its "attitude toward foreign visitors" in the World Economic Forum's Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Report. The same report also credited Iceland with a handful of other Best-In-World achievements: we're also #1 for "presence of major car rental companies," the percentage of "individuals using the Internet," and sports stadiums—when considering the number of available seats per million people, that is.

## BEST! Chlamydia Diagnoses!

In 2013, there were 2,179 diagnosed cases of chlamydia in Iceland. This record-breaking number puts Iceland way ahead of all its European neighbours, and not just last year, either. Iceland has been Europe's chlamydia champion for ten years running. Of course, some argue that the numbers appear worse in comparison with the rest of Europe because Iceland has better reporting and testing procedures for the STD than other countries. In which case, we're still #1...at reporting chlamydia!

## BEST! Healthy Diet!

In July, the UK Channel 4 documentary "World's Best Diet" declared Iceland—with its "fresh fish, high quality meat and dairy products"—to have the globe's healthiest diet, closely followed by Italy, Greece, Seventh Day Adventists (yep), and Japan. We'll admit, given Icelanders'

affinity for pizza, hamburgers, candy, and all manner of sauces on absolutely everything, this one came as a bit of a surprise, but we're not complaining.

## BEST! Mathematically-Inclined Young Females!

In its 2014 "Economic, Environmental, and Social Statistics" Factbook, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) declared that "only in Iceland do girls outperform boys in mathematics." (For the record, girls outperform boys in reading around the world.) Before we kick back on our laurels, however, it must be noted that in 2013, Iceland scored rather dismally on the OECD's "Programme for International Student Assessment" (PISA) report, with Icelandic fifteen-year-olds scoring lower than students in the other Nordic countries in science. Icelandic boys in particular didn't do so great on the test: 30% of them scored the lowest possible in reading for comprehension and 20% scored the lowest in math. So our particular shout out to Iceland's (math-)brainy ladies!

## BEST! Peaceful Country!

When considering crime and homicide rates, the percentage of the population, which is incarcerated, the number of police officers, general perception of criminality, and total lack of military

forces, the Institute for Economics and Peace found Iceland to be the world's most peaceful country in its 2013 Global Peace Index. Perhaps nothing goes as far to confirm this assertion as does the fact that last year marked a tragic first in Icelandic history: the first time a civilian was shot and killed during an armed confrontation with police officers. With mass and public shootings becoming a horrifying fact of life in so many countries, this incident resonated not only throughout Iceland, but also around the world, with global headlines including "In Iceland, When Policemen Kill a Gunman, They Apologize," and "For The First Time In Memory, Icelandic Police Shoot and Kill."

## BEST! Pot Smokers!

The United Nations' 2014 World Drug Report found that Icelanders smoke the most pot (per capita, of course), estimating that 18.3% of Icelanders aged 15–65 use the drug, followed by 14.8% of Americans and 14.6% of New Zealanders. (The Netherlands, by the way, came in at a totally mediocre rank of 21 in the world.) It's since been pointed out, however, that the results of the report may be rather inconclusive, as participants were asked whether or not they had ever smoked pot, not whether or not they still regularly do. So it's possible that Icelanders aren't actually that much higher than the rest of the world, just more likely to try cannabis at least once in their lives.

## BASICALLY BEST! Nobel Laureates (Per Capita)!

Iceland is deservedly proud of its one Nobel Laureate, author Halldór Laxness. But while Guinness World Records correctly reports that Iceland has the most Nobel Laureates per capita (3.36 per hypothetical million people), this record only holds because the Faroe Islands (population 49,709 in 2013), who boast

Nobel Laureate Niels Ryberg Finsen, are a protectorate of Denmark. If the record were for Nobel Laureates per capita in "self-governing nations" instead of in sovereign countries, the Faroes would have us beat.

## ALMOST BEST! (Second) Strongest Man!

Hafþór Júlíus Björnsson, who you may recognise as Game of Thrones' Gregor "The Mountain" Clegane, won silver (behind Lithuania's Zydrunas Savickas) in the 2014 World's Strongest Man competition. This is an improvement on his previous record—Hafþór placed third in the competition in both 2013 and 2012.

## ALMOST BEST! (Seventh) Longest Word!

In a totally unscientific Wikipedia survey of the world's longest words—according to the criteria that "candidates may be judged by their acceptance in major dictionaries...or in record-keeping publications like Guinness World Records, and by the frequency of their use in ordinary language"—Icelandic was found to have the seventh longest word in the world: Vaðlaheiðarvegavinnuverfærageymsluskúraútidyralyklakippuhringur. This 64-character word roughly means the "ring on a key chain for the main door of a tool storage shed used by road workers on (the hill) Vaðlaheiði." It was sourced from a post on the University of Iceland's website which admits that given the structure of Icelandic, words can be knit together "almost indefinitely." But thus far, this one's the longest one we've got.

The University of Iceland Student Bar

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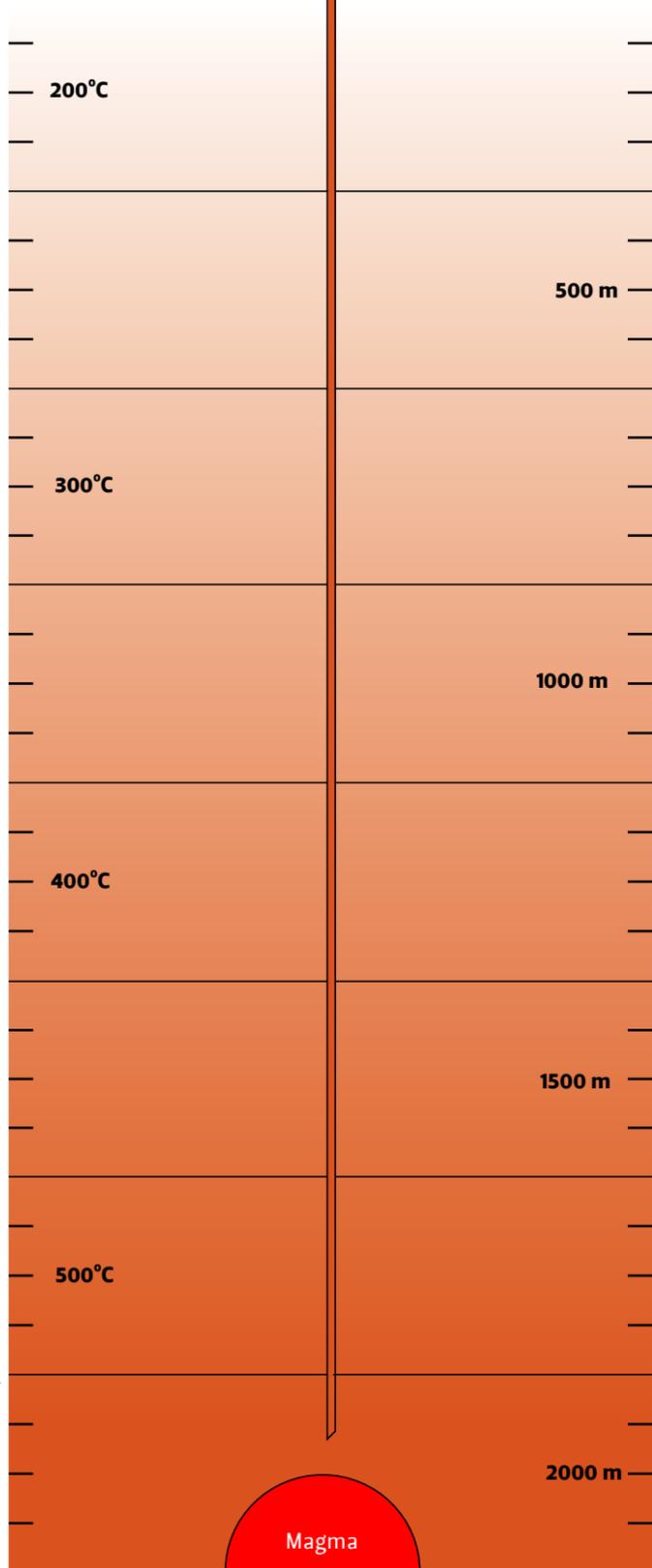
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**Best | Equality?**



Despite being ranked number one on the The World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Report, many argue that Iceland still has a ways to go to attain real gender equality. We reached out to Steinunn Rögnvaldsdóttir, the former spokesperson for Iceland's Feminist Association who is now working on a book about abortions in Iceland, to get her input on the issue.

**Do you think Iceland deserves to be called the 'best place to be a woman'?**

I think the focus on which country is the "best place to be a woman" isn't helpful. This is not a competition. But we are certainly doing well in some aspects of the gender equality struggle, and not as well in others. It's good to share the experiences and practices that are proving useful in achieving gender equality, but we have to keep focusing on a) keeping up the good work where things are in fact going well and b) improving ourselves on the issues where we can do better.

**In what ways are women and non-binary people lagging behind men?**

There are numerous ways in which they are second-class citizens such as with the gender-based pay gap and gender segregated labour market, as well as the prevalence of gender-based sexual violence, sexism in media and pop-culture, and sexism and hate-speech in general. Society's tendency to give more respect to men and male qualities over women and female qualities is also out of order.

**What improvements have we seen with regard to gender equality in the last year?**

I want to be optimistic that positive changes are going to come from within the police. Following a report on the issue last year, there has been a lot of discussion about the status of women on the force. It was also positive that laws about gender quotas on boards of firms came into action last autumn (although these mostly benefited educated, upper-class women). The most positive thing about the fight for gender equality in the last year has been the debate, how active it is, how criti-

cal and fun and brave the feminists participating in it are, and how many people engage in feminist activism one way or another.

**In what way could Iceland become a more egalitarian society?**

I think there is space for improvement in almost all spheres of our society. There are people working on many fronts to achieve more equality and if they were given more support, they could undoubtedly do more. There are too many active projects to list here, but I think one deserves a special mention. Research, data and experience suggest that struggling minorities and subordinated groups in society almost always have in common that they their economic situation is worse than the privileged and those keeping them down. So social justice, adequate wages for all and a good and strong welfare system are therefore probably the most important qualities required to becoming a more egalitarian society.

**How can ordinary citizens help create that society?**

Simple: Participate in feminist activism. Go to a meeting, write a piece about equality, don't laugh at a sexist joke, try to influence others, don't let your friends make sexist comments without calling them out on it, join a feminist group, write a letter to the media when they fuck up, be critical, think about inclusiveness, ask your boss about the workplace's equal pay policy (including your own salary), share the household chores equally with your partner, discuss equality and feminism with your family, do whatever you can. It all counts.

**The Best Place In The World To Be A Woman?**

**Freyja Barkardóttir**

*Women are reportedly more equal to men in Iceland than any other place in the world. But does this mean that we have reached the goal of gender equality?*

In international media and discourse, Iceland is often portrayed as the best place to be a woman. We certainly use it to market ourselves to tourists and boast of it in our own media. This is in large part due to the recognition we have received from the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Index. For five-years in a row now, Iceland has been ranked as number one on the Global Gender Gap index, which means that we have the world's lowest "Gender Gap."

The Gender Gap is measured by comparing women's status to that of men in four categories: Health and survival, economic participation and opportunity, political empowerment and educational attainment. The status of men in the specific country is always measured as the digit 1. They then measure the status of women by how much it differs from the men's. This way, the Forum avoids ranking countries by their level of development.

This, however, does not necessarily mean that we have the world's smallest gender inequality (if that can even be measured?) because the gender gap is not a sufficient measurement for gender equality. For instance, just because women are doing the same thing as men does not mean that the genders are equal, have equal opportunities or experience equal treatment.

One of the main reasons that Iceland ranks high on the Global Gender Gap index is the fact that for sixteen years (1980–1996), we had a female president, Vigdís Finnbogadóttir, the first female president in the world to be elected in a democratic election. Also, after the financial crisis in 2008, the number of women in government grew exceptionally from 31,7% in 2007 to 42,9% in 2009.

These facts contribute to our high score on the index but do not mean that being involved in politics in Iceland is easy for a woman. Women in politics is still a rarity, with men far outnumbering women in government, even though there have been equal voting rights for almost 100 years! And those women who do work in politics often do not last as long as men and they less frequently inhabit the higher positions.

Although Iceland has the smallest Gender Gap, there is still much room for improvement and it is important not to deduce from Iceland's relatively small gender gap that Iceland is a country with gender equality.

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# Best Of Reykjavík!

Once a year, we like to take a step back and celebrate our little city. It's not that Reykjavík is a city without problems, or that it's a place that doesn't have plenty of ways in which it could improve. This probably goes without saying. We at Grapevine spend a lot of time being critical, after all, and by and large we're a bunch of cynics. But once a year we like to set all that aside and appreciate the things that make Reykjavík a pretty great place to live.

As ever, our **BEST OF REYKJAVÍK!** issue is about big-upping stuff, giving out mad props and patting people on the shoulder. Our list is, of course, not a scientific one, and it is certainly contestable. It should be used as a starting point for a conversation;

something for you to read, verify, distrust, totally disagree with, argue over, send us angry rants about and enjoy.

**HOW WE DID IT:** We've polled readers on Facebook, we've discussed in bars, we've consulted our resident experts, we've argued, revised, and argued some more. And we think we've come up with a pretty great representation of the finest that Reykjavík has to offer.

Now, of course, not everyone is going to agree with our choices, and that's perfectly fine—variety in opinion and taste adds spice to life and anyway, we love a good debate. Enjoy, and remember to send your suggestions to [bestof@grapevine.is](mailto:bestof@grapevine.is) for consideration in our 2015 edition.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY Siggí Odds



## Dining and Grubbing

into a tasty burger (minus the murder), Búllan's got you covered. The patty is juicy on the inside but has a nice crispy texture on the outside. And, even better, it doesn't fall apart the minute you bite into it, which anyone who's sampled her fair share of veggie burgers will know is a kind of special triumph. Also, we're told, "if you add bacon to it, it's fucking awesome." So there's that.

- ♥ 2013: Hamborgarabúlla Tómasar
- ♥ 2012: Hamborgarabúlla Tómasar
- ♥ 2011: Hamborgarafabrikkan
- ♥ 2010: Saffran
- ♥ 2009: Drekkinn



### Best Specialty Burger "The Empire State" Roadhouse

"Everyone has these fucked up burgers now," says one Grapevine panelist. "Where can you just get a proper burger?" Come to think of it, we have no idea. Suffice to say that while the burgers at Roadhouse ("a hilarious place to find yourself") are far from "proper," they are pretty damn close to Awesome—or, like, Totally Horrifying, but that's kind of the same thing, right? Case in point: The Empire State, a double burger whose pat-

ties have been rent asunder by a fried egg, onion rings, bacon, jalapeños, several sauces, and...wait for it...a grilled cheese sandwich. Yes, you read that right. There is a second friggin' sandwich lodged in the middle of this burger. "The first bite is amazing," says our resident competitive eater, "and the last bite is terrible. At what point do you like yourself in this process?" SPOILER: at no point while eating this burger will you like yourself. But, should you choose to accept this mission and complete it (mostly) unscathed, your sweat will undoubtedly smell of meat for at least 72 hours, which has got to count for something.

- ♥ 2013: Hamborgarafabrikkan's Christmas burger
- ♥ 2012: Vitabar's 'Forget-me-not'
- ♥ 2011: Vitabar
- ♥ 2010: Hamborgarafabrikkan
- ♥ 2009: Vitabar



### Best Slice The Deli

In a city brimming with cardboard-tasting slices on offer, The Deli wins this award for the second year in a row for doing what the competition should be doing: offering well made slices with a diverse selection of toppings. In addition to the standard pepperoni and margherita options, The Deli also offers meaty pizzas with pepperoni, minced beef, jalapeno, and cream cheese, or vegetarian options such as peanuts, spinach, feta and peppers. To top it all off, the pizzas are reasonably priced, with a wonderful lunch offer of two full-sized slices for 700 ISK, or three slices for 900 ISK.

- ♥ 2013: Devitos
- ♥ 2012: Devitos
- ♥ 2011: Deli
- ♥ 2010: Deli
- ♥ 2009: Deli



### Best Pizza Hverfisgata 12

In an era when everyone is obsessed with visibility and self-promotion, it may come as a surprise that Hverfisgata 12 wins our best pizza award. The place doesn't advertise, the house isn't marked "PIZZA" in big tourist-trapping letters and it doesn't even have a Facebook page! As far as we can tell, people only know about it through word of mouth, which can be pulled off because Hverfisgata 12 offers the kind of pizzas you are unlikely to have tried before, with inventive toppings such as barbecue sauce, shredded pork, pears, roasted seeds and horseradish cream. The attached bar is also properly decked out and staff are well versed at making cocktails, in case you fancy having a nightcap before heading home.

- ♥ 2013: Gamla Smiðjan
- ♥ 2012: La Luna trattoria-pizzeria
- ♥ 2011: Gamla Smiðjan
- ♥ 2010: Gamla Smiðjan
- ♥ 2009: Devitos Pizza



### Best Ice Cream Valdís

Valdís takes the ice cream cone throne for the second year in a row and, judging by the way they're churning up creative new flavours, their reign shows no sign of faltering. Boasting an eclectic variety of freshly-made gelato, sorbet, smoothies, shakes, and waffle cones, Valdís continues to be Reykjavík's undisputed dairy champ, hence the queue at all hours, even on a rainy day.

- ♥ 2013: Valdís
- ♥ 2012: YoYo
- ♥ 2011: Ísbúðin Ísland
- ♥ 2010: Ísbúðin Ísland
- ♥ 2009: Ísbúð Vesturbæjar



### Best Burger "Freedom Burger," KEX Hostel

The Best Burger award has often been a contentious one, with the office arguing back and forth between Vitabarinn and Hamborgarabúlla Tómasar, but this year we have a clear winner and it is KEX Hostel's spicy "Freedom" burger. Consisting of high quality grass-fed free range beef, Ísbúi cheese, caramelised onion mayonnaise, veggies and fries on the side, it is absolutely, mouthwateringly overkill for a regular burger, with the only complaint imaginable being the slightly steep price of 2,490 ISK. We've heard enough local chefs compliment-

ing the burger, though, to convince us to select it as the Best Burger in Reykjavík.

- ♥ 2013: Vitabar
- ♥ 2012: Grillmarket
- ♥ 2011: Hamborgarabúlla Tómasar
- ♥ 2010: Hamborgarabúlla Tómasar
- ♥ 2009: Hamborgarabúlla Tómasar



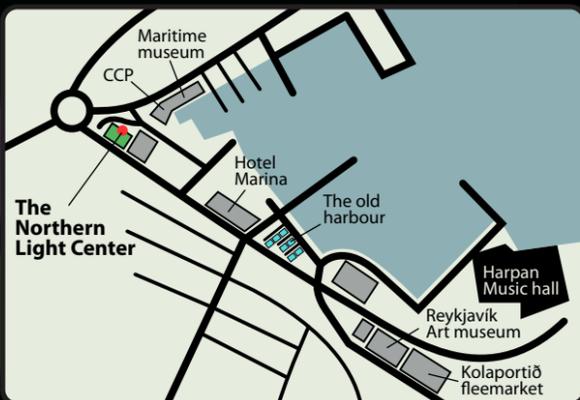
### Best Veggie Burger Hamborgarabúlla Tómasar

"A great veggie burger," according to one of Grapevine's more refined gourmants, "has 25 ingredients—minimum." This is all fine and good for the dedicated home chef, but when you're on the run and want the tactile satisfaction of biting

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# Best Of Reykjavík!



## Best Bakery Sandholt

Sandholt is another perennial Grapevine favourite that continues to deliver. And sure, its fresh croissants, pastries, breads, sandwiches and baked goods will set you back marginally more than some of the city's other top-of-the-line bakeries, but you won't regret spending the extra krónur, particularly if owner Ásgeir Sandholt has done the day's baking. A fourth-generation baker, Ásgeir still uses the same oven that his predecessors used when the bakery opened in 1920, although he has changed up nearly everything else about the place, including the bread recipe (a deceptively simple one which was in use 100 years ago). The bakery also recently expanded its seating area and added a back porch, both of which make stopping here for coffee and cake quite cosy, no matter the weather. Oh, and an added bonus in case you, like several Grapeviners, have strong opinions about such things: Sandholt's fancy new machine allows you to choose exactly how thick your bread slices will be.

- 🍷 2013: Sandholt
- 🍷 2012: Mosfellsbakari in Reykjavík
- 🍷 2011: Sandholt
- 🍷 2010: Sandholt
- 🍷 2009: Mosfellsbakari



## Best Indian Gandhi

Gandhi primarily serves cuisine from Kerala in South India. It "is nutty both in the sense that it uses coconuts with wild abandon and in that its influences are maddeningly diverse as the region boasts a reasonably large (mostly) non-vegetarian Christian and Muslim community, while the surrounding regions are mostly Hindu and/or vegetarian," as our food critic explained last time we paid Gandhi an official visit. "As much as I agree with Gordon Ramsey about the simple two

page menus, it simply doesn't apply here. No one in their right mind goes to India for minimalism," he noted before going on to praise the delicious food and the diversity it brings to Reykjavík's restaurant scene. Note: Its price range is somewhere between Shalimar (a Pakistani place, which gets an honourable mention) and Austur-Indíafjélagið (a North Indian place, which we have deemed an institution and is thus not in the running for an award).

- 🍷 2013: Austurlandahraðlestin
- 🍷 2012: Ghandi
- 🍷 2011: Austurlandahraðlestin
- 🍷 2010: Shalimar
- 🍷 2009: Austur-Indíafjélagið



## Best Thai Food Ban Thai

Clearly, Ban Thai is a Grapevine favourite: it's won Best Thai five times and was our Best Goddamn Restaurant in 2011. In the words of one of our panellists, "Price aside, the food here is just like in Thailand." The quality of each dish is excellent, and the menu is massive. Ban Thai's interior is kind of swanky, making it really nice to eat there, though the service isn't the most efficient. If they're not too busy, ordering takeaway ahead of time can save you some time. But wherever you eat your Thai, Ban Thai makes the best in town.

- 🍷 2013: Yummi Yummi
- 🍷 2012: Ban Thai
- 🍷 2011: Ban Thai
- 🍷 2010: Ban Thai
- 🍷 2009: Ban Thai



## Best Kebab Mandi

Last year, Mandi was close to storming in and grabbing Best Kebab in its first year, but barely missed out in favour of kebab mainstays Habibi. This year, the numbers

came out in favour of Mandi, and deservedly so. While their lamb kebabs are delicious and their falafels have our vegetarian stamp-of-approval, the real star of the show is the rolled kebab. Offered in chicken, lamb, or mixed, with the help of cheese, corn, green olives, rainbow rice, and dripping with your choice of yoghurt sauce or spicy sauce, the rolled kebab is one of the absolute best one-hand-required meals in town. Tightly enclosed in a warm, pressed-to-golden-perfection wrap, at 1250 ISK, it never fails to hit the spot. Though Mandi is awkwardly situated (a bit reminiscent of a corner store), the service is friendly and caters to a diverse crowd—"from anarchists and biker clubs to families passing through and late-nighters," says one of our writers—and better yet, it's open until 6 am on Fridays and Saturdays.

- 🍷 2012: Kebab Grill
- 🍷 2011: Habibi



## Best Coffeehouse Reykjavík Roasters (Formerly Kaffismiðjan)

Reykjavík Roasters takes the top spot this year and it's not hard to see why. Since it opened in 2008, the experience of nipping into Roasters has continually improved. The atmosphere is part sentimental Belle and Sebastian party, part knitting with granny and part minimalist art-school cool: you'll enjoy the sounds of quietly crackling vinyl records as you sip your painstakingly-roasted coffee. Ethically-minded as well as caffeine-spirited, Roasters also purchase directly from farmers in both Colombia and Nicaragua, and roast on location. The staff is always attentive, taking plenty of care with coffee presentation while they tailor your drink to your taste buds. Furthermore, with three unique different brewing methods available, even the most critical and experienced coffee connoisseur will find something to write home about.

- 🍷 2013: Kaffismiðjan
- 🍷 2012: Kaffismiðjan
- 🍷 2011: Kaffismiðjan
- 🍷 2010: Kaffismiðjan
- 🍷 2009: Kaffismiðjan



## Best Coffee To-Go Kaffifélagið

Having briefly ceded the throne to Litli Bóndabærinn (which recently moved to Grafarvogur), Kaffifélagið has surged back to reclaim their title as best cup of joe-to-go. According to our resident coffee connoisseur, at Kaffifélagið you just "feel like you're getting something more." They put some heart into serving up your coffee, asking how much milk you want instead of just slapping it all together and tossing it in your direction. Beyond that (milk of) human kindness, their coffee is sourced with the finest Italian espresso beans, making for a deep, full-flavoured drink. Due to limited seating space, the "to-go" part is almost by necessity—however if there are seats available, be sure to sip, pause, and take advantage of the friendly atmosphere.

- 🍷 2013: Litli Bóndabærinn
- 🍷 2012: Kaffifélagið
- 🍷 2011: Kaffifélagið
- 🍷 2010: Café Haiti
- 🍷 2009: Kaffifélagið



## Best Place To Get Tea Cafe Babalú

With its shiny yellow exterior, quirky, cluttered décor and the strong, exotic aromas emanating from its kitchen, Babalú is a beacon of good, relaxing vibes and nurtures that nostalgic, carefree part of your soul. And better yet, Babalú has an endless tea list hip enough for all the Ramona Flowers out there. They've also developed a delicious mutant tea/coffee offspring in their 'chamomile soya latté.' It's easy to spend the better part of a day curled up on the sofa, talking to the friendly staff and visitors or taking to the comfy balcony to soak up those rays during the summer months.

- 🍷 2012: Litli Bóndabærinn
- 🍷 2011: Te og kaffi



## Best Sushi Sushisamba

Sushi tends to be a contentious topic. While the purists ("I eat sashimi and sashimi only") dismiss places serving elaborate rolls, Icelanders tend to enjoy creative takes on classics and have a special affinity for sauce. And Sushisamba excels on both counts. "It's not even up for debate," one of our panellists noted. "They're creative, they think outside of the box." Another avid fan pointed out that "they don't do the sushi in a very traditional Japanese way, but that's not necessarily bad, as a lot of the sushi you get anywhere has some international influence...I can only say this: people think rice is easy. For sushi it is not, if you want to get it just right. Making it OK is easy. Making it dead-on is hard." Thus, Sushisamba takes the toro, err...Spicy Chicken Roll...err...Deep-Fried Volcano Roll with extra spicy mayo on top.

- 🍷 2013: Sakebarinn
- 🍷 2012: SuZushii
- 🍷 2011: SuZushii
- 🍷 2010: Sushibarinn
- 🍷 2009: Sushismiðjan



## Best Vegetarian Gló

Reykjavík may not have many veggie-centric spots, but for four years running, when anyone has asked us, sceptically, to name the city's best Vegan/Raw/Vegetarian place, we've been able to hold our heads high and unanimously, joyously proclaim: Gló! With a rotating daily menu featuring everything from veggie sushi and deconstructed raw pizzas (really delish!) to a veritable smorgasbord of mixed salads, fresh-squeezed juices, daily-made desserts, and yes, even a token meat-eater's option, Gló offers something unexpected, filling, and satisfying for everyone.

- 🍷 2013: Gló
- 🍷 2012: Gló
- 🍷 2011: Gló
- 🍷 2010: Á Næstu Grösum
- 🍷 2009: Á Næstu Grösum

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# Best Of Reykjavík!



## Best Hangover Meal *The Hangover Killer at Prikíð*

When you find yourself stumbling out of bed with a skull-splitting headache and a deep abhorrence of everything and everyone, look no further than Prikíð for the perfect remedy. Despite there being a significant chance that the café/bar/hip-hop haven contributed to your hangover in the first place, any hard feelings are patched up by their back-to-back winner, The Hangover Killer. This heaven-sent meal comes complete with a hangover sandwich (ham, cheese, bacon, egg, tomato, lettuce, and garlic dressing), a Jack Daniels infused 'Bruce Willis milkshake' and a tablet of Treo painkiller. Working together, this ensemble provides you with a Hangover Holy Trinity: greasy food, the hair of the dog, and a doctor-recommended analgesic. Once you break out of your subsequent food coma, you'll find yourself ready to go out and do it all over again.

- ♥ 2013: The Hangover Killer
- ♥ 2012: Vitabar
- ♥ 2011: The Truck at Grái Kötturinn
- ♥ 2010: The Truck at Prikíð
- ♥ 2009: The Truck at Grái kötturinn



## Best Soup *Noodle Station*

Ask a bunch of people living in Reykjavík to name the best soup in town and you will find yourself in the midst of a somewhat contentious conversation. There are a fair amount of soups served here, and a fair amount of them are pretty damn good. But if you want to get the most bang for your buck—or KRASH for your króna, if you will—you're almost guaranteed to come away from Noodle Station happy. It's a simple, quick place that doesn't try to reinvent the wheel. You have two choices to make: do you want Chicken, Beef, or Veggie? Do you want spicy or

lame not spicy? ("Always spicy," says a panellist. "I want them to make me cry." And they do.) Every so often—"like 20% of the time," says our frequent noodler who has eaten there "probably 70 times" in the last few years—Noodle Station doesn't serve up the best bowl, but no matter what, you'll never leave hungry. This is particularly true if you order your soup to go, as word on the street is that the take-away portions are generally more substantial.

- ♥ 2013: Kryddlegin Hjörtu
- ♥ 2012: Höfnin
- ♥ 2011: Kryddlegin Hjörtu
- ♥ 2010: Súpubarinn
- ♥ 2009: Lobster Soup at Sægreifinn



## Best Place To Go For A Fancy Meal *Dill*

Dill is New Nordic cuisine at its best. While many restaurants in Iceland have embraced some of the principles of New Nordic cuisine, as one of our resident foodies notes, Dill takes it the whole way, "carefully sourcing and foraging its ingredients." Dill's head chef, Gunnar Karl Gíslason, has worked at a number of Michelin starred restaurants in Denmark, and has been known to bring in guest chefs from the likes of Michelin-rated Maaemo. For a visual taste of Gunnar's expertise, you can also flip through his mouthwatering book, 'North: The New Nordic Cuisine of Iceland.' Note: Don't go to Dill's old location! The restaurant recently relocated to Hverfisgata 12 after a five-year run in the Nordic House on Sturlugata.

- ♥ 2013: Gallery Restaurant at Hótel Holt
- ♥ 2012: Grill Market
- ♥ 2011: Dill
- ♥ 2010: Dill
- ♥ 2009: Gallery Restaurant at Hótel Holt



## Best Place To Go On A Date *Grill Market*

If you're looking for a fancy restaurant for a romantic date, Grill Market is the perfect place. You will enjoy the freshest high quality food from local organic farmers and a great selection of wines from all over the world in a classy, luxurious setting. Portions are also pretty big so they're perfect for sharing! On that note, there's also a tasting menu for two put together by the chefs so that sample a variety of mouth-watering delicacies.

- ♥ 2013: Tapas Barinn
- ♥ 2012: Sushisamba
- ♥ 2011: Ítalía
- ♥ 2010: Pisa
- ♥ 2009: Ítalía

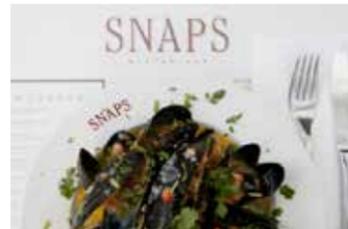


## Best Newcomer Restaurant *K-Bar*

K-Bar made a splash when it opened in late 2013 and it continues to roll out innovative new dishes. But thanks to creative cocktails, a strong line-up of beers and trendy yet cosy décor, K-Bar is satisfying even before the food arrives. The menu is detail-oriented and exciting, showcasing a unique fusion of Korean and Portuguese influences. Though the Korean staple, Bi Bim Bap, is good, the soft shell crab tempura sandwich and fish burgers are standouts. For dessert, try the cronut, their version of the croissant-donut fad that in 2013 created five hour lines and a black market outside its original bakery in New York City. K-Bar also has a special place in our hearts because they offer what might be the best food and drink deal in the city. Between 16:00 and 18:00, you can stop in and get their sauce-slathered KFC (Korean Fried Chicken) wings and the beer of the day for only 990 ISK. From the fresh flavours, the steal of a deal and the cronuts, K-Bar is

an extremely welcomed addition to the Reykjavík dining scene.

- ♥ 2013: Bergsson Mathús
- ♥ 2012: Forréttabarinn
- ♥ 2011: Sjávargrillið
- ♥ 2010: Noodle Station
- ♥ 2009: Saffran



## Best Goddamn Restaurant *SNAPS*

Since we started making our BEST OF issues, Best Goddamn Restaurant has remained one of the categories we have the most fun with as, according to the definition we initially made up, a 'best goddamn restaurant' needs to be 'on the cheaper side,' 'consistent,' 'tasty' and 'available.' And finding a spot that does all of the above is both rare and wonderful.

Even more rare—for Reykjavík, at least—is for an establishment to maintain those standards for a number of years without faltering on the quality front or blowing up its prices. This is perhaps why it's especially fun that we get to award SNAPS this title for the third year running.

Ever since SNAPS appeared on the scene (and on our BEST OF REYKJAVÍK list) back in 2012, the restaurant has thankfully kept at it. SNAPS continues to maintain a near-impeccable balance between good food, great atmosphere and affordable pricing; the perfect place to dine when you want to feel a little fancy without spending an arm and a leg. Fish of the day comes recommended, as do any of their Smörrebröd. Coupled with a drink, of course, or two.

Thank you, SNAPS!

- ♥ 2013: SNAPS
- ♥ 2012: SNAPS
- ♥ 2011: Ban Thai
- ♥ 2010: Saffran
- ♥ 2009: Segurmo at Boston



## Best Family Restaurant *The Laundromat Café*

The Laundromat Café has pulled off the four-peat, legitimising their run as a dynasty in the family restaurant arena. Sure, there are other places that pride themselves on being kid-friendly. A decent number of restaurants serve up affordable diner fare. And yes, even some places have board games to play. But to have all of these together, plus a downstairs play area, AND laundry machines?! The Laundromat Café is truly one-of-a-kind.

- ♥ 2013: Laundromat
- ♥ 2012: Laundromat
- ♥ 2011: Laundromat
- ♥ 2010: Piri-Piri
- ♥ 2009: Hornið



## Best Cheap Meal *10-11 after 14:00*

10-11 is not exactly the first place that comes to mind in a conversation about cheap food in Reykjavík. In fact, it probably doesn't come to mind at all. For cheap groceries, most people would probably agree that you should head to Bónus. However, if you're looking for a hot and seemingly healthy meal, 10-11 is actually not a bad option after two in the afternoon, when said hot meals are sold at a 50% discount. Their menu rotates weekly and often features Icelandic staples such as boiled haddock with potatoes and plökkfiskur ("fish stew") with rye bread. You'd be hard-pressed to find similar meals elsewhere in Reykjavík for less than 1,000 ISK. In addition, you can typically get a fairly hearty kjötsúpa (Icelandic "meat soup") for less than 500 ISK, regardless of the hour.

- ♥ 2013: 'Sub of the month' at Subway
- ♥ 2012: Íslenski barinn
- ♥ 2011: Noodle Station
- ♥ 2010: 'Sub of the month' at Subway

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# Best Of Reykjavík!



## Best Seafood Fiskifélagið

Fiskifélagið (or: The Fish Company) wins 'Best Seafood' for the third year in a row. "But that doesn't do it justice, seafood is just 60% of its menu," one panellist-slash-ardent-foodie argued, lobbying for it to take 'Best goddamn restaurant' this year. Then he also tried to vote it 'Best fancy restaurant.' "It's Fiskifélagið, hands down," he said. "You feel fancy, you get the service you expect, and you get something unexpected." In conclusion: It serves great seafood and MORE, which confirms that it is a really great 'Best Seafood' winner.

- 2013: Fiskifélagið
- 2012: Fiskifélagið
- 2011: Við Tjörnina
- 2010: Fiskifélagið



## Best Brunch Cocoo's Nest

With a fantastic brunch menu well suited to omnivores and vegans alike, picking the Cocoo's Nest was a no-brainer for us. With a great selection of mouth-watering sandwiches and Italian dishes, the real cream of the crop is their whole-wheat maple syrup and strawberries pancakes. Add crunchy bacon, and you'll be smiling for the rest of the week. Be advised, you may have to wait a spell to get a table as the restaurant has already earned itself a loyal following.

- 2013: Vox
- 2012: Vox
- 2011: Vox
- 2010: Nítjándá
- 2009: Vox



## Best Place To Go With A Group Of Friends KEX

KEX is huge, with tons of indoor and outdoor seating (for when the weather is occasionally nice), has good beer, a friendly atmosphere and frequent music events. Ergo, it's a great to visit with a group of friends. Unless of course you and your group of friends like cramped spaces, terrible beer, unfriendly vibes and complete silence, in which case we think you need to reevaluate your definition of 'fun.'

- 2013: KEX
- 2012: Tapas Bar
- 2011: Tapas Bar
- 2010: Tapas Bar



## Best Must-Try Dining Experience Food Section at Kolaportið

Someone has surely dared you to try out hákarl, our famous "rotten shark," but this malodorous delicacy is one that you'll only come to appreciate with time (and lots of alcohol). Don't spend a fortune testing it in a fancy restaurant—come to Kolaportið where you can try it for free, or even buy a tub. Other local samples may include hangikjöt and dried fish. You'll also find a variety of Thai ingredients, pastries, farm-fresh lamb and homemade sausages for sale.

- 2013: Icelandic food at Kaffi Loki
- 2012: Icelandic Home-Style Food at Mamma Steina
- 2011: The svið at Fljótt og Gott, BSÍ
- 2010: Moby Dick on a Stick at Sægreifinn
- 2009: Bæjarins Beztu



## Best Kept Secret Café Flora

With its trailing vines, brightly-coloured flowers, and wooden tables, this greenhouse café hidden in the heart of Reykjavík's Botanical Gardens is always warm and summery, even on a cloudy day. It's peaceful place to while away an afternoon munching on open-face sandwiches, savoury soups, or rich desserts—we particularly recommend the fantastic homemade sourdough bread and beetroot hummus. The café is only open during the summer and early fall, but reopens to serve up a special Icelandic Christmas buffet (Jólahlaðborð) in December.

- 2013: Lunch Beat
- 2012: Café Flora



## Best Lunch Place Bergsson Mathús

Located in a surprisingly airy space just below ground level, Bergsson Mathús—winner of last year's "Best Newcomer Restaurant"—is our favourite place for a filling, healthy, and tasty afternoon bite. The rotating daily menu always includes intriguing meaty entrees, such as a slow-roasted leg lamb with harissa and couscous or Thai chicken noodle salad, and fresh fish and spinach lasagne (really good) are always available. But for lunch, our go-to is the heaping "salad of the day" plate, a selection of several fresh salads and/or mixed veggies with a tasty yogurt sauce.

- 2013: Ostabúðin



## Best Late Night Bite Nonnabiti

Stumbling around 101 on a night out, a dozen or so drinks in, your stomach growls; you're hungry and your mouth waters as you frantically wonder what you could get at the ungodly hour of 5AM. 'Nonni,' your thoughts whisper to you. 'Nonni!' Your legs move forward, urged on by an instinctual memory. You keep your head up and your eyes open enough to keep from walking into anything, but your vision is already consumed by the image of a hoagie. You didn't realise that your mouth could salivate so much at the thought of subs, hamburgers and other tasty fast food. So absorbed in your thoughts, you only feel your mouth forming the words of your order before spitting them out to the patient employee. When your hero (truly worthy of the name) is in your hands, you hardly have time to register the feeling of toasted bread or dribbling sauce down your fingers before you tear into it. Each bite rejuvenates you a little more, until it's all gone and you walk back out into the night, satisfied...until next time.

- 2013: Nonnabiti

# Drinking And Nightlife



## Best Mainstreamer Bar The English Pub

So, what do we mean by "mainstreamer bar"? A mainstreamer bar is a place where you can take your friends from out of town, drunkenly belt out tunes with troubadours, cheer on your favourite team, or just sit down and enjoy a beer any day of the week. The English Pub, being the consummate old-fashioned bar, is ideal for any of these. At English Pub, nobody will judge you for your all-fleece wardrobe, and nobody will question your affinity for Pink Floyd and Smirnoff Ice.

- 2013: The English Pub
- 2012: The English Pub
- 2011: The English Pub
- 2010: Austur



## Best Place to Start the Night Kaldi Bar

Early in the night when you still have all your friends with you and before you want to go dancing, Kaldi is the place to be. The small bar draws a large crowd most nights with its fine selection of Kaldi beers (including the ever-popular unfiltered Kaldi), and its comfortable seating areas encourage patrons to converse. Pop on in, grab a table and kick a few back with your comrades before you start your hardcore partying.

- 2013: Slippbarinn
- 2012: KEX Hostel
- 2011: Nýlenduvörverzlun Hemma & Valda
- 2010: Nýlenduvörverzlun Hemma & Valda



## Best Place To End The Night Paloma

Paloma, with its Viking longboat bar and oddly placed support beams, may have the weirdest interior of any downtown venue, but the fact of the matter can't be denied: it is a pretty lively place to find yourself late at night. Paloma is usually filled with people dancing with reckless abandon after two in the morning, or out on the balcony, catching their breath and

chain-smoking like the cool kids they are. If you don't have an after party to go to when the bars close, just stick around outside: people from Gaukurinn and Húrra often hang around there, smoking cigarettes, finishing their drinks and being social.

- 2013: Harlem (RIP)



## Best Cheap Bar Ölsmiðjan

While not the cheapest beer in Reykjavík, Ölsmiðjan comes pretty darn close, with prices resembling those of other bars during their happy hours. The atmosphere is nicer than one would expect considering the low prices, and the warm ambiance and soul tunes often playing in the background are definitely enough to keep us coming back for more.

- 2013: Ölsmiðjan
- 2012: Ölsmiðjan
- 2011: Den Danske Kro
- 2010: Kaffi Zimsen
- 2009: Nýlenduvörverzlun Hemma & Valda



## Best All-Around Bar Boston

An old favourite, Boston continues carrying the flame of its proprietors' former venture, the legendary Sirkús (you wish you'd been there). Aside from being an old-fashioned establishment within which you and your pals can congregate and share a couple of frothy pints of Gull, Boston doubles as one of Reykjavík's trendiest meeting places. On weekends, you can expect minimalist microhouse beats and suave internationals, maybe even a surprise appearance from a member of Reykjavík's indie-celebrity clique. In addition, Boston serves a selection of Mexican food via their Santa Karamba kitchen. A great all-rounder.

- 2013: Dolly
- 2012: Faktory



# Best Of Reykjavík!



## Best Bar To Go Dancing Kiki

“When I start dancing,” says one sheepish Grapeviner, “I know it’s time to go home. Or I choose a place that I know I won’t be seen.” For those of you who are a bit more dance positive, however, Kiki is the place to be, a place where no one will judge you—or your moves. The only caveat is that it is only open on weekends and if you’re not into Robyn, Whitney, and/or Bonnie Tyler (which: really?!), you’ll have a much less enjoyable time here. It should be noted that our panellists were in the midst of debating several different places for this award when Kiki was suggested, and suddenly, everyone agreed simultaneously. “It was so obvious as soon as you said it,” someone said. We know, man. We know. But returning to the present: just imagine that you’re in a shook-up soft drink bottle full of confetti or a disco ball full of love.

- 🍷 2013: Harlem
- 🍷 2012: Bakkus



## Best Newcomer Bar Húrri

The downtown bar scene is an ever-changing one, and it is easy to grow jaded with it, but every once in a while we get something that is truly amazing, and Húrri’s blend of bar, club and live music venue is just that. With six different beers on tap (including Einstök Pale Ale and White Ale), the place is ideal to sit down for a pint in the early evening, see a live band step on stage around 10 or 11, and then dance to sweet tunes by talented DJs until the wee early hours. Let’s just hope it fares better than the four other bars that have been in that space over the past decade.

- 🍷 2013: Kaldi
- 🍷 2012: Slippbarinn, Hótel Marína
- 🍷 2011: Faktóry
- 🍷 2010: Sódóma



## Best Place To Watch Sports Over Beer Bjarni Fel

The ubiquitous cultural link between sports and beer endures at Bjarni Fel, our back-to-back winner in this category. There’s not a better place in Reykjavík to guzzle down some brews (2 for 1,990 ISK, Monday-Friday) and bemoan or celebrate your favourite teams. With 20 HDTVs and often hordes of rabid fans, it can truly be an immersive experience.

- 🍷 2013: Bjarni Fel
- 🍷 2012: Úrilla Górrillan (RIP)
- 🍷 2011: Hvíta Perlan (RIP),
- 🍷 2010: Hvíta Perlan,
- 🍷 2009: Bjarni Fel

## Best Beer Selection Microbar

If you love beer, you’ll love Microbar. The three-time winner consistently proves to have an unbeatable selection and a knowledgeable staff. In addition to offering ten different microbrews on tap, the prices are reasonable and relatively free of pesky mark-ups. If you’re trying to get your brewducation on, they offer 170 ml samples, five for 2,500 ISK. Microbar is truly by beer lovers, for beer lovers.

- 🍷 2013: Micro Bar
- 🍷 2012: Micro Bar



## Best Place To Get Cocktails Slippbarinn

Most of Reykjavík’s bars don’t have extensive cocktail menus. If you would have asked us where to get a good cocktail a decade ago, we’re not sure where we would have sent you, but we probably would have recommended somewhere making mojitos (which were synonymous with cocktails for a while there). Today, if you go to the right place, your bartender won’t look at you with a blank face when you ask for a ‘White Lady,’ and some places, like Slippbarinn, even offer innovative drinks beyond the classics. So take advantage of their happy hour (16:00–18:00) and try their popular “Winter Sour.”

- 🍷 2013: Borg, Hotel Borg
- 🍷 2012: Kolabrautin



## Best Bar For Smokers Hressó

Hressó won for Best People-Watching Spot last year, and that goes hand in hand with this award. Who doesn’t like smoking while watching the goings on of the night (or the results of the night before)? You obviously can’t smoke in the indoor booths, which are the prime seats for people-viewing, but the semi-outdoor patio is close enough for a smoke break in the relaxing semi-nature.

- 🍷 2013: Reykjavík Beats



## Best Place for Live Music Café Rosenberg

It’s kind of relaxing, kind of laid back, and the perfect place to let music wash over you when you’re craving that transcendental experience. Don’t let the hominess turn you away, because Rosenberg features a solid line-up of professionals every night.

- 🍷 2013: Volta (RIP)

# Activities And Fun-Times



## Best Pool Vesturbæjarlaug

Vesturbæjarlaug, though recently refurbished, is not our fanciest pool—it doesn’t have Laugardalslaug’s amazing slide or salt water hot pot, for instance—but it is a damn fine neighbourhood pool where normal people (and, um, Björk) can go swim a few laps, have a schvitz in the sauna or steam rooms, and then settle in one of the four hot pots for a little ‘pottaspjall,’ or hot pot chat. One of said hot pots is actually a four-in-one, wheelchair-accessible mega pot, which was cleverly situated so that during daylight hours, it is never in the shade. (New Reykjavík mayor Dagur B. Eggertson made a special visit to Vesturbæjarlaug when the new hot pot opened in April, an event covered by much of the local media: VERY EXCITE.) And after your swim, you can cap the experience with an ice cream cone the size of your head at Grapevine Institution Ísbúð Vesturbæjar, just around the corner.

- 🍷 2013: Laugardalslaug
- 🍷 2012: Laugardalslaug
- 🍷 2011: Neslaug
- 🍷 2010: Laugardalslaug
- 🍷 2009: Laugardalslaug



## Best Museum The National Museum

This is the best place to go to soak up knowledge of the Icelandic nation. Educate yourself on folk customs, look at old photographs and prints, see artefacts such as the first Icelandic Bible and the chess board used by Bobby Fischer and Boris Spassky in the 1972 World Chess Championship, hang in the library, and explore the dense collection which spans over 1000 years of Icelandic history and culture. We promise it’s not a boring place to go.

- 🍷 2013: National Museum
- 🍷 2012: National Museum
- 🍷 2011: National Museum
- 🍷 2010: National Center for Cultural Heritage



## Best Art Museum Reykjavík Art Museum

With three different locations offering a mix of works by international and home-grown artists, this is obviously the best art museum we’ve got. There’s a great sense of engagement with the local community, what with the parties and events hosted alongside the twenty plus annual exhibitions. They’ve been the best for a while, so let the test of time speak for itself.

- 🍷 2013: Reykjavík Art Museum
- 🍷 2012: Reykjavík Art Museum
- 🍷 2011: Einar Jónsson
- 🍷 2010: Reykjavík Art Museum
- 🍷 2009: Einar Jónsson



## Best Gallery Kling og Bang

At a recent exhibition including both a jar of peas and a video installation of a wiggling, polka-dotted ass, one Grapeviner nodded conclusively: “This is art.” And yes, our panellists agree that Kling og Bang is the heart of Reykjavík’s grassroots art scene, “the place where you see work by artists who aren’t making money.” But there’s a lot of high profile work shown there, too. Recently, K&B hosted a five-part multimedia performance series in collaboration with New York’s ESP TV, and “The Visitors” by fellow Reykjavík gallery i8’s artist, Ragnar Kjartansson.

- 🍷 2013: i8 Gallery
- 🍷 2012: i8 Gallery
- 🍷 2011: i8 Gallery
- 🍷 2010: i8 Gallery
- 🍷 2009: Gallery Kling og Bang



## Best Place to Spend a Rainy Day A Hot Tub

So you came to Iceland knowing, of course, that the weather is not, let’s say, its finest feature. You knew that there would be rain and wind (so much fucking wind) and that it wouldn’t be all sunshine-on-the-mountaintops like “The Sound of Music” or an Icelandair promo video. You knew this, but you didn’t be-

lieve it, and now you’re sad because you came all this way and the weather blows. Literally. We feel you, man, but if we got down every time the weather got bad, we’d be depressed all the time and would never do anything. Well, we might still be a little bit depressed, but we do our best to combat the feeling by telling the weather to “fuck off!” when it sucks, and sitting in a hot pot to make ourselves feel better. What hot pot, you ask? Any hot pot. You’ll be warm and toasty and relaxed and the fact that it’s sleeting or hailing in your face will suddenly feel bracing or even a tiny bit amusing, instead of symbolic of humanity’s futile struggle against nature and the fragility of the human vessel.

- 🍷 2013: Reykjavík Art Museum Hafnarhús
- 🍷 2012: Bíó Paradís
- 🍷 2011: Bíó Paradís
- 🍷 2010: A hot tub
- 🍷 2009: Borgarbókasafnið



## Best Place To Spend A Sunny Day Nauthólsvík

Our sunny summer days tend to top out around 13° C, and that, let us tell you, fully constitutes beach weather. Maybe you’re not up for an ocean dip with members of the resident Sea Swimming and Sea Bathing Association (see ‘Best Cheap Thrill’), but there are plenty of other warming activities that you can take part in at Nauthólsvík, the city’s very own geothermal beach. Better yet, access to the facilities—changing rooms, a long outdoor hot tub, and a sauna—are free in the summer. The hot pot will be rather sandy (it’s a beach, after all), and you’ll probably have a dozen or so small children snorkeling over your legs as you lounge, but it’s all part of the convivial atmosphere. Make a day of it and buy some cheap (uncooked) hot dogs at the snack bar to grill up on one of the outdoor BBQs.

- 🍷 2013: Nauthólsvík
- 🍷 2012: Hjartagarðurinn



# Best Of Reykjavík!



## Best Biking Tour Ægisiða – (Nauthólsvík) – Fossvogsdalur

If you haven't noticed, Reykjavík is not the most bike-friendly city in Europe. For instance, we don't have one of those great bike sharing schemes, and bike paths are few and far between. That said, the route from Ægisiða to Fossvogsdalur is pretty damn good. If you're downtown, find your way to Landakotskirkja (the Catholic church, which is not to be confused with the better known landmark church, Hallgrímskirkja), and then take Hofsvallagata (to make use of the city's unpopular attempt at a new bike path!) all the way to Ægisiða. Once you turn left onto the Ægisiða bike path (which is located on the ocean side of the street), it's a car-free and relatively flat ride all the way to Fossvogsdalur (a really nice, peaceful suburb with lots of trees). Keep your eyes peeled for the Great Auk, which sits on a rock out in the ocean not far from Nauthólsvík (the beach).

- 🍷 2013: Nauthólsvík – Fossvogsdalur
- 🍷 2012: Nauthólsvík – Fossvogsdalur



## Best Place to go to a Movie Sambíóin Álfabakka, Mjódd

For the record, we know that there are several downtown cinemas that are better for art-house film, or for what one of our panellists terms "proper movies." We know. But sometimes, all you want out of a film-going experience is popcorn. And maybe some explosions. And if that's the place you're in, then there is no better cinema than Sambíó's VIP Theater at Álfabakki. Why, you ask? Well. The VIP cinema—which exclusively screens coma-brain, Blockbuster-type movies, BTW—has only forty seats, all Lazy Boy-style recliners with excellent sightlines. More importantly, there is a server-yourself bin of fresh popcorn and a soda machine. Right. In. The. Theatre. You'll pay 2,000 ISK for a VIP ticket—and there won't be any intermission, so no bathroom break—but if you're strategic, you'll definitely get your money's worth in snackage. And since the theatre is located next to a bus station in Breiðholt, you'll get the added bonus of seeing a bit of the Reykjavík suburbs. 101 meet 109.

- 🍷 2013: Bíó Paradís



## Best Romantic Walk Grótta

For the third year in a row, our panellists deemed Grótta the best romantic walk. Although we don't know how many of them have actually taken their significant others to Grótta, it's easy to see why

it keeps taking the cake. Grótta is an island at the tip of Seltjarnarnes, which features a picturesque lighthouse. If your timing is good, the tide will be low and you can stroll over hand-in-hand, take a seat on the rocks and look out across the ocean whilst dreaming about what's on your horizon. Do note, however, that the island is off limits during nesting season.

- 🍷 2013: Grótta
- 🍷 2012: Grótta
- 🍷 2011: Grasagarðurinn
- 🍷 2010: Sæbraut
- 🍷 2009: Öskjuhlíð



## Best Place To Go For A Jog Ægissíða

The path along Ægissíða has run circles around its competition, earning the position of being the best place for a jog for the third year in a row. This coastal path caters to all types of workouts. If you're taking it easy, the ocean view and the charming houses provide a pleasant backdrop while motivating you to keep at it. Breaks can be taken at the old fishing station, the ice cream shop, a water fountain, or at one of the many benches or picnic tables if the weather allows it. If you're revving to go, running east along the long path will keep you off the streets and afford nice views of Bessastaðir (the President's residence), Perlan, and the Fossvogur bay while you're at it. You can then reward yourself with a dip at Nauthólsvík before having to head back.

- 🍷 2013: Ægissíða
- 🍷 2012: Ægissíða
- 🍷 2011: Laugardalur
- 🍷 2010: Laugardalur
- 🍷 2009: Elliðaárdalur



## Best Place to Enjoy a Zen Moment Elliðaárdalur

Step out of the urban landscape and briefly return to nature in Elliðaárdalur, a valley smack dab in the middle of the city. Though not a full-sized forest, this place instils a feeling of the sublime with its natural beauty. Climb the waterfall and watch the sunlight create a menagerie of colours on the water. Walk upon the paths and you feel like you're taking a stroll through a fairytale land. Host a picnic and keep an eye out for foxes smacking their lips for a bite of your sandwich. It will be hard to step out of the trees and back into the concrete jungle, but know that you will always be able to go back to it.

- 🍷 2013: Tjörninn
- 🍷 2012: Öskjuhlíð
- 🍷 2011: Húsdýragarðurinn
- 🍷 2010: Alþingi
- 🍷 2009: Reykjavík Botanical Gardens

## Best Shock-Walk 5 AM Laugavegur

Maybe this walk isn't as shocking as a trip through a haunted house on Halloween with a dude dressed up like Leatherface chasing you through the halls with a chainsaw, but we'd like to think it's better that way. You can see people stumbling home, or maybe out to the next bar, and interesting conversations are sure to abound. And hey, maybe you'll shocked at the relatively common sight of a couple getting it on in the street, but you should be used to that now.

- 🍷 2013: 5:00 AM Laugavegur



## Best Place To Cheer Up Tjörninn

Iceland routinely ranks among the top ten happiest countries in the world, but that doesn't mean that we don't feel down sometimes. When that happens, it's best to stroll over to the town pond, Tjörninn. On a beautiful day, the lake's surface glistens as it reflects the sky above. The ducks break the illusion of a second sky, but they are adorable little quackers, even when fighting for the bread people throw at them. (Please don't do this! It's really bad for them.) Even when the weather is feeling gloomy, too, the pond has a serene calm to it that soothes the nerves. Whether to watch the ducks or just walk the edge to ponder (heh) your innermost thoughts, every visit will leave you in greater spirits.

- 🍷 2013: Húsdýragarðurinn
- 🍷 2012: Tjörninn
- 🍷 2011: Nauthólsvík
- 🍷 2010: Húsdýragarðurinn
- 🍷 2009: Húsdýragarðurinn



## Best Place to Read a Book The National/ University Library

For those of you who want to read your book with some background noise and chatter, there are many fabulous cafes around the city for you to choose from. But if you need a distraction-free zone to finish that last chapter, we suggest you make the radical choice to read in a library. The National/University Library, in particular. Its windowed corner nooks have loungers and foot rests so you can get comfy, and none of the students will look askance at you if you kick off your shoes (pretty much everyone goes around in their socks). There's also an extensive A/V collection with Icelandic and foreign music, sound recordings, films and documentaries that you can use on-site and a café downstairs if you get peckish.

- 🍷 2013: Stofan
- 🍷 2012: Stofan

## Best Day Trip from Reykjavík Snæfellsnes

Often referred to as "miniature Iceland," Snæfellsnes contains all of Iceland's great natural sights, just on a somewhat smaller scale. You could easily spend days or even weeks exploring the area (and we recommend that you do!), but if you only have time for a day trip, the peninsula is just a few hours' drive from Reykjavík and it certainly has a lot to offer. "Snæfellsnes is an awesome day trip because you can see so many things in a short period of time: fjords, the amazing glacier, fishing villages where you can buy fresh fish right off the boat, lots of lava, and hot springs. Not to mention, there are some great hikes," one of our panellists sums it up succinctly. "All of that makes Snæfellsnes the best day trip of all!"

- 🍷 2013: Reykjadalur
- 🍷 2012: Mosfellsbær and Esja



## Best Place To Watch The Sunset Perlan

This was not an easy choice, as Reykjavík is filled with picturesque locations to watch the sun go down, such as the park benches at Ægissíða or the footbath at Grótta, but ultimately Perlan was selected as the winner. Why? Because it sits on top of a hill, has a 360° deck and big glass windows, making it suitable to see the sunset, no matter the season or weather.



## Best People-Watching Spot Second Floor Window Seats, Eymundsson on Austurstræti

Most of us like a good session of people watching occasionally, but no one likes that moment when you're staring at strangers walking by and then they turn and catch you creeping on them. It's totally awkward. But there's an easy solution: do your people watching from an elevated vantage point, such as the second-floor window seats in the Eymundsson Bookstore on Austurstræti, where you can spy without fear of discovery. You can compliment your voyeurism with a hot drink from the bookstore café, but our panellists point out that you can do your spying for free, too. "You don't have to buy anything," said one. "And there's WiFi and magazines." Sounds like a nice little Saturday afternoon to us.

- 🍷 2013: Booths at Hressó



## Best Graveyard to Hangout In Hólavallagarður Cemetery

Consecrated in 1838, Hólavallagarður is all twisting pathways and moss-covered stones, rambling roots and crumbling obelisks. As well as being the final resting place of notable Icelanders, such as national hero Jón Sigurðsson and beloved expressionist painter Johannes Kjarval, memorials to Faroese and French sailors lost in Icelandic waters can also be found there. It's beautiful no matter the season, with tulips and seasonal blossoms planted around headstones in the spring, and memorial candles placed on the graves at Christmastime.

- 🍷 2013: Hólavallagarður Cemetery



## Best Cheap Thrill Sea Swimming at Nauthólsvík

Going sea swimming in Iceland will make for an amazing story to tell your friends, and dedicated practitioners agree that alternating between the icy ocean and the toasty hot pot has numerous health benefits. In the wintertime, you can borrow neoprene boots and gloves from the service desk (these make a huge difference), and you can treat yourself to a cup of cocoa from the snack bar afterwards. Fact: it gets worse before it gets better.

- 🍷 2013: City Library



## Best Place To Spend Outdoor Time With Kids Húsdýragarðurinn

Reykjavík's 'zoo' (and the attached family fun park with its zip lines, trampolines and rides) is basically where happiness was born and where it returns periodically to get jazzed up all over again. There are bunnies. There are horses. There are sheep and cows and roosters and arctic foxes and reindeer and enormous pigs and some random cats that seem to kind of live there. And, of course, there are goats (our favourite!). It's a magical place to go in the spring when the place is just lousy with tiny, baby cute things, but there's fun to be had year-round, such as horse rides for kids on weekend and holiday afternoons. Make sure to check the day's schedule to find out when all the animals will be fed (watching the seals catch the whole fish that are flung at them is a total, unfettered joy), as well as the 'running of the pigs' from their holding pen to a nearby field. Dee-lightful. If you don't have a kid to take with you (and can't borrow one for the day), we won't judge you if you go alone.

- 🍷 2013: Fjölskyldugarðurinn
- 🍷 2012: Lynghagarólf Playground

# Best Of Reykjavík!

## Shopping And Commerce



### Best Place to Shop for Touristy Stuff *Giftstore / Rammagerðin*

Whether you're looking for a lopapeysa, a sheepskin stool, a puffin mug, a runic necklace, jar of volcanic ash, a knick-knack handcrafted in Iceland or anything in between (really, they have a lot of cool stuff), Iceland Giftstore is the place to go. Their huge variety of stock will satisfy the needs of souvenir purchases both cheesy and practical, both luxurious and kitschy.

- 👉 2013: Geysir
- 👉 2012: Geysir
- 👉 2011: Geysir
- 👉 2010: Handprjónasambandið
- 👉 2009: Handprjónasambandið



### Best Place To Stock Up On Local Design *Kraum*

Don't underestimate this little wooden mid-1700s house. Kraum may be the oldest house in Reykjavík but it features the most modern work from over 70 designers from all over Iceland. You'll be able to find the coolest Icelandic designs of almost anything from textiles and jewelry to bowls and chairs. We heard that all items are actually selected by a special committee to make sure you get a feel for what some of Iceland's best designers are up to.

- 👉 2013: Kraum
- 👉 2012: Kraum
- 👉 2011: Kraum
- 👉 2010: Kraum



### Best Place To Stock Up On Local Fashion Design *Kiosk*

Kiosk is a co-op owned by a few talented, young Icelandic designers. You'll be able to get unique, quirky and creative pieces at a very reasonable price. Not only do you get to purchase work by local designers, you get to meet them too as they take turns to work in the store.

- 👉 2013: Kiosk
- 👉 2012: Kiosk
- 👉 2011: Kiosk



### Best Bookstore *Nexus*

This award has bounced back and forth between Mál og Menning and Eymundsson, but the moment that Nexus was mentioned, all of our panellists were onboard. Not only is Nexus well-stocked in contemporary fiction, but they have an amazing selection of fantasy and sci-fi novels, as well as teen fiction, comic books, graphic novels and manga. The place also avoids the negative stereotype about comic book stores, putting a lot of effort into making sure it has a very female-positive attitude. If they don't have the book you want, they can hunt it down and order it for no extra charge.

- 👉 2013: Eymundsson, Bankastræti
- 👉 2012: Mál og Menning
- 👉 2011: Eymundsson, Austurstræti
- 👉 2010: Eymundsson, Skólavörðustígur



### Best Place To Get A Trendy Haircut *Rauðhetta og úlfurinn*

It turns out that restaurants and stores in Reykjavík aren't the only businesses benefiting from Iceland's tourism boom. Apparently, we've heard, hairdressers are getting a lot of drop-ins from tourists. "I want Icelandic hair," they say. "Give me Icelandic hair." While many (if not most) people go to the same hairdresser, and our hairdresser admitted that she would never just drop in somewhere random while vacationing in Rome, people apparently have great faith in Icelanders wielding scissors. Now, you don't have to go somewhere completely random though. Go to Rauðhetta og úlfurinn ('Little Red Riding Hood'), a three-time Grapevine winner that has stood the test of time, consistently delivering new and trendy haircuts.

- 👉 2013: Rauðhetta Og Úlfurinn
- 👉 2012: Rauðhetta og úlfurinn
- 👉 2011: Barber Theater
- 👉 2010: Rauðhetta og úlfurinn



### Best Second Hand Shop *Spúútník*

If you're at all into second hand shopping, there is no place you'll enjoy more than Spúútník. It has a wide variety of clothing, shoes and accessories for all genders and ages and definitely has the largest selection of vintage dresses, denim and printed shirts, and leather jackets in all of Reykjavík. Items are also pre-selected and arranged neatly so you're not going to have to spend hours going through piles of junk!

- 👉 2013: Fatamarkaðurinn
- 👉 2012: Fatamarkaðurinn



### Best Shop For 'High Fashion' *KronKron*

Does the word 'Acne' make you think of something more than a skin condition? Do names like Marc and Vivienne make your heart skip a beat? If you're a fashionista with a deep passion for designer labels, KronKron is the place for you. You'll find clothing by the biggest international designer brands such as Sonia Rykiel, Marc Jacobs, and Vivienne Westwood and also the storeowners' very own stylish label KRONbyKRONKRON. Prices are a little on the high side but what do you expect for high fashion?

- 👉 2013: KronKron
- 👉 2012: Kronkron
- 👉 2011: Kronkron



### Best Haberdashery *Herrafataverzlun Kormáks & Skjaldar*

Tucked under the Bónus on Laugavegur is a classy gentleman's heaven. Herrafataverzlun Kormáks & Skjaldar sells everything for an elegant man's wardrobe, from leather shoes and top hats to tailored suits and bowties. The store carries many great brands such as Barbour, Loake, Hackett and Filson. There is also a great barber who'll give you a stylish haircut and beard trim.

- 👉 2013: Jör
- 👉 2012: Herrafataverzlun Kormáks & Skjaldar
- 👉 2011: Herrafataverzlun Kormáks & Skjaldar
- 👉 2010: Herrafataverzlun Kormáks & Skjaldar



### Best Place to Buy Activewear/Gear *Fjallakofinn*

Conveniently sharing a store with Arctic Adventures, Fjallakofinn is the answer to all your hiking and camping needs. Featuring top brands such as Marmot and Arc'teryx, you'll find an abundant supply of outerwear, hiking boots, and all the equipment you could ask for. If you're not exactly sure what to look for, their friendly staff of expert campers will help you find what you need. Also, if you happen to have travelled to Iceland without your trusty hiking tent or sleeping bag, they've got you covered. They offer equipment rentals on tents, sleeping bags, backpacks, boots, ice axes, pots, and more.

- 👉 2012: Fjallakofinn



### Best Place to Buy a Wool Sweater *Handprjónasambandið*

Founded in 1977, the Handknitting Association currently has around 200 active members who utilise the finest materials for their handmade goods. In addition to selling a plethora of lopapeysas, they offer mittens, hats, and more, all made from lightweight, water-repellent, and breathable authentic Icelandic wool. Though far from cheap, Handprjónasambandið is the best place to shop to avoid purchasing a sweater that has been made in a sweatshop. With a mastery of countless patterns and an array of yarn for sale, the friendly staff will even help you make your own. If you're in the market for a lopapeysa to rep that Icelandic style wherever you go, look no further than this slightly overwhelming woollen paradise on Skólavörðustígur.

- 👉 2013: Handprjónasambandið (Kolaportið)



### Best Place To Shop Organic *Frú Lauga*

This charming pair of stores, one in 101 and the other in 105, is perfect for those who really care about where their food comes from. The purveyors of Frú Lauga look to promote tradition as well as innovation in food, and often have samples of the wine and food to prove it!

- 👉 2013: Frú Lauga
- 👉 2012: Frú Lauga
- 👉 2011: Frú Lauga



### Best Record Store *Lucky Records*

Though Lucky Records has been bestowed with countless accolades, we had no choice but to pile on another. With a huge store, extensive Icelandic music section, and a trove of hip-hop vinyls, it's possible to spend hours exploring their inventory. Also, keep on the lookout for live shows, as they periodically host local acts.

- 👉 2013: Lucky Records
- 👉 2012: Lucky Records



sushi  
samba

Amazing  
6 course menu

A unique Icelandic Feast



Starts with a shot of the Icelandic national spirit "Brennivín"

**Arctic char**  
with cucumber and coriander

**Smoked puffin**  
with yuzu mayo

**Minke whale**  
with celeriac purée

**Reindeer burger**  
with portobello mushroom

**Icelandic free range lamb fillet**  
with cinnamon potato

And to end on a high note ....  
"Skyr" panna cotta with white chocolate  
and raspberry sorbet

6.990 kr.



Our kitchen is open  
17.00–23.00 sun.–thu.  
17.00–24.00 fri.–sat.

sushisamba  
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## Reykjavík Institutions Aka 'The Untouchables'

Through compiling our second annual best of list back when, we reached the conclusion that some of these places are so firmly established as local favourites that naming them "best of" anything is sort of redundant. Furthermore, we thought having to compete with local favourites was almost unfair to all the new places trying to make their name. There will only ever be one Ísbúð Vesturbæjar, and it will probably remain Reykjavík's favourite ice cream joint for as long as they don't mess up horribly. That shouldn't mean we can't get excited and dish out props to other ice cream vendors.

We came up with a solution that would give us a chance to honour some of the perennial local favourites while still giving props to new and exciting places. We simply made a category that we call REYKJAVÍK INSTITUTIONS.

What makes a 'REYKJAVÍK INSTITUTION'? By our definition, a 'REYKJAVÍK INSTITUTION' is a place or entity that's time and time again proven itself as one of the best of its kind, and has remained a must-visit through the years. When achieving INSTITUTION status, an establishment is automatically disqualified from winning any 'best of' categories, because you're beyond being 'best,' having been all consistently awesome for a long, long time.

A REYKJAVÍK INSTITUTION is a must-visit for tourists to Reykjavík. A REYKJAVÍK INSTITUTION will retain its status as such until it starts sucking, in which case we will ceremoniously remove them from our list next year.

Without further ado, here are our REYKJAVÍK INSTITUTIONS, along with some choice reader and specialist quotes that argue their status:

### Kaffibarinn

"Despite some ups and downs, Kaffibarinn has remained the undisputed reigning champion of Reykjavík nightlife and drinking for well over a decade. They are a true nightlife institution."

### Bæjarins bestu

"Everyone goes there. All the time. For over 70 years now. Not exactly gourmet dining, but a really freaking great snack nonetheless."

### Ísbúð vesturbæjar

"It's hard to explain the charm to outsiders, just tell them to go there. The ever-present queue speaks for itself."

### Hornið

"For a restaurant to remain so consistently on top of its game for over thirty years is one huge achievement. They are cosy, dependable and ever-tasty."

### Mokka

"They brought 'coffee' to Iceland, pretty much."

### Tíu dropar

"Quintessentially Icelandic in every way. The coffee, the cake, the vibe. If I were to point a visiting friend to 'the essence of Iceland,' this is where I would send him."

### Kolaportið

"If Kolaportið weren't around, we'd need to establish it immediately, lest we vanish back to the dark ages of commerce."

### Bókin – Bókabúð Braga

"It's hard to imagine Reykjavík without it. So let's not."

### Brynja

"This neighbourhood hardware store almost predates Laugavegur, and they always serve you with a smile (and don't mind throwing in some good advice when needed)."

### Austur-Indía félagið

"Probably your safest bet for fine dining in Iceland, period."

### Jómfrúin

"This Danish 'smørrebrød' house provides a unique atmosphere and taste you won't find elsewhere in town... or in the world for that matter."

### Prikið

"Serving old men their morning coffee since way back, and somehow combining that with serving beer and hip hop to young folks since the late '90s. And burgers. And milkshakes. A one of a kind place with spirit and soul."

### Sundhöll Reykjavíkur

"The Guðjón Samúelsson designed Sundhöll Reykjavíkur with its maze of locker rooms is a beautiful building, and the nude sunbathing facilities, soothing hot pots and an atmosphere that has remained relatively unchanged since the 1930s all add to its appeal. While some of Reykjavík's other pools might offer more diversity, Sundhöll Reykjavíkur remains a unique and enduring local favourite."

Feel like we missed one? Drop us a line at bestof@grapevine.is explaining why a given place should be merited INSTITUTION status, and we shall consider it for our 2014 edition!

HALLGRÍMSKIRKJA'S FRIENDS OF THE ARTS SOCIETY 32ND SEASON

### Weekend concerts

Saturday at 12 noon and Sunday at 5 pm with international concert organists



14.6. 12 noon	Björn Steinar Sólbergsson, Hallgrímskirkja Reykjavík
15.6. 5 pm	Björn Steinar Sólbergsson, Hallgrímskirkja Reykjavík
21.6. 12 noon	Hannfried Lucke, Lichtenstein- Salzburg/Austurríki
22.6. 5 pm	Hannfried Lucke, Lichtenstein- Salzburg/ Austurríki
28.6. 12 noon	Pétur Sakari, Helsinki, Finland/ Finland
29.6. 5 pm	Pétur Sakari, Helsinki, Finland/ Finland
5.7. 12 noon	Thierry Escaich, París Frakkland / France
6.7. 5 pm	Thierry Escaich, París Frakkland / France
12.7. 12 noon	Andreas Meisner, Altenberg Þýskaland / Germany
13.7. 5 pm	Andreas Meisner, Altenberg Þýskaland / Germany
19.7. 12 noon	Alessandro Bianchi, Cantu, Ítalía/ Italy
20.7. 5 pm	Alessandro Bianchi, Cantu Ítalía/ Italy
26.7. 12 noon	Lára Bryndís Eggertsdóttir Reykjavík, Ísland/ Iceland
27.7. 5 pm	Lára Bryndís Eggertsdóttir Reykjavík, Ísland/ Iceland
2.8. 12 noon	Maurice Clerc, Dijon Frakkland / France
3.8. 5 pm	Maurice Clerc, Dijon Frakkland / France
9.8. 12 noon	Eyþór Franzson Wechner, Ísland/ Iceland
10.8. 5 pm	Eyþór Franzson Wechner, Ísland / Iceland
16.8. 12 noon	Axel Flierl, Dillingen, Þýskaland/ Germany
17.8. 5 pm	Axel Flierl, Dillingen, Þýskaland/ Germany

## THE INTERNATIONAL ORGAN SUMMER IN HALLGRÍMSKIRKJA 2014

JUNE 14 – AUGUST 17



Lunchtime concerts  
on Wednesdays at 12 noon  
Schola cantorum

### Lunchtime concerts on Thursdays at 12 noon

19. 6. 12 noon	Helga Þórdís Guðmundsdóttir, Víðistaðarkirkja/Iceland
26. 6. 12 noon	Guðmundur Sigurðsson, Hafnarfjarðarkirkja/Iceland
3. 7. 12 noon	Kári Allansson, Háteigskirkja & Anna Jónsdóttir soprano, Reykjavík/Iceland
10. 7. 12 noon	Steingrímur Þórhallsson, Nes Kirkja & Hallveig Rúnarsdóttir, soprano, Reykjavík
17. 7. 12 noon	Sigrún Magna Þórsteinsdóttir, Akureyrarkirkja/Iceland
24. 7. 12 noon	Jón Bjarnason, Skálholt Cathedral/Iceland
31. 7. 12 noon	Stéphane Rigat, orgel & Olivier Gillet trumpet, Marseille/France
7. 8. 12 noon	Eyþór Ingi Jónsson, Akureyrarkirkja/Iceland
14. 8. 12 noon	Gunnar Gunnarsson, Frikirkjan í Reykjavík/Iceland

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# Best Of Reykjavík!



## The Ghosts Of Best-Ofs Past

WORDS BY Haukur S. Magnússon

PHOTOS Various

Compiling the BEST OF REYKJAVÍK has always been, at best, a half-absurd proposition. As much as we love our city, it is a tiny one, a miniscule one. It is a city that hosts exactly two competitors for the category of ‘best Indian food’, in a country where the Prime Minister ceremoniously and reverently chomped down the first Big Mac served at the island’s first McDonald’s franchise back in ’93 (miss u, cheap cardboard hamburgers and delicious fries).

Yet, compiling the BEST OF REYKJAVÍK, half-absurd as the act may be, is always a deeply satisfying endeavour. The best part is: it is an opportunity to give kudos and profess gratitude to the various establishments and phenomena that enrich our day-to-day, that make life in Reykjavík a tad more bearable. Just as importantly: it provides a welcome chance to do a little inventory of the city we hold so dear, to poll friends and strangers and you reader types out there on what awesome stuff we might be missing out on—and then traipse around sampling various goods and services. Fun times!

Browsing through our old BEST OF issues (we made the first one way back 2009) is in many ways akin to opening a time capsule—the further back you go, the more the BEST OFs feel like a sort of partial census of what was going on back then, what people professed to like at the time, where their ambitions lay (say, being fancy and slick, or bearded and rugged) and which places were around in general. In post-collapse 2009, for instance, being “affordable” was a very important factor of any given establishment’s appeal (for a fun comparison, measure that yardstick against our 2014 BEST OF list, featured in this very issue).

Browsing through those old BEST OF issues is also sure to make any Reykjavík mainstay well up a little. The city is a chaotic, fast-changing beast, and its commercial ventures especially are notoriously fickle, prone to vanish at the drop of a pin, just as quickly as they sprang into existence in the first place.

Below, a sampling of some establishments that we used to love. And now they’re gone. Good night, sweet princes. Fare thee well.



**Segurmo**  
*Best Goddamn Restaurant, 2009*

Segurmo was our first ever BEST GODDAMN RESTAURANT—in fact, we created the category specifically so we could reward Segurmo for being so wonderful. It was everything a BEST GODDAMN RESTAURANT should be: plentiful, consistent, tasty and cheap.

Segurmo was situated within the confines of still-going-strong Laugavegur bar Boston, where chef and proprietor Númi Thomasson (now of perennial BEST GODDAMN RESTAURANT Snaps—coincidence?) concocted a fresh menu of newfangled takes on Icelandic classics every week, the fare priced to fit the budgets of lowly students and freelance workers alike.

Oh, how sweet it was.

The dream was short lived though. A mere month after we declared Segurmo to be Reykjavík’s BEST GODDAMN RESTAURANT, and less than a year after it opened for business, the place shut down for good. While many speculated that their mark-ups had simply been irrationally low, eating up any potential profit, chef Númi commented to the press that Segurmo was just too much work, that he needed some time off to read books and meet his friends (selfish much?).

Regardless. For a brief period of time in the late noughties, Reykjavík’s serfs and peasants could start off their night at the city’s trendiest bar by gorging on a meal fit for royalty. It was beautiful. And we are thankful.

The first cut is the deepest. Segurmo, we hardly knew ye.



**Karamba**  
*Best All-Round Bar, 2009*

Popping up unexpectedly in the spring of 2009, Karamba was all whirlwind, heat and flash for a very brief window of time, before fizzling and fading into eternity. Like probably a third of every Reykjavík bar that’s ever existed, Karamba was located on the street level space at Laugavegur 22 (currently host to the wonderfully neutral, always welcoming Bravó).

In retrospect, it’s kind of hard to discern what made Karamba so special for a few months in the summer of 2009. Aside from sporting wall decorations (by folks like Grapevine comic artists Hugglekur Dagsson and Lóa Hjálmtýsdóttir), it was pretty much like any other bar out there.

Except, it wasn’t! For the couple of months that passed after Karamba’s crowd expanded beyond inbred 101 artiste regulars (and before that expansion started encompassing obnoxiously drunken teenagers. Note to bar owners: nobody likes teenagers), Karamba was a glorious place to visit at any time of day or night. Bloody Mary afternoons over board-games, intense dance parties at three AM and the occasional impromptu concert, Reykjavík’s bars have spent years attempting to synthesize the atmosphere Karamba so effortlessly oozed during its peaks, to no avail.



**Súpubarinn**  
*Best Soup, 2010*

Back in the day, hip, culturally conscious youngsters would head to the Reykjavík Art Museum at lunchtime. Why? To gorge on affordable, inventive and fairly priced soups at Súpubarinn (“the soup bar”). Those soups, they were delicious, they were affordable, they were slurped down in a very artful, Erró-heavy environment.

And now they are gone. No soup for you.

**Piri-Piri**  
*Best Family Restaurant, 2010*

Piri-Piri was some brave entrepreneur’s attempt to recreate fabled UK chicken chain Nando’s by the Reykjavík harbour before that area was all the rage (without having to pay any pesky licensing fees). Piri-Piri’s take on Nando’s was pretty decent, although nothing to write home about (unless maybe you have a really boring life and the only other thing you could write about was your trip to the post office to mail that very letter). However, the restaurant’s saving grace was its gargantuan, luxuriously outfitted play area, where despairing parents could safely dump their kids while they enjoyed some overtly moderately spicy chicken and a beer.



**Sódóma Reykjavík**  
*Best Newcomer Bar, 2010*

You know that place, Gaukur á Stöng? That slightly rock-themed bar-slash-live venue by Hafnarstræti that’s always playing host to some metal concert or other and has chilled Jäger shots on tap? Or is it called Gamli Gaukurinn now? Or

perhaps something else? Just Gaukurinn, maybe? Well, in 2010 a group of ambitious music lovers opened up a slightly rock-themed bar-slash-live venue in that very same space. During its brief lifetime, Sódóma Reykjavík played host to various metal concerts and sold many shots of chilled Jäger.

It was pretty great, while it lasted.

**Hvíta Perlan (2010-2011) / Úrilla Górrillan (2012)**  
*Best Place To Watch Sports Over A Beer*

Hvíta Perlan and Úrilla górrillan were high concept sports bars where you could watch sports over a beer. If memory serves, one succeeded the other at the same Austurstræti location. At least one of them (possibly both) had 3D TVs, back when those were a thing. Anyway, those places are gone now, but televised sports still remain, and so does beer. Don’t be sad.



**Hemmi & Valdi**  
*Best Place To Start The Night (2010/2011)*

Nicknamed Hemmi & Valdi, this cutesy bar/café in the legendary Hljómalind building (miss u, Kiddi Kanína) on Laugavegur was a somewhat essential stop for any cultured persons making the rounds in 101 a few years back. An extremely chill locale, Hemmi & Valdi was a perfect place to sit down with a pint or two and enjoy some audible conversation (even from nearby tables)! And if you’d start feeling rowdy, you could always climb to the second floor and work off your agitation at the foosball table. The bar even doubled as an impromptu concert venue, with many of Reykjavík’s current crop taking their first steps towards stardom.

As all the wonderful establishments that have been operated at that location, Hemmi & Valdi was eventually forced to move out to make way for some dumb real estate monstro-deal that never actually gets built (thank god, though).

# The Best Way To Hit 12 Bars In 12 Hours!

**Words** Tómas Gabríel Benjamin

**Photos** Magnús Andersen

We at the Grapevine do not encourage people to drink to excess, but if you ever wanted to have 12 drinks at 12 bars in 12 hours, we've mapped out the best way to do that! Most bars in Reykjavík have a happy hour, and if you align them in the correct order on a Friday, you can get a dozen in a row. If you give yourself 15–20 minutes to get from place to place, we reckon you should be able to make it. You'll need to have a friend with you though, as a few places on the list have a two for one deal. So, have a hearty meal before you set out, pack a snack to nibble on between places, and have fun!

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---

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**1** Osushi The Train

Pósthússtræti 13

🕒 14:00

🍺 475 ISK

The venture begins at Osushi, a (you guessed it) sushi place, where the food is delivered via conveyor belt. Osushi currently has the earliest happy hour in Reykjavík and if you want to add two beers to the dozen, you can start here as early as noon.

**2** Sólon Bistro

Bankastræti 7a

🕒 15:00

🍺 650 ISK

In case sushi isn't your thing, you can order other food at Sólon Bistro to go along with that beer. Enjoy the opportunity to do some people watching through the massive windows, and bask in the sun if the weather is good. But be sure to pace yourself, though, as we have a long journey ahead of us.

**3** Bar 7

Frakkastígur 7

🕒 16:00

🍺 350 ISK

This stop has both the smallest bar and the cheapest happy hour on offer. If you don't fancy craft beers or whisky, you can just stay here for a few hours and skip the next few stops and shave off a bit of change, or make it back on the slots machine. Maybe the bartender will even take song requests.

**4** Micro Bar

Austurstræti 6

🕒 17:00

🍺 600 ISK

Micro Bar prides itself on having a great selection of (you guessed it) micro-brew beers, and they routinely rotate what's on happy hour. They don't ever have live performances, and on good days you might get away with sitting outside.

**5** Kaldi Bar

Laugavegur 20b

🕒 18:00

🍺 650 ISK

Kaldi beer may be brewed far up in the North of Iceland close to Dalvík, but it has a bar dedicated to it in Reykjavík that serves the beer filtered and unfiltered. The place is a real treat for the beer fans of Iceland, and the waiters are super nice. If you are lucky, DJ Flugvél & geimskip might even serve you your beer.

**6** Dillon

Laugavegur 30

🕒 19:00

🍷 Whisky: 550 ISK

This stop features our very first non-beer recommendation, as Dillon isn't just a bar, it's a whiskey bar! Make

sure to ask the bartender for recommendations as to whether you should have your drink smooth, with a few drops or on the rocks. If you don't fancy the water of life, you can get a beer instead for the same price.

**7** Tíu Dropar

Laugavegur 27

🕒 20:00

🍷 400 ISK (2-4-1)

If you haven't been stuffing your face with junk food between bars, you should order something from Tíu dropar's menu. If you don't want to mix berries with barley, fret not, for the cosy French-themed basement café also has beers on tap. Do note you'll have to buy two glasses to enjoy this deal, so bring a friend.

**8** Húrra

Tryggvagata 22

🕒 21:00

🍺 500 ISK

Húrra is not only known for hosting a lot of cool live events, but also for having Einstök Pale Ale and White Ale on tap during happy hour. If that isn't a reason for letting out a hoo-rah, we don't know what is. Check out the downstairs lounge if you want some peace and quiet.

**9** Roadhouse

Snorrabraut 56

🕒 22:00

🍺 450 ISK (2-4-1)

At this point things must be looking pretty grim, even if you've been stuffing your face with subs, had some cake at Tíu dropar and had a lot of water along the way. Fortunately, this is an American-style steak house, and they can whip you up something nice and meaty. You might even try their Empire State Burger, which we voted "Best Specialty Burger" this year. Do note you'll have to buy two beers to enjoy this deal.

**10** Bar 11

Hverfisgata 18

🕒 23:00

🍺 500 ISK

At this time on a Friday evening you can expect a dirty rock band to be whipping the crowd into frenzy with guitar shreds and machine gun drums. In other words, if you want to avoid spilling your beer, don't go into the pit downstairs. If it seems like a good idea, it's probably the alcohol talking.

**11** Vegamót

Vegamótastígur 4

🕒 00:00

🍷 1,000 ISK

If your eardrums aren't accustomed to rock and fucking roll, you're in luck because the next stop is a hip hop den. If you are still of sound mind, you can also go exploring the complicated floor plan of Vegamót with your fancy cocktail glass in hand. Just don't get lost, ok?

**12** Park

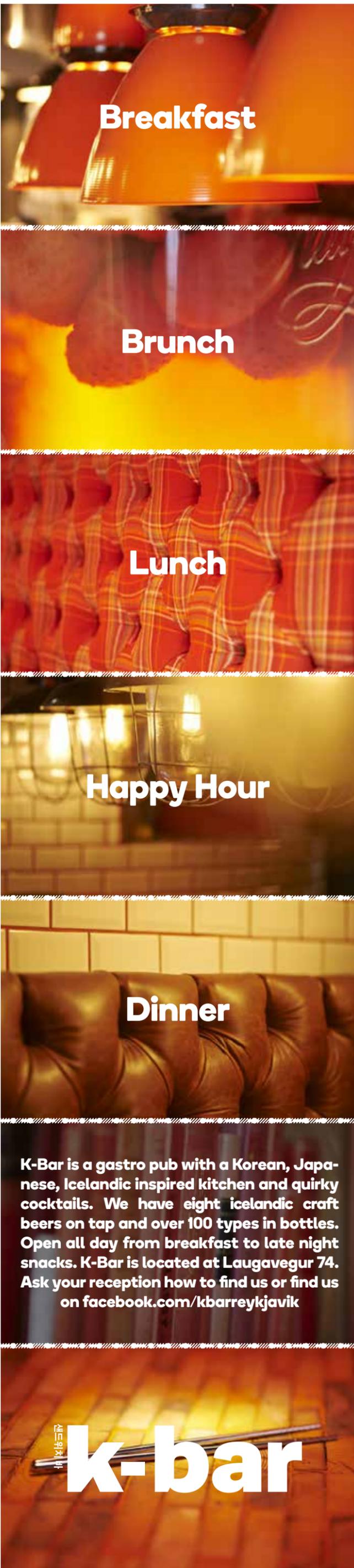
Hverfisgata 20

🕒 01:00

🍺 500 ISK

Wait, hang on, did you make it all the way here? That's amazing! This is the end of the line, and also the very latest happy hour in town. Go on, have that last beer, sit down in one of the big booths, and pat yourself on the back and finally allow yourself to pass out, you deserve it buddy!

*NOTE: You should totally download our handy 'Appy Hour' app. It's handy.*



Breakfast

Brunch

Lunch

Happy Hour

Dinner

K-Bar is a gastro pub with a Korean, Japanese, Icelandic inspired kitchen and quirky cocktails. We have eight Icelandic craft beers on tap and over 100 types in bottles. Open all day from breakfast to late night snacks. K-Bar is located at Laugavegur 74. Ask your reception how to find us or find us on [facebook.com/kbarreykjavik](https://www.facebook.com/kbarreykjavik)

**k-bar**



# Best Vintage Stores

The Grapevine's guide to vintage shopping in Reykjavík

**Words**

Susanna Lam

**Photos**

Magnús Andersen

Vintage shopping can be one of the most thrilling life experiences for fashion lovers out there. Nothing compares to the joy and excitement of rummaging through a treasure trove of retro sunglasses or the pride and satisfaction of excavating the perfect '60s designer dress from under a pile of old sweaters. There is a ridiculous number of vintage shopping guides, lists and stories for almost every fashion-conscious city out there. Try typing, "Vintage shops in Paris" into Google. Now replace Paris with New York, Milan, London, Stockholm or Berlin and you're going to be directed to thousands of different places to dig for old clothes. Now try Reykjavík, and you won't come up with much. Yet, vintage shopping in Reykjavík is alive and well, according to Rake! Unnur Thorlacius, a fashion enthusiast who manages Spúútnik in Kringlan. "There are only a few stores, but they are all nice," she says. "They're not cluttered like vintage stores in other places."

Here is a list of Reykjavík's vintage stores, and while Spúútnik wins 'Best Vintage Store' this year, the others also have their perks that make them the best in different ways.



**Best Overall Vintage Store**

**Spúútnik  
Laugavegur 28b/Kringlan**

Spúútnik has to be every fashion lover's dream come true. It has the widest selection of vintage clothing for all genders and ages. The best part of it all is that none of these gems are hidden! One glance into the store and you'll easily be able to see the many wonders that

Spúútnik has to offer.

"Hmm," Rake! pauses to think when describing Spúútnik's typical customer. "All kinds of people of all ages. We have young girls from the age of 10 to old women buying dresses. Men come to the Kringlan store to buy plaid and denim shirts, but most of them go to our downtown store because there are more clothes for men there."

Spúútnik has its large variety of printed shirts, denim shorts, military jackets, sequined dresses, leather bags, and all other vintage items that you could be looking for arranged neatly in racks and shelves by the super stylish staff, making your vintage shopping experience as pleasant as it could possibly be.

"We keep the store very organised," Rake! says. "We have a very big warehouse where we keep our stock. We get lots, but we don't bring everything into the store. We choose all the items very carefully."

Individual high-quality vintage pieces are carefully hand selected from the United States, France and the Netherlands and brought back to Iceland in perfect condition for the Spúútnik stores.

"If the clothes have holes or tears, we can't put them in the store. We have to make sure that everything is in very good condition," Rake! says.

The wide array of vintage goodies coupled with the comfortable and friendly shopping environment certainly makes Spúútnik the winner for the best overall vintage store in Reykjavík. Also, don't forget to check out the summer and the kilo sale for some great deals! The ongoing summer sale ends at the start of August when the kilo starts. During the kilo sale, you'll be able to get a whole kilo of clothing for 5,900 ISK! You can also just get half a kilo if you have that much self-control.



Best for high-quality vintage women's clothing

**Nostalgia**  
Laugavegur 32

Located just a couple of steps away from Spúútnik is the super colourful and quirky store called Nostalgía. There you will find the most brilliant collection of must-have vintage kimonos alongside other unique, museum-quality evening gowns, tweed blazers, beaded cardigans, lace lingerie and other vintage treasures. Prices may be a little steep so you might want to bring lots of cash and a few working credit cards before heading over!



Best for stylish and affordable clothing

**Fatamarkaðurinn**  
Laugavegur 118

If you have already spent your entire fortune at the two vintage places mentioned above, you have nothing to fear! Just like Spúútnik and Nostalgía, Fatamarkaðurinn has all types of fashionable vintage clothing, shoes, bags and accessories for every shopper out there, and it is much cheaper than the other two stores. Although you may have to go searching through piles of old stuff and check thoroughly for the quality of each item, your time and money spent will definitely be worth it! You will find the most amazing vintage items at the lowest prices; however you are still most likely going to want to spend your very last króna on more than one of those shockingly affordable faux fur vests.



Best for super cheap second-hand clothing

**The Red Cross**  
Laugavegur 12

Although this is not exactly a vintage store, you are still likely to find many cool (and cheap) vintage items here if you search hard enough. Never underestimate the Red Cross. You could find really cheap used clothing and the occasional vintage designer item for a tiny fraction of the price that it's worth! By shopping at the Red Cross, you will also be doing a good deed as the proceeds benefit both the local community and other international causes.

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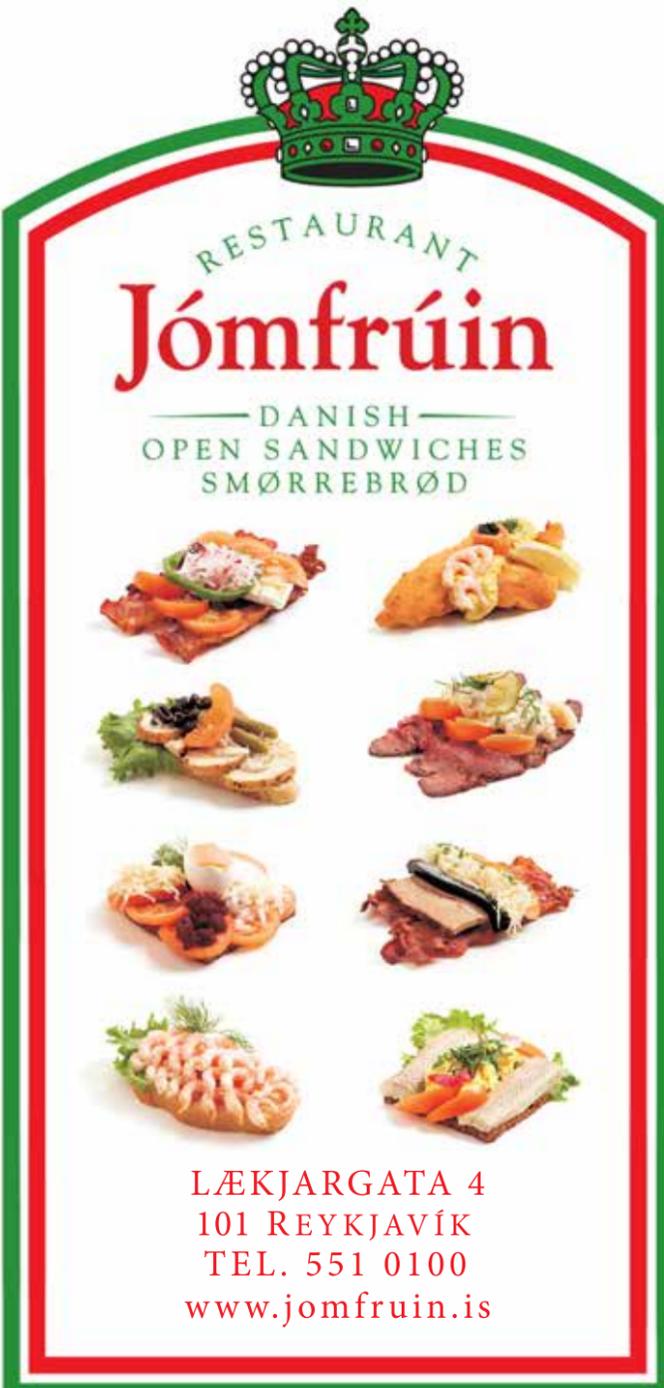
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# What Brings Face Hunter To Town?



**Words**  
Anna Andersen

**Photo**  
Provided by Yvan Rodic

Yvan Rodic hasn't been in the same place for more than two weeks in the last five years. He says he takes an average 170 flights per year. He's like George Clooney in 'Up In The Air,' except he's a tall, Swiss-born fashionista who travels the world doing something far more benign. The photographer better known as Face Hunter documents street style via his blog, which reportedly gets a million views per month. During his most recent four-day trip to Reykjavík, we met up at Boston for GusGus's jam-packed album release party. We found a table in the far corner of their outdoor patio to sit down and catch up since our last rendezvous at Iceland Airwaves in November. He told me about his recent trip to Alaska and showed me some of his incredible photos from a remote island in Resurrection Bay. We talked about turbulence and the missing Malaysia Airlines flight, and at some point I turned on the recorder for a quick, impromptu interview in anticipation of our 'Best of Reykjavík' issue.

**So what's it like to live out of a suitcase? How far in advance do you have to plan your trips?**

I know my plans one or two months in advance based on projects, and I plan my personal trips in between those. It's a crazy life, but it's not the most horrible existence ever. I think it might be stressful for some people, but I can see myself doing it for a few more years. I just really enjoy experiencing the world this way.

**What keeps you coming back to Reykjavík? Is it one of the places you visit most frequently?**

I'd say it's one of my less-known regular destinations. I spend most of my time in New York or London or Paris—even Stockholm or LA maybe, but I think Reykjavík has a lot to offer culturally and fashion-wise without being too exposed. Of all the places I've been around the world, there's no town that is so small and remote as Reykjavík that is so cool. It has this unique energy that doesn't exist anywhere else.

**Would you say that's what's best about Reykjavík?**

It's this unlimited sense of creativity. There's so much self-confidence. People don't feel like, 'oh, we're too small.' They have intuition and it works quite well for people here. It's a special case.

**What's the best part about taking photos here?**

People-wise, I like it because the fashion isn't too trend-driven. You don't have access to all of the big high street chains. People need to be more creative and actually they like to be creative. If you go

to a bigger city, New York or London for example, people are cool and diverse, but you tend to see more patterns.

**That's interesting because I feel like everything down to haircuts goes into fashion here. A particular haircut goes into fashion and all of a sudden everyone has that haircut, even if it doesn't suit him or her.**

Of course within a society people are inspired by each other. It's also normal for people to want to belong. If you live here, I'm sure you can tell that a lot of people are doing similar things, but from an outsider's perspective it seems quite distinct compared to a lot of places I've seen.

The fashion seems to be less contaminated by international trends, which I think is partly due to the fact that you have less access to big chains. People have to figure out how to dress, so it's more vintage and do-it-yourself. You see more unique pieces, which spices it up. To me it always seems a bit more out there and different than anything else.

**Do you have any favourite Icelandic designers?**

In menswear I like what Bóas Kristjánsson does. Last time I saw his work I thought it was very innovative and unique for menswear.

**So you come here two, three times a year. What are the best times to visit?**

Summer is definitely a highlight because the weather is so good—well not that good, but it's kind of good—and that creates a different energy. There's more

action. There are more parties. There are more people out.

**Then you also tend to come for Airwaves and the Reykjavík Fashion Festival.**

Yeah, RFF is a highlight as well because it's a gathering of stylish people—there are a lot of them per square metre in town. Airwaves is a bit tricky because it's late in the year, so it's pretty dark and people are really drunk. It's fun, but it's difficult for me to take style photos.

**Are Icelanders more stylish in the summer? Are they too bundled up in the winter?**

Not necessarily. They dress well in the winter, but they are just more difficult to catch. It's dark and they stay inside more.

**What do you look for when you're taking photos? The people who you photograph?**

I'm looking for a package. So it's not just the clothes. It's the attitude, the hair, the tattoos and the personality.

**When are you coming back? Is that planned?**

No, not yet.



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A fitting warm-up: At 2pm every Thursday we screen *Spirits of Iceland*, a film on Icelandic folklore in the library's 5th floor screening room



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# Keeping Reykjavík Preened



Best Trendy Haircut:  
Rauðhetta og Úlfurinn



**Words**  
Tyler Clevenger

**Photo**  
Magnús Andersen

It's no secret that Icelanders take their hair very seriously. For years, Rauðhetta og úlfurinn has been the go-to spot for Icelanders looking to sport a fresh cut. As four-time winners of our annual 'Best Place To Get A Trendy Haircut' award, it's clear that the experts at the Skólavörðustígur studio know how to chop some locks.

According to salon manager Sandra Olgeirsdóttir, being the best at trendy haircuts is all about practice and this salon has been doing that for the last 17 years. In addition to offering clients magazines and massages, she says they always try to figure out what type of person he or she is, and what style might best suit them. Rauðhetta og úlfurinn in particular draws inspiration from a variety of sources. Each year, members of the staff travel abroad to look for new ideas. For Sandra, watching old movies is also an effective brainstorming strategy.

Above all else, she says the key to managing a great salon is (mostly) about one thing. "Service is number

one, two, and three. And also good coffee!" she quips. "We're not afraid to give the haircuts that clients ask for, no matter what it is," she says. "That's how you get the experience."

Ultimately, when it comes to serving up the trendiest cuts, she says thinking ahead and focusing outward is of the utmost importance. The hip haircut when we pull together the 2015 Best Of guide? According to Sandra, it's likely to move on from a mid-length cut to a longer 'do. Until then, head over to Rauðhetta og úlfurinn, get your souvenir haircut, and enjoy the rest of our Best Of 2014 picks in style.

Schola cantorum summer concert series

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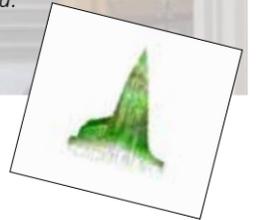


Schola cantorum chamber choir of Hallgrímskirkja presents an excellent opportunity to experience the great acoustics of Hallgrímskirkja. The repertoire consists of Icelandic contemporary music for a capella choir as well as Icelandic folk songs.

**CONCERT CALENDAR:**

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steamed fish  
fish stew  
fish soup

# Best Of Music

It's that time of year...



## Straumur

The Straumur radio show airs on X977 Monday evenings at 23:00

[www.straum.is](http://www.straum.is)

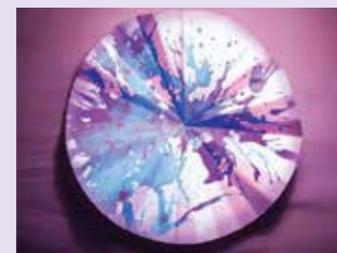
### Words

Óli Dóri & Davíð Roach



a witty blend combining stream of consciousness with food and surreal humour. In this gem of a song he asks the listener whether it's possible to hoard charm, and if it's something you can put into a schwarma. It's impossible to listen without a grin on your face and at least a little bit chuckling. We laughed hard.

bit of English ska band Madness. It has tons of sunshine and parties crammed into its 2:22 runtime and the chorus asks the listener to join in on the good times.



### Best album:

GusGus's 'Mexico'

The greats of Icelandic dance music, GusGus, have yet to slip up in their almost two decade long career and they certainly don't do so on their latest album, 'Mexico.' They continue to explore the sonic terrain of their last album, 'Arabian Horse,' a sound that is not in any way minimal, but extremely economical. But that would be for nothing if it weren't for the melodies and singers. Vocalist Daniel Ágúst has particularly outstanding performances in "Crossfade" and "Sustain" and former member Urður Hákonardóttir shines on standout track, "Another Life." But they also hark back to the sounds of their grittier "Forever" period on the instrumental title track whose monstrous bass synth mutates throughout the song, merging melody and rhythm into an unstoppable sonic beast. In "God Application" they also experiment with modern R&B textures with impressive results. Still got it.



### Best song from "another" decade:

Boogie Trouble's "Steinunn"

Every second of "Steinunn" is dripping with the sounds of late '70s disco, from the rollicking bass line and chicken scratch wah-wah guitars to the velvety soft keyboards. The cheerful trading of lines between male and female vocals on the chorus make Boogie Trouble the rightful heir to famed Icelandic disco band Þú og Ég.



### Best summer jam:

Grísalappalísa's "ABC"

The first single from Grísalappalísa's sophomore album started our summer with a bang. It's a short romp boasting an up-tempo beat with layers of saxophones and buckets of bounce that reminds us quite a



### Funniest lyrics:

Prins Póló's "Hamstra Sjarma"

Nobody in Iceland writes lyrics quite like Prins Póló. Their song "Hamstra Sjarma" ("Hoarding Charm") is

### Most foreign sounding song:

Myndra's "Distant Lover"

When you hear the beginning of "Distant Lover" from the three-piece indie band Myndra you get the felling you're listening to a brand new song from indie veterans The Decemberists. Led by the Icelandic singer-songwriter and guitarist Linus Orri, Myndra is a band with a universal sound and a fantastic album out called 'Songs From Your Collarbone.'



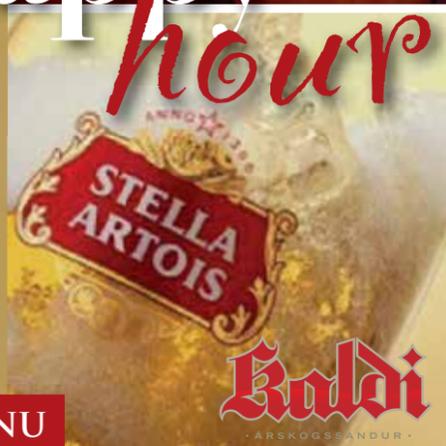
### Best electronic song:

M-band's "Ever Ending Never"

"Ever Ending Never" from M-band is from the brilliant 'Haust' album. It sounds like a cross between Jon Hopkins and GusGus at their best. With a haunting vocal build around a repetitive bouncing synth line, the song takes you to a world of its own. A perfect tune to get your weekend started.



# Happy hour



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Best song for a hazy day at the beach:

**Pretty Please's "100kg"**

Pretty Please's "100kg" has you hypnotised while taking a walk on the beach and enjoying hazy summer parties and happy days.



The hardest rocking song:

**Pink Street Boys's "Kick the trash out"**

The dirty rocking "Kick the trash out" by Pink Street Boys is a heavily distorted fusion of garage rock and modern punk. Every note of the song is played with intense raw emotion that viciously attacks your ears and assaults your heart.



Best new concert venue:

**Húrra**

Since Húrra opened its door in May a single week has not gone by without something spectacular happening inside the venue. Húrra has become a melting pot for the best music within the Icelandic scene.

We have seen great hip hop, indie, electro and rock artist grace the stage. A mid-sized concert venue in the heart of the city is just what we needed.



Best concert at an abandoned military base:

**Portishead at All Tomorrow's Parties**

Portishead's performance at All Tomorrow's Parties in a crammed airplane hanger was an audiovisual blast of hydrogen proportions. The sound was perfect with every drum sound tailor made for each song, and the accompanying visuals were impeccable with a live feed of the band drenched in trippy filters mixed with pre-made videos warped on the huge screen behind them. Highlights include, but were in no way limited to, Beth Gibbon's voice acting as a human Theremin, Geoff Barrow's turntable scratch solo in "Over," the goose bump-inducing Rhodes chords opening the first song of their encore, "Roads," and the '60s psychedelic video accompanying "Rip."



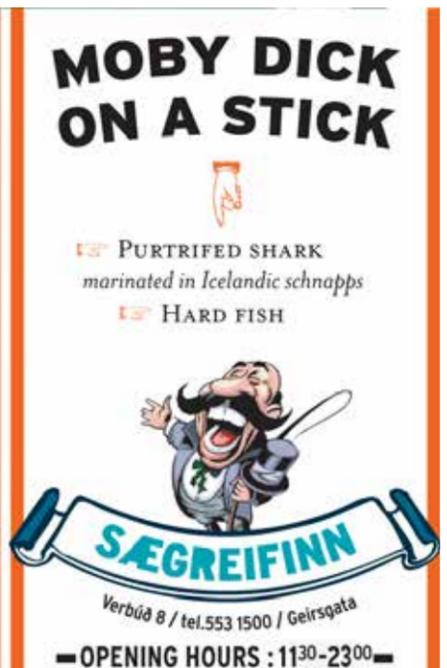
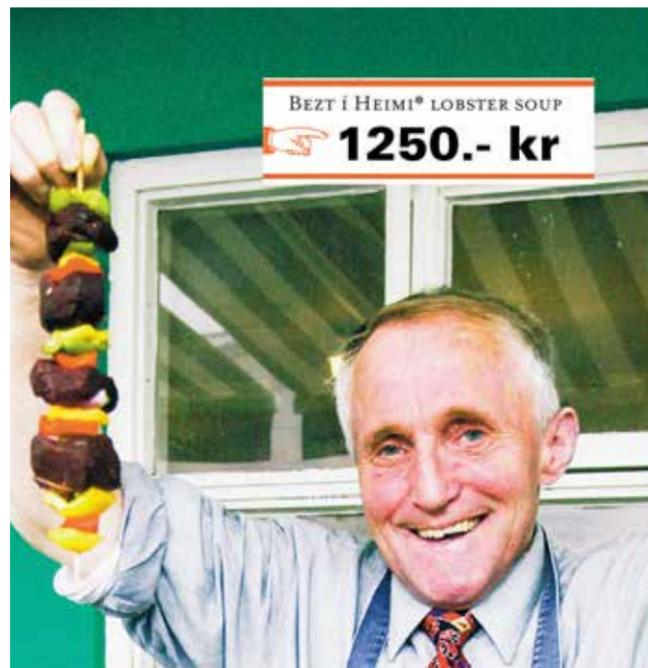
*Straumur has been active since last summer, with writers Óli Dóri and Davíð Roach documenting the local music scene and helping people discover new music at [straum.is](http://straum.is). It is associated with the radio show *Straumur* on X977, which airs every Monday evening at 23:00.*

INSPIRED BY ICELAND



# Are you the Tourist of the Year?

The Reykjavík Grapevine and Inspired by Iceland are looking for **THE TOURIST OF THE YEAR**. Tell us why you should be the Tourist of the Year for a chance to win a free trip to Iceland.



**Hressingarskálinn (Hressó) is a Classical Bistro, located in the heart of the city at Austurstræti 20**

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## Book Worms, Ahoy!

Best Bookstore: Nexus Afþreying 

### Words

Tómas Gabriel Benjamin

### Photo

Magnús Andersen

Nexus is Iceland's only store dedicated to fantasy and science fiction and features a large fiction section, as well as non-fiction books on drawing, knitting, handicrafts and other hobbies. The store also has numerous aisles filled with games, DVDs, comics and just about everything else related to fandom.

The store has been running in one form or another since 1992. After 18 years at Hverfisgata 103, the store relocated last August to a bigger space at Nótún 17. Although some were disappointed that the store would no longer be in downtown Reykjavík, the new space has allowed for a wider selection of wares and its non-fiction section in particular has grown.

Gísli Einarsson has been a part of Nexus from the beginning and is now the sole owner and mastermind behind its present incarnation. When we called to let him know that Nexus had won the 'Best Bookstore' award, he was so overjoyed that he accidentally hung up the phone.

Despite the book section taking up so much of the store's floor space, Gísli was surprised that Nexus was considered for the 'Best Bookstore' award, and when we met up with him the following day he was beaming with joy, having just proudly told his staff the good news.

The atmosphere at Nexus very relaxed, and on a quiet day it is easy to spend a while chitchatting with staff members about the latest books, upcoming films and new developments in the hobby world. They are very helpful when it comes to finding something for yourself or gifts for others.

The bulk of the book section consists of a decidedly nerdy selection of literature (read: sci fi and fantasy), with books ranging from 'Ender's Game' to 'Twilight' and 'Game Of Thrones,' and staff is typically willing to track down and order books, DVDs, games and other wares for its customers at no extra cost.

"We do a lot of special orders," Gísli

says. "If the book is available somewhere in the world, we can probably get it for our customers at a reasonable price." New releases from the US usually arrive a week after an order is placed, with a slightly longer waiting period from Europe.

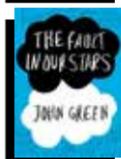
Be warned, many new customers that wander into Nexus come out having spent a lot more money than they initially intended. Judging from the smiles on their faces though, they probably don't regret any of it.

*(Disclaimer: the writer worked at Nexus from 2007 to 2010)*

Comic Book Manager Þórhallur Björgvinsson's Best of Nexus Books



**Best children's book**  
'I'd Really Like To Eat A Child'  
by Sylviane Donnio



**Best teen fiction**  
'The Fault In Our Stars'  
by Anthony Ryan



**Best fantasy**  
'Blood Song'  
by Anthony Ryan



**Best science fiction**  
'Red Shirts'  
by John Scalzi



**Best short story collection**  
'Zombies Vs. Unicorns'  
by Justine Larbalestier and Holly Black



**Best non-fiction**  
'Girls Like Us'  
by Rachel Lloyd



**Must read comic book**  
'Saga'  
by Brian K. Vaughan



**Must read manga**  
'Attack On Titan'  
by Hajime Isayama



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# Searching For The Best Public Bathroom

The Daytime Edition

Words by Esther Þorvaldsdóttir

Photos Magnús Andersen

Something that always seems to be missing in reviews of restaurants, bars, cafés and what-not, is the bathroom. Perhaps it is a taboo subject? But when you think about it, the flowery potpourri smell in the bathroom might make up for a mediocre cup of coffee or a semi-flat beer and stumbling upon a clogged toilet could make you forget about all the great food and service you just got. What good is a good soup if your dining experience is shadowed by a dirty bathroom?

When writing these reviews, I went to some of Reykjavík's most popular cafés to check out their bathroom facilities: Did they have soap and toilet paper? Was the number of the toilets sufficient considering the place's size and popularity? Was it clean and did it smell nice? Note: The bathrooms were visited sometime during the day between 12:00 and 18:00 and the reviews reflect on the bathroom's situation as it was when visited.

**When visited:**  
12:00–18:00

**Legend:**

- There is soap
- There is toilet paper
- You don't have to wait long
- It's Clean
- It smells good

The rating system goes from one to three stars, unless the bathroom is really shitty. In that case, the rating will be denoted by a pile of shit.



**Café Babalú**

Skólavörðustígur 22

Babalú has an upstairs and downstairs bathroom. The upstairs one was nice and cosy—so cosy that I actually wouldn't have minded working there on my computer instead of from my seat in the actual sitting area. They even had a table in front of the toilet, which seemed perfect for a laptop. The downstairs bathroom was also great. It has an '80s feel to it and the walls are adorned by characters from Star Wars (which is clever, although slightly uncomfortable as they watch you pee).



★★★★

*Peeing at Babalú makes your day a little bit better.*

**Stofan**

Vesturgata 3

Stofan has recently reopened where an antique store called Fríða Frænka once stood. The café has retained its cosy, low-key, '50s living room atmosphere. It features a few bathrooms upstairs and downstairs, which are all in keeping with this theme. Unfortunately, the upstairs stalls are quite small and the doors open in, which makes it difficult to get in and

out. The bins could probably have been changed a couple hours before I visited. However, they made up for this sloppiness with vanilla scented candles. The downstairs bathrooms are more spacious, and one is wheelchair accessible. It's of little use though, as you have to go down a flight of stairs to get to it.



★★★☆☆

*Small and cosy bathroom stalls in need of a little cleaning.*



**Prikið**

Bankastræti 12

This is the kind of coffeehouse you go to for food, music and atmosphere, but you try not to order too many drinks so that you can avoid using their awful excuse for bathrooms. After waiting in line for way too long, it was my turn to relieve myself of that wonderful Swiss Mocha I had ordered two hours earlier. I found it surprising, and newsworthy enough to write here, that the soap dispenser wasn't empty! I don't remember that ever being the case. However, that didn't make up for the waiting, the stink of urine mixed with cigarette smoke, the extremely small space and the lack of toilet paper. The men's bathroom was only slightly better since there was no line for it. A festival porta-potty after a three-day

festival is probably cleaner and more appealing.



*Two small and smelly bathrooms, which were very dirty and lacking almost everything you need in a public bathroom.*



**Hressingarskálinn**

Austurstræti 20

The bathrooms at Hressingarskálinn, or Hressó, as the natives call it, are located around the corner from the bar. At first sight these bathrooms didn't look too nice. There was toilet paper on the wet, icky floor and the walls were dirty and sticky, even. The bigger of the two was spacious enough to be identified as an accessible toilet, which should of course be in every coffeehouse. The toilet itself was very clean, and it didn't smell bad (but note that the regulars never sit near the toilets as the place tends to stink up if anyone drops a number two).



★★★☆☆

*All the necessities were there, but it could have been a lot cleaner.*



**Kaffibrennslan**

Laugavegur 21

This bathroom was squeaky clean, cleaner

than any other public bathroom I've seen and probably cleaner than some hospitals. They even had a changing table accessible to both women and men, which is rarely the case (mostly changing tables can be found in the women's bathroom). The only downside is that the bathrooms are on the second floor with no wheelchair access. Nonetheless, this place gets a full house.



★★★★

*This is definitely one of the cleanest places in Reykjavík (not just counting bathrooms). It's perfect for daddies with babies in tow.*



**Caffé Mezzo**

Lækjargata 2a

I had high hopes for these bathrooms because you have to ask for a key to access them. However, the key was for a door that leads you into a room with a few stalls, opposed to direct access to one bathroom. This meant that people were queuing up when they didn't have to, out of fear of walking in on someone's private moment. Apart from the fact that there was a lot of water on the floor, the bathroom seemed fairly neat. I thought I could safely sit down on the toilet, but I was in for a rude surprise, as my thighs were met by a disgusting, wet sensation. When I went to wash my hands in the sink located in the stall, I discovered why the floor was wet. The water pressure was way too high. The water went all over the toilet and my pants. I looked like I had peed myself, but at least I knew I hadn't sat in piss.



★★★☆☆

*A few fairly clean stalls hiding behind a locked door. Be careful, the tap water has high pressure.*



### Te Og Kaffi

Laugavegur 24

I received a key to toilet number seven, which was one of only two toilets that I could see. I was greeted by a lovely, fruity smell. There was a chart on a shelf indicating when the toilet had last been cleaned. It had not been cleaned today, even though it was only one hour until closing time. I could also see that they had neglected to “clean the walls with all-purpose cleaner” for quite some time. But aside from that and one paper towel on the floor, the bathroom was pretty much spotless. It’s a shame that it’s not wheelchair accessible. However, they get an extra point for offering not only soap but also anti-bacterial spray.



★★★★

*With a visible cleaning chart and antibacterial spray, this one is recommended for germaphobes.*



### Bunk Bar

Laugavegur 28

Bunk Bar has a few bathrooms. I couldn’t find the light switch in the first one I tried (I even tried waving my hands about in case it had motion detectors), so I tried the next one over. That one was freezing cold. There was an open window that seemed to be placed directly beside the smoking area so not only was it cold, but it also smelled bad. The floor was in dire need of cleaning and so was everything else in there. You could easily see the yellow spots all over the bottom of the toilet seat, indicating it hadn’t been properly cleaned for days. The only reason this place is not getting a stinky review is that they did have soap and toilet paper and access for wheelchairs (if those who need it ever manage to turn on the lights). When you choose a seat in the coffee house, don’t sit close to the toilets, in case someone has to go number two.



★☆☆

*This place brings you back to all these times you went camping with friends, sitting on a freezing dirty seat and inhaling the smoky smell of partying.*



### Kex Hostel

Skúlagata 28

The bathrooms at KEX were very neat and clean when I visited. They smelled nice and had everything needed to do one’s business. Plus, the walls are filled with pages of old books, providing lots of reading material for Icelandic speaking people. There were hooks to hang your coat and bag, which must be especially handy for tourists, who tend to have a lot of stuff with them.



★★★★

*This is a fine place to pee. There is nothing lacking.*

### Tíu Dropar

Laugavegur 27

Tíu dropar is so crowded with old-timey decorations that you get the feeling that you are drinking coffee at a folk museum. It would have been a wonderful opportunity to have old-fashioned bathroom decorations as well, but instead the bathroom just looked old. The dirt seemed to be old too. The walls needed cleaning, if not painting. It was very unappealing, but at least the toilet and the sink were clean. They also get an extra point for having a changing room for infants (even though the icon for it was gender specific).



★★★☆☆

*This a good looking coffee house with a bad looking bathroom.*

### Loft Hostel

Bankastræti 7a

The bathroom at Loft Hostel was awfully uninviting. Their cleaning chart indicated that they hadn’t cleaned since the day before and it was almost 6 o’clock. But the room itself wasn’t that dirty, it needed some tidying up. They had plenty of toilet paper. The room was accessible for wheelchairs, which is nice. The hand soap came from the lovely organic eco-village called Sólheimar.



★★★☆☆

*They need to tidy up more often, but the hand soap was eco friendly and smelled nice.*

### Kaffitár

Bankastræti 8

To get to the bathrooms, you have to go behind the counter, up a narrow staircase where you repeatedly peek into “staff only” rooms before finally stumbling upon the room that you were looking for. Some might find it unprofessional to have customers walking past stuff laying around, but others might find it homey, as if you were visiting a friend, who feels comfortable enough to have you in their home when everything’s a mess. Nothing was lacking inside the bathroom and I could see that they had just cleaned it. However, I wouldn’t recommend it for people who have difficulty using stairs.



★★★☆☆

*Clean toilet, lacking of nothing, but the way to it was messy and confusing.*



### C is for Cookie

Týsgata 8

The bathroom is painted a beautiful red colour and features a simplistic painting and a cute mirror on the wall. The place was clean (not counting the small piece of toilet paper on the floor, which is commonly found in public bathrooms right before closing time). All of the necessities were there along with a changing table. I sat for hours next to the bathroom door and never noticed a line or bad smell wafting my way. The most defining feature would have to be the stuffed animal rats in the window that appear to be the café’s mascots.



★★★★

*Cute and clean.*

# KEXP REPORT

◆ 2014 ◆  
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# JULY 19<sup>TH</sup>

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# Scheduled Busses & Bus Passports

SUMMER 2014



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There are three variations of the Hiking On Your Own passport depending on your preference; Hiking Laugavegur; Hiking Fimmvörðuháls and Hiking Laugavegur & Fimmvörðuháls. You choose between the three options available when you purchase the passport and they determine which routes your passport is valid for. Hiking On Your Own is a great option for individuals and groups alike.



- 9 | 9a** Reykjavik – Þórsmörk
- 11 | 11a** Reykjavik – Landmannalaugar
- 21 | 21a** Reykjavik – Skógar

\* Groups will have to be booked beforehand.

## Route map 2014



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1 Snæfellsnes

**How to get there?**

Route 1 through the Hvalfjörður tunnel (toll of 1,000 ISK each way) and then changing to Route 54 up and around the peninsula. It takes roughly three hours to drive all the way around Snæfellsnes.

# Iceland In Miniature

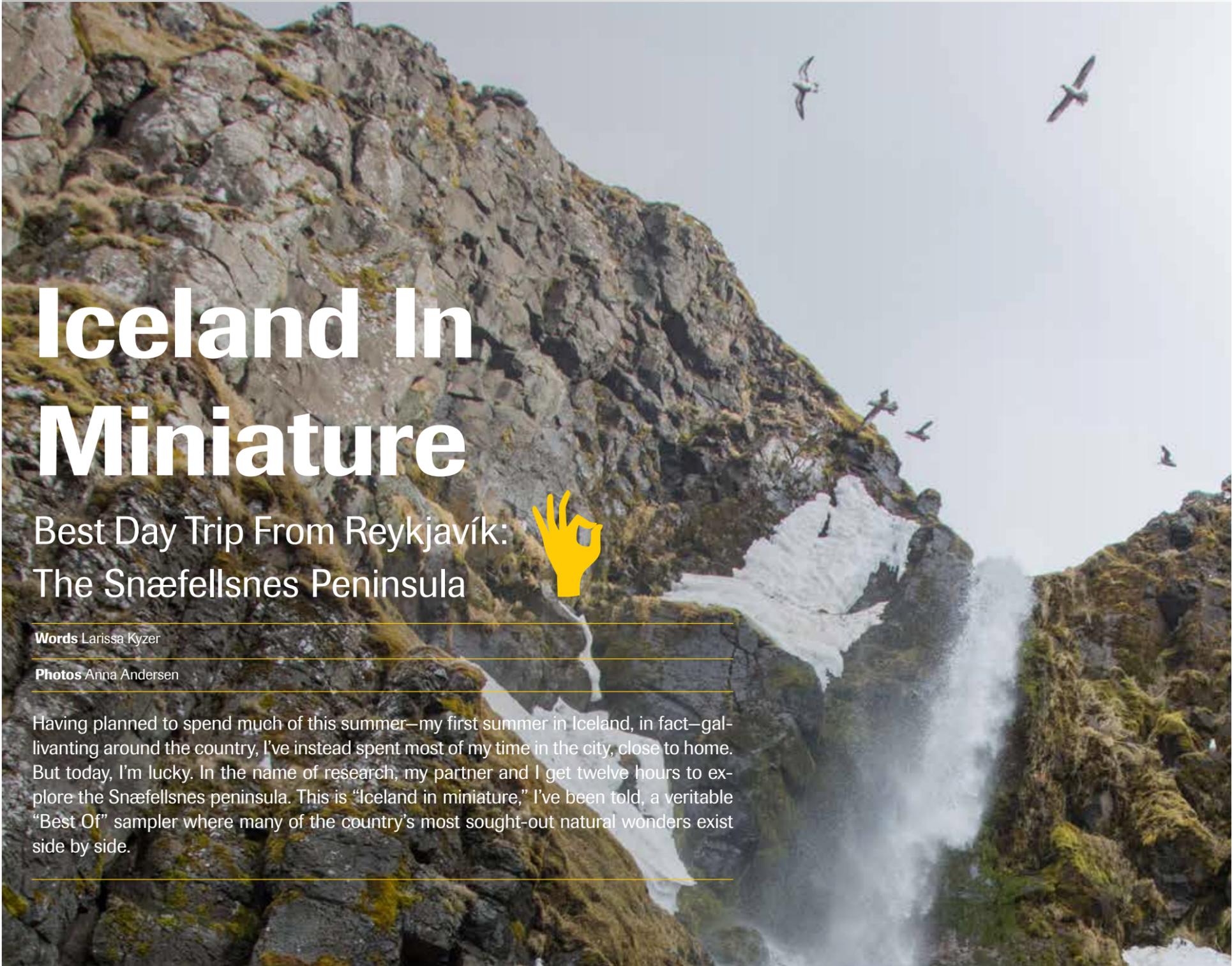
Best Day Trip From Reykjavík:  
The Snæfellsnes Peninsula



Words Larissa Kyzer

Photos Anna Andersen

Having planned to spend much of this summer—my first summer in Iceland, in fact—galivanting around the country, I’ve instead spent most of my time in the city, close to home. But today, I’m lucky. In the name of research, my partner and I get twelve hours to explore the Snæfellsnes peninsula. This is “Iceland in miniature,” I’ve been told, a veritable “Best Of” sampler where many of the country’s most sought-out natural wonders exist side by side.



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Distance from Reykjavík  
150 km



### Above The Lava Field

Circumnavigating the whole peninsula would only take about three hours, but with limited time at our disposal, we decide to concentrate our energies along the south coast. Our first stop at the base of the peninsula is at Snorrastaðir farm, where there's a trail to Eldborg, a 5,000+ year old crater which rises 60 metres out of the surrounding lava field and looms like some spectacular vintage Hollywood backdrop. The trail, which meanders through surprisingly lush summer moss and birch trees, takes about an hour to walk each way, and being underprepared for the steady downpour that dogs us the whole way, we're pretty soaked by the time we reach the precipice. Even so, it's worth it: Eldborg is somehow shapely and elegant, like a massive stoneware bowl, and looking out from its edge, you can see where the sprawling lava plateau meets the ocean.

The rain has mostly cleared by the time we get back to our car, so we change into dry clothes (always smart to have on hand) and continue west, passing Gerðuberg, a wall of hexagonal basalt columns, and eventually the Búðahraun lava field, which boasts its own volcanic crater, Búðaklettur.

### Under The Glacier

We head to Vatnshellir, an 8,000-year-old lava cave in the Snæfellsnes National Park. Joining one of the hourly guided tours (2,500 ISK for adults), we enter through a spacey-looking door marked "Undirheimar," or Underworld, recalling Jules Verne's "Journey to the Centre of the Earth," which takes place under this very glacier.

Amidst the patter of three very precocious English children, the tour guide points out unique stalagmite-like formations which were formed by dripping lava, and a kind of (harmless) bacteria which only exists in Vatnshellir and sparkles in our flashlight beams. After descending two spiral staircases and finding ourselves 35 metres below the surface, we're treated to a rare experience. Shutting off our flashlights, we stand in the complete and utter darkness. The disembodiment is only exacerbated by the fact that due to the composition of the cave walls, Vatnshellir has no echo.

### The Guardian Of Snæfellsnes

A little further west we find Djúpalónsandur, a black pebble beach located at one end of another lava field (there are a lot of these on Snæfellsnes, but they

don't get old). There, we pass through the ruins of a British trawler that was shipwrecked in 1948 and take another trail along the edge of a cliff-face to the secluded cove of Dritvík. There were once as many as 600 fishermen stationed here, but now the area is home only to a few plump sheep, grazing lazily on the slopes.

We then head back east to the lovely coastal village of Hellnar. Here, we restore ourselves at Fjöruhúsið, a cosy seaside cafe that faces the Baðstofa rock formation where calls of nesting birds echo with the rush of the tide. It's nice weather for Iceland, but still a bit chilly, so the waitress brings us blankets to keep warm while we eat our creamy, hearty fish soup on the porch.

After our meal, we walk up the hill to see the red-roofed church and its adjoining graveyard. There's a trail along the coastline and we'd love to linger, but it's nearing 22:00 and while the light will hold out indefinitely, we're not sure our energy will, so we're on our way.

Nevertheless, we're not too tired to make a spontaneous stop at Rauðfeldar Canyon. The saga says that Bádár Snæfellsás—the peninsula's half-man, half-troll guardian spirit—disappeared here after killing his nephew (long story). We follow a stream that leads us to a narrow gap between the rock walls and find ourselves in a mossy grotto. Had we more time and better gear, we would have happily spent a few hours following the stream further into the canyon.

### Carbonated Spring Water and A Mud Bath

We have two final stops on our itinerary, starting with the Ölkelda mineral spring near Staðastaður. Honestly, while the experience is pretty simple in and of itself, it is amazingly cool to turn on a faucet and get drinkable, carbonated mineral water right from the ground.

After marvelling at our bubbly water for a few minutes, we decide to take a midnight dip in the Landbrotalaug hot spring. We can see from the parking area that the pool is occupied (by a few Spanish tourists and residents of a local farm, we find out later), but these are generally 'the more the merrier' sorts of situations, so we start to pick our way across the stones that have been laid in the lake that lies between us and the spring.

Unfortunately, I misjudge a stone and end up sinking thigh-deep into a swampy mud-suck and have to be pretty violently hauled up. This would have been entirely dispiriting had there not been the promise of a hot spring on the other side. Alas, not only is there not really much space for two more in Landbrotalaug, the current occupants are at least a case of beer into their evening—it's a Friday night in the country, after all—and not terribly respectful people.

So instead, we squelch back to the car, have a few restorative gulps of our mineral water, and decide to leave this last "must-do" undone. It's always good to have something yet to do in a place you enjoy visiting, after all—it gives you an excuse to come back. Although in the case of Snæfellsnes, we'd hardly need one.



## INFO

Snæfellsnes is located 143 km away from Reykjavík and can be reached by following Route 1 through the Hvalfjörður tunnel (toll of 1,000 ISK each way) and then changing to Route 54 up and around the peninsula. It takes roughly three hours to drive all the way around Snæfellsnes.



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L E M Ú R I N N



# “The Fag-End Of Civilization”

Best descriptions of Reykjavík by foreign visitors in the 19th Century



**Words**  
Helgi Hrafn Guðmundsson

It is no secret that the village of Reykjavík was not only a tiny place in the eyes of 19th century tourists in Iceland but also a “filthy” and “desolate” shantytown. Iceland was a poor and isolated country back then. By 1900 the capital had only around 6,000 inhabitants (always described as “souls”) which all lived in the city centre of today. The foreign visitors in the 19th century were mostly rich Europeans who were shocked by the poverty and extreme hardships faced by Icelandic people. These tourists mostly wrote about the ugliness and are sometimes merciful in their descriptions.

Lord Dufferin: Letters  
From High Latitudes (1857)

Notwithstanding that its site, as I mentioned in my last letter, was determined by auspices not less divine than those of Rome or Athens, Reykjavík is not so fine a city as either, though its public buildings may be thought to be in better repair. In fact, the town consists of a collection of wooden sheds, one story high, rising here and there into a gable end of greater pretensions, built along the lava beach, and flanked at either end by a suburb of turf huts.

On every side of it extends a desolate plain of lava that once must have boiled up red-hot from some distant gateway of hell, and fallen hissing into the sea.

No tree or bush relieves the dreariness of the landscape, and the mountains are too distant to serve as a background to the buildings; but before the door of each merchant's house facing the sea there flies a gay little pennon; and as you walk along the silent streets, whose dust no carriage-wheel has ever desecrated, the rows of flower-pots that peep out of the windows, between curtains of white muslin, at once convince you that, notwithstanding their unpretending appearance, within each dwelling reign the elegance and comfort of a woman-tended home.

J. Ross Browne:  
The Land Of Thor (1867)

My first view of the capital of Iceland was through a chilling rain. A more desolate-looking place I had rarely if ever seen, though it was susceptible of improvement under the influence of an ardent imagination. As a subject for the pencil of an artist, it was at least peculiar, if not picturesque. A tourist whose glowing fancies had not been nipped in the bud by the rigors of an extended experience might have been able to invest it with certain weird charms, but to me it was only the fag-end of civilization, abounding in horrible odors of decayed polypi and dried fish. A cutting wind from the distant Jokuls and a searching rain did not tend to soften the natural asperities of its features. In no point of view did it impress me as a cheerful place of residence except for wild ducks and sea-gulls.

The whole country for miles around is a black desert of bogs and lava. Scarcely an arable spot is to be seen save on the tops of the fishermen's huts, where the sod produces an abundance of grass and weeds. A dark gravelly slope in front of the town, dotted with boats, oars, nets, and piles of fish; a long row of shambling old store-houses built of wood, and painted a dismal black, varied by patches of dirty yellow; a general hodge-podge of frame shanties behind, constructed of old boards and patched up with drift-wood; a few straggling streets, paved with broken

lava and reeking with offal from the doors of the houses; some dozens of idle citizens and drunken boatmen lounging about the grog-shops; a gang of women, brawny and weather-beaten, carrying loads of codfish down to the landing; a drove of shaggy little ponies, each tied to the tail of the pony in front; a pack of mangy dogs prowling about in dirty places looking for something to eat, and fighting when they got it—this was all I could see of Reykjavík, the famous Icelandic capital.

The town lies on a strip of land between the harbor and a lagoon in the rear. It is said to contain a population of two thousand, and if the dogs and fleas be taken into consideration, I have no doubt it does. Where two thousand human beings can stow themselves in a place containing but one hotel, and that a very poor one, is a matter of wonder to the stranger. The houses generally are but one story high, and seldom contain more than two or three rooms. Some half a dozen stores, it is true, of better appearance than the average, have been built by the Danish

merchants within the past few years; and the residence of the governor and the public University are not without some pretensions to style.

The only stone building in Reykjavík of any importance is the “Cathedral;” so called, perhaps, more in honor of its great antiquity than anything imposing about its style or dimensions. At present it shows no indications of age, having been patched, plastered, and painted into quite a neat little church of modern appearance.

“The women are really the only class of inhabitants, except the fleas, who possess any vitality. Rude, slatternly, and ignorant as they are, they still evince some sign of life and energy compared with the men.”



At each end of the town is a small gathering of sod-covered huts, where the fishermen and their families live like rabbits in a burrow. That these poor people are not all devoured by snails or crippled with rheumatism is a marvel to any stranger who takes a peep into their filthy and cheerless little cabins.

The oozy slime of fish and smoke mingles with the green mould of the rocks; barnacles cover the walls, and puddles make a soft carpeting for the floors. The earth is overhead, and their heads are

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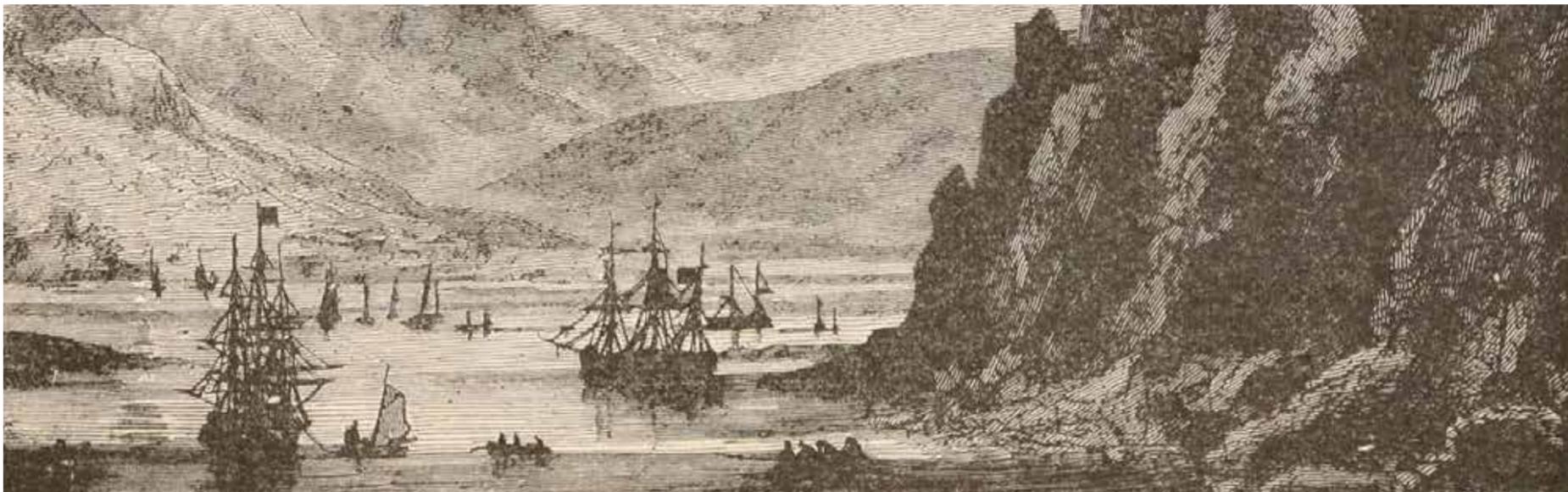
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and the surrounding horizon.*



L E M Ú R I N N



under the earth, and the light of day has no light job of it to get in edgewise through the windows. The beaver-huts and badger-holes of California, taking into consideration the difference of climate, are palatial residences compared with the dismal hovels of these Icelandic fishermen. At a short distance they look for all the world like mounds in a grave-yard.

The inhabitants, worse off than the dead, are buried alive. No gardens, no cultivated patches, no attempt at anything ornamental relieves the dreary monotony of the premises. Dark patches of lava, all littered with the heads and entrails of fish; a pile of turf from some neighboring bog; a rickety shed in which the fish are hung up to dry; a gang of wolfish-looking curs, horribly lean and voracious; a few prowling cats, and possibly a chicken deeply depressed in spirits – these are the most prominent objects visible in the vicinity. Sloth and filth go hand in hand.

The women are really the only class of inhabitants, except the fleas, who possess any vitality. Rude, slatternly, and ignorant as they are, they still evince some sign of life and energy compared with the men.

Over-taxed by domestic cares, they go down upon the wharves when a vessel comes in, and by hard labor earn enough to purchase a few rags of clothing for their children. The men are too lazy even to carry the fish out of their own boats. At home they lie about the doors, smoking and gossiping, and too

often drunk. Some are too lazy to get drunk and go to sleep over the effort. In truth, the prevailing indolence among all classes is so striking that one can almost imagine himself in a Southern clime. There is much about Reykjavik to remind a Californian traveler of San Diego. The drunken fellows about the

stores, and the racing of horses up and down the streets, under the stimulus of liquor rather than natural energy, sometimes made me feel quite at home.

I should be sorry to be understood as intimating, in my brief sketch of Reykjavik, that it is destitute of refined society. There are families of as cultivated manners here as in any other part of the world; and on the occasion of a ball

or party, a stranger would be surprised at the display of beauty and style. The University and public library attract students from all parts of the island, and several of the professors and literary men have obtained a European reputation. Two semi-monthly newspapers are published at Reykjavik, in the Icelandic language. They are well printed, and said to be edited with ability. I looked over them very carefully from beginning to end, and could see nothing to object to in any portion of the contents.

E. J. Oswald: By Fell and Fjord, or, Summer Scenes in Iceland (1882)

There are three streets in Reykjavik parallel to the shore, and one leading up inland at each extremity of the town; these are nicely gravelled and neatly kept. There is also a square, with grass in the centre, in the middle of which stands a fine statue of Thorwaldsen, the only ornament of the town.

The rest of it is all irregular, houses dotted about by twos and threes over a considerable space of country. The public buildings consist of an ugly salmon-coloured church they call the cathedral, a plain whitewashed house for the governor and a larger one, salmon-coloured again, for the college.

Most of the houses are of timber painted black, picked out with white; many stand in gardens among hardy flowers, or, with a complete disregard for appearances, turnips and potatoes.

How I longed often to do a little gardening, and square things up! for the Icelanders have no ideas about out-of-doors amenity. The houses are, however, generally neat inside, and some of them are daintily pretty; and they are usually ornamented by roses, carnations, and geraniums, blooming in the windows, tender favourites which are rarely exposed to the open air.

There are a few old turf-houses, which are among the worst and smallest specimens of the genuine Icelandic bae or dwelling; and of late many new substantial houses of grey whinstone have been built. The red Danish flag flutters from many a roof, and the whole place has a thriving air, and an increasing trade and population. The two or three stores, which are like our Highland "general merchants" shops, places where you can buy everything rather dear, are crowded in summer.

Sabine Baring-Gould: Iceland: Its Scenes and Sagas (1862)

Reykjavik is a jumble of wooden shanties, pitched down wherever the builder listed. Some of the houses are painted white, the majority black, one has broke out in green shutters, another is daubed over with orange. The roofs are also of wood, and coloured black or grey.

[...]

There are but two streets, and these are hardly worthy of the name. One leads from the jetty to the inn, and is called Athalstræti, or High Street; in it live the agent for the steamer and the printer. The second starts from this street, and terminates at a bridge crossing a brook, which flows from the lake into the sea. [...] The sea-front is occupied by a line of merchant stores. The moment that the main thoroughfares are quitted, the stench emitted from the smaller houses becomes insupportable. Decayed fish, offal, filth of every description, is tossed anywhere for the rain to wash away, or for the passer-by to trample into the ground. [...]

An Icelander seems to have no sense of smell; perhaps it is well that he has none, for there is no possibility of gratifying that sense, whilst there is every opportunity of mortifying it. The enormous amount of snuff consumed is one cause of this deadness in the perception of scent. Nature has made a mistake in forming Icelanders' faces; she should have inverted their noses, so as to facilitate their plugging them with tobacco.

The town is full of idle men, who follow the strange whithersoever he goes – provided he does not walk too fast for them. They hang about the stores as thickly and stupidly as flies round a sugar-barrel; they stream into the shops af-

ter me, throng so closely round me that I can hardly move, listen to what I say, eye me from head to foot, as the price of every article of clothing I have on; bid for my knickerbockers which, of course, I cannot spare; feel my stockings, and laugh to scorn their loose texture; criticize my purchases, want to examine my purse, but I object, and by so doing, hurt the feelings of half-a-dozen [...]

They make advances towards familiarity, shaking hands, asking my name, then my father's name, then they inquire who was my mother; they offer me a pinch of snuff, or rather a pull at their snuff horns, which are like powder-flasks, and are applied to the nostril, the head thrown back, and the snuff poured in, till the nose is pretty well choked.

One man, very dirty and very drunk, insists on having a kiss – the national salutation; and, when the merchant explains that such is not the English custom, he kisses all the natives in the shop, and embraces the merchant across the counter. [...]

In character, the people are phlegmatic, conservative to a fault, and desperately indolent. They have a peculiar knack of doing what has to be done in the clumsiest manner imaginable.

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inside the volcano

P.12



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P.28



“If you want to avoid spilling your beer, don’t go into the pit downstairs. If it seems like a good idea, it’s probably the alcohol talking.”

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P.38



“The flowery potpourri smell in the bathroom might make up for a mediocre cup of coffee or a semi-flat beer and stumbling upon a clogged toilet could make you forget about all the great food and service you just got. What good is a good soup if your dining experience is shadowed by a dirty bathroom?”

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Issue 10 - 2014

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**13-20**

July

**LungA**

Seyðisfjörður

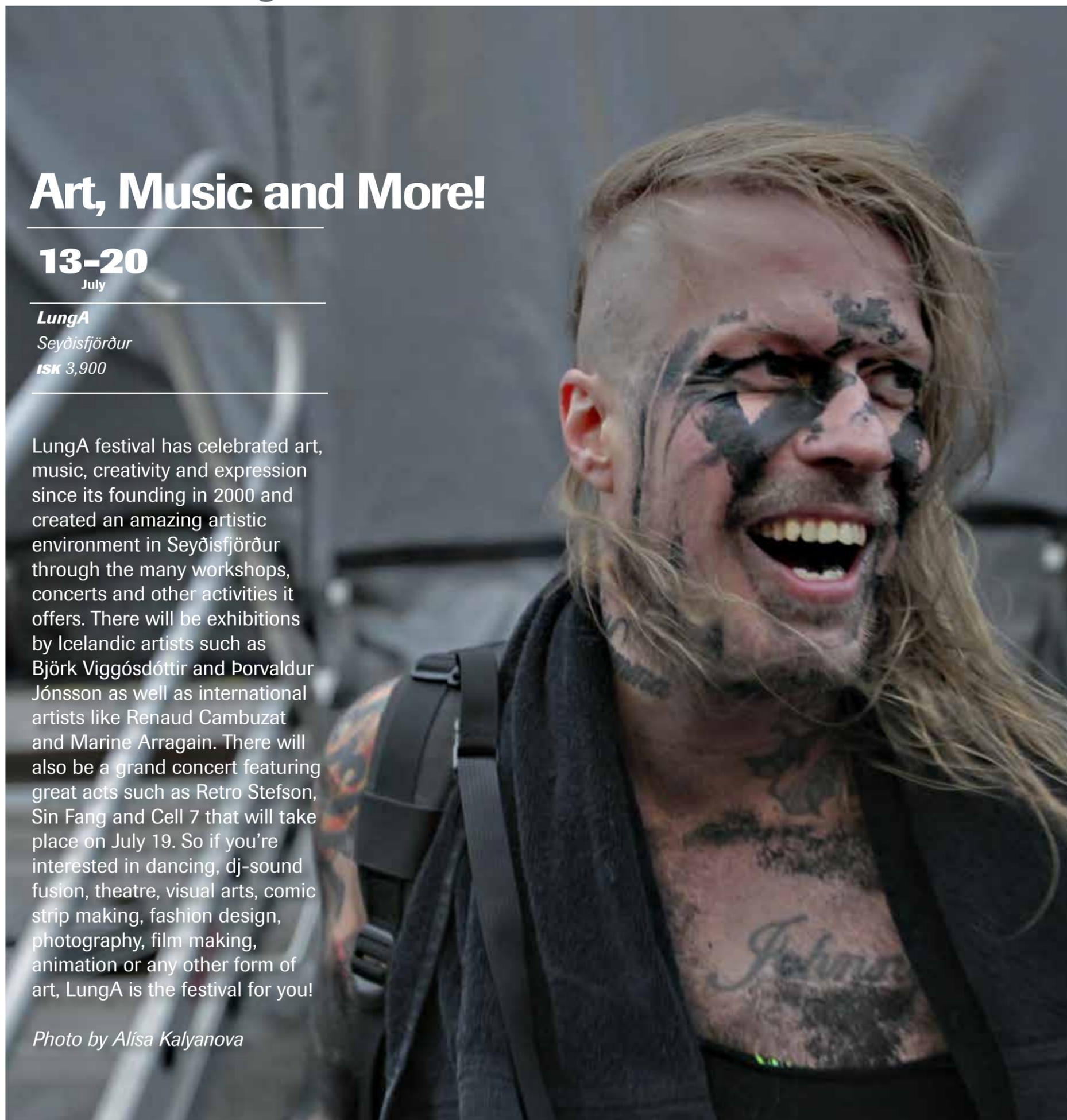
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LungA festival has celebrated art, music, creativity and expression since its founding in 2000 and created an amazing artistic environment in Seyðisfjörður through the many workshops, concerts and other activities it offers. There will be exhibitions by Icelandic artists such as Björk Viggósdóttir and Þorvaldur Jónsson as well as international artists like Renaud Cambuzat and Marine Arragain. There will also be a grand concert featuring great acts such as Retro Stefson, Sin Fang and Cell 7 that will take place on July 19. So if you're interested in dancing, dj-sound fusion, theatre, visual arts, comic strip making, fashion design, photography, film making, animation or any other form of art, LungA is the festival for you!

Photo by Alisa Kalyanova



Advertisement



# MUSIC

## CONCERTS & NIGHTLIFE

July 18 - July 31

How to use the listings: Venues are listed alphabetically by day. Events listed are all live performances, with troubadours and DJs specifically highlighted. For complete listings and detailed information on venues visit [listings.grapevine.is](http://listings.grapevine.is). Send us your listings to: [listings@grapevine.is](mailto:listings@grapevine.is).

### Friday July 18

**Boston**  
21:00 DJ Katla  
**Brikk**  
21:00 DJ Dansson  
**Café Rosenberg**  
21:00 Borgardætur  
**Den Danske Kro**  
21:00 Troubadours Fannar / Biggi Olgeirs  
**Dillon**  
22:00 DJ Andrea  
**Dolly**  
22:00 DJ KGB  
**Dubliner**  
21:00 Troubadours Gisli and Tjokko  
**English Pub**  
21:00 Troubadours Danni & Jón / Steini  
**Gaukurinn**  
22:30 Alchemia / Electric Elephant / While My City Burns  
**Harpa**  
17:00 Pearls of Icelandic Song  
**Hressó**  
22:00 Jón Ólaf's Rock Trio  
**Húrra**  
22:00 DJ Styrmir  
**Kaffibarinn**  
21:00 Simon FKNHNSM  
**Lavabarin**  
23:00 DJ Agzilla / Plasmic / Andre / Elvar  
**Paloma**  
22:00 DJ Kári  
**Prikið**  
12:00 DJ Sunna Ben / Danni Deluxe

### Saturday July 19

**Boston**  
21:00 DJ Gisli Galdur  
**Bravó**  
21:00 DJ Katla  
**Brikk**  
21:00 DJ Óli Dóri  
**Café Rosenberg**  
21:00 Borgardætur  
**Den Danske Kro**  
21:00 Troubadours Ellert / Hjálmar & Dagur  
**Dillon**  
21:00 Kiriya Family / DJ Andrea  
**Dolly**  
22:00 DJ Yamaho / Zebra Katz (DJ set)  
**Dubliner**  
21:00 Troubadour Andri  
**English Pub**  
22:00 Troubadour Steini  
23:00 LAUS  
**Hallgrímskirkja**  
12:00 Alessandro Bianchi  
**Hressó**  
22:00 Dalton  
**Húrra**  
22:00 DJ Michello Doddis  
**Kaffibarinn**  
22:00 DJ Casanova  
**KEX Hostel**  
12:00 KEXPort Block Party: 1860 / Atónal Blús / Dimma / DJ Flugvél og Geimskip / Ghostigital / kimono / Kött Grá Pjé / Low Roar / Mr. Silla / Pétur Ben / Reykjavíkurdætur / Sometime



**Ima Read Ima Read Ima Read**  
*Zebra Katz + Special Guests*

### Húrra

Tryggvagata 22 (D3) | ☺ 21:00 | ISK 2,000

NYC-based rapper Zebra Katz takes on Reykjavík, bringing his dark, minimalist hip-hop to Húrra for what is sure to be an unforgettable night. The artist behind 2012 underground hit "Ima Read," Zebra Katz weaves together a profoundly modern mix of Busta Rhymes, Azealia Banks, and Die Antwoord. However, it's useless to reduce him to comparisons—one really needs to hear him to understand the primal futuristic sound he brings to the table. Zebra Katz will be joined by Reykjavík rapper Gísli Palmi and DJs Kitty Von Sometime, Moonshine, Kocoon, and Techsoul. A true phenomenon in the fashion, indie, queer rap, and just plain ol' hip-hop scenes, Zebra Katz is a one-of-a-kind artist who promises to put on a one-of-a-kind show. **TC**



**The Church Organ Sounds**  
*Alessandro Bianchi*

### Hallgrímskirkja

Skólavörðustígur (G6) | July 19-20 ☺ 17:00 | ISK 1,700

Italian organist and composer Alessandro Bianchi has performed as a soloist in more than 1,500 concerts in great cathedrals and concert halls all over the world, including Notre Dame Paris, Westminster Abbey, Westminster Cathedral, and St. Paul's Cathedral in London, the Cultural Centre in Hong Kong, the Philharmonic Hall in St. Petersburg and the cathedrals of Cologne, Hamburg, Zurich, Bruges, Warsaw, Seville, Palma de Mallorca and Copenhagen. He has also recorded for radio, television and record companies in Europe, USA and Brazil, judged choir and organ competitions and given lectures on Italian music in Italy, Germany, Spain, the United States and Mexico. Unless you know of a better travelled performer playing somewhere else, we recommend you check out Alessandro's performance on the organ of our very own Hallgrímskirkja! **SL**

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**Mengi**  
 21:00 Högni Egilsson  
**Nordic House**  
 16:00 Pikknick Concert: Bryndís Ásmundsdóttir  
**Paloma**  
 22:00 RVK Soundsystem (DJ Set)  
**Prikiö**  
 21:00 DJ Kocoon / Ewok B2B

**Sunday July 20**

**Den Danske Kro**  
 22:00 Troubadour Tryggvi  
**English Pub**  
 21:00 Troubadour Danni  
**Hallgrímskirkja**  
 17:00 Alessandro Bianchi  
**Harpa**  
 17:00 Pearls of Icelandic Song  
**Hressó**  
 21:00 Jazz Jam Session  
**Húrra**  
 21:00 DJ Einar Sonic  
**Kaffibarinn**  
 21:00 DJ Kristinn Pálsson

**Monday July 21**

**Café Rosenberg**  
 21:00 Anna Mjöll's Jazz Band  
**Den Danske Kro**  
 22:00 Troubadour Tryggvi  
**English Pub**  
 21:00 DJ Arnar "beib"  
**Húrra**  
 21:00 Monday Jazz  
**Prikiö**  
 21:00 Monday Club

**Tuesday July 22**

**Café Rosenberg**  
 21:00 Myrra Rós & Elín Ey  
**Den Danske Kro**  
 22:00 Troubadour Ingi Valur  
**Dubliner**  
 21:00 Troubadour Andri  
**English Pub**  
 21:00 Troubadour Ingi Valur  
**Harpa**  
 17:00 Pearls of Icelandic Song  
**Kaffibarinn**  
 21:00 DJ Alfons X  
**KEX Hostel**  
 20:30 KEX Jazz  
**Húrra**  
 22:00 DJ Andre  
**Sigurjón Ólafsson Museum**  
 20:30 Lilja Guðmundsdóttir / Sigurjón Bergþór Daðason / Carl Phillippe Gione

**Wednesday July 23**

**Café Rosenberg**  
 21:00 Sigmar Þór & Band – Joni Mitchell Tribute  
**Den Danske Kro**  
 22:00 Troubadour Hreimur  
**Dolly**  
 22:00 Amateur DJ Night  
**English Pub**  
 21:00 Troubadour Alexander  
**Gaukurinn**  
 20:00 Chill Night  
**Hallgrímskirkja**  
 12:00 Schola Cantorum  
**Harpa**  
 18:30 Voces Thules  
 21:30 New York State of Mind  
**Húrra**  
 22:00 Bellstop / DJ Katla  
**Kaffibarinn**  
 21:00 DJ Terrordisco  
**Prikiö**  
 21:00 Vinyl Wednesday: Gunni Ewok

**Thursday July 24**

**Boston**  
 21:00 DJ Atli Bolla  
**Den Danske Kro**  
 22:00 Troubadour Pétur Dillon  
 21:00 Dreprún  
**Dolly**  
 22:00 C.U.N.T. DJ Girls Night  
**Dubliner**  
 21:00 Troubadour Ellert  
**English Pub**  
 22:00 Troubadours Hjálmar and Dagur  
**Gaukurinn**  
 21:00 Soffía Björg / Boogie Trouble  
**Hallgrímskirkja**  
 12:00 Jón Bjarnason  
**Hressó**  
 22:00 Troubadour Alexander Aron  
**Húrra**  
 22:00 Arctic Roots / DJ Steindór Jónsson  
**Kaffibarinn**  
 21:00 DJ Pilsner  
**Loft Hostel**  
 21:00 Ribbaldarnir  
**Mengi**  
 21:00 Berglind María Tómasdóttir  
**Prikiö**  
 21:00 DJ YAMAHO

**Friday July 25**

**Boston**  
 21:00 DJ Kári  
**Brikk**  
 21:00 DJ KGB  
**Café Rosenberg**  
 21:00 Robert The Roommate



**23**  
July

**Icelandic Medieval Music**  
*Voces Thules*

**Harpa**

Austurbakki 2 (C4) | ☎ 18:30 | ISK 3,500

Voces Thules has established itself as a leading music ensemble for performance and research into Icelandic medieval music. The recording and publishing of St. Thorlak's Office in 2006, one of Iceland's prominent music manuscripts, is the most extensive project that the ensemble has undertaken so far, allowing the ensemble to receive the Iceland Music Prize in 2006. Aside from the singing, you'll also get to hear the members of Voces Thules performing on various medieval instruments such as bagpipes, shawms, crumhorns, symphonies, rebecs, dulcimers and lyres! **SL**



**31**  
July

**Iceland's Acoustic Muse**  
*Ólöf Arnalds*

**Loft Hostel**

Bankastræti 7 (E5) | ☎ 21:00 | ISK Free!

With a distinctly ethereal voice, singer/songwriter Ólöf Arnalds has carved out a niche of her own in Icelandic acoustic music. Possessing a sound reminiscent of Joanna Newsom, the unpredictable artist plays a variety of instruments including violin, viola, acoustic guitar, and charango. Don't miss the chance to see her play an intimate show at Loft Hostel, the perfect setting to catch her captivating melodies. Perhaps she will even preview material from her upcoming album, which is reportedly nearly finished. Having toured and collaborated with múm, Björk, and a bevy of other Icelandic artists, Ólöf stands as one of Iceland's most indispensable talents. **TC**

*Photo by Mareva Nardelli*

**Den Danske Kro**

21:00 Troubadours Ellert / Hjálmar & Dagur  
**Dillon**  
 22:00 DJ Andrea  
**Dolly**  
 22:00 DJ Pedro Pilatus  
**Dubliner**  
 22:00 Troubadours Ingi Valur & Tjokko  
**English Pub**  
 21:00 Troubadours Ingi Valur & Tryggvi  
 22:00 LAUS  
**Gaukurinn**  
 21:00 Kvika  
**Harpa**  
 17:00 Pearls of Icelandic Song  
**Hressó**  
 22:00 Penta Trio  
**Húrra**  
 22:00 DJ Óli Dóri  
**Kaffibarinn**  
 21:00 DJ Gísli Galdur  
**Mengi**  
 21:00 Matti Hemstock  
**Paloma**  
 22:00 DJ Sigrún  
**Prikiö**  
 21:00 DJ Sonur Sæll / Gay Latino  
 Man

**Saturday July 26**

**Boston**  
 21:00 Funkpátturinn DJs  
**Brikk**  
 21:00 DJ Dansson  
**Café Rosenberg**  
 21:00 Thin Jim  
**Den Danske Kro**  
 21:00 Troubadour Fannar  
 23:30 Troubadour Biggi Olgeirs  
**Dillon**  
 21:00 Friyrkjan / DJ Andrea  
**Dolly**  
 22:00 DJ Gísli Galdur & Benni B-Ruff  
**Dubliner**  
 21:00 Troubadour Ingi Valur & Ellert  
**English Pub**  
 21:00 Troubadour Raggi  
 23:30 Troubadours Ingi Valur & Tryggvi  
**Gaukurinn**  
 21:00 Elgar  
**Hallgrímskirkja**  
 12:00 Lára Bryndís Eggertsdóttir  
**Harpa**  
 17:00 Pearls of Icelandic Song  
**Hressó**  
 22:00 Stóma  
**Húrra**  
 22:00 Orphic Oxta / DJ Simon  
 FKNHNSM



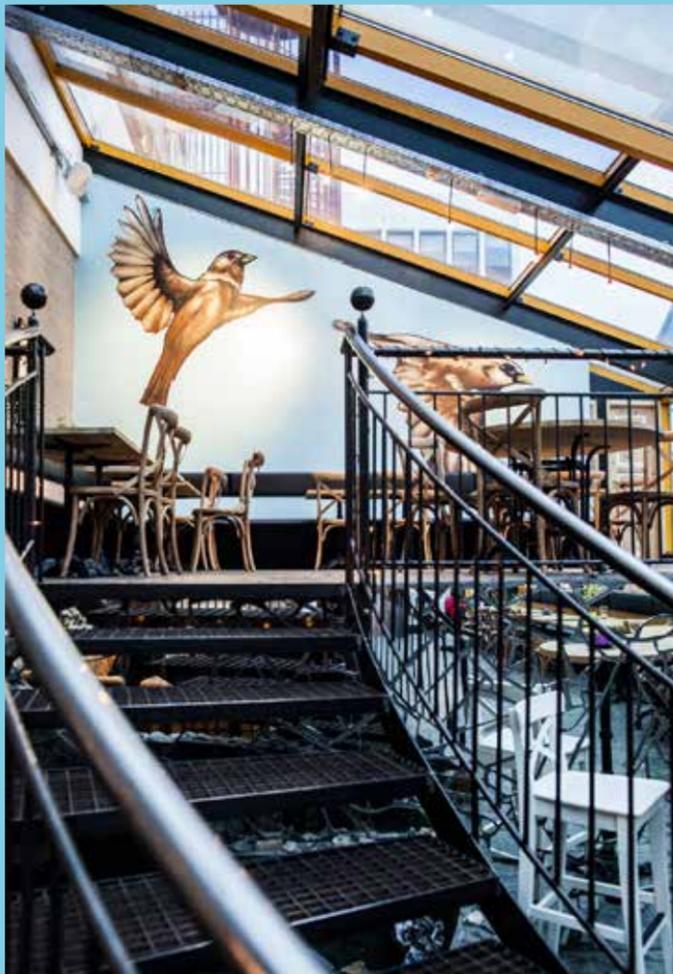
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# MUSIC

## CONCERTS & NIGHTLIFE

31  
July



Warm Enough To Melt Skaftafell  
Skúli Mennski

### Café Rosenberg

Klapparstígur 25-27 (E5) | ☎ 22:00 | ISK TBA

Skúli Mennski makes the kind of acoustic guitar-based music that makes you kinda' feel like you understand it even if you don't understand Icelandic. His music is as thoughtful as it is warm, reflecting as he calls it "a private public," personal subjects we can all identify with. Skúli plays a mixture of folk, jazz, blues and rockabilly, all inflected with his own warm, home-sprung Icelandic touch, meaning that his shows, including this one here at Café Rosenberg, are always (feet) moving and unforgettable. **LH**

18  
July



A Burning Alchemic City Of Elephants  
Alchemia / While My City Burns / Electric Elephant

### Gaukurinn

Tryggvagata 22 (D3) | ☎ 22:00 | ISK Free!

Get ready for a quick tour around some of the various sub-genres of Icelandic rock music with this host of acts at Gaukurinn. First up is the old-school vibes of Alchemia, sounding like AC/DC filtered through contemporary European eyes. And beer. All in the best way possible, of course. Pushing the hardcore boat out further is While My City Burns, who will definitely have you shredding your vocal chords singing along and slipping a few discs head-banging. Finally, Electric Elephant take us back to the time of afros, flares and pre-Labyrinth David Bowie with their unique blend of funk and rock. **LH**

## SPOR Í SANDI/ TRACKS IN SAND SIGURJÓN ÓLAFSSON YFIRLITSSÝNING/ RETROSPECTIVE

LISTASAFN ÍSLANDS/  
NATIONAL GALLERY OF ICELAND  
23.5. – 26.10. 2014

LISTASAFN SIGURJÓNS  
ÓLAFSSONAR/  
SIGURJÓN ÓLAFSSON MUSEUM  
24.5. – 29.11. 2014

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WELCOME

LISTASAFN ÍSLANDS  
NATIONAL GALLERY OF ICELAND

### Kaffibarinn

21:00 DJ Kári  
Nordic House  
16:00 Pikknikk Concert: Kristjana  
Stefánsdóttir  
Paloma  
22:00 DJ KGB  
Prikíð  
21:00 DJ Pedro Pilatus  
Stúdentakjallarinn  
21:00 Hope Masike

### Sunday July 27

English Pub  
21:00 Troubadour Danni  
Hallgrímskirkja  
17:00 Lára Bryndís Eggertsdóttir  
Hressó  
21:00 Jazz Jam Session  
Húrra  
21:00 DJ Ísar Logi Arnarsson  
Kaffibarinn  
21:00 DJ Krystal Carma

### Monday July 28

Den Danske Kro  
22:00 Troubadour Ingi Valur  
English Pub  
21:00 Troubadour Ingi Valur  
Harpa  
17:00 Pearls of Icelandic Song  
Húrra  
21:00 Monday Jazz  
Kaffibarinn  
21:00 DJ Alfons X

### Tuesday July 29

Den Danske Kro  
22:00 Troubadour Tryggvi  
English Pub  
21:00 DJ Arnar "beib"  
Húrra  
22:00 DJ Krummi

### Kaffibarinn

21:00 DJ Ívar Pétur  
KEX Hostel  
20:30 KEX Jazz  
Sigurjón Ólafsson Museum  
20:30 String Quartet no. 1 op. 50 by  
Sergei Prokofiev / String Quartet  
no. 8 op. 110 by Dmitri Shostakov-  
ich

### Wednesday July 30

Café Rosenberg  
21:00 White Signal  
Den Danske Kro  
22:00 Troubadour Hreimur  
English Pub  
21:00 DJ Arnar "beib"  
Gaukurinn  
20:00 Chill Night  
Hallgrímskirkja  
12:00 Schola Cantorum  
Harpa  
17:00 Pearls of Icelandic Song  
Húrra  
22:00 DJ Óli Dóri  
Kaffibarinn  
21:00 DJ Haukur FKNHNSM  
Prikíð  
21:00 DJ Housekell

### Thursday July 31

Boston  
21:00 DJ Krystal Carma  
Bravó  
22:00 Steve Sampling / Orang Vo-  
lante Modesart / Árni2  
Café Rosenberg  
21:00 Skúli Mennski  
Den Danske Kro  
22:00 Troubadour Pétur  
Dolly  
22:00 DJ Plan B  
Dubliner  
21:00 Troubadour Ellert

### English Pub

21:00 Troubadours Alexander &  
Guðmann  
Gaukurinn  
21:00 Bellstop  
Hallgrímskirkja  
12:00 Stéphane Rigat & Olivier  
Gillet  
Harpa  
17:00 Pearls of Icelandic Song  
Hressó  
22:00 DJ Cyppie & Steini Sax  
Húrra  
22:00 DJ Ívar Pétur  
Kaffibarinn  
21:00 DJ Katla  
KEX Hostel  
21:00 Atónal Blús  
Loft Hostel  
21:00 Ólöf Arnalds  
Mengi  
21:00 Sóley  
Prikíð  
21:00 King Agzilla B-Day

# ART

## OPENINGS AND ONGOING

July 18 - July 31

**How to use the listings:** Venues are listed alphabetically by day. For complete listings and detailed information on venues visit listings.grapevine.is Send us your listings to: listings@grapevine.is

### Opening

#### Harbinger Equator

In this show, artist Victor Ocares deals with dual nationality, drawing from his own experience of being both Chilean and Icelandic. He employs symbols drawn from the worlds of mathematics and business science, dealing with the current state of entropy through the subjects of globalisation and politics.

Opens July 26

Runs until August 24

#### Kunstschlager

##### Look Around You, experiment one

Artists Anna Hrund Másdóttir and Helgi Már Kristjánsson created a collaborative sculpture for the gallery space, focusing on everyday objects and common materials. They've got a thing for ice cream, oranges, flower arrangements and the color blue. If that's your thing too, check it out.

Opens July 26

Runs until August 9

#### Mokka Kaffi

##### MOKKA'S BLACK BOX / Still life

Artist Jón Axel Björnsson will be exhibiting a new series of gouache, abstract still life paintings.

Opens July 18

Runs until August 21

#### National Gallery

##### Hop-On Hop-Off

This guided tour in English is offered weekly during the summer through the exhibition At Twilight. The exhibition sheds light on that dynamic part of the day, which is neither day nor night, but a space between the two. As a place is situated closer to the poles, south or north, the longer the period of sunrise and sunset. At such sites the twilight may reveal the transition periods of time, and charge the environment with ambiguous light. The dark months of winter increases the length of twilight and daylight, which lasts for only a few hours each day, throws long shadows onto a surface. The works of this exhibition are all by Icelandic artists from the collection of the National Gallery of Iceland spanning the period from 1900 to 2013.

Runs July 17, 24 and 31 at 12-13:00

### Ongoing

#### Árbær Museum

A guided tour in English through this open air museum, which consists of twenty buildings happens daily at 13:00.

On permanent view

#### ART 67

Porgrímur Einarsson is the guest artist of the month, exploring the terrain where realism and abstraction meet in oil paintings.

Runs until July 31

#### ASÍ Art Gallery

Eygló Harðardóttir's untitled sculpture exhibit sits in ASÍ's garden for all to see.

Runs until August 9

#### Ladies, Beautiful Ladies

Birgir Birgisson follows up on the questions at the heart of the politics of representation, addressed through the visual negotiations of blondes in our cultural environment. This exhibition presents a variety of works that reach from painting on canvas to installation to works on paper and connects them to the issue of how identities are made, shaped, distributed and retold.

Runs until December 31

#### The Culture House

This exhibit showcases principal medieval manuscripts, such as Codices Regii of the Poetic Edda, Prose Edda, law codices and Christian works, and the Icelandic Sagas.

On permanent view

#### Child of Hope - Youth and Jón Sigurðsson

Exploring the life of Icelandic national



**A New Sort Of 'Every Day'**  
*Look Around You, experiment one*

#### Kunstschlager | Rauðarárstígur 1 (F8)

July 26 - August 19 | ☺ 15:00 - 18:00 | **ISK Free!**

This new exhibit from mathematician-turned-artist, Anna Hrund Másdóttir, and abstract painter, Helgi Már Kristjánsson, takes a look at the common and mundane objects from everyday life, viewing them from a new perspective. Out of a group of oranges there is one drawn like a happy basketball. Posts with orange chains tied around them create a circle around nothing. It's not only about finding the goofy and surreal in the everyday, but also how these objects we take for granted inspire us, like the colours of a red-yellow apple used for a similar coloured cone. Expect to see the things you take for granted presented in a new way. **AH**

hero Jón Sigurðsson, made especially accessible to children, families and school groups.

On permanent view

#### Millennium - Phase One

A selection of pieces is on view from the collection of the National Gallery, including a variety of works by Icelandic artists in the last two centuries.

On permanent view

#### The Library Room

The old reading room of the National Library displays books of Icelandic cultural history dating from the 16th century to the present day.

On permanent view

#### The Einar Jónsson Museum

The museum contains close to 300 artworks including a beautiful garden with 26 bronze casts of the artist's sculptures.

On permanent view

#### Gallerí Skilti

##### Pura Vida

British artist S Mark Gubb went to Costa Rica, got inspired by the casual atmosphere and the concept of "pura vida," the catchall phrase for positivity. So he brought it to Reykjavík with a sign that points anyone in the right direction to find their own Pura Vida, or good life.

Runs until December 15

#### Hafnarborg

##### New Acquisitions

This is an exhibition of recent additions to the Hafnarborg collection, including work by leading Icelandic contemporary artists Sirra Sigrún Sigurðardóttir, Stefán Jónsson, Hildur Bjarnadóttir, Pétur Thomsen and Hreinn Friðfinnsson.

Runs until August 24

#### Works By The Pioneers Of Icelandic Art

A collection exhibition focusing on the work of the pioneers of Icelandic art. The exhibition includes works by some of the first Icelanders to make painting their profession, such as Þórarinn B. Þorláksson, Jóhannes S. Kjarval and more.

Runs until August 24

#### Harpa

##### Wild Reindeer of Iceland

The exhibition features the beautiful reindeer and is the perfect mix between nature, culture and latest technology.

Runs until July 30

#### Hverfisgallerí

##### Summer Show

19 artists from Iceland, Finland, Belgium and USA showcase paintings, works on paper, and sculptures in the group exhibition.

Runs until August 23

#### i8

##### C-O-N-T-I-N-U-A-T-I-O-N

London designer Peter Liversidge's latest exhibition will take place at i8. His work has begun with single or grouped typewritten proposals, with

the proposed works taking form across a seemingly limitless variety of media, including performance, installation, sculpture, painting, photography and actions. For this performance, Peter has written 24 proposals for works and performative actions in Proposals for Reykjavík.

Runs until August 9

#### The Icelandic Phallogical Museum

The museum contains a collection of more than two hundred and fifteen penises and penile parts belonging to almost all the land and sea mammals that can be found in Iceland. There's also a penis sculpture honoring the Icelandic men's handball team, though confusingly it does not feature their actual penises.

On permanent view

#### Kópavogur Art Museum

##### 20th Anniversary Exhibition

To celebrate its 20th Anniversary, Kópavogur Art Museum curated a new exhibition of works from the museum's permanent collection and from the private collection of Þorvaldur Guðmundsson and Ingibjörg Guðmundsdóttir, donated to the museum in 2001. On display will be selected works by Gerður Helgadóttir, Barbara Árnason, Magnús Á. Arnason and Valgerður Briem and paintings by Jóhannes S. Kjarval. Free admission on Wednesdays.

Runs until July 27

#### Museum of Design and Applied Art

##### Ertu tilbúin frá forseti?

The exhibition, 'Are you ready, Madam President?' displays clothing and other accessories from the wardrobe of former Icelandic President Vigdís Finnbogadóttir. The exhibition gives visitors a glimpse into Vigdís's preferences in choosing her wardrobe and style, and also the personal lives and habits of heads of state.

Runs until October 5

#### Hjalti Karlsson: This Is How I Do It

Hjalti Karlsson, last year's recipient of the Nordic Torsten and Wanja Söderberg prize is holding an exhibition featuring work specially created for the occasion of the prize. Hjalti's work, from newspaper page to moving graphics, from educational exhibition form to the place-specific art installation, shows traces of both classic schooling and Icelandic narrative tradition.

Runs until October 5

#### National Gallery

##### Sigurjón Ólafsson Retrospective

The National Gallery of Iceland opens a retrospective exhibition of the works of abstract sculptor Sigurjón Ólafsson (1908-1982). Ólafsson was one of the most influential Icelandic artists in the postwar era, and was in the forefront of Icelandic sculpture throughout his life.

Runs until October 29

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**HARPA**      Location: Harpa - Reykjavik Concert Hall and Conference Center.  
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Reykjavík  
City Museum



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# ART

## OPENINGS AND ONGOING



23  
July

To Go, Or Not To Go, That Shouldn't Even  
Be A Question  
Globe Theatre on Tour presents Hamlet

### Harpa

Austurbakki 2 (C4) | ☎ 19:30 | ISK from 4,600

From the stage of the Shakespeare's Globe Theatre they have brought his most famous play here. For one night only see Shakespeare's better/work than any other, says the jury. It's a tale you've most likely heard of now/the death of a king and Hamlet's madness/so see it performed by the best right now/but if missed there will only be sadness. Though there is plenty of that in the play/with its violence and its tragedy. If you really must go out of your way/to see it, you'll never regret it. **AH**

### >> REAL DELICACIES

This is a compilation of recent Brazilian videos that articulate images from reality, and escape definitions of genre to create a personal interpretation.

Runs until July 31

### At Twilight

One of Iceland's defining features, precious little gem that it is, is its period of twilight. This exhibition sheds light on this oft taken for granted solar elevation angle, as its artists explore its prompt contrasts between light and darkness.

Runs until September 21

### The National Museum Icelandic Silverwork

See various silver pieces and the methods of their making at this exhibit commemorating the 150th anniversary of the National Museum of Iceland.

On permanent view

### Inspirations by Ron Rosenstock

The original subjects of Ron's black and white photography—land, sky, trees, and glaciers—serve as initial inspiration for this exhibition. He then digitally edits the images like he used to do in the darkroom to bring out his feelings at the time of exposure.

Runs until July 27

### Sodium Sun

Photographer Stuart Richardson exhibits a series of photographs on Icelandic streetlights, their locales and the weather.

Runs until December 31

### The Making Of A Nation

This exhibition is intended to provide insight into the history of the Icelandic nation from the Settlement to the present day.

On permanent view

### Snapshots Of A Moment

Porsteinn Jóséppson (1907–1967) was a widely travelled author and journalist. Porsteinn's photography presents an intricate panorama of Icelandic life and a rapidly changing rural landscape. His collection of photographs is one of the largest, most important and most comprehensive private

collections from the twentieth century preserved in Iceland's National Museum of Photography, a part of the National Museum of Iceland.

Runs until December 31

### Nordic House

### Atlantis Photo Exhibition

This exhibition showcases an underwater photo series shot by Finnish photographer Ilkka Keskinen in Aalto Alvari, the swimming hall of the Finnish city Jyväskylä. Keskinen has had over 30 years experience shooting underwater, and boasts an extensive underwater gallery.

Runs until July 21

### Descent

This exhibition is a collaboration between six Danish artists, all looking to build on an interest in the mythical and existential. Inspired by a 5,000 year old Sumerian myth, they depict the descent into the netherworld, illuminating the life and stories that are connected to it. With different artistic media, including photography, sculpture, painting and installation, this eternally relevant myth is reinterpreted and put into a new context.

Runs until August 17

### Jump In Diorama

Presented by Annika Dahlsten and Markku Laakso, Jump In Diorama focuses on the documentative nature of photography, and real vs. authentic. The artists have taken photos and shot videos in various natural landscapes in Finnish Lapland, Germany, and Southern Africa. In these situations, the Laakso family entertained spectators with their way of life, as human exhibitions being seen as anthropological-zoological displays.

On permanent view

### The Old Harbour Iceland Expo Pavillion

Every day from 10:00 to 22:00, Sagafilmis projects a film of Icelandic scenery inside their Iceland Expo Pavillion which provides a unique 360 degree movie experience.

On permanent view

### Reykjavík Art Museum - Ásmundarsafn

Selection from the Ásmundur Sveinsson Collection

The exhibition spans over Ásmundur Sveinsson's entire career and shows how his artistic vision developed throughout his life. Among the oldest exhibits are sculptures that he created as a student; later came the grand masterpieces that praise Icelandic people, folktales and nature, and finally the collection shows a number of abstract works that the artist created in the last decades of his life.

Runs until August 31

### Reykjavík Art Museum - Hafnarhús

**Erró: The World Today**  
The Reykjavík Art Museum's already large collection of paintings by Erró has grown considerably in recent years, as the artist continues to donate his more recent works. These pieces—including collages, oils, watercolours and enamels—are on display.

Runs until September 28

### Your Compound View

The exhibition comprises a total of about 80 pieces from the period 1970–2010, representing three generations of artists. The origins of Icelandic contemporary art can be traced back to the rebellion of the "SÚM generation" (SÚM – Association of Young Artists) against the dominant position of abstract painters in Icelandic art in the early 1960s.

Runs until September 7

### Reykjavík Art Museum - Kjarvalsstaðir

**Affinities**  
The exhibition is made up of works which span a period of 73 years juxtaposes works of different artists, two or three together, in order to highlight the similarities between them. A painting of a door by Þorri Hringsson may thus be compared with a geometrical abstract by Þorvaldur Skúlason: Þorri objectifies the form, while Þorvaldur rejects all allusion to external reality.

Pearls of  
Icelandic Song

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23, 25, 28, 30 & 31  
AUGUST 2, 3, 5, 6, 8, 10,  
12, 16, 17, 20, 24, 28 & 30  
at 17:00  
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the box office in Harpa or at  
[WWW.CCCR.IS](http://WWW.CCCR.IS)

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and folk music.

The programme is  
sung in Icelandic and  
introduced in English.



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WHAT'S INSIDE | Reykjavík Map | Happy Hour Guide | Places We Like | Best Of Reykjavík | Practical Info

Reykjavík

July 18 - July 31

Keep it in your pocket

## Two Weeks

The Grapevine picks the events, places and what to experience in the next two weeks

<b>26 July</b>	<b>Bringing The Warmth Of Zimbabwe To Iceland</b>	<b>19 July</b>	<b>12 Hour Music Marathon</b>
<b>Hope Masike</b> ISK Free! 🕒 21:00 <i>Stúdentakjallaranum</i>	<b>KEXPort Block Party</b> ISK Free! 🕒 12:00-00:00 <i>KEX Hostel</i>		

Though far from her home in Zimbabwe, Hope is bringing her country's warmth to Iceland with her mbira based music. While the Zimbabwean vocals and mbira melodies are difficult to categorise in any one genre, the jazz instrumental cross-beat are familiar to our Western ears. Even if you don't understand what she is singing about, her sizzling voice and mbira notes that sway with her steps will leave you enthralled and hoping that her music inspires others to take up the style. **AH**

In collaboration with legendary Seattle radio station KEXP, KEX Hostel invites everyone to an outdoor concert extravaganza. Promising twelve Icelandic acts over the course of twelve hours, there are few better ways for a music lover to spend their Saturday. Don't miss peppy indie pop band 1860, psych-rockers Átonal Blús, hard rock group Dimma, the ever-eclectic DJ Flúgvél og Geimskip, and indie rockers Low Roar, fresh off the release of a new album and an ATP gig. Also, be sure to check out genre-blending veterans Ghostigital, female rap crew Reykjavíkurdætur, indie band Pétur Ben, and electro-poppers Sometime. Also featured on the bill are post-rock band kimono, Icelandic rock supergroup Mr. Silla, and rapper Kött Grá Pje. If last year was any indication, this is bound to be a fantastic time. **TC**

July 23 **MUSICALS BY MUSICIANS** If you can't stop singing your favourite songs from musicals and operas, such as "The Impossible Dream," "If I Loved You," "Some Enchanted Evening," "Vanilla Ice Cream," "I Hate Men," "Summertime," "Steal Me," "Tonight," "So In Love" and "I Could Have Danced," then maybe listening to first-class musicians performing them live will calm you down. The lineup includes the Ukrainian sopranos **Alexandra Chernyshova** and **Irina Petrik**, the American baritone **Kevin Bees** and the Icelandic pianist **Einar Bjartur Egilsson** playing in **Harpa** at **21:30**. Admission is **2,900 ISK**.

**20-31 June July** **Reindeer And Reindeer And Reindeer Oh My!**

**Wild Reindeer of Iceland** 🕒 09:00-18:00  
*Harpa* ISK 1,900

July 19 **SECOND FIGHT OF THE YEAR** Iceland's premiere **mixed martial artist** and former Grapevine cover star, **Gunnar Nelson**, is set to square off against the American **Zak Cummings** this Saturday as the **UFC** heads off to Dublin. Gunnar famously defeated **Omari Akhmedov** this March, with a first round submission (**rear-naked choke**, as per usual), and all sports bars of note will be showing the bout at **19:00**, as will the comfortable **Stúdentakjallarinn**. We recommend cheering loudly.

Have you ever wanted to know everything there is to possibly know about reindeer? If you ever did, you are in luck because the people behind Harpa were kind enough to put on an exhibition devoted entirely to them, so you might as well go and learn something. In addition to the display of professional reindeer photography and interactive reindeer learning centre, there is also the Reindeer Parade. It's a collection of life-size fibreglass reindeer decorated and altered by select Icelandic artists, all for you to look at. Reindeer upon reindeer upon reindeer sounds pretty cool. **RSL**



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A



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www.kraum.is  
(354) 517 7797  
Find us on Facebook

**Opening hours**  
September — May  
9:00 — 18:00 weekdays  
10:00 — 17:00 Saturdays  
12:00 — 17:00 Sundays

B

**Café Loki**  
in front of Hallgrímskirkja



Enjoy some solid homemade Icelandic food  
Open 9-21 Mon-Sat and 11-21 Sundays

C

# MAP

♥ Places We Luv ♥

## Eating

### 1 KEX Hostel

Skúlagata 28

KEX Hostel is the darling of Reykjavík hipsters and professionals and their visiting peers from abroad, drawing crowds daily. With its great views and cheap accommodation, excellent dining and choice beer selection—along with an abundance of exciting events—you don't have to wonder why.

**Winner: Best Burger**

### 2 Snaps

Óðinstorg, Þórsgrata 1

This mainstay of Reykjavík dining continues to be a popular spot for folks with a fine palate and a modest budget, offering a small menu of courses made from local produce with a carefully selected wine list. It's also a cool hangout for artists and musicians. Make sure to get there early - they take reservations until 18:30 but after that it's a free-for-all!

**Winner: Best Goddamn Restaurant**

### 3 The Cocoo's Nest

Grandagarður 23

Nestled in a refurbished fishing hut in the newly-flourishing area of Grandi, The Cocoo's Nest is a cosy and airy cafe, offering California-casual brunch, lunch, and dinner, with an Italian twist. With large windows and light wood throughout, this is perfect for a lazy Saturday get-together or an afternoon 'aperitivo' after work. If you are in that part of town, head over for a warm-up.

**Winner: Best Brunch**

### 4 Dill

Hverfisgata 12

Pioneering New Nordic Kitchen-style cuisine in Iceland, Dill Restaurant very quickly gained status as a Reykjavík favourite, which it continues to live up to. Using fresh and classic Nordic ingredients exclusively, Dill offers a unique dining experience whether you go for their short and simple lunchtime menu or the extensive evening one.

**Winner: Best Fancy Meal**

### 5 Laundromat Café

Austurstræti 9

Here you can do your laundry, drink a beer and have a grandma, read to your children all under one roof. This kid-friendly café/bar restaurant prides itself on its diverse menu, good service, a 5,000 book library (that you can buy or trade from), board games, and newspapers and magazines (including a fancy WALL OF GRAPEVINES!)

**Winner: Best Family Restaurant**

## Drinking

### 6 Húrra

Tryggvagata 22

The walls may be dark and adorned with gloomy paintings, but when the bands step onto the stage the place really comes into its own. Armed with a great sound system, Húrra delivers a great experience for music fans throughout Reykjavík. And they serve Einstök Pale and White Ales in beer mugs!

**Winner: Best Newcomer Bar**

## Useful Numbers

Emergency number: **112**

Medical help: **1770**

Dental emergency: **575 0505**

Information: **118**

Taxi: Hreyfill-Bæjarleiðir: **588 5522**

BSR: **561 0000**

**Tax-Free Refund**

**Iceland Refund**, Aðalstræti 2, tel: 564 6400

**Tourist Information**

**Arctic Adventures**, Laugavegur 11,

tel: 562 7000

**City Centre**, Aðalstræti 2, tel: 590 1550

**Iceland Excursions - Grayline Iceland**,

Hafnarstræti 20, tel: 540 1313



### 7 Micro Bar

Austurstræti 6

Micro Bar sits snugged up behind the lobby of City Center Hotel and offers Reykjavík's best selection of microbrew beers, served by knowledgeable and polite staff. This is one of the few bars in Reykjavík where you can have a conversation with your mates without having to shout over live bands or loud music.

**Winner: Best Beer Selection**

### 8 English Pub

Austurstræti 12

True to its name, the English Pub offers many different kinds of lager on tap and a whiff of that genuine UK feel. Try the famous "wheel of fortune" where one can win up to a metre of beer with a single spin while a steady team of troubadours engage the crowd in classic sing-alongs every night.

**Winner: Best Mainstream Bar**

### 9 Reykjavík Roasters

Kárástigur 1

Reykjavík Roasters make the best coffee in Reykjavík. They take that stuff seriously, roasting their beans on-site and employing folks who know how to churn out a cup of whatever coffee you thirst for. The atmosphere is the kind you will only find in Reykjavík.

**Winner: Best Coffeehouse**

**The Icelandic Travel Market**, Bankastræti 2, tel: 522 4979

**Trip**, Laugavegur 54, tel: 433 8747

**Pharmacies**

**Lyf og heilsa**, Egilsgrata 3, tel: 563 1020

**Lyfja**, Laugavegur 16, tel: 552 4045 and Lág-  
múla 5, tel: 533 2300

**Coach Terminal**

**BSÍ**, Vatnsmýrarvegur 10,

tel: 562 1011, www.bsi.is

**Domestic Airlines**

**Air Iceland**, Reykjavíkflugvöllur,

tel: 570 3030, www.flugfelag.is

**Eagle Air**, Hótel Loftleiðir, tel: 562 4200

## Public Transport

The only public transport available in Reykjavík is the bus. Most buses run every 20-30 minutes (the wait may be longer on weekends) and the price per fare is 350 ISK for adults and children. Multiple day passes are available for purchase at select locations. Complete route map available at: www.bus.is. Tel: 540 2700. Buses run from 07:00-24:00 on weekdays and 10:00-24:00 on weekends. Main terminals are: Hlemmur and Lækjartorg.

## Opening Hours

**Bars and clubs:** According to regulations, bars can stay open until 01:00 on weekdays and 04:30 on weekends.

**Shops:** Mon-Fri 10:00-18:00, Sat 10:00-16:00, Sun closed. The shopping centres Kringlan and Smáralind as well as most supermarkets and tourist shops have longer opening hours.

**Swimming pools:** Weekdays 06:30-22:00 and weekends 09:00-17:00, although each pool varies plus or minus a few hours.

**Banks** in the centre are open Mon-Fri 09:00-16:00.

## Post Offices

Post offices are located around the city. The downtown post office is at Pósthússtræti 3-5, open Mon-Fri 09:00-18:00. Stamps are also sold at bookstores, gas stations, tourist shops and some grocery stores.



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D





230 kr.

290 kr.

315 kr.

350 kr.

400 kr.

420 kr.

440 kr.

480 kr.

**Osushi** is a unique restaurant in Iceland. The method of dining involves snatching small plates from a conveyor belt. Pricing is distinguished by the color and pattern of the plate – most range between 230 - 440 ISK.

Everything off the conveyor belt is tasty and if you don't really fancy sushi, you can instead choose for example teriyaki chicken, noodle salad, tempura and desserts.

The vibe in **Osushi** is friendly and relaxed. The restaurant is located almost next door to Althingi (the parliament) which is in the heart of the city.

osushi.is



Pósthússtræti 13 / Borgartúni 29 / Reykjavíkurvegur 60 HF.  
Tel: 561 0562 / www.osushi.is

# Best Of Reykjavík

Every year around the beginning of July, we make a BEST OF REYKJAVÍK ISSUE celebrating some of what makes Reykjavík-life worthwhile, posting some good entries into a hopefully never-ending discussion. The primary purpose of BEST OF REYKJAVÍK is celebration! It's about big-upping stuff, giving mad props to it and patting it on the shoulder. The following are some nice tips we pulled from BEST OF REYKJAVÍK 2014 which you can read in full at [www.grapevine.is](http://www.grapevine.is).



## BEST PLACE TO GO ON A DATE: GRILL MARKET



If you're looking for a fancy restaurant for a romantic date, Grill Market is the perfect place. You will enjoy the freshest high quality food from local organic farmers and a great selection of wines from all over the world in a classy, luxurious setting. Portions are also pretty big so they're perfect for sharing! On that note, there's also a tasting menu for two put together by the chefs so that sample a variety of mouth-watering delicacies.

Lækjargata 2A



## BEST PLACE TO CHEER UP: TJÖRNIN



Iceland routinely ranks among the top ten happiest countries in the world, but that doesn't mean that we don't feel down sometimes. When that happens, it's best to stroll over to the town pond, Tjörnin. On a beautiful day, the lake's surface glistens as it reflects the sky above. The ducks break the illusion of a second sky, but they are adorable little quackers, even when fighting for the bread people throw at them. (Please don't do this! It's really bad for them.) Even when the weather is feeling gloomy, too, the pond has a serene calm to it that soothes the nerves. Whether to watch the ducks or just walk the edge to ponder (heh) your innermost thoughts, every visit will leave you in greater spirits.

Downtown Reykjavík



## BEST SECOND-HAND SHOP: SPÚÚTNIK



If you're at all into second hand shopping, there is no place you'll enjoy more than Spúútnik. It has a wide variety of clothing, shoes and accessories for all genders and ages and definitely has the largest selection of vintage dresses, denim and printed shirts, and leather jackets in all of Reykjavík. Items are also pre-selected and arranged neatly so you're not going to have to spend hours going through piles of junk!

Laugavegur 28B

## A GUIDE THAT FUCKS YOU UP

A list of every Happy Hour in 101 Reykjavík

**101 Hótel**  
Every day from 16:00 to 18:00. Beer 470 ISK, Wine 740 ISK.

**Austur**  
Thursday to Saturday from 20:00 to 00:00. Beer 800 ISK, Wine 800 ISK.

**B5**  
Every day from 16:00 to 22:00. Beer 550 ISK, Cider 700 ISK, Wine 550 ISK.

**Bar 7**  
Every day from 16:00 to 20:00. Beer 350 ISK, Shot 450 ISK

**Bar 11**  
Thursday to Saturday from 21:00 to 00:00. Beer 500 ISK.

**Bíó Paradís**  
Monday to Sunday from 17:00 to 19:30. 2 for 1 Beer 1,000 ISK and Wine 1,000 ISK.

**Bjarni Fel**  
Monday to Friday from 21:00 to 23:00. 2 for 1 Beer 990 ISK, shot with soda 1,300 ISK.

**Boston**  
Every day from 16:00 to 20:00. Beer 600 ISK, Wine 650 ISK.

**Bravó**  
Every day from 17:00 to 21:00. Beer 500 ISK, Wine 750 ISK.

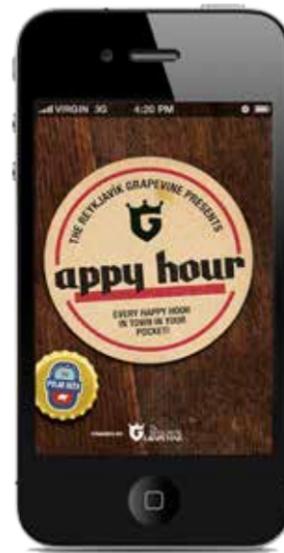
**Bunk Bar**  
Every day from 16:00 to 20:00. 2 for 1 Beer 500 ISK, Wine 750 ISK.

**Den Danske Kro**  
Every day from 16:00 to 19:00. 2 for 1 Beer 950 ISK and 2 for 1 Wine 1,200 ISK.

**Dillon**  
Every day from 16:00 to 20:00. Beer, Wine and Whisky each 550 ISK.

**Dolly**  
Wednesday to Thursday from 20:00 to 22:00, Friday to Saturday from 20:00 to 23:00. Beer 500 ISK, Wine 500 ISK.

**Dubliner**  
Every day from 16:00 until 22:00. 2 for 1 Wine 1,000 ISK, Tuborg & Somersby 500 ISK, Guinness & Kilkenny 900 ISK.



## Download the FREE Grapevine Appy Hour app!

Every happy hour in town in your pocket. Available in the App Store and on the Android Market.

**Einar Ben**  
Every day from 19:00 to 21:00. Beer 500 ISK.

**Gamli Gaukurinn**  
Every day from 21:00 to 22:00. Beer 500 ISK, single shot 500 ISK.

**Hótel 1919**  
Every day from 16:00 to 19:00. Beer 600 ISK, Wine 575 ISK, Cocktail of the day half price.

**Hótel Holt Gallery Bar**  
Every day from 16:00 to 19:00. Beer 650 ISK, Wine 750 ISK, Cocktail of the day 1,200 ISK.

**Hótel Natura**  
Every day from 16:00 to 18:00. Beer 475 ISK, Wine 900 ISK, all drinks half price.

**Hótel Plaza Bar**  
Every day from 17:00 to 19:00. Beer 500 ISK.

**Húrra**  
Every day from 18:00 to 22:00. Beer 500 ISK.

**Iða Zimsen**  
Coffee happy hour every day from 8:00 to 10:00. All coffee 300 ISK. Every day from 19:00 to 22:00. Beer 445 ISK.

**Kaffi Kompaníð**  
Friday to Saturday from 14:00 to 17:00. 2 for 1 Beer 850 ISK, Wine 700 ISK.

**Kaldi Bar**  
Every day from 16:00 to 19:00. Beer for 650 ISK, Wine for 650 ISK.

**Kiki Queer Bar**  
Thursday from 20:00 to 22:00. Beer 450 ISK, Wine 700 ISK.

**Kolabrautin**  
Every day from 16:00 to 18:00. Beer 450 ISK, Wine 700 ISK, Cocktails from 1,000 ISK.

**Lebowski Bar**  
Every day from 16:00 to 19:00. 2 for 1 Beer 950 ISK, Wine or Guinness 2 for 1,100 ISK.

**Loft Hostel Bar**  
Every day from 16:00 to 20:00. Beer 500 ISK, Cider 500 ISK, Wine 700 ISK.

**Micro Bar**  
Every day from 17:00 to 19:00. Beer 600 ISK.

**Miðgarður Bistro bar**  
Every day from 17:00 to 19:00. Beer 500 ISK, Wine 600 ISK, all drinks half price.

**Nora Magasin**  
Every day from 16:00 to 19:00. Beer 650 ISK, House Wine 600 ISK.

**Osushi**  
Every day from 12:00 to 18:00. Beer 475 ISK, Wine 540 ISK.

**Park**  
Friday to Saturday from 22:00 to 02:00. Beer 500 ISK, single shot 400 ISK.

**Prikið**  
Monday to Friday from 16:00 to 20:00. Beer 500 ISK.

**SKY Bar & Lounge**  
Every day from 17:00 to 19:00. Beer 500 ISK, Wine 800 ISK.

**Slippbarinn**  
Every day from 16:00 to 18:00. Beer 500 ISK, Wine 500 ISK, selected Cocktails 950 ISK.

**Solon Bistro**  
Every day from 15:00 to 18:00. Beer 650 ISK, Wine 700 ISK.

**Stofan**  
Every day from 17:00 to 20:00. Beer 750 ISK.

**Tíu Dropar**  
Every day from 18:00 to 21:00. 2 for 1 Wine 800 ISK. Beer 950 ISK.

**Vinsmarkkarinn**  
Monday to Saturday from 18:00 to 20:00. Beer 600 ISK, Wine 700 ISK.

# ART ONGOING

— continued —

Runs until September 14

## Reykjavík, Town, Structure

The exhibition Reykjavík, Town, Structure explores how Icelandic artists perceived the town as it developed into a city, over 102 years from 1891 to 1993.

Runs until September 14

## The Seasons in Kjarval's Art

Every season imbues the land with new life, and every cloud casts new colour upon the mountains. This exhibit focuses on how land and saga merge to become one in the works of celebrated Icelandic artist Jóhannes Kjarval.

Runs until October 12

## The Reykjavík City Library

The collection centres around new Nordic literature, both fiction and nonfiction. The library lends out novels, academic publications, audiobooks and more.

On permanent view

## Gesture Sign Art—Deaf Culture / Hearing Culture

This one-of-a-kind exhibition presents works of art that are shaped at the interstices of the deaf and hearing cultures. It further examines language and communication and delves into the similarities, differences, and specificities of deaf and hearing cultures.

Runs until July 20

## Reykjavík City Museum

### Reykjavík 871 +/- 2: The Settlement Exhibition

Archaeological findings from ruins of one of the first houses in Iceland and other excavations in the city centre, open daily 10:00-17:00.

On permanent view

## Reykjavík Maritime Museum

### From Poverty to Abundance

Photos documenting Icelandic fishermen at the turn of the 20th century.

On permanent view

## The History of Sailing

Iceland's maritime history that showcases the growth of the Reykjavík Harbour.

On permanent view

## The Coast Guard Vessel Óðinn

This vessel sailed through all three Cod Wars and has also served as a rescue ship to over 200 ships.

On permanent view

## Reykjavík Museum of Photography

### The Mirror Of Life

A collection of RAX's photography from the last three decades, including stunning shots from Siberia, hunters in Greenland, farmers and fishermen in Iceland and the Faroe Islands and news photography of shipwrecks and natural disasters.

Runs until September 7

## #shoppingtrolleys

For the last year and a half Gunnar Marel Hinriksson has photographed shopping trolleys around the city using the smartphone app Instagram. The trolleys are photographed as they are found without interference from the photographer. They symbolize single-use consumerism, abandoned when they have served their purpose for the consumer.

Runs until August 19



## Delving Into Dual Nationality Equator

Harbinger Project Space | Freyjugata 1 (G5)

July 26 - August 24 | ☺ 14:00-19:00 | **ISK Free!**

Chilean-Icelandic artist Victor Ocares explores the nuances of dual nationality, specifically drawing from his own experience and exploring the individual histories of Chile and Iceland. Victor utilises symbols culled from mathematics, business, science, and the enveloping presence of politics and globalisation. Guaranteed to be light-hearted, humorous, and thought-provoking, 'Equator' encourages the viewer to consider globalism and its effect on the concept of individual identity. **TC**



## When In Lapland... Jump In Diorama

Nordic House | Sturlugata 5

July 25 - August 28 | ☺ 12:00-17:00 | **ISK Free**

Indigenous Sami people, Annika Dahlsten and Markku Laakso are asking the question "What is authentic? And who defines what is authentic? Who is real?" Deep and scary questions, but their incredible journey around locations like Lapland, Germany and South Africa, all whilst wearing traditional Sami dress, attempted to answer them. Their dresses indicate 'realness' to them, something they hoped to convey by providing 'Human exhibitions,' living as they would back home with animals to purposely convey themselves as 'exotic tribes people.' Regardless, are they 'real,' or merely providing a caricature for others to enjoy? That's something you'll have to judge for yourselves. **LH**

## SÍM

### Stara

The Icelandic Association of Visual Artists returns with its new exhibition. They pride themselves on the unpredictability of their pieces, and since every artist is different, you can never know what to expect, or the medium of which it is delivered. Refreshments will be available, so...that means free booze, we hope!

Runs until July 24

## Spark Design Space

### Urban Shape

The exhibition by artist Paolo Gianfrancesco is a series of maps of every European capital. Using Open Street Map (OSM) data, the maps are meant to represent a view of the cities rather than try to capture the reality of them because cities are not static like maps but are continuously evolving over time.

Runs until September 26

## Týsgallerí

### (Un)steady Objects

Artist Ingunn Fjóra Ingbórsdóttir works with a variety of media, including acrylic paint, woolen yarn, nylon threads and wood in order to break up the flat, two-dimensional surface of painting.

Runs until August 8

## Volcano House

The exhibition gives a brief overview of Iceland's geological history and volcanic systems with superb photographs of volcanic eruptions and other magnificent aspects of Icelandic nature.

On permanent view

## Wind And Weather Gallery

### Alex

Video and sculpture mixed media installation by artist Sigga Björg Sigurðardóttir.

Runs until August 31

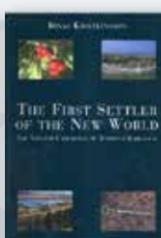
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## 20th Anniversary Exhibition of the Museum

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Hjalti Karlsson  
graphic designer

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Ólöf Nordal, Gunnar Karlsson  
& Þuríður Jónsdóttir

Fancy-Cake  
in the Sun  
Dieter Roth

## Kópavogur Art Museum / Gerðarsafn

Hamraborg 4, Kópavogur  
Open 11-17 / Closed on Mondays  
[www.gerdarsafn.is](http://www.gerdarsafn.is)

## Hönnunarsafn Íslands / Museum of Design and Applied Art

Garðatorg 1, Garðabær  
Open 12-17 / Closed on Mondays  
[www.honnunarsafn.is](http://www.honnunarsafn.is)

## Hafnarborg / The Hafnarfjörður Centre of Culture and Fine Art

Strandgata 34, Hafnarfjörður  
Open 12-17 / Thursdays 12-21  
Closed on Tuesdays  
[www.hafnarborg.is](http://www.hafnarborg.is)

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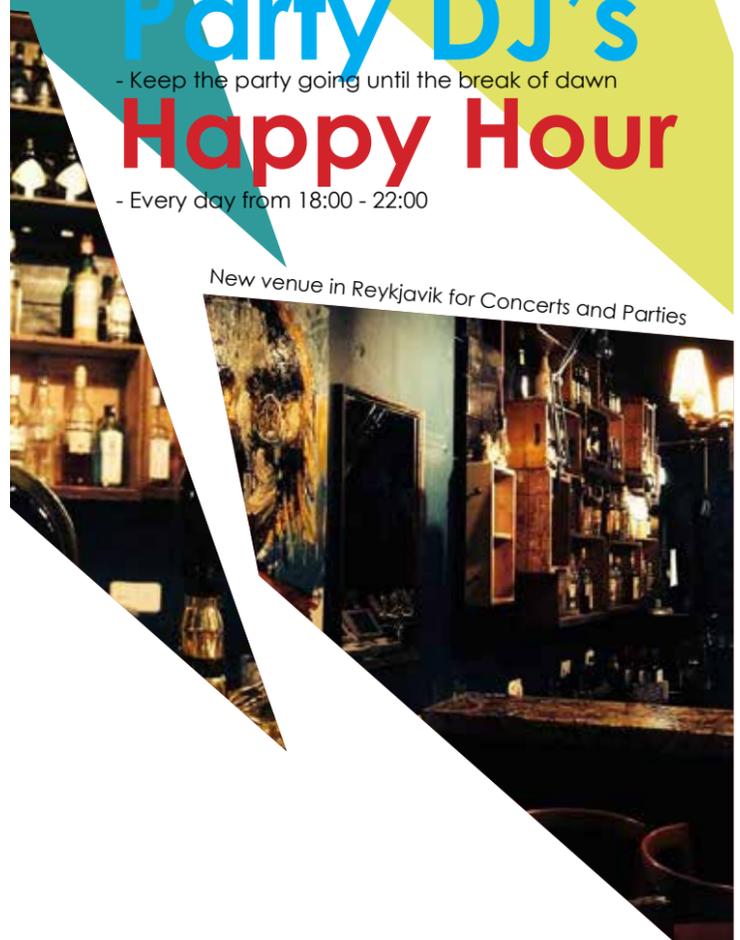
## Party DJ's

- Keep the party going until the break of dawn

## Happy Hour

- Every day from 18:00 - 22:00

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# RÓRÓ

June 17 - October 5, 2014

Group exhibition and events with thirty local and international visual artists who are in active contact with the town Seyðisfjörður and Skaftfell center. The works are exhibited in the gallery as well as various sites and venues throughout the town. Open daily and free admission. Guided tours on Wednesdays at 15.00, 500 ISK.

## Skaftfell

Center for Visual Art  
Austurvegur 42,  
Seyðisfjörður,  
East Iceland  
Event program:  
[www.skaftfell.is/en](http://www.skaftfell.is/en)

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# OUTSIDE

REYKJAVÍK JULY 18 TO JULY 31



## Cursing In Iambic Pentametre

Grísalappalísa  
Mikligarður, Norðausturvegur, Vopnafjörður  
July 23 at 22:00 | ISK 1,500

Grísalappalísa are a janus-faced inception. Blending the two disparate themes of orthodox Icelandic literary tradition and good old-fashioned garage punk, they sound kinda' like the Hives if they swallowed a dictionary, and maybe a few illegal pills for good measure. Since, as their live shows will testify, they're always a little skittish and unable to sit in one place for too long, they're taking off to journey around Iceland to spread mankini-clothed anarchy to the good residents of quaint places like Húsavík, Flateyri and Egilsstaðir. LH  
Photo by Magnús Andersen

## OUTSIDE REYKJAVÍK

### North Iceland

#### Akureyri

**Akureyri Backpackers**  
Einar Indra / Subminimal / Bistro Boy / Futuregrapher

If you find yourself in Akureyri craving some deep grooves, come get down with the dreamy electronica of Einar Indra, as well as the sweet house sounds of Subminimal and Bistro Boy, and the weirdcore of Futuregrapher.

July 19 at 22:00

#### Flóra

##### Creation

Artist Kristín Gunnlaugsdóttir's visual art exhibition focuses on addressing taboos such as women's exploration of their libido and how they too see themselves from the male gaze. Expect to see women's genitals from a new point of view.

Runs until August 16

#### Græni Hatturinn

##### Grísalappalísa

Poet-punks Grísalappalísa perform live. Expect rock and fucking roll.

July 20 at 21:00

#### Listagilið

##### Icelandic Contemporary Portraits - Character Descriptions In The 21st Century

During the show you can see how 70 artists have struggled with the concept of the portrait of the last century until the present day. Among the artists who have works in the exhibition are Ragnar Kjartansson, Kristin Gunnlaugsdóttir, Sigurðardóttir Þórarinsdóttir and Aðalheiður S. Eysteinsdóttir. It is open every day except Mon. 10-17. Admission is free.

Runs Until August 17

#### Five Decades Of Graphic Design

Gisli B. Björnsson has pioneered graphic design in Iceland, establishing his own advertising agency and running the graphic design course at Iceland's old art school which has since been amalgamated into the Iceland Academy of the Arts. Runs Until August 10

#### Húsavík

##### Gamli Baukur

##### Grísalappalísa

Poet-punks Grísalappalísa perform live. Expect rock and fucking roll.

July 21 at 21:00

#### Mývatn

##### Sigurgeir's Bird Museum

The collection includes almost all of Iceland's birds along with some 100 different types of eggs. The museum educates about birds, the ecology of Lake Mývatn and how locals utilised water in their everyday lives.

On permanent display

#### Skagafjörður

##### The Glaumbær Farm

The farm was functional until 1947, and opened as an exhibition space in 1952. The old turf farmhouse forms the backdrop for exhibitions focusing on rural life in 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century Iceland.

On permanent display.

### East Iceland

#### Egilsstaðir

##### Gamla símstöðin

Einar Indra / Subminimal / Bistro Boy / Futuregrapher

The dreamy electronica of Einar Indra, as well as the sweet house sounds of Subminimal and Bistro Boy, and the weirdcore of Futuregrapher.

July 18 at 22:00

#### Grísalappalísa

Poet-punks Grísalappalísa perform live. Expect rock and fucking roll.

July 24 at 21:00

#### Sláturhúsið

##### East Iceland Heritage Museum

The museum's exhibition consists of objects from the old rural society

in East Iceland, before 1900. On display are tools related to hunting, crafts, food production, clothing and various aspects of daily life, hygiene, hobbies, morals and values. There are also various objects on display in connection to the 20th century urban development in the eastern region.

On permanent display

#### Hjalteyri

##### Verksmiðjan á Hjalteyri

##### The Hjalteyri Scales - Rod Summers

Rod Summers, believing that he is smarter than scientists with their peer-reviewed articles and fancy education. Instead, Rod hypothesises in this exhibit that the "real" cause of fish shoal disappearance is ship noise pollution and chocolate.

Runs until July 27

#### Seyðisfjörður

##### Skaftafell Centre for Visual Art Tvisöngur

The site-specific sound sculpture by German artist Lukas Kühne, is embedded in the mountainside above the town, in a quiet area with a breathtaking view of the fjord. It offers an acoustic sensation that can be explored and experimented with.

On Permanent Display

#### Herðubreið

##### Lunga Festival

Lunga Festival is an annual mixed art workshop and festival that has taken place in Seyðisfjörður in East Iceland since 2000. Through these workshops and events, it presents a powerful mix of art, creativity and beautiful nature. Playing the nature will be Retro Stefson, Hermigervill, Sin Fang, Prins Pólo, Moses Hightower and Cell 7.

July 13-20

#### Heima Artists Residency

##### Grísalappalísa

Poet-punks Grísalappalísa perform live. Expect rock and fucking roll.

July 25 at 21:00

#### Vopnafjörður

##### Mikligarður

##### Grísalappalísa

Poet-punks Grísalappalísa perform live. Expect rock and fucking roll.

July 23 at 21:00

### South Iceland

#### Hafnir

##### Útítonleikar

##### Steve Sampling / Orang Volante

##### Modesart / Árni2

All three of these DJs were selected to play at Reykjavík's Secret Solstice Festival in July. They're some of the brightest acts in Reykjavík's rising techno scene.

August 3 at 22:00



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# OUTSIDE

REYKJAVÍK JULY 18 TO JULY 31

## Höfn í Hornafirði

### Pórbergssetur

Established in memory of the famous Icelandic writer Þórbergur Þórðarsson (1888–1974), who was born in Hali í Suðursveit. The centre includes a heritage museum and unique exhibitions of the district Suðursveit and the writer Þórbergur Þórðarson, his life and works.

On permanent display

## Hvolsvöllur

### Skógar Museum

This folk museum offers artifacts dating to the Viking age. In the rebuilt turfhouses you can catch a glimpse of the atmosphere of times long gone and experience how Icelanders lived through the centuries. The museum of transport, tells the story of technology and transportation and its development.

On permanent display

## Mosfellsbær

### Gljúfrasteinn

Gljúfrasteinninn was the home and workplace of Halldór Laxness and his family for 50 years. Today, it is a museum, allowing visitors insight into the great writer's world. All facilities, including the library, have been meticulously maintained.

On permanent display

## Westman Islands

### Sagnheimar Folk Museum

This folk museum's aim is to let visitors of all ages experience the island's history in both traditional and more untraditional ways, through photography, multimedia and interactive pieces.

On permanent display

## West Iceland

## Borgarnes

### The Icelandic Settlement Centre The Settlement Exhibition

A 30-minute long multimedia exhibit that provides insight into the settlement of Iceland, from the first man to step foot on the island, to the establishment of the world's first parliament, Þingvellir.

On permanent display

## Drangsnæs

### Malarkaffi

### Futuregrapher / Skurken / Tanya Pollock / Snooze Infinity

Come get your DJ fix at Malarkaffi in the Westfjords. Get down with the weirdcore of Futuregrapher, and don't even try to contain your dance moves when Skurken, Tanya Pollock and Snooze Infinity start spinning.

July 24 at 22:00

## Flateyri

### Vagninn

### Grísalappalísa

Poet-punks Grísalappalísa perform live. Expect rock and fucking roll.

July 19 at 21:00



### A Möller Records Celebration

Einar Indra / Subminimal / Bistro Boy / Futuregrapher

Akureyri Backpackers, Hafnarstræti 98, 600 Akureyri

July 19 at 22:00 | ISK Free!

Don't miss the chance to catch Möller Records on their cross-Iceland tour. One of Iceland's most prominent record labels has sent DJs Einar Indra, Subminimal, Bistro Boy, and label co-founder Futuregrapher to spread their deep grooves around the country. Experimental DJ Einar Indra brings his act to Akureyri after recently being announced as an addition to November's Iceland Airwaves festival. Also on the bill, Ambient / Drum N Bass pro Subminimal and smooth electro DJ Bistro Boy will keep your feet moving. Leader of the crew Futuregrapher (pictured) looks to play his critically-acclaimed weirdcore music (his album 'LP,' by the way, totally earned a + review from us at the Grapevine). If you find yourself in Akureyri with a craving for some electro goodness, head to Backpackers. **TC**

## Grundarfjörður

### The Heritage Center

The first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century comes alive as narrators guide guests through exhibitions of how developments in farming, fishing and housing marked the beginning of modern life in Iceland.

On permanent display

### RúBen

### Grísalappalísa

Poet-punks Grísalappalísa perform live. Expect rock and fucking roll.

July 18 at 21:00

## Ísafjörður

### Húsið

### Futuregrapher / Skurken / Tanya Pollock / Snooze Infinity

If you find yourself in Ísafjörður itching for a party, look no further than Húsið. Some of Iceland's best DJs, including Futuregrapher, Skurken, Tanya Pollock and Snooze Infinity will help you find your groove.

July 25 at 22:00

## Laugar

### Edduhótel

### Grísalappalísa

Poet-punks Grísalappalísa perform live. Expect rock and fucking roll.

July 20 at 21:00

## Reykholt

### Snorrastofa

### Snorri Sturluson

Sitting on the ground floor of the local church, Snorrastofa has an exhibition dedicated to poet, historian and politician Snorri Sturluson as well as the middle ages in Iceland.

On permanent display

## Stykkishólmur

### Vatnasafnið / Library of Water

### Water, Selected

An ongoing exhibition with 24 columns filled with glacier water from all over the country.

On permanent display

### Eldfjallasafnið

Works of art, old and recent, showing volcanic eruptions, and artifacts.

It also boasts volcanic rocks from the collection of professor Haraldur Sigurðsson, who's researched volcanoes worldwide for 40 years.

Runs until September 30

## Tálknafjörður

### Hópið

### Futuregrapher / Skurken / Tanya Pollock / Snooze Infinity

Be sure to catch Iceland's best DJs at Hópið, where they will be laying down some impeccable deep house, ambient and weirdcore beats.

July 26 at 22:00



July 13<sup>th</sup>—September 14<sup>th</sup>  
**POINTS OF CONTACT**



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## THE HOUSE AT EYRARBAKKI

*The House at Eyrarbakki*



Árnessýsla folk museum is located in Húsið, the House, historical home of the Danish merchants built in 1765. Húsið is one of the oldest houses in Iceland and a beautiful monument of Eyrarbakki's time as the biggest trading place on the south coast.

Today one can enjoy exhibitions about the story and culture of the region, famous piano, shawl made out of human hair and the Kings pot, are among items. Húsið prides itself with warm and homelike atmosphere.



HÚSIÐ Á EYRARBAKKA  
Byggingasafn Árnesinga

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# F O O D

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## The Best Restaurant Reviews In The Last Year

COMPILED BY Tómas Gabriel Benjamin

We at the Grapevine have reviewed a myriad of restaurants in Reykjavík, and as this is our Best Of issue, we've pulled a few snippets from five restaurants that we gave five stars to in the last year.

### The Great Grillsby

Grillið, Hótel Saga,  
Hagatorg 1, 101 Reykjavík

#### What We Think:

Fine dining done right.

#### Flavour:

Nouvelle French, modern Spanish, seasonal local ingredients

#### Ambiance:

A little on the formal side

#### Service:

Spoiled me rotten

#### Four course menu for two (with wine):

33,200 ISK



The first main course was a fried plaice with smoky cheese, broccoli ragù and toasted sunflower seeds. I love plaice, but I missed the charred fish skin. A delicious combination but the plating could have been livelier. This was paired with an Abadal Picapoll—quite fruity but drier and denser than the last one. Not out of place with the plaice (sorry).

The second main course was grilled tenderloin with Icelandic oyster mush-

rooms, pearl onion and spring onions. I was very surprised to hear they had sourced the oyster mushrooms from a local grower in Hafnarfjörður. The two-month dry aged tenderloin was complex and mellow. Heavy on the onion flavour, but the meat could handle it. This was paired with a 2006 Cune rioja. An excellent wine, but the least successful pairing out of the bunch—probably due to the onions.

Ragnar Egilsson

### Not Just A Pretty Place

#### Dill

was in the Nordic House,  
now Hverfisgata 12, 101

#### What We Think:

A deliciously unique experience

#### Flavour:

Local produce dressed up

#### Ambiance:

Tranquil Scandinavian simplicity

#### Service:

Attentive and subtle

#### Price for 2: 5-course menu

9,100 ISK, another 9,100 ISK with wine



Then came the main course, delicious lamb done three ways: lamb fillet, lamb shanks (an abysmally underrated cut), and crispy lamb fat topped with sweet carrots to bribe the jury. A smooth, fully rounded 2010 Gerard Bertrand Cor-

bières brought the case to a close.

Dessert consisted of a refreshing strawberry and skyr sorbet with crunchy oats, freeze-dried raspberries and tarragon. Skyr sorbet is something of a has-been, but it's never tasted better than at Dill, tart with none of the lactose-y dryness. This was washed down with a Peter Lehmann dessert wine that tasted like liquid autumn.

Patricia Pormar

### Mystery Trip Made The Night

#### Forréttabarninn

Nýlendugata 14, 101 Reykjavík

#### What We Think:

Simple and small, yet fresh and totally on the money.

#### Flavour:

Southern European, new Nordic cuisine.

#### Ambiance:

Casual, "gastro-pubbish," perfect for a late night snack with drinks.

#### Service:

Friendly, accommodating.

#### Price for 2 (with drinks):

11,800 ISK.



The star of the night was without a doubt the fourth course: fried cod with pork belly, chorizo and parsnip purée.

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□ Nanna Dís

This was a delight in every sense of the word. The cod was perfectly cooked, still flaky on the inside and crisp on the outside. The pork belly was dripping with salty, fatty, porky goodness. Bits of chorizo are never harmful, its oil adding another flavour to the dish, which was all in all harmonious and full of flavour. A sprig of lemongrass was also present, and should not be underestimated. I would say this is one of the best dishes I've tasted in Reykjavík.

*Björn Teitsson*

## Secret Smørrebrød Society

**Jómfrúin,**

**Lækjargata 4, 101 Reykjavík**

### What We Think:

A cultural "oplevelse"

### Flavour:

Pickled, dried, cured, delicious

### Ambiance:

Aristocratic, yet inviting

### Service:

Attentive, professional

### Price for 2 (without drinks):

5-6,000 ISK



Upon entering Jómfrúin, the most surprising thing is probably the size of the restaurant: it's very roomy, reminiscent in a way of a canteen, and the tables are numerous. Make no mistake, however, on weekends in the summer you will be needing a reservation. My companion and I had nonetheless chosen the per-

fect day to visit: an extremely sunny and warm Sunday in late February.

Though my companion had actually visited the establishment a number of times (along with his mother, of course) this was my maiden voyage. And, what can I say? When in Rome... you absolutely must order a Danish beer on tap (950 ISK). And you absolutely must order a Danish schnapps (recommendations include Gammel Dansk (990 ISK) or Akvavit, (950 ISK)) before even opening the menu. Please note: Jómfrúin is only open until 18:00. So this means you will have to endure feeling a bit tipsy before supper—this seems to me to be a big part of the fun (and no doubt popularity) of the restaurant.

*Björn Teitsson*

## Thank You Mr. Boonchang!

**Ban Thai**

**Laugavegur 126, 105 Reykjavík**

**What We Think:** Best Thai food in Iceland. Without the slightest doubt.

**Flavour:** Spicy, salty, savoury, sweet, exotic.

### Ambiance:

Kitschy and cheesy, but fitting.

### Service:

Can be slow if crowded. Sufficient.

### Price for 2 (with drinks):

6-8,000 ISK (a steal!).



Ban Thai also offers a take-away menu consisting of 12 different items. This

is hereby recommended to everyone. But inside the restaurant, the menu is gigantic. I mean—it's huge. It has over 150 items! This would certainly be considered problematic in any other restaurant, but I refer to my previous statement—I trust Mr. Boonchang. The number of items pretty much means that you will possibly (or most likely) have to wait a bit longer than in your average restaurant. This is, however, stated on the first page of the menu: "This is not a fast-food restaurant, it takes time to cook everything from scratch, nothing it pre-made." But the wait is easy, and worth it—especially with a couple of Singha Thai beers (590 ISK) by your side.

What is left to be said? For fans of Thai cuisine, this is as authentic as it gets in Iceland. For chilli-fanatics, this is as hot as it gets in Iceland, hands down. This has been tried and tested. And the prices are excellent! To me, the quality of the food is really up there with the best of them. Anywhere. But dividing price by expectations and outcome...Ban Thai stands head and shoulders above the rest. Not just Thai restaurants. Every restaurant! Thank you, Mr. Boonchang, my trust in you remains, unabated.

*Björn Teitsson*



# SNAPS

Reykjavík | B I S T R O - B A R | Est. 2012

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Ban Thai





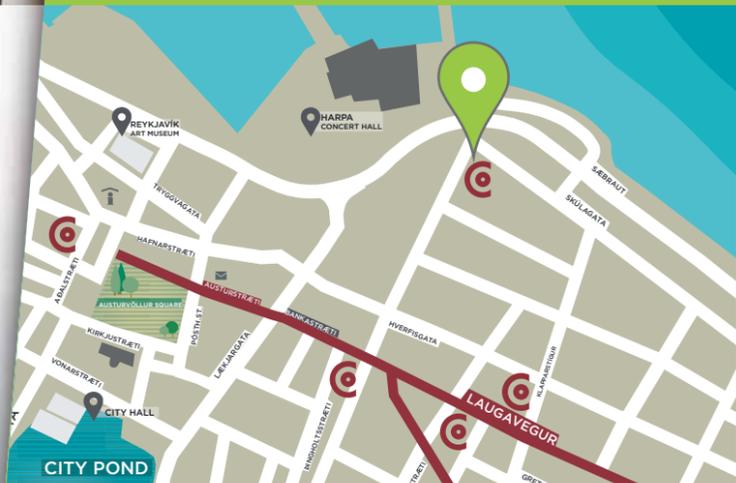
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