





COVER PHOTO:

Photo: Joana Fontinha

As our cover story is about the influence of, well, influencers on tourism in Iceland, here Joana has taken a person capturing photos of Iceland, and made them the subject of another photo themselves. In so doing, she is turning the lens back on the lens that captures, and sells, the image of Iceland.

# First



07: Bónus Flag vs Alþingi  
11: Punx Not Dead  
12: Wild Wild East



18: Sounds Of Anything  
22: Finding Family  
23: Island Beer



28: Slippurinn  
30: Laugarvatn Delights  
31: The Chef Islander

## EDITORIAL

# Monstrous Month For Human Rights



June has not been a good month for human rights in the world. Finland and Sweden have decided to give a discount on their own human rights policies while negotiating with the autocracy of Turkey, and promise to extradite persecuted Kurds—who have been killed en masse in Turkey for decades. The same people who fought the fascist monsters in ISIS when few others dared to do so.

Finland and Sweden see this as an acceptable price for joining NATO. Sending people to their open death, to a country where the national leader, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, stole power in broad daylight, on live TV, just a few years ago.

Don't get us wrong, we want Finland and Sweden to join NATO to strengthen the alliance even further against the frantic political madness that is happening in the Kremlin. But befriending one deranged dictator to fight another one feels like an unworthy move for the values we are trying to defend in the western world.

In late June, two people were shot to death in a well-known gay bar in Oslo, Norway. More were wounded in the attack which has been dubbed in the media as some kind of hybrid of Islamist fascist attack on western values—and mental issues. Just to clear it up, mental health has little to do with it. Most people in the world actually handle their mental issues pretty well, unlike unoriginal screenwriters in Hollywood would have you believe. Not that it matters, for this attack was just a straight-up terrorist attack against the LGBTQ+ community. It was not the first one, and will not be the last attack either.

The courageous people in Oslo took it to the streets the day after, disregarding the police's advice to the community not to hold their heads high on the scheduled Gay Pride. It was the right choice for those who didn't listen and the only acceptable move against hate. We at the Reykjavik Grapevine bow our heads in respect for you all.

And finally, the US Supreme Court's decision to overturn Roe vs Wade 50 years later is no simple thing. First of all, it's outright laughable that the court didn't find the right to an abortion constitutional, because there is no mention of the word abortion in the Constitution. Bear in mind that the Constitution was written at the same time as slavery was legal and women were property of their fathers and husbands. The US court system has a serious problem on its hands if they want to join the rest of the world in the 21st century if they try to define their whole legal system and human rights based on wording from a time when human rights didn't even exist.

It's only a matter of time before there will be an increase in news about ten-year-old victims pregnant with their father's child being denied an abortion.

The saddest thing here is that the politicians could easily correct this if they wanted, but the Democratic leadership has inexplicably shown no willingness to use the tools at their disposal to defend body autonomy. And Republican leaders are already using the Roe decision to justify denying critical healthcare to trans people. They rely their entire political careers on being dictated to by the Christian fanatics or the gun nuts. Usually one the same person. And by the way, do you know what word is not to be found in the Bible? You guessed it; abortion!

Even God doesn't give a shit if you're wondering. It's just straight-up barbaric to refuse people the power over their own bodies.

**Valur Grettilsson**  
Editor-in-chief



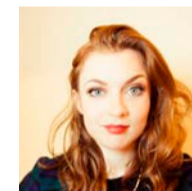
**Joana Fontinha** is an Aries baby expressing her soul through photography. She's been obsessed with Icelandic culture since her teens, so much that at 20 she threw herself head-first on a plane to her long-time dream country, Iceland. Driven, energetic and unable to be still, she clumsily moves like a flash and suffers from a serious fast-talking condition.



**Alice Poggio**, quarter-life crisis is all too real, but Alice is making the most of it. Chasing down her numerous interests, which have shaped her into the poster child for the sometimes painful phrase: 'Master of none'. UAL graduate, volunteer, sculptor, freelance artist, wannabe MacGyver, is now eager to play her part within the landscape of Icelandic media.



**Emma Ledbetter** was once the only person on a group tour of Iceland's south coast, which made her fall in love—a little bit with the guide and a lot with Iceland. She has a microbiology degree, so she is legally obligated to say "Go Cougs" to anyone wearing crimson and gray, and morally obligated to tell you she loves bacteria.



**Josie Anne Gaitens** is an arts worker, musician and writer from the Scottish Highlands. She was once erroneously referred to as the Queen of Scotland by a Malaysian newspaper and has been falsely using that title ever since. In addition to her Grapevine duties, she is currently on a mission to have a pint in every bar in 101.



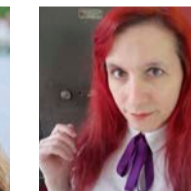
**Iryna Zubenko** is a Ukrainian who has been working on the cross-section of media and technology for the past five years. While she is still figuring out what to do in life, this time her love for travelling, unspoiled nature and Scandi design has brought Iryna to Reykjavik. One day she'll write a non-fiction book.



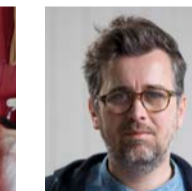
**Catharine Fulton** is a writer who has been involved with the Grapevine for many years—possibly too many—serving as journalist, food editor and news editor before settling on copy editor. When not wielding her red pen she's often found opining on Canadian politics (professionally), and bitching about Icelandic politics (for fun).



**Asha Edmondson** studies and takes on just about everything back home in the States. From communications to dance to psychology to sailing, there is almost nothing she hasn't tried. An intrusive thought of "What if I spent my summer in Iceland?" turned into reality, bringing her to the Grapevine.



**Andie Sophia Fontaine** has lived in Iceland since 1999 and has been reporting since 2003. She was the first foreign-born member of the Icelandic Parliament, an experience she recommends for anyone who wants to enjoy a workplace where colleagues work tirelessly to undermine each other.



**Valur Grettilsson** is an award-winning journalist, author and playwright. He has been writing for Icelandic media since 2005. He was also a theatre critic and one of the hosts of the cultural program, 'Djöflaeyjan' on RÚV. Valur is not to be confused with the dreadful football club that bears the same name.

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Reynisfjara: beautiful, but also deadly

## What Are Icelanders Talking About?

The hot topics rockin' the comment sections

Words: **Andie Sophia Fontaine** Photos: **Art Bicnick**

**NEWS** We had a peaceful four years, but now, thanks to one dude, we are all forced to talk about whale hunting again. Hvalur hf., the last company in Iceland still hunting fin whales, and its CEO, rich Boomer and enfant terrible Kristján Loftsson, have resumed hunting whales again after a four-year hiatus. So once again, Iceland is making international headlines for this bizarre and cruel practice that cannot even be defended financially — not only does it hurt Iceland's biggest industry (tourism), whaling itself fails to generate a profit. On the bright side, Minister of Fisheries Svandís Svavarsdóttir has intimated that she will likely let Hvalur's whaling license expire, but that won't happen until the end of 2023. As such, we will most likely have to go through this same song and dance next summer, too.

Another unfortunate subject that has entered the discussion again is **Reynisfjara**, and not on account of its beautiful black sands or striking basalt columns. Rather, because sadly **yet another person has died there** — the fifth such death in the past seven years. The latest death has prompted renewed discussion about what to do about the beach:

close it altogether? Install greater security measures? Close it sometimes? Or do nothing at all? So far, it seems the government is most willing to set up an **early warning system** in the area. Whether this will make a material difference remains to be seen.

Oh, we also **had another shooting**. This time, it wasn't in Reykjavík, but in the normally calm and family-friendly town of Hafnarfjörður. There, a man in his sixties allegedly fired shots from an unidentified firearm at a vehicle that had an

adult and child inside. Fortunately, neither were physically injured. After a stand-off with police that lasted a few hours, the man surrendered to authorities. It is uncertain what his motivations were, but this recent uptick in shootings has caused many Icelanders to worry that shootings may soon become a more common occurrence.

In happier news, the Minister of Justice's **controversial bill to amend the Law on Foreigners has failed** to pass. Jón Gunnarsson, the Minister in question, withdrew the bill before it could be defeated, vowing to submit it again in the autumn. If he does, this would mark the fifth attempt by the Independence Party to make life more difficult for immigrants in Iceland, particularly those seeking international protection. There are no indications that his bill will have better chances in September. 🇮🇸



This whale will likely breathe easier in 2024



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ASK AN EXPERT

**Q: Why are horses important to Icelanders?**



Words: **Asha Edmondson**  
Photo: **Jelena Ohm**

*If you have ever driven through the Icelandic countryside, you have likely caught glimpses of majestic Icelandic horses standing in farmers' fields. Perhaps your first introduction to Iceland was its special equine. But what makes the Icelandic horse so special and culturally significant? We asked Jelena Ohm from Horses of Iceland.*

"With the settlement of Iceland they brought along the horses, and it's many people's opinion that without the horses Icelanders would have never survived in this harsh environment. At the time, they were the main means of transportation, they were means for food, they were means for shelter," explains Jelena. "I don't think you can really talk about the history of Iceland without the Icelandic horse because it is so interwoven within the Sagas and the history."

"That relationship kind of progressed over the years and with the Industrial Revolution and cars coming in," Jelena continues. "It changed the relationship between the horses and Icelanders because they started to turn more into life companions."

The relationship developed, and now Icelandic horses are used for hobbies, competitions, tourism and breeding. As the relationship between Icelanders and horses shifted, it has allowed for more professionalism, innovation and opportunities for the continued symbolism of the Icelandic horse.

"So many people are here because of the Icelandic horse. I know so many people who first became aware of Iceland because of the Icelandic horse, and who now live and work here with them," adds Jelena. "We think of them today as the best ambassadors for Iceland."

tion of Icelandic Employers (SA) will be able to convince unions to settle for a small wage increase, SA chair Halldór Benjamín Þorbergsson pointed out that Iceland's purchasing power is nearing its peak. Data from Statistics Iceland does show disposable income rising steadily, and Halldór added that "sometimes you need to take one step back in order to take two steps forward later. I think that applies well to the fragile state of the economy today."

**The union response**

Meanwhile, Drífa Snædal, the president of the Icelandic Confederation of Labour (ASÍ), pointed out that the policy rate is higher now than it was three years ago, when the previous wage agreements were approved. Rather than seeing wages driving inflation, she believes the inflation rate can be attributed to a runaway housing market.

**Wages, housing and inflation**

The housing market can have a real and significant effect on inflation, brought about by demand outpacing supply to a great degree. It is no secret that housing prices in Iceland have been rising dramatically while supply remains constrained — and rising policy rates contribute to the cost of owning a home. This has in turn affected the rental market, which hits lowest income earners especially hard.

Whatever the next few weeks and months bear out, one thing is certain: upcoming wage negotiations are going to be hard fought. 🇮🇸



# Inflation: What's Causing It & What To Do About It?

The Central Bank, management and labour at odds

Words: **Andie Sophia Fontaine**

Photo: **Art Bicnick**

There is no disputing that Iceland's inflation rate has been steadily rising — from 4.3% in July 2021 to 7.6% in April 2022. The real question is what to do about it, and the Central Bank, business leaders, and union representatives all have different approaches that indicate a tough road ahead in the upcoming wage negotiations. Chair of the Central Bank Ásgeir Jónsson announced June 22nd that the bank would raise its policy rate by another

percent, taking it to 4.75%. This is the seventh such increase in the past year. The raising of the policy rate is, of course, an attempt to quell inflation, but from there, things get more complicated.

**Purchasing power and wages**

While reluctant to say whether he believed it is likely that the Confedera-

LOST IN GOOGLE TRANSLATION

## The Sea Bids Farewell—To Itself

Climate change is really taking a turn for the (even) worse, with the ocean recently deciding to call it quits and bid us all adieu. We knew sea levels were rising but had no idea the water had decided to say goodbye entirely! But wait, that's not the only thing wrong with this headline. Apparently the sea has only been working for half a century—a miscommunication that would make any historian, oceanographer, or geologist run for higher ground. This headline conjured up images of the ocean rising out of the ground, or worse,

disappearing entirely—leaving Iceland and the rest of the world high and dry. We at The Reykjavik Grapevine were mightily baffled by this reported turn of events, until we looked out the window and realized good ol' Google had muffed it up again, pulling a fast one on all of us in the process. The original headline reads "Kveður hafið eftir rúma hálfa öld á sjó," but our friends at Google translated it to "The sea says goodbye after more than half a century at sea." Believe it or not, Icelanders have multiple words for "sea." In this confusing kerfuffle of a sentence, "hafið" and "sjó" are effectively both referring to that big body of water—but in fact fisherman Kristján Björnsson is saying farewell to the sea (hafið), after he spent over 50 years at sea (á sjó). It's a happy retirement message with a nautical twist. So it looks like we're safe from a desolate, waterless future—for now. Maybe the folks over at Google were trying to send us a warning message. They are, after all, in California, so they know a thing or two about drought. So don't make the water mad, or it may retire...forever. EL 🇮🇸

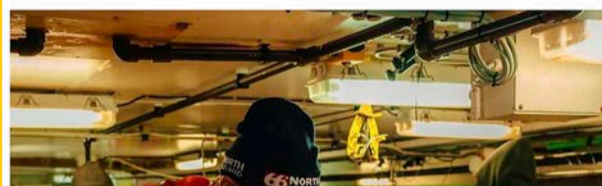
### The sea says goodbye after more than half a century at sea

Samúel Karl Ólason writes © June 12, 2022 11:00 p.m.



### Kveður hafið eftir rúma hálfa öld á sjó

Samúel Karl Ólason skrifar © 12. Júní 2022 11:00



# SMASHED BURGERS AND NASHVILLE-STYLE HOT CHICKEN IN DOWNTOWN REYKJAVIK

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GREAT MOMENTS  
IN ICELANDIC  
HISTORY



# The Bónus Flag at The Parliament

A moment that said so much with so little

**Words:** This moment has a pretty unique stand in this writer's mind, as I witnessed it take place. I was a young journalist when it happened in 2008 and I remember the tension it presented, which I tried to explain in an article printed in the newspaper, DV, the day after. This is the story about a young anarchist who flew the Bónus flag from the parliament flagpole, which instigated a riot and turned out to be the first indication of the famous Pots and Pans Revolution against the sitting government of Iceland.

**Photo:** Screenshots from DV

## First: some context

This incident happened around one month after the last big bank collapsed in Iceland's spectacular and complete banking failure that threatened the economic future of Icelanders. 'Banksters' had been running wild across the world, resulting in the Brits evoking the Anti-terrorism, Crime and Security Act to secure deposits in connection with Icesave—which would later become a major international dispute between Iceland, the UK and the Netherlands. Regular housing loans had skyrocketed and it was clear that thousands of Icelanders would lose their homes

within the next months and years. As a result, Icelanders, un-organised but angry, started to take to the streets.

## The weekly protest

On Saturday 8th of November 2008 there was a gathering outside parliament. This in itself wasn't special: protesters met weekly but hadn't really gotten any straight answers from the government. It was starting to dawn on everybody that politicians had been enabling the Icelandic bankers the whole time.

Hörður Torfason, a legendary musician, had been helping to organise these peaceful protests every week, and they had grown significantly in numbers. Now there were not hundreds, but thousands of people at the protest.

## New faces, covered faces

The protest went on like usual. There were a few speeches and a lot of angry faces in the crowd. But I spotted a crowd I had not noticed before; some of them were dressed in black and all of them covered their faces. These were the young anarchist activists, a new generation of protesters who had

been repeatedly in the news in connection with the most concerted environmentalist fight Icelanders had ever seen a few years before, the building of Kárahnjúkar dam. These guys were serious.

Shortly after the speeches people turned their focus on the parliament. They threw eggs and skyr at the house and chanted that the government needed to go.

And then, all of a sudden, we saw a young, slim man, dressed in a red hoodie and military pants, walking on the roof of the parliament. The protesters immediately started cheering him on. The man pulled out a Bónus flag—obviously stolen from the discount supermarket chain. Next he started to raise it on the pole until it flew high over the building hiding the corrupt government. It was a powerful statement, as one of Iceland's biggest players in the economic crash was the owner of these discount stores. The message was clear: the government was firmly under the heel of dirty investment bankers.

## First serious clash

The police mobilised to get the young anarchist and headed to the parliament garden where he had climbed to the roof, but the protesters saw what was happening and rushed to stop them apprehending the anarchist. This turned out to be the first serious clash between the protesters and the police. The young man managed to climb down, and the protesters blocked the police's efforts to arrest him.

After the event I managed to interview the young protester. His name was Haukur Hilmarrson, and I asked him what he wanted to achieve when he flew the Bónus flag. He told me, "We just wanted to show people that they can change everything. It doesn't perhaps feel like a big difference to fly a flag for a minute—but it shows that nothing is unchangeable."

Haukur lost his life around a decade later. He was killed by Syria, where he was fighting alongside the Kurds against ISIS. His body has never been repatriated, despite many attempts by his mother to bring him home. We immortalised him on our cover in November 2018, where we wrote about his remarkable, but sadly short, life.

This incident is an incredibly important one in Icelandic history, even if Haukur didn't recognise that himself at the time. It is said to have been the first shift towards the Pots and Pans Revolution which ultimately resulted in bringing down the government, and forcing them to actually go and clean up the economic mess, instead of being a part of it. 🇮🇸

## NEW MUSIC PICKS



**Ari Árelíus**  
**Melrakkí**

We're not quite sure how, but all of a sudden Ari Árelíus is everywhere. His latest single "Melrakkí", released on July 1st, reminds us of the 70s; colourful flowery carpets, velvet pants and psychedelic vibes. Playful, dynamic, and upbeat, this jazzy instrumental tune is great for any kind of trip in any kind of weather. His debut album *Hiatus Terræ* will be out on July 22nd. **KW**



**neonme**  
**The Flower Phallus**

If someone had asked me in the 90s what I thought music would sound like in the 2020s, this would be it. This brief but intriguing piece opens with an extended electronic instrumental that sounds like a wind-up toy made of hard candy, but then drops us into soaring synths and ethereal vocals that left us wanting more. Certainly didn't hurt that the video was playfully weird. Definitely an artist to keep an ear out for. **ASF**



**Una Schram**  
**mess**

Sharing the name of Una's newest mixtape, 'mess' is a smooth R&B piece that conjures feelings of longing and regret. Taking you straight back to the teenage and early 20-something confusion about life and the future, the song, and the whole mixtape, reminds you that nobody is perfect and nobody knows what they are doing. **AE**

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# Instagram vs Re

## How The Digital Age Of Tourism Changed Iceland Forever

WORDS: Josie Anne Gaitens PHOTOS: provided by influencers

**T**ourism was the unexpected saviour of the Icelandic economy after the financial crisis of 2008, and since then social media platforms like Instagram have facilitated a huge boom in visitors. Fourteen years later, with tourist numbers expected to return to pre-pandemic figures rapidly and infrastructure struggling to keep up with demand, is it finally time to face up to our relationship with tourism in the age of social media?

It's an image you've seen before: the dark basalt columns, lined up in almost unnatural uniformity, shaded soft grey and black from passing rain squalls. A person is perched on top, their bright orange jacket contrasting with the monochrome background. Around them; nothing. They are alone, a sole vivid spark in the vast expanse of Icelandic nature.

Except, of course, they're not. The image is captured—sometimes repeatedly, until the exact correct angle is achieved—and then immediately the subject's place is filled by another person, and another almost identical photo is taken. And so it goes on. In fact, the beach is crowded. People queue, jostling each other for a spot to pose on the stones. Behind them others take selfies, Facetime their families and send up drones, dodging the encroaching waves that continually batter the shoreline.

This is the reality of travel in the era of social media. Reynisfjara, the site of these iconic rock columns—which feature heavily on Instagram's #Iceland feed—has already received more than 100,000 visitors this year, according to statistics collected by Visit Iceland. What's more, it's also the location of a number of recent tragedies; a man in his 80's was killed after being caught by a so-called 'sneaker wave' just last month. In total there have been five deaths—as well as numerous near misses—at Reynisfjara in the past seven years. All of them were tourists.

### INTRODUCING: INFLUENCERS

Tourism has changed substantially since the turn of the century, and this is in no small part due to our burgeoning relationship with—and increasing reliance on—social media platforms such as Instagram. While individuals might

previously have engaged the help of a specialist travel agent to assist them in planning and booking their holidays, nowadays more and more of us are turning to the photo and video sharing app to get inspiration and knowledge about our intended destinations.

However, it turns out that despite the internet generation's aversion to in-person commercial interactions (see also: the rise of supermarket self-checkouts and online clothes shopping), when it comes to travel we are still looking for figures to guide and inform us. These modern-day equivalents to travel agents are social media 'influencers', individuals who craft curated feeds and attract thousands, sometimes millions of followers. Their power to shape and change the way that people travel cannot be downplayed, especially in a small country like Iceland where changes to trends and norms can be felt very quickly.

### MILLENNIAL GO-TO

Kyana Sue Powers admits she was not an avid Instagram user before she started planning her first trip to Iceland.

"Before coming here I lived under a social media rock," she explains, laughing. "I didn't know that everybody had Instagram, I just followed family and friends."

Despite not considering herself a particularly engaged Instagram user, Kyana felt it was an obvious choice when it came to planning her first visit to Iceland. "I went to Instagram to research because that's just where Millennials and younger people go these days to get inspired for their next trip, or to know where to go once they arrive at their destination," she says. "I basically started following any account that had to do with Iceland, and that's when I was opened up to this world of travel influencers."

### FINDING A VOICE

By the time Kyana arrived in Iceland she was hooked—both on social media and her love for the country. After spending a week travelling the Ring Road, she vowed she would return to make Iceland her home. For her, building a social media presence was a natural progression in her journey to creating a new life in Iceland.

"Because of everyone I was following on Instagram, I didn't see people with normal jobs, like doctors and construction workers," she says. "I only saw people travelling and taking pictures and being photographers. So of course

I thought, well I need to go and do that too."

After spending months researching photography and social media marketing skills, Kyana saw her following on Instagram steadily start to grow. But it wasn't until the launch of 'reels'—short format video clips, often with music, that is Instagram's answer to TikTok or Vine (RIP)—that she really found her particular niche. She began making videos on the theme of "my daily life in Iceland", many of which have been watched over a million times.

"I really found my own voice through social media," Kyana confides. What's more, it's a voice that clearly resonates with her audience. Kyana has heard from many tourists that her content is responsible for encouraging them to plan a trip to Iceland. Today she has 32.4K followers on Instagram, and almost 50K on TikTok.

### THE CULT OF AUTHENTICITY

At its core, tourism is an incredibly strange phenomenon. Every year, millions of people leave their comfortable homes for other spaces and realities. Tourism is experience produced on an industrial scale. It fuels economies, builds cities, and shapes how all of us—whether resident or visitor—live our lives.

"Recently it's been much more, 'give me the raw'—along with 'I want it to look really beautiful.'"

But the concept of tourism has evolved and shifted in the context of Instagram, and the digital age more broadly. In this time of online-enlightenment, tourism has become embroiled in the ugliest internet debate of them all: the inescapable cult of authenticity. The impassioned hunt for experiences which can be considered 'authentic' is one of the most significant drivers of postmodern tourism, and it's an arena in which countries like Iceland, which would have once been considered undesirable as holiday destinations, have excelled. Even Syria—still battered and burying its war dead—has been met with a marked increase in requests for tourist visas in recent years.

### DEGREE OF INFLUENCE

Jewells Chambers, who has a popular Youtube channel, podcast, and various other media platforms under the umbrella name "All Things Iceland," recognises that the idea of authenticity can sometimes feel like a trap.

"There's this whole "Instagram vs Reality trend," she says. "Up until the past couple of years, I don't think people would have really been into it. But recently it's been much more, 'give me the raw'—along with 'I want it to look really beautiful.'"

Jewells, who like Kyana is originally from the US, moved to the country to live with her Icelandic partner in the mid 2010s. She has a background in digital marketing and has worked with multiple companies alongside producing her own content, but says that the perception other people have of her work is not always kind.

"There is a huge misconception of what [influencer] means," Jewells explains. "A lot of people think of Kim Kardashian—a huge figure in terms of pop culture. But they also think of selling or pushing things that you might not ever have had experience with, or that you don't really believe in, or that it's all just for the money."

Jewells is quick to contradict that opinion: "For me one of the most important parts of my sharing is that it comes from an authentic place, and that I have experience of something, whether that's an activity or a particular circumstance," she clarifies. "Everyone has influence to a degree, whether it's to a lot of people or just within your immediate circle. I think of it as, you trust that person and their advice or

recommendations—and so I take it very seriously."

### THE TOURIST BOOM

Before the early 2010s, Iceland did not know large-scale international tourism. But a perfect storm of factors conspired to change the situation—and rapidly. Firstly, Iceland suffered hugely in the financial crisis of 2008. While on paper that might not seem like an ideal incubator for tourism, the reality is that prior to the crash, Iceland was not a feasible holiday destination for most people because being here was just too damn expensive.

The second reason was environmental, and probably only slightly less anticipated than the recession: Eyjafjallajökull. The volcano erupted in 2010, throwing huge amounts of ash into the sky and grounding air traffic across most of the globe. Suddenly, tiny Iceland was on every news station on the planet, simultaneously. Sure, the coverage was not overwhelmingly posi-



# Reality

tive—cue the video of a drunk Scottish guy bellowing “AH HATE ICELAND,” behind a frustrated news anchor’s back—but it put the country in everyone’s minds.

The post-tourism pull of the hard-to-reach, unusual place that nobody else was going to was the final piece of the puzzle that chimed with a new breed of social-media savvy traveler. In 2009, 494,000 visitors came to Iceland. In 2019, that figure was over two million.

## “MCDISNEYIZATION”

Along with this marked increase in visitor numbers has come a dramatic change in the landscape of Iceland—both environmentally and culturally. For instance, the post-modern tourist does not desire to stay in traditional hostels or hotels as their parents did. Instead, they have turned to companies like Airbnb, who offer the opportunity to stay smack dab in the middle of downtown Reykjavik, in apartments that are desired for both their simulacra of ‘authenticity’, as well as their aesthetic currency for sharing online. The fact that Iceland is currently experiencing its worst rental shortage of all time does not feel unrelated.

It’s a phenomenon that American sociologist George Ritzer refers to as “McDisneyization”—the idea that increasingly, cities and spaces are being rationalised for consumption by the visiting tourist, often at the expense of those who actually live there. Kyana recognises the issue in some of her audience, who come to Iceland expecting to be swept away in a fairytale experience.

“I think the biggest ‘Instagram vs reality’ experiences people have when

## “THIS COULD KILL YOU”

What Kyana sees as a real concern, however, is the way that social media may be encouraging people to interact with Icelandic nature in ways that risk harm to individuals—or the landscape itself.

“We’re all the same: we go somewhere new and think, oh I have to take that photo, we’re never coming back, let’s just do it,” she says, with empathy. “But in some cases in Iceland you could really regret doing it.”

Kyana continues: “For example, the volcano: I know we were lucky in that there were no deaths or major injuries, but there were a lot of people who messaged me saying they were going to go up, even if there was a big storm.”

Jewells shares similar worries regarding safety at Fagradalsfjall: “People were walking on the lava like it was fine,” she says, incredulously. “But it’s like no, this could kill you!”

Jewells also believes, however, that it is the responsibility of her and others in her industry to set a standard of behaviour that others can follow: “If you’re an influencer, and you’re doing something reckless, there’s a good chance that people that people will copy you and try and get that same picture.”

“I’m not saying it’s one person’s fault,” she adds. “But let’s not try and encourage behaviour that could have people jumping off a cliff, or standing on the moss.”

## THE BIEBER EFFECT

Perhaps the most famous moss-wrecker of them all is pop star Justin Bieber. In 2015, Bieber filmed the music video for his song “I’ll Show You” in Iceland, which included scenes of

they come here is the amount of people,” she says. “Because of course, you were inspired by a small person standing in front of a beautiful waterfall, and you thought, oh my gosh that’s amazing. But then when you actually come here, you might be on a tour or it might be peak time, and there will be hundreds of people standing in front of Skógafoss.”

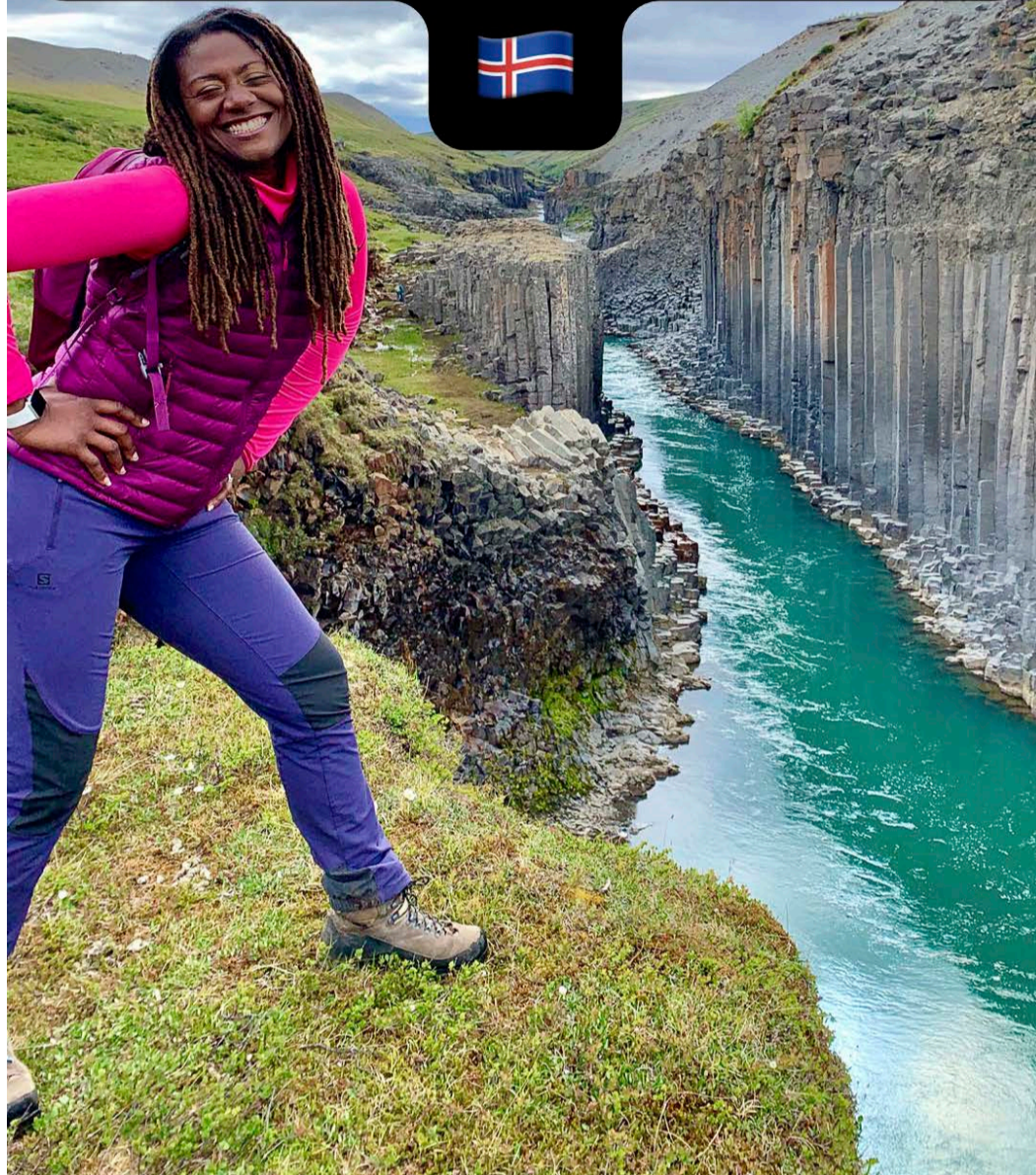
Kyana herself now frequently travels Iceland during the night in summer time, in order to get the photographs her followers expect, devoid of crowds. “It’s my way of doing my job more effectively,” she says, matter-of-factly.

him running on protected moss in the Fjaðrárgljúfur gorge of South Iceland, as well as swimming in Jökulsárlón—aka the ‘diamond lagoon’—which can be incredibly dangerous.

Since then, footfall in Fjaðrárgljúfur—which was previously relatively unknown to tourists—has increased substantially, and park rangers have reported damage to the moss, which can take many years to grow back.

Kyana feels frustrated that the Icelandic government seem to acknowledge the damage that can be caused by one influencer’s actions, without engaging with those who want

# THIS IS WHAT TO EXPECT DURING SUMMER IN ICELAND



Jewells Chambers (All Things Iceland) teaches her followers about Icelandic life on Instagram

to help protect Iceland’s nature, as well as the safety of those who want to visit it responsibly:

“With this black beach situation, people are just walking past the signs,” she says, regarding the recent deaths at Reynisfjara. “I don’t know if that’s to do with where they’re located, or if they’re not big enough. But what I do know is that changing these things can only do so much, because travellers relate best to other people.”

She goes on: “There are tonnes of travel influencers in the country who inspire people to come here, and I think we’re the ones who need to share this message. I don’t know why the Minister or the Tourism Board isn’t coming to us to help get across this huge safety message.”

## CONSCIOUS TOURISM

Jewells echoes Kyana’s sentiments, saying that there is a big interest from her audience for content regarding how to be a responsible tourist.

“More and more people want to be seen as conscious tourists,” she says. “I try to cater to that, educating people on different aspects. Maybe it’s just my community, but I feel like people really appreciate that.”

While the government so far has not taken the initiative to recruit influencers for major safety campaigns, both Jewells and Kyana, as well as other influencers, have taken it upon themselves to inform and educate their followers, with content such as “8 Mistakes Tourists Make” (Kyana) and “7 Ways Iceland Can Kill You” (Jewells).

However, one aspect where Jewells and Kyana feel differently is on the subject of geotagging locations—the method by which those sharing content on social media can pinpoint the exact spot where it was produced.

“Sometimes people share pictures but don’t share where the location is,” Jewells says. “I get that you want to make travel inspo, and there are some places where perhaps you shouldn’t share the location because it’s dangerous for people to go there, or they could cause damage. But in my opinion I love when people share information about a place, what you should and shouldn’t do—interesting places to go, but also what to watch out for.”

## KEEPING SECRETS

But Kyana feels strongly that some places should not be shared on social media at all. “If it’s a place where you don’t want to share the location, it’s quite possible that you shouldn’t even put it on Instagram,” she says.

“All it takes is the awareness of location,” she adds. “You may not think it’s a big issue, but there have been a few hot springs in Iceland that have been

“If you’re doing something reckless, there’s a good chance that people will copy you.”



REEL LIFE IN ICELAND  
ATV Adventure

Kyana Sue Powers utilises Instagram 'reels' to reach her fans

"It's given me a whole life in Iceland, which is incredible," she says, gratefully. Kyana was recently given a visa to remain in Iceland, after an extremely tumultuous period where she was under

the summer, walking down Laugavegur can feel like being an extra in someone else's fantasy of Iceland—a fantasy that is often sold to people through social media.

**"There has to be a conversation about the capacity of what Iceland can handle."**

threat of deportation after having her work visa declined. Unsurprisingly, Kyana turned to her social media accounts to raise support for her cause, which seemed to be a major contributor to the reversal of the Department of Work and Pensions' decision.

However, it was not without controversy—many criticisms were levelled at Kyana, including that her campaign lacked self-awareness and failed to acknowledge her privilege as a middle-class American, compared to the many others who face deportation from Iceland, often to places with deplorable or life-threatening conditions.

But despite this experience, Kyana is still happy to be here, and proud to be doing what she does. "It's pretty awesome that being a content creator, you get to work with other people who are doing the same thing," she remarks. "And at the end of the day, none of us know what we're doing—it's a brand new industry!" She laughs, and adds: "We're paving the way for people in the future and just trying to do our best. It's great to be able to have conversations about it with other creators, and I feel like there's a really good community here in Iceland."

There are big challenges to tackle. Every year, the Icelandic government pumps millions of krónur into promoting tourism in Iceland, with the apparent goal of attracting more and more visitors. Parallel to that, influencers like Kyana and Jewells also continue to build their brands, selling, essentially, a story about Iceland—a dream we are encouraged to follow. Meanwhile, hospitals, roads, campsites and car parks are all groaning at the seams. With so much at stake, can tourism really just continue to increase, unfettered?

"I don't see social media going anywhere," Kyana states. "But there has to be a conversation about the capacity of what Iceland can handle, because it seems impossible. The hotels are booked, there aren't enough cars. Where are these people going to stay?"

14 years ago, when Iceland's financial future hung in the balance, tourism came in to save it. Now, post-pandemic, and with inflation at its highest since 2009, the situation once again feels like it's balancing on a knife's edge. But the world is undeniably different now, and the way we travel must reflect that. Jewells, Kyana and their peers present a hopeful approach. Their focus on fostering personal connection and encouraging responsible, sensitive tourism, might just indicate the way forward. "There's this moral compass that's developing on the internet," Jewells says.

**"WHERE ARE THESE PEOPLE GOING TO STAY?"**

Regardless of what else that potential future holds, what is clear is that tourism and social media are both here to stay, and it is time to have an honest conversation about what that means in Iceland. In this experience economy, people are willing to spend great swathes of their income to immerse themselves in an imagined version of authentic Icelandic life. That we, as a country, benefit hugely from this is without doubt. Tourism is Iceland's biggest industry, after all, and there is barely anyone living here who doesn't gain some level of income or benefit from the tourism industry.

But Iceland is not a theme park. It is a home to 370,000 people, as well as a natural environment that is delicate and sensitive to change. At the height of

Tourism is no longer the domain of traditional gatekeepers like travel agents or airline companies—it belongs to the people who come here. It has been ostensibly democratised, but the grassroots movement has in itself grown to become commercial. Iceland will never be without tourism again, but our complex, codependent relationship with it is also firmly here to stay.

so amazing, and we have really great memories at them. And they are now closed—forever closed with a gate and a key."

"Even though it was still a 'secret' location," Kyana continues, "just the fact that people knew it existed, meant they could figure out how to get there, and they ended up trashing the place because it's not their home. And, you know, they're just tourists. They don't care. You see it every year at Seljalal-

laug. There's graffiti and trash and clothes and it smells."

"It's not because of locals," she concludes. "Locals are definitely not doing that. It's all tourists."

**THE JOYS OF THE JOB**

Despite the challenges that can be present in her line of work, Kyana is vocal about how much she loves her job.

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2022

# Happening

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ings app - APPENING  
on the Apple and  
Android stores



## North West we go! HÁTÍÐNI

July 1st - July 3rd - Borðeyri - 3,000 ISK

Returning for the fourth time, Post-dreifing is once again hosting HÁTÍÐNI in the northwest village of Borðeyri with an extensive lineup of DJs, post-punk bands, indie artists, and more. You are bound to find something up your alley. Promising a weekend of friends, both old and new, HÁTÍÐNI is the perfect place to bond with other music heads. **AE**



## Pride the Icelandic way! Reykjavik Pride

August 2nd until August 7th - Down-  
town Reykjavik - Free

Acclaimed as one of the biggest little Pride Parades in the world, Reykjavik Pride regularly attracts thousands of people—locals and tourists alike—to celebrate and show support for the LGBTQ+ community. So, don your rainbow regalia, recruit some friends, and run to the streets of Reykjavik for this event. It features a dance, parade and various festival activities, so there is plenty for everyone to enjoy. **EL**



## Iceland's greatest hits! Icelandic Sagas

July 4th until August 11th - Harpa -  
5,900 ISK

With two of Iceland's finest actors leading the charge, this comedic performance is sure to be a rollercoaster ride showcasing Iceland's fantastic—and surprising—Viking history. You'll learn about Vikings' practical concerns, from how to get your wife to stop killing your neighbour's slaves, to what to do when someone calls you a horse-ass-eater, with some moments in between that are too unscrupulous for even us to print. **EL**

## CULTURE NEWS



Festival goers gather at Norðanpaunk 2019

# School Of DIY

Some things are just better when you do them yourself

Words:  
**Emma Ledbetter**

Photos:  
**Joanna Pianka**  
&  
**provided by**  
**interviewee**

With three days of music from underground Icelandic artists and several favourite foreign bands, Norðanpaunk is the place not only to get your punk on, but to experience Iceland's "DIY" culture at its finest. Here—at a cosy venue in North Iceland—event organisers, musicians and festival goers unite under the belief that if you want something done right, you should do it yourself.

### Anti-consumer mindset

"If you sit around to wait for things to happen in Iceland, there wouldn't be much happening," says festival co-founder Árni Þorlákur Guðnason.

Norðanpaunk exists because music lovers decided to take things into their own hands, stepping beyond the all-too-common commercialised festival scene. "We wouldn't have those special, unusual acts without people committing to the inherent value in that happening. There are certain things that are only possible when people are engaged because of passion."

The people who do the work make the decisions, which is extremely empowering, Árni says. The crew members are extremely dedicated, returning year after year, because of this.

When it comes down to it, Árni believes DIY-ers are creative problem solvers and community builders. "It's a school for learning important skills. There's a different atmosphere that grows out of it," he says.

At Norðanpaunk, if you aren't part of the DIY community when you arrive, you will be when you leave. On the first day of the festival, people often have what Árni dubs the "consumer mindset," littering at the campsites and not taking responsibility for their surroundings. But after seeing organisers and musicians—who don't get paid for their work—picking up trash between shifts, their attitude changes. "By the third day, they're fully integrated into this way of living and partying together," Árni says.

With this culture of responsibility, Norðanpaunk may well be one of the cleanest festivals...ever. "It made me very happy to see the woman who owns the venue and campsites taking pictures and posting them on Facebook, asking people, 'Does it look this clean at your festival? I don't think so!'" Árni says.

### Welcome to the underground family

With around 400-500 people attending each year, the event delivers a strong sense of community. About half of the attendees during any given year are returning from a previous time, while the other half are new—friends of

friends, welcomed into the "family of underground," Árni explains.

The bands are hand-selected, and many are considered too unconventional for other venues, resulting in an event that's truly all about the art and the community surrounding it. "Nobody wants to listen to standard stuff," Árni says, "and the different scenes are constantly enriching each other."

Despite the name, the line-up at Norðanpaunk spans a broad range of genres—from death metal to electronic to techno—because, as Árni says, "The Icelandic scene is too small for people to become entrenched in only one." The result is a family celebration of the "year's harvest," where everyone can gather to witness the art created in the last twelve months. Whether that's drawings or paintings created in the 'art corner' and hung around the venue, or music performed during the event, there is a place for it all at Norðanpaunk.

### The social experiment

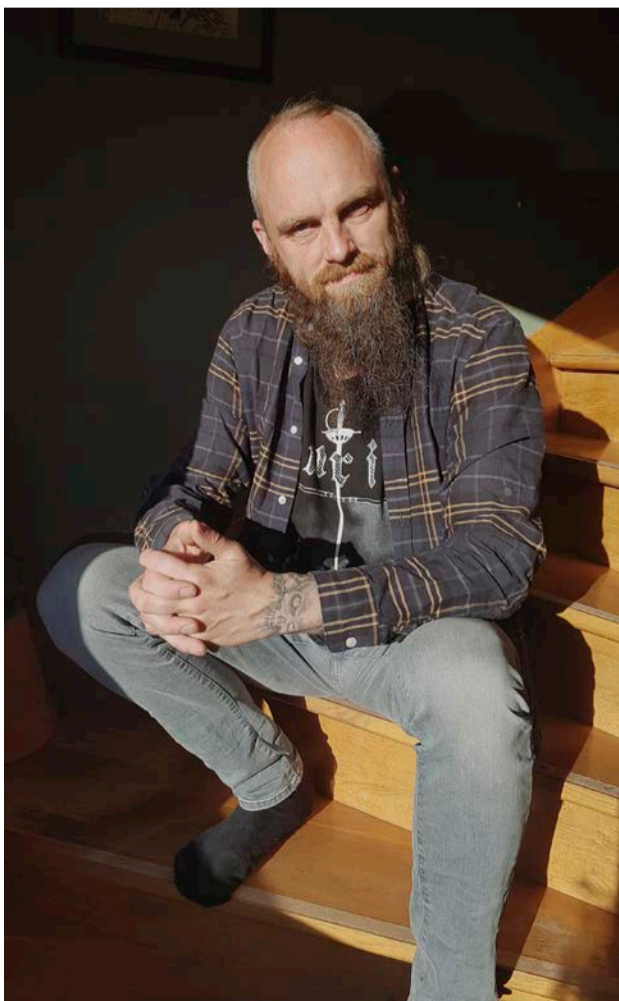
Norðanpaunk is a social experiment and creative process, evolving each year to become what the community wants.

"It's kind of like a flower," Árni says. "You can't tell it what to do, you can only tend to it and hope the wind and sun are in your favour. That's how we approach Norðanpaunk each year, with liberty and art as our objective."

Be careful, Árni cautions, lest you miss some of the excitement. One of his favourite memories, oddly enough, was missing a surprise show from one of his favourite bands. He was called away to deal with an issue, and when he came back, he had already missed the performance. Árni believes this is a reminder to live in the moment and an important lesson about DIY values.

"If you missed it, it's gone. It's not replicable," Árni says. "It's a series of special moments—you can't buy that." **👉**

Norðanpaunk will take place July 29-31 in Laugarbakki. Tickets are available at [nordanpaunk.org](http://nordanpaunk.org); no tickets will be sold at the door. Bring your own food, alcohol, and supplies.



Árni Þorlákur



Wild wild east

## A Crazy Microcosm On A Fjord

Art lovers unite in Seyðisfjörður—it's LungA time

Words: **Iryna Zubenko** Photos: **Provided by LungA**

In the middle of July, people from all over Iceland and beyond flock to Seyðisfjörður, an East Iceland fishing town that is unremarkable at first sight. The reason for the migration: LungA, an arts festival like no other. We chatted with Festival Director Björt Sigfinnsdóttir and Head of Music Simon Bergkjær about what makes the 2022 edition special. While the thing that first caught our attention was the waterfall gig, in reality, there's so much more.

### The evolution of LungA

Björt has been running the festival with her mother since she was 15. In 22 extraordinary years, they have witnessed LungA take on many forms and evolve tremendously. “When we started, it was just one weekend with 20 participants,” she shares. Today, it spans more than a week and brings together 2000 to 3000 people. “We started out very, very small, calling out to people and begging them to participate. And then in 2005 or 2006, it all of a sudden exploded,” Björt recalls.

The festival is based on four pillars: workshops, art-related performances and exhibitions, a youth exchange with Erasmus Plus, and the music programme. “To us

this is kind of the big bang of the whole thing,” says Björt.

### Thinking deep

Every year, LungA picks up a socially relevant topic as the main theme of the festival. “A topic that we think is needed to talk about in a bigger setting from a social perspective,” explains Björt.

In the past, the festival centred on such topics as gender and empathy, and this year it will revolve around equality. “For most people, the first thought is probably ‘whoa, that's a big topic,’” Björt admits. But the team chooses the main topic with the intention that the artists can take it in whatever direction they want—whether it's equality for the LGBTQIA+, equality on the dance floor or whatnot. “That has not been decided beforehand, as we don't want to direct the conversation in a certain direction,” says Björt.

### Refuge for art lovers

The more we speak with Björt and Simon, the more LungA starts to sound like a utopian paradise. But who is it for, exactly?

“I think we might represent a crazy microcosm,” says Simon. “We

have almost the entire spectrum,” Björt adds. “We have people who are coming here to take the first steps into any kind of art interest. And we also have people who have done masters and have long-term careers in art.”

“I feel that as a festival in East Iceland, we also represent some sort of a cultural hub, a meeting place for a lot of people who live on opposite ends of a very large geographic country,” Simon adds. “It makes a lot of sense to talk about differences and celebrate differences and maybe break down some stereotypes. Seyðisfjörður and LungA is a very good place to do that.”

### Embracing change

“In December 2020, a big mudslide hit Seyðisfjörður which devastated a lot of the town and affected everyone living there,” recalls Simon. “It rendered our festival site useless for hosting LungA going forward.”

The situation, however, didn't leave the team disheartened. Instead, it pushed them to explore other options. “We kind of took it as a gift that we were forced away from one of the only obvious festival sites in town,” Simon admits. “We sat down and started to brainstorm

where we would like to take this. What do we have that no one else has? We found that what we have is Seyðisfjörður.”

“Seyðisfjörður is a magical, beautiful place. It's overwhelming in its natural glory,” continues Simon. “We thought that we wanted to utilise that more.”

For the 2022 edition, LungA will feature smaller events spread around town—inside the ecosystem of Seyðisfjörður. “We want to utilise the waterfalls, we want to have a concert in the meadow, we want

to do a little party on the beach,” shares Simon and you can feel his palpable impatience for the festival to kick off. “All these kinds of things that were before restricted a little bit to a more classical, one or two-stage festival site.”

### Final countdown to LungA

“We have a high-quality international event programme, where most of the things that you will see here for free, cost a lot of money if you see them anywhere else,” says Björt. “This has also been a part of our philosophy—to keep the prices down to a minimum to ensure access to art and cultural experiences for everybody, unrelated to status or background.”

Björt recounts her personal highlight at the upcoming festival: “We're having a memorial exhibition for Tóta Van Helzing who was a long-term LungA family member.” Tóta, an Icelandic designer and artist, died last year.

“This year, we're very happy to bring an American ambient producer called Huerco S—he

doesn't play a lot and he really wants to come to LungA and play one of his rare sets with a Scottish electronic musician called Perko,” adds Simon. “Those two are coming up to make a completely unique

“Seyðisfjörður is a magical, beautiful place. We thought that we wanted to utilise that more.”

once-in-a-lifetime live set that's going to take place a little bit up the mountain next to a waterfall. We're gonna use underwater mics to mic up the waterfall and use nature as part of the instruments to create this performance.”

As if the waterfall gig wasn't enough to get us excited, Simon adds:

“DJ Sexy laser is going to do a DJ set—Saman Sauna—a beautiful event down on the beach on the Saturday.”

### All roads East

“I think a lot of our audience comes for an experience that is a bit deeper than maybe most festival experiences,” says Simon. “Where you actually take time out of your normal day to deep dive into issues that maybe you've thought a lot about—or maybe you haven't thought a lot about before.”

Simon and Björt agree LungA not only has a lot of good places to see art, dance, but also “good places to go sit quietly, in retrospect or in introspect and have a think.” You can't really plan how your festival experience will turn out—and that's the beauty of it. “The sky is pretty much the limit in Seyðisfjörður and LungA,” Simon concludes. ♥

LungA takes place July 10th-17th in Seyðisfjörður, East Iceland. Find out more and buy tickets at [lunga.is](http://lunga.is)



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# Best of Reykjavík



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Birds go camping, too

## Let's Go Camping!

Grapevine's guide on where to pitch your tent this summer

Words: **Iryna Zubenko** Photos: **Maria Shpak, Julia Staples & Art Bionick**

The season is here. Grab your sleeping bag, a tent (that you definitely forgot to wash since that festival a few years ago), a disposable grill and go on an adventure. Bear in mind that wild camping is widely prohibited in Iceland—but with dozens of designated campsites, you'll be spoilt with choices for where to stay. We've narrowed down a few of our favourites to help you out.

### Dórsmörk



Tent life is not for everyone, and if you fall into this camp (sorry), we totally get you! If you want to stay away from wet polyester and hairy showers this summer, try glamping. Húsadalur valley in Dórsmörk offers comfortable yurt-style tents that come with a double bed and a heater. Sauna and hot pool are just a few steps away. Unlike other camping options, you will need to stretch your budget a bit with this one—but keep in mind that Dórsmörk has accommodation options to suit every pocket, including the traditional campground.

Distance from Reykjavík: 155 km  
Price: 24,650 ISK/night

### Skógar



While being located right in the middle of the Golden Circle and in the midst of tourist buzz, Skógar campground offers million-dollar views right at your doorstep. Imagine waking up to the rumbling of Skogafoss waterfall, lush greenery and hiking trails close by (you can hike all the way to Dórsmörk from there). Obvious disadvantages include the lack of kitchen and charging stations. Showers are available for an extra fee.

Distance from Reykjavík: 156 km  
Price: 1500 ISK/night

perfect for you. Located in a secluded valley at the foot of a mountain, away from the main road and harsh winds, it's perfect for those looking for some downtime. The campsite has a well-equipped indoor kitchen, laundry room, and showers. Charcoal grills are available outside for your convenience. In addition, Kirkjubæur II also offers small cabins for rent.

Distance from Reykjavík: 259 km  
Price: 1500 ISK/night

### Atlavík



There are not many forests in Iceland, so when you're recommended to camp in one, take your chance. This particular campground is located in the Hallormsstaður National Forest, considered to be the largest woodlands in the country. The campsite is equipped with all the basic facilities, but unfortunately doesn't have electric outlets. No worries—use one of the many outdoor barbecues to cook dinner. The view over the lake Lagarfljót will definitely spoil you with beautiful sunsets this summer.

Distance from Reykjavík: 663 km  
Price: 1800 ISK/night

### Hauganes



Unremarkable at first sight, this campground has something to offer that will make your jaw drop: hot tubs! Imagine soaking in the hot water with a drink of choice and watching the sunset change into sunrise over the ocean. For an extra 1000 ISK hot tub fee, you can turn a regular camping experience into a night to remember.

Distance from Reykjavík: 401 km  
Price: 1750 ISK/night

### Kirkjubæur II



If camping sites usually give you anxiety (and we don't blame you—there's nothing worse than being woken up in the middle of the night by drunk Brits singing "Wonderwall"), this campground is

"BEST BURGER OF REYKJAVÍK" 2021

# YUZU



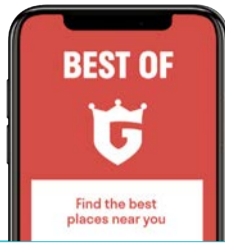
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July 1st—August 4th

# In Your Pocket



Reykjavík Map

Places We Like

Best Of Reykjavík

## Perfect Day

Dance, jive & have the time of your life



Words: [Asha Edmondson](#) Photo: [Joana Fontinha](#)

### Blær Örn Ásgeirsson

*Blær Örn Ásgeirsson is a 19-year-old disc golfer from Reykjavík. Don't let his young age fool you though, he has already won The Reykjavík Open three times. Before embarking on a European disc golf tour, Blær shared his perfect day. Completely head over heels with passion and love for the sport, it is unsurprising that his perfect day includes a LOT of disc golf.*

### Breakfast of champions

I would wake up, not too early, probably around 10am. Then I'd get a banana and strawberry smoothie and oatmeal at Nútri for breakfast. If I'm feeling it, I might also get an açai bowl.

### Disc golf

After breakfast I would head to the Grafarholt Disc Golf Course with some friends. I would spend pretty much all day there just playing and hanging out with friends. This 18-hole course is the most advanced in Reykjavík, and I work here, so I'm able to change up the course to make it more or less difficult.

I started playing disc golf when I was around 12. I was on holiday in the west with a friend and we decided to try playing. I loved it and for my next birthday I got a starter kit. Ever since then, I have played or competed in disc golf almost every day.

I graduated school about a year ago which opened up my time to play more disc golf and work at the course. I spend most of my time here

and I hope to keep playing as long as it is still fun and I'm still able to. I actually taught an 80-year-old man how to play recently, so I should be able to play for many, many years.

At some point I'd go out and get lunch. I'd probably get a burrito at Serrano.

### Play, eat and friends

After my day playing disc golf, I would go bowling at Keiluhöllin with some friends. I usually go bowling with friends about twice a month. We'd hang out, get pizza for dinner, and have a fun night together. I'd then go home and play some "Call of Duty" before going to bed around midnight. It wouldn't be too long of a day and I'd spend most of the day playing disc golf. I think that would be my perfect day. 🇹🇼

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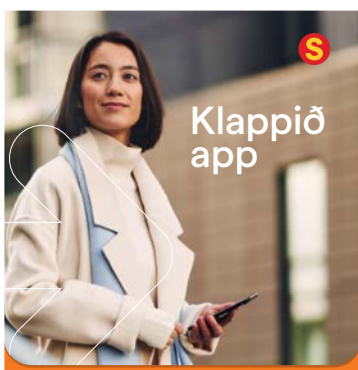


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Vermouth Menu



**PHOTOS FROM ICELAND**

Skólavörðustígur 22



**Wine bar & food**

VÍNSTÚKAN  
**TÍU SOPAR**

# The Map

The City Map presents a selection of restaurants, bars and shops that received the 2022 "Best Of Reykjavík" award curated by our stringent panellists. Get the bigger, more detailed version of The Reykjavík Grapevine City Map at your nearest hotel or guesthouse.

## Dining

### 1. Le Kock

Tryggvagata 14

The craft burger OG has never been better. No one toasts potato buns to crisp perfection like they do, or cooks patties to such medium rare goodness. Everything is made from scratch, including the condiments! This is gourmet fast food, with all of the attention to detail and none of the sacrifice on fun and flavour.

### 2. Flatey

Grandagarður 11

Educating a country beyond their diet of pizza-chain pies is no small feat, but that's exactly what Flatey sought to do when they burst onto the scene, and for that we applaud them. The Margherita continues to be a panel favourite; who can argue with milky mozzarella and tomatoes?

### 3. Fine

Rauðarárstígur 33

A panel favourite, Fine is a no nonsense, no frills, Sichuanese Chinese restaurant that steadfastly opens Reykjavík's mind's and palates to the regional cuisine. The Mala Chicken is a tingling explosion of flavour, literally, thanks to the sichuan peppercorn. For something simple yet exciting, we recommend the Hot and Sour Potatoes.

### 4. SONO matselíjor

Sæmundargata 11

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

### 5. Laundromat

Austurstræti 9

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

### 6. Deig Workshop

Tryggvagata 14

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

### 7. Sushi Social

Pinghóltsstræti 5

If you are a group of friends looking for a fun night about town, Sushi Social is the place to be. The menu is ideal for sharing—although, who'd want to share something as delectable as langoustine tempura. Order one—or several—of those colourful drinks with names that recall a tropical holiday to make a fun night even more festive.

### 8. Sumac Grill + Drinks

Laugavegur 28

Sumac is one of the few places that cooks lamb with none of that sous-vide nonsense. An unpretentious lamb rib, cooked on the grill, kissed with smoke and licked by flame is pretty hard to top. Sumac serves it with blistered grapes, fried almonds, a splash of thinned down muhammara and lentils. It's a dish you can't get enough of, and thankfully the restaurant hasn't dared to take it off the menu.

### 9. Borg 29

Borgartún 29

This is one of the more comfortable food halls to be at, with a wide variety of choices to please most anyone. "Almost every place makes small plates, which is excellent for sharing," observed one panellist. She's right, one can choose from sushi at Umami, to burgers at Yuzu, to grilled meats at Bál, to healthy skyr bowls at Svala.

### 10. Fish Company

Vesturgata 2a

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

### 11. Prir Frakkar

Baldursgata 14

This cosy, tucked-away restaurant has not let anything sway them from tradition—you'll spot everything from foal, to blackbird, to cod throats to plökkfiskur on their menu. Opened in 1989, the restaurant has been run by chef Úlfar Eysteinnsson and his family ever since. A visit to this place underlines that good old-fashioned Icelandic cooking can be all kinds of memorable.

## Drinking

### 12. Röntgen

Hverfisgata 12

This place has it all. "It's crazy how it's continued to dominate the bar scene in Reykjavík," one panellist raved. "But it's just got so many elements. It works for every vibe, which is so rare for a bar." Despite only appearing on the downtown scene a few years ago, the place has already cemented itself among the nightlife legends.

### 13. Jungle Cocktail Bar

Austurstræti 9

"Jungle's vibe naturally caters to an early night crowd. It's stylish and airy, and, of course, they have the most innovative and delicious cocktails in the city," enthused one panel member. The panel also praised the bar's diversity—noting how attendees spanned all ages and demographics.

### 14. Kaffibarinn

Bergstaðastræti 1

Let's be real: there's a reason that Kaffibarinn is still here and full of dedicated regulars. At night, you'll find the crowd gets rowdy, the convos get interesting and the dance floor gets sweaty in the most wonderful way. "It's the obvious choice," said a panellist. "Who doesn't have some crazy story from closing time in the smoking area at Kaffibarinn?"

### 15. Gaukurinn

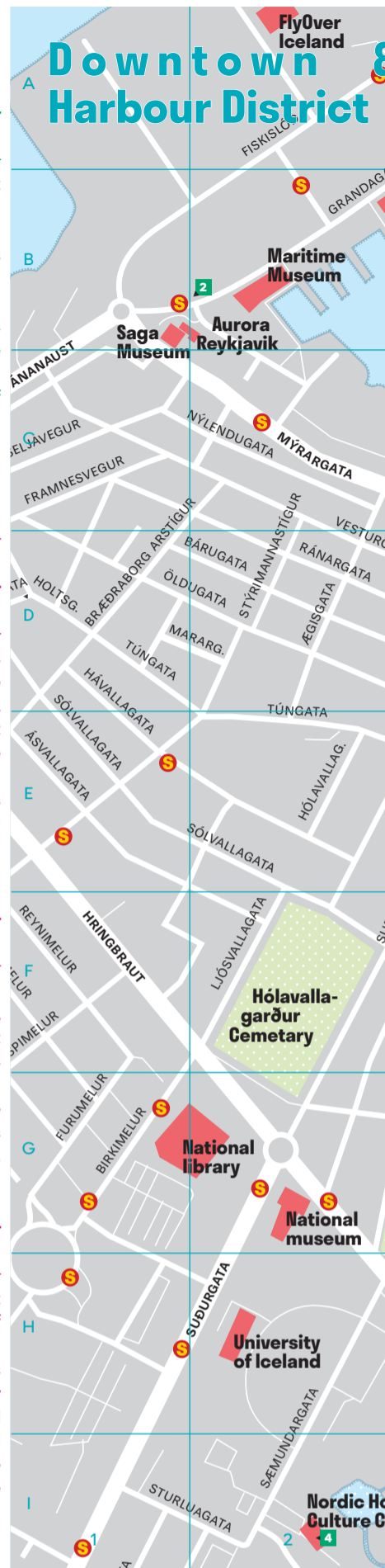
Tryggvagata 22

With dim lights, leather sofas, gender-neutral bathrooms and free tampons, this bar/venue is the preferred hangout for the unorthodox Reykvikingar. So if you're looking for like-minded peeps in the alt and queer scene, there you go. From heavy metal fests to quieter indie shows, this second floor haunt does it all.

### 16. Bravó

Laugavegur 22

Bravó: a dark room with amber-toned light, simple furniture, and cosy bohemian pillows. Their happy hour—perhaps the most prolific in the city—starts at 12:00 everyday and lasts until 20:00. Located in the



heart of Laugavegur, it's also a prime people-watching spot.

### 17. Óðinstorg

Óðinstorg

It's decided: Óðinstorg is the best outdoor drinking spot in Reykjavík. The new square was previously a parking area, but is now an open, airy, designed-for-those-lazy-summer-days paradise. You have good sun, good seating, Snaps, and Bodega, and serious mainland European vibes.

### 18. Session Craft Bar

Bankastræti 14

With its minimal appearance, stainless steel bar backed with dozens of taps and fridges full of beers canned and



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### New In Town ☆



### Bruggstofan

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With 16 taps of stellar Icelandic craft brews, pop up restaurants, a brilliant range of fun events and decks and vinyl always ready to go, Bruggstofan somehow manages to cater to everyone, whilst still looking cool about it. From hardcore craft beer aficionados to chilled out embroidery crafters, you never know who you'll run into, but you can be sure that the drinks will be cold, the vibe immaculate, the tunes fresh and the conversations interesting. **JG**

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Skólavörðustígur 15

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SSS STÉL

bottled, Session is a place that, while cosy enough, is made for serious craft heads. Whether you're hankering for a lip-puckering gose, or an IPA packed with more flowers than a funeral, Session has got your back.

### 19. Skuggabaldur

Pósthússtræti 9

A weekday bar is all about atmosphere. You want something lively but cosy, bustling without being jam packed, and above all else, full of good vibes. Skuggabaldur has perfected this delicate combo, with the best of Reykjavik's jazz scene showing up nightly to entertain patrons and make even a Wednesday memorable. Despite only opening last year, the bar has quickly become

a favourite with everyone from downtown artists to suburban folk.

## Shopping

### 20. Yeoman

Laugavegur 7

2021 saw Yeoman being donned by international celebrities while also continuing her reign as the primary fashion tastemaker for Reykjavik women. "To talk about modern Icelandic style is to talk about Yeoman," one panel member said.

### 21. Lucky Records

Rauðarástígur 10

Lucky Records is the one-stop-shop for anything Icelandic music. They've got it all; new titles, CDs, rarities, vinyl, cassettes, second hand 12", 7" sections, you name it! Notably, the store is very in touch with the local underground. Basically any Icelandic release—no matter how big or small—will be sold there, and trust and believe, their shopkeepers will know them inside and out.

### 22. Hringekjan

Pórunnartún 2

Similar to a consignment shop, Hringekjan is a space where people can rent out spaces to sell their own clothes and accessories. It's the most eco-friendly way to keep your closet fresh, which, in light of our current world, is something

we should all be thinking about. "I don't know how they get such chic people to sell their clothes there," laughed one panel member. If you want something groovy this is the place to go."

### 23. Apótek Atelier

Laugavegur 16

Apótek Atelier is quite new on the scene, but this small boutique has already made quite a splash. Created by designers Ýr Prastardóttir, Halldóra Sif Guðlaugsdóttir and Sævar Markús Óskarsson, Apótek Atelier blurs the line between studio and store, functioning as both the designers' workspace, as well as the place where one can purchase their wares.

## I

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Look at this tiny piano!

## Everything Is An Instrument

Diego Manatrizio, aka Flaaryr, knows how to make music even from trash

Words: Iryna Zubenko Photo: Joana Fontinha

As we step into Post-húsið, the headquarters of Reykjavík-based music collective Post-dreifing, we see Diego Manatrizio gesturing over odd-looking objects: a toy xylophone, tiny piano, alarm clock, even a traffic cone—like a wizard conjuring a spell over a bubbling cauldron of magic potion with his trusty wand. Well, replace the wand with a drumstick and Diego is nothing short of a modern-day wizard, extracting magical sounds from ordinary objects. Tonight we are at ‘Allt er hljóðfæri’ or ‘Everything is an instrument’—one of the many improvisation nights Diego leads.

“Right now I am a full-time musician,” says Diego, who is perhaps better known by his stage name Flaaryr. Diego’s work knows few if any boundaries. “I never place myself in a particular genre,” he says. “But I think my music has elements of minimalism, rhythmic experimentation, a little bit of noise, a little bit of ambient, a little bit of math rock,” he continues, noting these are genres that were very influential for him growing up. “What defines it more is just loops and rhythmic experimentation.”

### Finding music in unexpected places

“I make improvisations out of sounds that are not considered exactly musical instruments,” he says. One example is his “trash

set”—an improvisation in which he takes objects from dumpsters and puts contact microphones on them. “I think the moment in which I decided to start using trash with contact mics was when I thought, ‘What if instead of modifying conventional musical instruments like a guitar, I just put all the focus on these random objects and the objects are the instruments themselves?’”

One of the objects with musical qualities that surprised Diego turned out to be a mirror. “A mirror doesn’t have much resonance. If you bang on it, not much will happen,” he says. “But if you put water on it and move your fingers, it makes a screeching sound that is really interesting. Depending on how much pressure you apply with your fingers, the pitch of that sound changes in a really surprisingly wide range.”

### Guitar or flamingo?

In one of his upcoming shows at the RUSL sustainable design festival, Diego won’t play guitar at all. “In that set, I will only play with a mirror and a garden decoration that is a flamingo made of metal. It’s gonna be completely different from what I have ever played,” Diego shares. “The theme of this festival is about sustainability and reusing objects that are usually considered waste. I thought that it was interesting to make my set very close to the concept of the

festival. It’s a good situation to see what happens if I don’t have a guitar and will have to rely on these objects that are very unpredictable.”

### Intuitive music to the masses

In addition to prepping for live performances, Diego has been

working on a new album, ‘Dagur Tónlistar Innsæisins’ or “A Day of Intuitive Music, which will be released in November.

“This is my first composition project in which I will not be the performer,” he explains. Starting in July, Diego plans to launch an open call for people willing to participate in the project. “I will invite 24 people who don’t know how

to play any instruments. Each of them will play one hour of improvisation, with a lot of instruments and random objects that I will give them and I will record them playing solo improvisations one by one. Out of those 24 hours of completely improvised music, I will make 24 short pieces only by cutting and rearranging them, without doing any sound processing or anything like that. So I will compose using improvisations as my source.”

### Choose your own instrument

The idea of the project was born a year ago when Diego started to organise improvisation nights, just like the one we are at while speaking. “The concept is pretty straightforward,” he says, adding: “It’s just 100% open improvisation in a space full of instruments. And everyone, absolutely everyone is welcome to join and play any instrument they like. It doesn’t matter if you have never played an instrument before, or if you are a guitarist and you want to grab a trumpet, you are totally welcome to do it. There are no musical guidelines.”

“The bottom line of this project is to tell people that everyone is qualified enough to make music. Music can mean so many things and, in this case, there are no boxes that you have to tick,” he beams with a smile so sincere that you start to believe it is true. “You can have no training and still make amazing music.”

## EVENT PICKS



### ★ Innipúkinn

July 29th - July 31st - Gamla Bíó & Röntgen - 4990 - 8990 ISK

While most of the city celebrates the holiday weekend at Vestmannaeyjar to attend the infamous Þjóðhátíð festival, Innipúkinn is for

those who would rather stay in the city. The name loosely translates to “house monster”, something introverts and homebodies could

probably relate to. It's perfect for those who can't be bothered to join the pilgrimage to Vestmannaeyjar and prefer a smaller party, but don't let that fool you! The three-day festival, taking place in Gamla Bíó and Röntgen, celebrates its 20th anniversary this year and their lineup is top-tier. 12 acts including Briet, Bjartar Sveiflur, Hipsumhaps and Inspector Spacetime, have already been announced and more are to come.

Your grandkids may one day ask you if you attended Innipúkinn's 20th anniversary, why would you want to disappoint them? **KW**



### ★ Prins Pólo

GAMLA BÍÓ 22. JÚLÍ  
MIDASALA Á TIX.IS

### ★ Prins Pólo & Moses Hightower

July 22nd - 21:00 - Gamla Bíó - 5900 ISK

Earlier this year Prins Pólo (the musician, not the chocolate bar) released his latest EP and collaborated with Moses Hightower on a single release. We're happy to hear it didn't stop there as they are taking over one of Reykjavík's most significant venues together. Best head over to [tix.is](http://tix.is) and score your ticket before it's sold out! **KW**



### ★ PIKKNIKK Concert Series by Nordic House

Every Sunday in June & July - 15:00 - Nordic House - Free

Are you not quite sure what to do on Sundays? Nordic House is hosting a free concert series throughout June and July. Great music at a great location in hopefully great weather, what's not to love? Head over to their website to check out the lineup (and don't forget to check the weather forecast). **KW**

## July 1st—August 4th

# Upcoming Events

Send details of your event to: [events@grapevine.is](mailto:events@grapevine.is)

This month is packed with so many great events that we can't possibly fit them all! Check them out on [events.grapevine.is](http://events.grapevine.is) and don't hesitate to add yours!

### Friday July 1st

**Blóðmör (with Kusk/ Merkúr/ Óviti)**  
20:00 Gaukurinn  
**MIMRA**  
20:00 Mál og Menning  
**Einar Scheving & Friends**  
21:00 Skuggabaldur  
**DJ Frimann**  
22:00 Kaffibarinn

### Saturday July 2nd

**Buxur 22**  
15:00 Fúsk Gufunes  
**Lucy in Blue**  
20:00 Gaukurinn  
**Fringe Closing Party**  
01:00 Húrra  
**Guide to Iceland 10th Anniversary Concert**  
20:00 Ingólfstorg  
**DJ Símon fknhdsm**  
23:00 Kaffibarinn  
**Dopamine Machine, Captain Syrup, Fjara**  
20:00 KEX

### Sunday July 3rd

**Doomcember: Primitive Man**  
20:00 Gaukurinn  
**Fringe Award Ceremony**  
18:00 IDNÓ  
**Bootswing Burlesque**  
21:30 IDNÓ  
★ **Pikknikk Summer Concerts - Yana**  
15:00 Nordic House

### Monday July 4th

**Comedy Night**  
20:00 Gaukurinn  
**Múlinn Jazz Club - Bölvad Braz**  
20:00 Harpa

### Tuesday July 5th

**Karaoke**  
20:00 Gaukurinn  
**Kyiv Soloists for Peace**  
19:30 Harpa

### Wednesday July 6th

**Kúsk & Óviti**  
20:00 Gaukurinn  
**Marcus Miller**  
20:00 Harpa  
**Party Karaoke**  
21:00 Sæta Svinið

### Thursday July 7th

**Gýða Valtýsdóttir**  
21:00 Gamla Bíó  
**Andrew Sim**  
20:00 Gaukurinn

### Friday July 8th

**Earthly Delights**  
20:00 Gaukurinn  
**DJ Óli Dóri**  
22:00 Kaffibarinn

### Saturday July 9th

**Prisoner & Key (US)**  
20:00 Gaukurinn  
**KEXPort**  
14:00 KEX  
**DJ Kjørk**  
23:00 Kaffibarinn

### Sunday July 10th

**Adam Harpaz**  
20:00 Gaukurinn  
**Velkominn Heim - Erna Vala**  
16:00 Harpa  
★ **Pikknikk Summer Concerts - Teitur Magnússon & Tue West**  
15:00 Nordic House

### Tuesday July 12th

**Karaoke**  
20:00 Gaukurinn

### Wednesday July 13th

**Queer Stand-up**  
20:00 Gaukurinn  
**Múlinn Jazz Club - Hröðmar Sigurðsson Quartet**  
20:00 Harpa  
**Party Karaoke**  
21:00 Sæta Svinið

### Thursday July 14th

**TÆR**  
20:00 Gaukurinn

### Friday July 15th

**Devine Defilement, Merkur, Duft**  
20:00 Hellirinn  
**DJ Þorgerður Jóhanna**  
22:00 Kaffibarinn

### Saturday July 16th

**Servitores (Greek Traditional Music)**  
21:00 Dillo  
**Danni BigRoom og Björn Salvador**  
23:00 Kaffibarinn

### Sunday July 17th

**Velkominn Heim - Steiney Sigurardóttir**  
16:00 Harpa  
★ **Pikknikk Summer Concerts - Andverel**  
15:00 Nordic House

### Monday July 18th

**Comedy Night**  
20:00 Gaukurinn

### Tuesday July 19th

**Karaoke**  
20:00 Gaukurinn

### Wednesday July 20th

**Múlinn Jazz Club - Raghneiður Gröndal**  
20:00 Harpa  
**Party Karaoke**  
21:00 Sæta Svinið

### Thursday July 21st

**Space Breaker**  
20:00 Gaukurinn

### Friday July 22nd

★ **Prins Pólo & Moses Hightower**  
20:00 Gamla Bíó  
**Young G&T**  
22:00 Kaffibarinn  
**Goth Night**  
20:00 Gaukurinn

### Saturday July 23rd

**Prima Facie - National Theatre Live Screening**  
15:00 Bíó Paradís  
**Brain Police**  
20:00 Gaukurinn  
**DJ Benni B-ruff**  
23:00 Kaffibarinn

### Simmi & Friends

21:00 Skuggabaldur

### Sunday July 24th

**Velkominn Heim - Baldvin Snær**  
14:00 Harpa  
★ **Pikknikk Summer Concerts - Áslaug Dungal**  
15:00 Nordic House

### Tuesday July 26th

**Karaoke**  
20:00 Gaukurinn

### Wednesday July 27th

**Prima Facie - National Theatre Live Screening**  
19:00 Bíó Paradís  
**Shallov/Norðanpaunk**  
20:00 Gaukurinn  
**Múlinn Jazz Club - Bjarni Már Ingólfsson Quartet**  
20:00 Harpa  
**Party Karaoke**  
21:00 Sæta Svinið

### Thursday July 28th

**Issamwera**  
20:00 Gaukurinn

### Friday July 15th

**DJ Fusion Groove**  
22:00 Kaffibarinn

### Saturday July 2nd

**DJ Pilsner**  
23:00 Kaffibarinn

### Sunday July 31st

★ **Pikknikk Summer Concerts - Ösp Eldjárn & Valeria Pozzo**  
15:00 Nordic House

### Tuesday August 2nd

**Pride Karaoke**  
20:00 Gaukurinn

### Wednesday August 3rd

**Pub Quiz**  
20:00 Gaukurinn  
**Iron Cowboy**  
20:00 Harpa (Kaldalón)  
**Múlinn Jazz Club - Simmi & Friends**  
20:00 Harpa

### Thursday August 4th

**Drag Bingo**  
20:00 Gaukurinn



### MUSIC NEWS

Want to see when your favourite Icelandic artist is coming to your hometown? Well you're in luck!

The Iceland Music LIVE database website, sponsored by ÚTON (Iceland Music Export), has been launched, providing users with a database of all international tours of Icelandic artists. The site is kept up to date by using the Mobilitus database, which adds concerts automatically. Artists of all genres and popularity levels are listed on the site, ensuring that everyone's favourite Icelandic artists are receiving publicity. Currently the site has 700 shows by 48 artists in 36 countries. Users can search the site by artist, date, or location, and ticketing sites are linked. Access Iceland Music LIVE at [icelandmusic.is/live](http://icelandmusic.is/live) **AE**



Þjóðhátíð is back! The Vestmannaeyjar festival is making its grand return on July 29th after a two-year hiatus due to COVID, so if you really want to spend your holiday weekend drunk in a field chowing down on puffin and roaring campfire songs, the option is all yours. In the past, Þjóðhátíð has been dogged by numerous reported incidences of sexual abuse, but the festival organisers are placing considerable emphasis on their “Against Violence” initiative, which is certainly a step in the right direction. We deeply hope that 2022 marks the year that all attendees can focus on camping, music and culture (and let's be real: a lot of drinking), without the fear of sexual violence. **AE / JB**



As a small country often looked over in the music scene, we know all too well how hard it can be to become mainstream. That's why it is exciting to announce that Iceland will be championing two fellow underdogs at Iceland Airwaves festival. Bands from the Faroe Islands and Luxembourg will be making their way to Iceland to remind everyone that even the smallest of places have talent too. We are thrilled that Marius DC, Kóboykex, Janus Rasmussen, Brimheim, and Guðrið Hansdóttir will be joining us from the Faroe Islands and TUY'S, KLEIN, and Francis of Delirium will be coming from Luxembourg. Keep your schedule open for November 3-5! **AE**



**Alicja Kwade**  
*In Relation to the Sun,  
to Sequences of Events,*  
i8 Grandi — 22.01.22–22.12.22



Mariika and Óskar with their works

## Art of Defiance

Ukrainian art comes to Iceland

Words: **Alice Poggio** Photo: **Óskar Hallgrímsson**

Óskar Hallgrímsson and Mariika Lobyntseva, power couple behind textile art collaboration “Comfortable Universe”, join us on video call from Kyiv, Ukraine, with bursts of technicolour visible in the background of their art studio. They have only recently been reunited with their art. For the first six weeks after Russia invaded Ukraine, the Ukrainian military had been utilising the building.

Their art consists of brightly coloured wall hangings, hand-sewn from wool and acrylic, depicting minimalist characters engaging in beautifully mundane activities that we often take for granted. It all began during lockdown, as a response to the boredom and discomfort of the pandemic.

### Tough times, soft solutions

COVID-19 created a need to escape to a more comforting place, even if just through creativity and imagination. It was Óskar and Mariika’s “way to not go crazy,” she says. They built what they call “an opposite world” to the one they were living in.

“Comfortable Universe,” their newly adopted studio name, was the title of their previous exhibition held last December. The soft pieces offered a sensory experience which endorsed closeness, touch and warmth—a stark contrast to a pandemic lockdown. “It portrays the comfortable feelings we missed during the pandemic,” Óskar says. The ageless, raceless, genderless characters depicted through fluffy tufts of yarn in Mariika and Óskar’s art personify the moment in time when all of humanity struggled against the same invisible force that made it grind to a halt.

### Longing for safety

Then came war. Mariika and Óskar found themselves facing an entirely different kind of monster. “It’s not

unseen and unfelt, it’s very, very real” Óskar says. Mariika adds: “It is shocking how quickly you adapt to your new reality.”

“If we are walking down the street and look slightly suspicious, soldiers will stop and search you. The second they realise that we mean no harm, they are smiling and happy to let us go,” Óskar explains. “Although it was scary at first, now it makes us feel safer, knowing they are being extremely careful.”

### “Ljómandi Þægilegt”

Confined once again, they made the best out of their situation, using art to express what words cannot. It is this feeling of safety that Comfortable Universe has focused on for their upcoming show, “Ljómandi Þægilegt”, at Gallery Port from July 16th to August 4th. They will be bringing the work over to Iceland soon, in as many checked-bags as they can carry. “Ljómandi” translates to “glowing” but it is often



Striking lines

used colloquially as a synonym for “great.” It describes the glow we can feel inside “like a candlelight—warm, comforting, cosy” Óskar says.

### Unexpected Influences

In these newer pieces, beings peek from behind objects, hiding. Mariika sketches the designs, which are then reworked and adapted by both Óskar and Mariika. “Art evolves as you go along”, Mariika explains. “Often you don’t realise until later, when you exhibit your work and people see all kinds of

meanings you didn’t even realise were there.”

Flowers are prominent in their latest work, with giant daisies and flower-covered barricades. “I was never into bouquets, but now when we see people selling them, we buy one if we can. It’s a little bit of happiness,” Mariika smiles. “There are a lot more flowers in my work now.”

### Dressing Reality

“Our art this time is not meant to be an ‘escape’, we are merely ‘dressing’ our reality. It’s about defiance,” Óskar clarifies. “We don’t want to use obvious war imagery, but it’s not that we don’t want to acknowledge the pain and the hurt. We know there’s a lot. We have seen it.”

The only exception to this rule of theirs is what Óskar and Mariika like to refer to as “a symbol of defiance.” One of their little beings, throwing a molotov cocktail. It is not in the form of a fluffy wall hanging, but rather one of the most popular tattoo designs at one of the flash tattooing events that Mariika attends. The events take place in an old warehouse that has served as the central hub for making molotovs, camouflage nets, and occasionally hosting raves. All the proceeds from the tattoos go to support the Ukrainian military. “Everyone is contributing something, we do what we can with our skills to help,” says Mariika.

Defiance is the other pervasive theme in “Ljómandi Þægilegt.” It can come in many forms. A person buying a bouquet of flowers, the trees blooming for spring in cities yet to be liberated, or creating art under a sniper occupied roof. It’s a soldier taking up gardening tools while on break, to make sure the roots of their city’s beloved trees get enough air. His AK47 rested on his back, swinging from side to side with every motion of the trowel.

Russian officials will try to have you believe that Ukraine won’t even exist in a few years’ time. Óskar and Mariika assured us it is just noise, and every small act of defiance helps to drown it out, becoming another voice that joins the ever louder chant: “we’re not going anywhere.”

09.04.–29.9.2022

# The Power of Erró Images

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★ NR4 Umhverfing

July 2 - End of August - Westfjords

“Akademia Skyn-  
junarinnar”, which  
can be translated  
to “Academy  
of Perception”,  
is hosting the  
fourth edition  
of their annual  
“Umhverfing” art  
journey. The aim  
of the project  
is to promote  
local culture  
through art in  
both traditional  
and unconven-

tional ways and  
spaces, stimulat-  
ing discussions  
about art and  
life with the local  
community.

For this year’s  
edition they  
established col-  
laborations with  
127 artists who  
will showcase  
their work around  
the Westfjords,  
Strandir, and  
Dalabyggð. Every  
participating  
artist has roots  
leading back to  
these locations,  
whether it’s cur-  
rent or dating  
back generations,  
thus reconnect-  
ing artists with  
their origins. The  
exhibition takes  
the viewer on a  
literal journey  
through art, cul-  
ture and nature  
with the help  
of GPS points.  
More information  
about the diverse  
and cultural  
programme (in-  
cluding lectures,  
talks, guided art  
walks, and group  
trips between  
venues) can be  
found on their  
website. **KW**

July 1st—August 4th

# Art Exhibitions

Gallery openings, happenings, showings and pop-up exhibitions all around the capital region.

Send details of yours to: [events@grapevine.is](mailto:events@grapevine.is)

## Opening

### ÁSMUNDARSALUR

#### Essentially untitled

The multidisciplinary French artist Claire Paugum’s exhibition focuses on questioning. With common rules and representations in mind, she confronts sensitive experiences, demonstrating the unstable nature of images. Exploring themes of shapelessness, entropy, disorder, and letting go, her art lives in the space as living beings would. Some crawl on the floor and walls, some become fluid matter, integrating seamlessly into the space yet challenging the spatial perspective.

- Opens on July 16th
- Runs until August 14th

## Ongoing

### REYKJAVÍK ART MUSEUM - HAFNARHÚS

#### Erró: The Power of Images

Erró is undoubtedly Iceland’s best-known visual artist. The Reykjavík Art Museum is custodian of nearly 4000 pieces of the artist’s work after he began donating them in the 1980s, and this exhibition of more than 300 of them is the most extensive showing of Erró’s works ever seen in Iceland. Videos, graphics, and collages—with larger works in public spaces, and paintings of all scales—showcase Erró’s eclectic appropriation of imagery from every possible domain.

- Runs until September 29th

### AUSTURVÖLLUR

#### Bótaþegi

The reality of being disabled and living in poverty in this prosperous country is something Hrafn Hólmfríðarson Jónsson (aka Krummi) draws attention to with his photo exhibition. Krummi explores what it’s like to suffer material deprivation in a society that makes you believe money can buy happiness.

- Runs until July 31st

### HALLGRÍMSKIRKJUTORG

#### Armors

When artist Steinunn Þórarinsdóttir visited the Metropolitan Museum in NYC roughly ten years ago, she be-

came fascinated with its extensive armour collection and what armour can symbolise. Today, in collaboration with said museum, she displays three pairs of armoured figures. Their armour, 3D scanned and turned into cast metal sculptures, is based on three precious mediæval armors originating from Italy, Germany, and England.

- Runs until August 8th

### MUSEUM OF DESIGN & APPLIED ART

#### Bathing Culture

The outdoor geothermal pool is the most interesting public sphere in Iceland. A place where strangers cross paths and acquaintances meet, it is a source of wellbeing and a major part of everyday life for many. This exhibition traces the development of Icelandic bathing culture, showing how architects and designers, pool staff and the public have together shaped the story.

- Runs until September 25th

#### Virtual waters

Taking a philosophical approach to the Iceland bathing culture, Hrund Atladóttir describes diving into water as entering another dimension full of contradictions. In connection with the museum’s current ‘bathing culture’ exhibition, this work challenges viewers to dive into this dimension through virtual reality and experience the effect water can have on perception.

- Runs until October 23rd

### KLING OG BANG

#### De Rien

Ingibjörg Sigurjónsdóttir’s De Rien explores tragedy, understanding, beauty and truth in the 21st century. She deconstructs details of everyday life to reconstruct them in an existential context. Using materials as diverse as gold, air, office paper and pigments, Ingibjörg’s works represent uncontrollable progression.

- Runs until July 24th

### i8 GRANDI

#### In Relation To The Sun

i8 Grandi is a new exhibition space, the unique concept of which is to focus on year-long shows by single artists. The exhibitions will evolve



★ ALDA

Until September 4 - Gerðarsafn

Challenging the boundaries between visual arts and dance, ALDA draws upon the history of women’s collective physical labour through repetitive movement and song in order to initiate an intimate convergence. ALDA is the result of a collaboration between choreographer Katrín Gunnarsdóttir, designer Eva Signý Berger, and Baldvin Þór Magnússon. **KW**



★ Heads from Clouds

Until September 28 - Kjarvalsstaðir

Jóhannes S. Kjarval, one of Iceland’s most beloved painters, is known for his portraits and artistic interpretation of Icelandic nature. He started his career in 1923 and won the heart of the nation when he started depicting the “common people”. The connection he establishes between his portraits and Icelandic nature is something he is still known for today. **KW**



★ Sea Lava Circle

Until July 30 - i8 Gallery

Art collector power couple Pétur Arason and Ragna Róbertsdóttir have been accumulating valuable pieces of art from established international and national artists for over five decades. This unique exhibition features works from both their personal collection and pieces that touch upon i8’s history. The show includes paintings, sculptures, photography, and more. **KW**

while on view, allowing their creators to reflect how the passage of time alters their work and encourage repeat viewings to observe those changes. This inaugural exhibition by Alicja Kwade encompasses installation, sculpture and work on paper. Its title—initially “In Relation To The Sun”—will change as the nature of the pieces on display evolves.

- Runs until December 22nd

### NATIONAL LIBRARY

#### Sir Joseph Banks - Iceland Expedition

Joseph Banks joined Captain James Cook on his first voyage around the world. Barely a year after they returned, he led the first British scientific expedition to Iceland in 1772, exactly 250 years ago. The National Library opens up an exhibition to celebrate the anniversary of his voyage.

- Runs until November 20th

### HAFNARBORG

#### In the Depths of Your Own Awareness

This retrospective exhibition features works spanning Gunnar Örn Gunnarsson’s almost 40 year career. His first exhibition raised existential questions regarding modern society and set the precedent for what would be his lifelong inspiration: human existence. This retrospective exhibition features works spanning his career, embodying the artist’s spiritual search.

- Runs until August 28th

### HVERFISGALLERÍ

#### Inner Space

Three dimensional wall works, reliefs, and a colour palette ranging from untreated wood, to principal colours, to neon. Belgian artist Jeanine Cohen’s solo exhibition explores the effect colours and shapes can have on our spatial experience. While each piece is a stand-alone work of art, she uses the exhibition space to stimulate a collaborative dialogue between them.

- Runs until September 29th

### ÁSMUNDARSALUR

#### We the Mountain

For this solo exhibition, the Danish Julie Laenkholm works with the poetry of Guðny frá Klömbrum. Laenkholm’s works are made using wool, traditional dyeing techniques and needle felting she was introduced to in her ancestral hometown Húsavík and, driven by female history, explore the transformation of pain and healing and collective activation.

- Runs until July 10th

### KJARVALSSTAÐIR

#### Stitches and Threads

Local artists explore and confront social issues, the poetry of everyday life, and the tenderness of nostalgia through embroidery and use of needlework. The exhibition focuses on this sub-discipline within textile art, and where some honour its heritage traditionally, others approach it via progressive mixed media experiments.

- Runs until September 18th

### REYKJAVÍK ART MUSEUM - ÁSMUNDARSALUR

#### Spatial Infractions

Rósa Gísladóttir exhibits her work in conversation with that of Icelandic sculpture pioneer Ásmundur Sveinsson. Rósa is best known for her creations in the medium of plaster, but she often references architecture in her work and here will use Ásmundarsafn, the museum building itself, as a sculpture.

- Runs until August 7th

### NATIONAL GALLERY

#### Liðamót / Ode to Join

Margét H. Blöndal’s exhibition honours connections. The title refers to the result of movement when three or more joints come together. Ode to Join consists of drawings made with powdered pigments and oil, and three dimensional works that were made within the space of the museum. Each individual work of art is intended to work in combination with the surrounding pieces, becoming almost a symphonic poem where all are joined together.

- Runs until October 2nd

### REYKJAVÍK MUSEUM OF PHOTOGRAPHY

#### Light Space - Shadow Space

Ester Jóhannesdóttir’s work explores how abstract forms and shadows can be transformed into clearer, graspable imagery through photography and the use of natural light. The exhibition displays her photographs of buildings, shot both inside and outside at different times of day, exploring the relationship between opposites as darkness retreats with increased natural light.

- Runs until August 16th

### GERÐARSALUR

#### We can talk

This exhibition marks the end of a collaboration between prominent cross-disciplinary festivals and institutions located in five Nordic countries, initiated by Platform GÁTT. Nine artists showcase their work, reflecting on what it means to be part of the Nordic Region and exploring both the positive and the negative aspects of a shared identity.

- Runs until September 4th

### NATIONAL GALLERY

#### Jewellery of Dieter Roth

Mostly known as a visual artist, musician, poet, thinker, and trailblazer, Dieter Roth’s creation of innovative jewellery is often overlooked. This exhibition showcases his unique and experimental approach to jewellery-making and bears witness to his unconventional methods that make him the versatile artist he is known as today.

- Runs until September 23rd

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## Finding Family

The story of two long-lost brothers

Words: **Asha Edmondson** Photo: **Joana Fontinha**

*The winner of this year's Skjaldborg film festival truly proves the saying "you're never too old." The film, "Velkominn Árni," follows 77-year-old Árni Jón Arnason on his life-changing journey to discover his American half-brother. Over the course of the film, audiences watch as Árni's life changes through his travels and he shifts from being a socially-forgotten, quiet man to a creative visionary with a new spark in his eye.*

### Meeting Árni

Director Viktoría Hermansdóttir first came across the story through her radio show about the children of Icelandic mothers and foreign soldier fathers from World War II. When American David Balsam called, searching for his half-brother, Viktoría went on the hunt—and met Árni.

Viktoría immediately became enamoured with Árni's life and character. "He's the most open person that I've met; the most genuine person," Viktoría said of meeting the septuagenarian for the first time.

### From radio to film

Following the original radio show, Viktoría knew that Árni deserved more. Listeners reached out begging to know more about Árni and his story. Viktoría was intrigued as well and decided to create a documentary centred around him.

She knew director Allan Sigurðsson through a friend and asked him to work with her on the documentary. "When Viktoría called me and asked me if I wanted to join in, I hadn't heard the radio show. So I went and listened to that and said 'no doubt about it' and I'm very glad that I did," beamed Allan.

### Árni on camera

The film chronicles David and Árni finding each other after going their entire lives without knowing about the other's existence. We get to see David's extended family completely embracing Árni into their lives and acting as if they've known each other forever.

Along with a deep dive into the familial relations, the viewer gets a completely raw and genuine look into Árni's life and character. It's refreshing to see someone so open and relaxed, completely embracing themselves and their story.

Throughout the interview, Viktoría and Allan are very careful not to spoil anything about the film. They clearly believe the intrigue of Árni is captured in the magic of the film and want to preserve that first meeting feel for all the viewers.

"Many people change their behaviour when they see a camera

and he's just always himself and lets everything out. He's always very genuine and super open and there's not one second where he's pretentious or anything like that. So, that's very rare to find," Allan said with love for his new friend.

"He's just always being himself in every situation," Viktoría continued.

### "It's not just an Icelandic story"

The film resonates with any audience member and leaves you feeling warm and hopeful. The journey leads the loveable Árni to his first true family, a feel-good story that makes you think about your own familial history.

"It's not just an Icelandic story. It's a story that can go around the world because it has connections

to America, children of war, and people who are lonely and not assimilated into society," Viktoría says about the breadth of the story.

"It's a story many people can relate to in many ways," Allan recounted.

This truly is the case. We can all find resonance with Árni's story and the film clearly captures the deep-rooted human need for belonging shared by humanity.

Be sure to look for "Velkominn Árni" at film festivals near you and keep an eye out on the RÚV schedule at the end of the year so you, too, can have the privilege of knowing Árni. 🇮🇸

"It's a story many people can relate to in many ways."



A still from the movie trailer



“This has never been about making money.”

Jóhann sharing all he knows about beer

# Brotherly Beer

Jóhann Guðmundsson on inadvertently turning passion into a job you love while bettering his home, the island of Heimaey

**Words:** Alice Poggio & Iryna Zubenko  
*“Now I can have as much free beer as I want,” says Jóhann Guðmundsson beaming with pride. It seems like he has already achieved all he wanted in life, and frankly, it’s infectious—we want this, too. We stopped by his life-long project, The Brothers Brewery in the Westman Islands, to grab a pint, and ended up talking to Jóhann for hours.*

**Photos:** Joana Fontinha

## Let’s start brewing

First things first: Who are the brothers? Jóhann clarifies: “We’re best friends. This is actually the third company we started. Back in 2012, we were getting drunk in a summer house and we looked at a bottle of beer and thought: ‘Beer only has four ingredients. Out of those four ingredients, there’s water and yeast, so really it’s two ingredients. We cannot fuck this up, it’s so easy. Let’s just start brewing beer.’”

The joke soon became a real possibility, so both Jóhann and his business partner Kjartan Vídó invited their respective brothers to join, and ‘Brothers Brewery’ came to life. Each member contributed their skills. Jóhann, a computer programmer and self-proclaimed “nerd of the group,” began to research. He started with the book ‘How to Brew.’ “From that, I just kept on reading and reading,” he says.

Their first real batch was made with around 2.5 kg of grain. “We were on top of the world,” Jóhann remembers. “We gave some to our friends and they said, ‘Wow, this is disgusting,’ but we kept on brewing.”

## Chasing ‘The Dream’

At first the brewers only intended to sell beer to a neighbouring restaurant, and have it pay for the extra grain that would allow them to drink their own beer for free. But their beer kept selling out. “I was waking up every morning and heading to the brewery from six until lunchtime. Then I went to my day

job, finishing at maybe eight or nine,” Jóhann recalls.

That is when the brothers decided to look for a place to rent. In March 2017, they opened a tap room and a small brewery thinking it was too much space, but in six months’ time, they had outgrown it. Now they are using 600 kg of grain per week, in a building they bought and refitted themselves.

## What’s brewed in Heimaey, stays in Heimaey

Surprisingly, The Brothers Brewery doesn’t sell their beer beyond Heimaey. “The only place that has our beer in kegs is GOTT [the restaurant next door],” says Jóhann. We sometimes put it in some of the craft bars in Reykjavik, but most of it is just sold here.”

“We have beer from Akureyri, and when people come in and get that we

sometimes make fun of it,” shares Jóhann. “Do you know how big the carbon footprint of your beer is? You can actually just drink this and have pretty much none,” he jokes, pointing to metal containers with freshly brewed local beer.

“This has never been about making money,” continues Jóhann. “This has been about having fun, having free beer, and what we can do to actually make the island better.”

Every year, The Brothers Brewery makes a special beer for Fishermen’s Day, a big Icelandic holiday, honouring a local fisherman. “The beer is named after the fisherman and put into three bottles. One bottle is for us, one for the fisherman or his family, and then we take one bottle and auction it off,” explains Jóhann. Over the last few years, the brewery has raised 7.5 million ISK for local charities.

## From wonky veg to beer

Sustainability has always been important to the brewers. “We were using lactose in a lot of beer earlier,” Jóhann recalls. “Three years ago, we thought ‘Why use animal products when we don’t have to?’” The brewery opted to stop using any animal products, except for one style—their famous Skeyr Sour.

The team is also striving for a holistic approach to reduce their environmental impact, such as donating spent grains (one of beer’s byproducts) to local farmers. Their zero-waste attitude led to another experiment: turning wonky vegetables into beer. “We were given ugly carrots that couldn’t be sold,” shares Jóhann. “We cut them into pieces, dumped them into the mash and made beer,” says Jóhann.

## Find what you love

When asked what the secret of The Brothers Brewery is, Jóhann doesn’t hesitate: “The passion that we have for what we’re doing,” he replies.

Since the brewery opened in Heimaey in 2016, the attitude towards alcohol consumption on the island has changed for the better—Jóhann and the team take pride in their contribution to challenging social biases around the topic, which was until recently considered taboo.

“We just had fun drinking beer, and now we can have as much free beer as we want,” reiterates Jóhann, adding: “A lot of time I just walk here, have a beer after work and walk home. I think it’s paradise.”



Pints in the sun

# BEST PIZZA IN REYKJAVÍK 2022



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## Track By Track



Gyða and her trademark cello

### “Ox” by Gyða

Iceland's muse does it again

Words: Gyða Valtýsdóttir & Andie Sophia Fontaine Photo: Eva Schram



#### Info

*Gyða's latest album, “Ox,” has been garnering accolades the world over lately, as the artist continues to exceed expectations. But what was the inspiration, the stories, the processes behind the songs on the album? Gyða breaks it down for us, track by track.*

#### Alphabet

The name of the album comes from this song as most alphabets start with aleph, originating from the Egyptian hieroglyph which depicts an ox's head.

Alphabet is about reading between the lines, to connect the dots of the sensory waves that make up our reality and the empathy it takes to see into others.

This song has many muses, including Virginia Woolf and Nikola Tesla. I owe its existence to Kjartan Sveinsson who was in the room with me when it was born, asleep on the sofa. He also left his DNA firmly in the arrangement. It was recorded live with him and Merope,

then I recorded an orchestra of cello and flute overdubs in the basement of Figure8 Studio in NYC, where I lived for most of the pandemic and where most of the album came into existence.

#### Black Swan

I wrote the text in a stream of consciousness while sick. It is a quite visceral praise to embodiment, as well as a love letter to my shadow side, the importance of embracing both darkness and light and to hold non-dualistic thinking when it comes to morality and to accepting ourselves and thus others.

#### In Corde

The lyrics are from the 12th century nun Hildegard von Bingen. I played the hymn on cello on my first album “Epicycle,” so now I decided to sing the lyrics of that same hymn. The melody poured out effortlessly with the words. It was inspired by a documentary about nuns, which I was pitching for. Didn't get the job but this song was born.

#### Cute Kittens Lick Cream

I was watching these cute kittens lick cream and inside the amalgamation of their purrs I could hear music. I grabbed a pen and wrote down what I heard, so the song came into existence.

#### Miracle

It's perhaps the most personal song I've ever written because I allowed myself to go inside a pain which I want rather to keep private.

#### Prism

An attempt to create a rift in the membrane of existence; so, to see or feel for a moment what lies there beyond.

#### Heavenly Piracy

The lyrics burst forth in an email to a lover just after a volcanic eruption in 2014. I never thought it would end on an album but I've performed it live many times, usually a capella. It is the most collaborative song on the album. I'd written out most of the arrangements but here everyone improvised freely. The drums are mostly samples from Julians Sartorius's Beat Diary, recorded onto my phone from my record player. Shahzad Ismaily added his highly unique bass playing, Alex Sopp goes wild on flute, Merope added their magic and there is a sample from Efterklang from the original version I did back in 2014 — an incredible ingredient to cook with along with master chef Úlfur who co-produced the song with me.

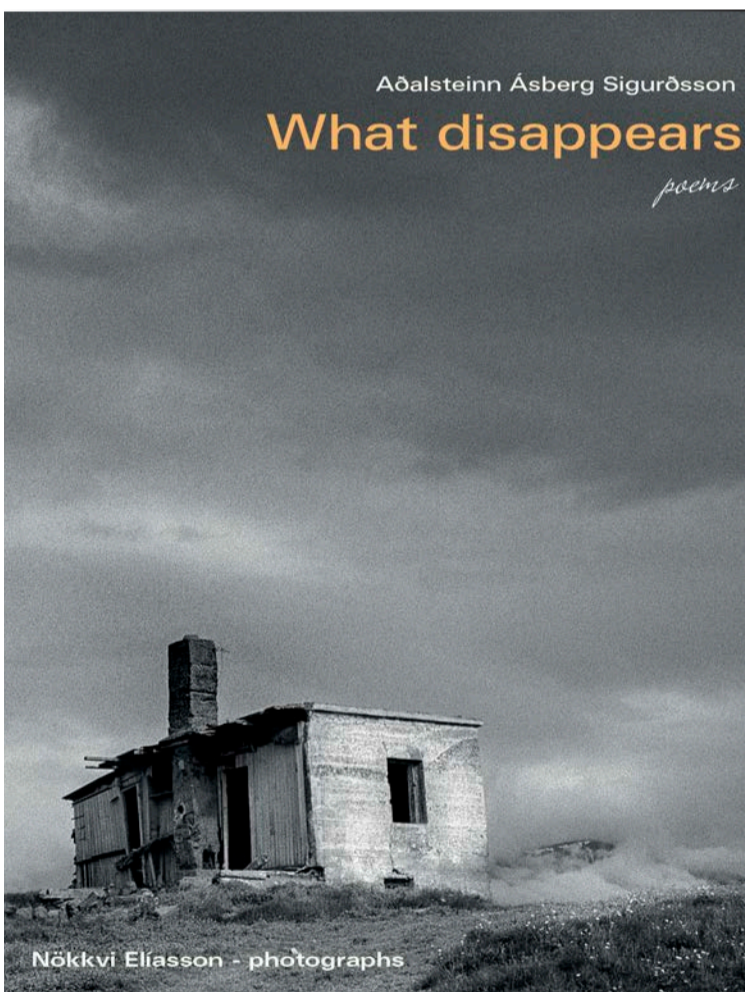
#### Tell It

One of three songs from the album which was born during a song-a-day session. This one is simply the lo-fi demo I sent in one day.

#### Amaying

This might be the only true love song I've ever written. It was recorded live with Kjartan and Merope. I wanted the song to blossom like a nocturnal Datura and Úlfur wrote this incredibly glorious cello arrangement for it. I've made a video of me dancing a duet with a ballerina. Coming soon! 🍷

You can catch Gyða at Gamla Bíó on July 7th at 21:00. Tickets available at [tix.is](https://tix.is). Ox is available via our online store [shop.grapevine.is](https://shop.grapevine.is), or on [smekkleysa.net](https://smekkleysa.net)



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Wine 900 ISK.

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Every day from 16:00 to 20:00.  
Beer 800 ISK,  
Wine 800 ISK.

**ÍÐNÓ**  
Every day from 16:00 to 19:00.  
Beer 850 ISK,  
Wine 850 ISK.

**JÖRGENSEN KITCHEN & BAR**  
Weekdays 16:00 onwards.  
Weekends 12:00 to 16:00.  
Beer 750 ISK,  
Wine 900 ISK.

**JUNGLE COCKTAIL BAR**  
Every day from

16:00 to 18:00.  
Beer 800 ISK,  
Wine 1000 ISK.

**KAFFI LÆKUR**  
Every day from 16:00 to 19:00 & 22:00 to 23:00 on Tue-Sat  
Beer 950 ISK,  
Wine 1050 ISK.

**KOFINN BAR**  
Every day from 12:00 to 19:00.  
Beer 600 ISK,  
Wine 1000 ISK.

**LOFT**  
Every day from 16:00 to 20:00.  
Beer 860 ISK,  
Wine 950 ISK.

**LÓLA FLORENS**  
Every day from 15:00 to 18:00.  
Beer 1000 ISK,  
Wine 1000 ISK.

**LUNA FLORENS**  
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Discount or a free appetiser.

**MIAMI**  
Tue 15:00 to 00:00.  
Wed to Sat 15:00 to 19:00.  
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Wine 990 ISK

**PRIKID**  
Every day from 16:00 to 20:00.  
Beer 700 ISK,  
Wine 1000 ISK.

**PUBLIC HOUSE**  
Every day from 15:00 to 18:00 then 23:00 to 01:00  
Beer 890 ISK,  
Wine 890 ISK

**PUNK**  
Every day from 16:00 to 18:00.  
Beer 850 ISK,  
Wine 850 ISK.

**UPPSALIR BAR**  
Every day from 16:00 to 19:00.  
Beer 750 ISK,  
Wine 900 ISK.

**RÖNTGEN**  
Every day from 16:00 to 19:00.  
Beer 800 ISK,

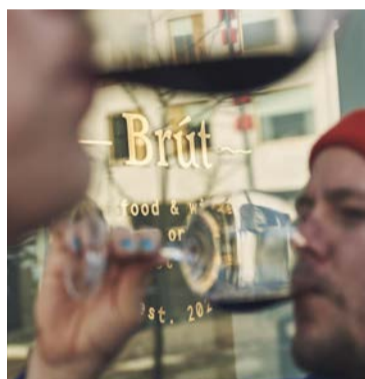
Wine 900 ISK.  
**SÆTA SVÍNID**  
Every day from 15:00 to 18:00.  
Beer 990 ISK,  
Wine 990 ISK.

**SKÚLI CRAFT**  
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Wine 900 ISK.  
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Wine 800 ISK.

**SÓLON**  
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Wine 800 ISK.

**SPIKAKAFFI**  
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sandwich 1,095 ISK  
Vegan option

**Uppsaliir**  
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Vegan option

**Noodle Station**  
Every day 11:00 - 22:00  
Vegetarian noodles - 1,100 ISK

**2,000 ISK And Under**

**Matarkjallarinn**  
Monday - Friday

11:30 - 15:00  
Fisherman's fish soup - 1,990 ISK

**5,000 ISK And Under**

**Apótek**  
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Three course lunch - 4,390 ISK

**Brút**  
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**Deig / Le Kock**  
Week days-All day  
Doughnut, coffee & bagel - 1,100 ISK

**Hamborgara-búlla Tómasar**  
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Burger, french fries & soda - 1,390 ISK

**Gló**  
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Bowl of the month - 1,290 ISK

Vegan option  
**Shalimar**  
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Curry - 1,290 ISK  
Vegan option

**Sæta Svinið**  
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**Lemon**  
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## Books



Karítas at the launch of her new book, "Dagatal"

## Words to live by

Karítas Hrundar Pálsdóttir brings Icelandic learner fiction up to date with her new book "Dagatal."

Words: **Josie Anne Gaitens** Photos: **Ástráður Sigurðsson & Hrund Þórarins Ingudóttir**

Learners of Icelandic have a notoriously rough time. Not only is Icelandic supposedly one of the hardest languages to master grammatically (although some language experts have tried to debunk this myth), but the ubiquity of English across the western world means that even for those who really make the effort to learn, immersion is nigh-on impossible. Pair that with the fact that the available lessons are almost always dry, academic and eye-wateringly expensive, many foreigners who live in Iceland feel that learning the language is an unachievable goal.

It was partly this situation that inspired author Karítas Hrundar Pálsdóttir to write her first book of short stories for learners of Icelandic.

"I love learning languages and in my studies I have read different stories and texts in easy language appropriate to my level many times," Karítas says. "When I was doing a bachelor degree in Icelandic I studied for one year in Japan and did some teaching of Icelandic as a second language. Being around more people who were learning Icelandic, it became apparent to me that the same variety of stories that I had been able to access as a second language learner, weren't there for Icelandic learners."

### A new go-to

The resulting book, "Árstíðir", was published in 2020 and has quickly become a go-to text for Icelandic newbies. Now Karítas has published a second collection of stories, "Dagatal", which is aimed

at slightly more advanced readers, while still focused on straightforward grammar and accessible text.

Similar to *Árstíðir*, *Dagatal* is a series of extremely short stories—"flash fiction," as Karítas calls them. The stories sometimes take on different or quirky forms, like a text message conversation, or a short play, making them very engaging for the reader.

"In both of my collections I've tried to be innovative and creative in the presentation of the story," Karítas explains. "So there are some that are set up as poems, or dialogue, as a journal entry, or email or messenger communication."

"But there's also a lot of diversity in the content and the genre," she continues. "Some are more exciting than others, some are more melancholic, and there's a lot of funny ones that have a play on words and a punchline of some sort."

The stories' length obviously help with their readability for those newly acquainted with reading Icelandic fiction, but Karítas also feels like she is able to express her own creativity through this style as well.

"It's about capturing a moment in time, or just an emotion," she says. "Of course it is a strict form, linguistically, and sometimes creates limitations. But that's also the beauty of the writing process, of being creative within a restrained form. Many writers do that in different ways. For instance in poetry and playwriting there's a strict form, but then you get creative within it."

### Icelandic life in context

As well as introducing learners to the grammar and structure of the language, it was important to Karítas that her books give people some context to Icelandic life, culture and customs. To that end, the main theme for *Dagatal* is around calendar days and the special events that only Iceland celebrates.

"There's a lot of introduction of main traditions and how they might be different in Iceland than elsewhere," says Karítas. "Even though we do celebrate the same holidays as many countries, we also have our own individual unique things."

"I hope that the books help people advance their reading competence, but I also hope that it adds to cultural literacy and gives people an insight into Icelandic values, traditions, and views on life," she adds.

### Design matters

It's clear that a huge amount of care and thought went into the overall design of the book to make it appeal to readers. The presentation is sleek and stylish, steering well clear of anything infantilising or that might feel textbook-y. Karítas worked with cutting-edge artists and designers Krot & Krass to produce the look, including creating individual icons which indicate the language level of each story, without being intrusive into the experience of reading the book.

"How the stories are presented is important," Karítas confirms. "It's important to honour learn-



later,” she explains. “Adult learners might need that simple grammatical linguistic structure, but they’re able to handle different topics. They have a bigger world view.”

Another issue that Karítas has seen in the teaching of Icelandic is how it is almost always delivered through English, making the process of learning very difficult for those who come from different backgrounds.

“It excludes people from other language backgrounds who don’t have strong English, like is the case for some people from Eastern Europe or the Middle East,” she says. “Because of that I wanted my writing to be inclusive, and the best way to do that was to have only Icelandic in the book.”

This includes the prologues of both *Árstíðir* and *Dagatal*, which are both written by non-native Icelandic speakers. First Lady Eliza Reid wrote the forward for *Árstíðir*, while the intro for *Dagatal* was written by Claudia Ashanie Wilson, a prominent human rights lawyer.

### A more tolerant approach

Karítas believes that having strong role models is an oft-overlooked aspect to encouraging non-native residents in Iceland that learning the language is more than possible. Beyond that, she feels there needs to be a broader cultural shift in order for learners to feel more comfortable in using their newly adopted language.

“There’s a lot of things the government and employers could do to facilitate easier access to Icelandic language courses, reducing fees or eliminating them,” Karítas says. “But it’s also about society being more tolerant.”

By any means, Karítas’s books are a step towards making that tolerance and understanding a reality. Luckily for learners, she has no plans to stop writing.

“I would definitely say I’m not done yet,” she says with a wry smile. “I have more ideas for stories to come.”

Find this book and more in our online shop: [shop.grapevine.is](http://shop.grapevine.is)

### The best way to learn

Until Karítas’s stories were published, it was common for Icelandic learners to be recommended children’s books in order to be able to practise their reading and comprehension skills. However, Karítas says that this approach is not always effective.

“Icelandic children’s books may be about simple topics, but have complicated grammatical structures that children learn early but second language learners learn



Karítas Hrunnar Pálsdóttir



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## Food



Chef Gísli Matthías Auðunsson foraging for seaweed

## Slippurinn

Chef Gísli Matthías Auðunsson serves originality by the spadefuls and continues to redefine Icelandic cuisine with razor sharp focus on provenance of produce, while challenging the spectre of cookie-cutter sameness that plagues fine dining.

Words: **Shruthi Basappa** Photos: **Art Bicnick**

Food at Slippurinn is unlike any you will encounter here in Iceland.

For 10 years now, the family-run restaurant has opened each summer, for a few short months, delivering consistency and steadfast focus on what Icelandic cuisine could be.

Restaurants in Iceland tend to be plagued by a curious affliction of profit margins and appealing to a mythical diner who apparently wants the same food no matter where they're dining. At Slippurinn, owner chef Gísli Matthías Auðunsson is freed from such expectation and sends out dish after dish of memorable plates that you're unlikely to taste anywhere else.

On the heels of the success of his debut book, "Slippurinn: Recipes and Stories from Iceland" published by Phaidon, the restaurant is now open for the 2022 season.

### Of guillemot eggs and glistening skies

Dining at Slippurinn can feel like a pilgrimage. For those who dine at the restaurant religiously each year (and there are many), getting there is a big part of that experience. The hour long drive to Landeyjarhöfn is a canvas of vast skies, hills and famous waterfalls. Then there is the 40 minute ferry. As the boat draws closer, towering oceanic



Local guillemot eggs

islands appear in the horizon. Various sea birds squawking overhead foreshadow the forthcoming meal in more ways than one.

Slippurinn does both set and a la carte menus. The flexibility allows for fantastic sampling and warrants multiple visits as the menu changes with the season's produce throughout the summer.

For instance, the opening weeks coincide with the guillemot egg season. Larger than your average chicken egg with a pronounced pointy profile, the aquamarine, speckled egg has a history of being a fresh treat after a harsh winter's diet of soured foods. The birds nest on precarious craggy cliff sides, and the eggs are harvested by hand, in an almost sport-like manner today. Gísli's guillemot eggs are always a layered trifle—it is best to dig deep and get everything in one bite. On this occasion, they hide a layer of kitchen scrap 'XO sauce', topped with an ethereal pine needle sour cream. The ascorbic acid in the needles curdles fresh cream and it is a citrusy revelation that tastes like a promise of summer. Gísli might insist that what he makes is not Icelandic food, but then he goes and revives a rooted-in-the-island ingredient and elevates it to a fine dining treat that is an Instagram dream.



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with gay abandon across the page. But then you sip a cold glass of bartender David Hood's excellent Dandelion Sour (2600 ISK) with brennivín and skyr whey, and you realise that the pesky weed is not just edible, but also delicious. It is also a reminder that the once weak cocktail game has finally come into its own.

Gísli once said that foraging is a no-brainer in Iceland and lamented the incredulity of importing ingredients from Peru when our own backyards are literally ripe for the picking. The restaurant exudes this belief without resorting to gimmicky garnishes of chervil that otherwise haunts restaurants that proclaim backyard foraging. Here, they arrive in all their jewel-like splendour like the stars they are.

Of particular delight this time are the hand-dived sea urchins (1950 ISK) from the Westfjords—the creamy coral uni sits in its once



spiny home on a pool of zippy horseradish cream, crowned with briny seaweed capers and the soft bite of oyster leaves and flowers. A beautiful layering of distinct saltiness of the ocean cohabitants weaves in and out of each bite, reminding you of the adage, "what grows together goes together."

Another show-stopper is the 'Pari' or sugar kelp, the broad, belt-like seaweed that lines Icelandic shores and has to be slow cooked for 18-24 hours to be edible. It is then dried, fried and served like a chip. A decadent snack to shame every other snack you'll encounter hereon. The broth from boiling the kelp is served as a consomme alongside; its dashi-esque flavour an unwitting reminder of Japan, but the heady slick of brown butter gently draws you back to Iceland.

### Backyard treasures and foraged finesse

For the average diner, a brief perusal of the menu might seem intimidating with ingredients like dandelion, lovage, chervil and angelica running

### Beyond the cod head

One of the most popular dishes at the restaurant that has garnered Gísli well deserved attention is the whole cod head. There might,

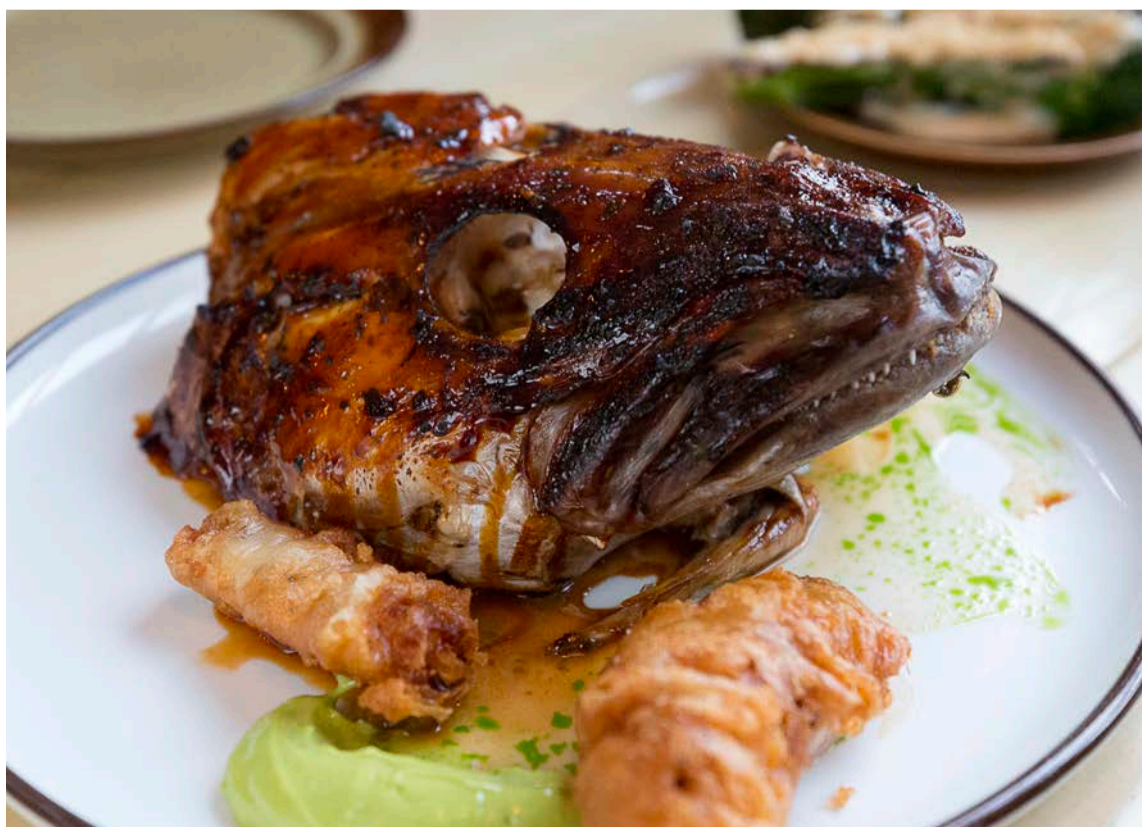
however, be a new usurper to that throne.

The whole lemon sole (5550 ISK) has been a steadfast fixture on the menu, but the iteration served up this year is likely its most pristine. Gísli has always turned to fish, approaching everything from the ground up—starting with the butchering. Like with the 'cod wings' (with an even spicier, earthier hot sauce this year, 1950 ISK), he turns the heat up on the lemon sole by filleting it on both sides, snipping it at either end—thus removing all the bones, while leaving the fish 'whole'. It's then cooked en papillote with a fish stock butter sauce that is at once bright, voluptuous and rich. Batons of fresh apples and wedges of radish are an inspired touch of earthy sweetness to the expertly cooked fish. Yet again, Gísli shows that he is no hostage to technique as he revels in marrying his honed skills with home cooking methods, a rare quality that explains the approachable quality to the restaurant despite its audacity.

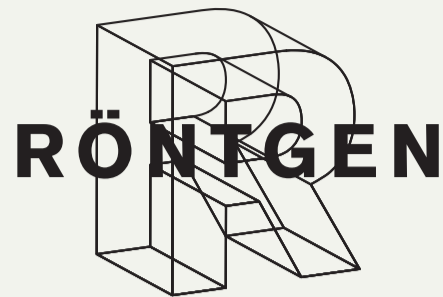
What makes for a unique dining experience at Slippurinn is a combination of several different factors that really shouldn't work, especially if one were to listen to listless norms in fine dining lately: that value for money meals come at the expense of originality, that luxury translates to tired tropes of beef carpaccio, caviar quenelles and a New Nordic hangover, and that one can only have one or the other.

Slippurinn celebrates Iceland and shines a light on its ingredients both abundant and obscure with dishes that are at once old, new and original appealing to a cross-section of diners. Gísli eschews of-the-moment popularity in favour of the unbridled joy of discovery, be it his experiments with ageing fish like with the cured halibut, or that butter and fish can be more than the sum of its parts, as he shows us with his birch-speared scallops served in a satisfying puddle of fermented garlic butter and pickled dulce. Dining at Slippurinn can feel like a journey of enlightenment: you come out changed and wiser for it.

"Slippurinn: Recipes and Stories from Iceland" is available for purchase from our online store [shop.grapevine.is](http://shop.grapevine.is)



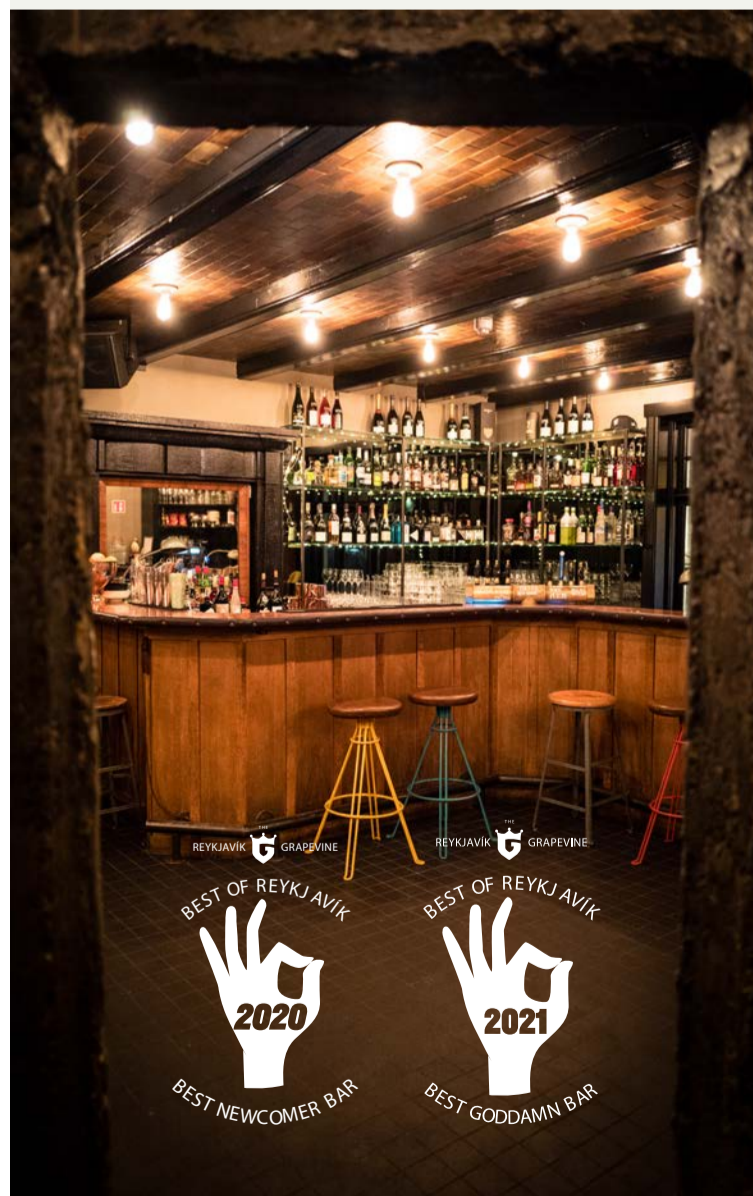
The infamous cod's head dish



Hverfisgata 12



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



# Travel

## Laugarvatn

Waterproof Entertainment

Words: **Alice Poggio** Photos: **Joana Fontinha**



**Distance from Reykjavik:**  
78 kilometres

**Tour provided by:**  
Laugarvatn Adventure  
[laugarvatnadventure.is](http://laugarvatnadventure.is)

Where does one go when you only have one day off from work this week, but you're long overdue for an adventure, something to remind yourself that you are actually in the Iceland that you fell for? Dramatic landscapes, geysers and waterfalls? We say Laugarvatn. Only 50km past the traffic-jammed confines of Reykjavik, we found the small lake-side town, enveloped by nature.

### Weather Schmeather

Laugarvatn is situated along the Golden Circle. The lake has geothermal springs under its surface, which has attracted crowds since the first people settled in Iceland. The weather started out pretty foul, but that was not going to stop us, and as Icelandic people love to say: "There's no such thing as bad weather, just bad clothing," we made sure to come prepared.

### Google's shortcuts

The way there is smooth sailing, but if you are using Google Maps, be aware that it will often try to find a shortcut. When you are using a small electric car, without four wheel drive, faster is not better. From Reykjavik you take Route 36 towards Þingvellir and then Laugarvatn. As you get closer, to your left there's an unassuming, safe-looking road. Follow your survival instinct, that little voice saying 'hmm, maybe not,' drive another five minutes, and turn left on Route 365 (an easy way to remember this is 365 days per year of smart decisions). Spare yourself the

nightmare of accidentally travelling on what appears to be an unmarked F-road—aka FU-road. Rant over.

### Cave People

The Cave People is a guided tour of a restored home dug into the soft volcanic rock on the side of a mountain. It is in Laugarvatnshellir and has been open to the public since 2017. Over the past 100 years it has been a home to many sheep, and two separate families, one of which even gave birth to two of their three children inside the cave.

Driven by their passion to preserve Icelandic history, the staff spent a year researching and renovating, making this a very unique stop that should definitely be part of your Golden Circle tour.



I'm on a boat!

The staff will entertain you with true tales of those who lived in the cave, as they dealt with freezing winters, harsh living conditions, and encounters with the hidden people, often referred to as elves.

It's also a great chance to try the local delicacies in the section of the house where sheep were kept, now the Cave Café. Have a hot beverage with your kleina (Icelanders' favourite pastry), or some traditional lamb soup.

The caves are open every day from 10:00 to 18:00. We highly recommend you go on the 25 minute tours, which are available every half hour.

### Paddleboarding

With full, happy stomachs we headed to another of Laugarvatn Adventure's tours just ten minutes down the road: paddleboarding. Our guide was knowledgeable, patient, and very helpful, especially when it came to putting on the dry suits which are a challenge in itself. Paddleboarding was surprisingly easier than expected, and even if the weather was not on our side, we were not going to let it spoil our fun.

The beautiful scenery and patches of warm water of the shallow lake helped

too. We recommend going with a large group of friends, so you can play some bolder paddleboarding games, such as running across lined up boards, or trying to form a pyramid. Or try your hand at some paddleboard yoga—but be prepared to fall in the water several times.

### Fontana spa

Nothing beats treating yourself to a spa following your afternoon of splashing around the lake. Fontana harnesses the geothermal waters underneath the lake to create natural hot pools and steam vents. It also has a lovely little pier, from which you can access the colder waters for a dip. Thankfully it is close enough for you to give your Wim Hof life a try, but then run back to the comfort and safety of the bubbling tubs.

Laugarvatn makes for the perfect day away from the hubbub of the city, allowing you to reconnect with nature and the wondrous and magical side of Iceland that we love. We cannot wait for our next day off, rainy or not. 🍷



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## Micaela Alexandra Ajanti

Words: **Alice Poggio** Photos: **Joana Fontinha**

There's a sense of calm after a storm that can only be felt after a crushingly busy Friday night at Tides. A waiter approaches the last guests. "If he's not too busy, we would love to see this evening's chef, we cannot say enough great things about the food," the diner says. "Or she!" her friend quickly clarifies. Proving her point, out from the smoke of the recently extinguished grill, walks Micaela.

Apparently, such an exchange is common for the junior sous-chef

from Finland. She's a no-nonsense woman though, and is unvexed by the guests' assumption that she'd be male. "Although it doesn't happen much in Iceland, I find people tend to underestimate women, but it only pushes me more, it feeds me," she says.

### A series of fortunate events

Micaela's first choice of degree was in nutritional therapy, an interest she developed due to severe health

conditions. "I felt really useless," she recalls. So she studied as a means to take matters into her own hands. But just studying food from a book wasn't enough for her. "I needed to work with my hands, I wanted to create."

So she applied to chef school, in fact only sending in her documents 15 minutes before the application deadline. "Why not?" she thought. But once she started, she couldn't let go. "I was hooked."

Then came the opportunity to study abroad with an Erasmus program in Iceland. It was the perfect fit for Micaela. "I remember thinking: 'I would never want to live and work in Iceland. It's a small island, it's cold, and it's expensive.' So that was my chance to visit," she smiled. "I could have never imagined what came next."

### Staying hungry

In Iceland she met Sigurður Laufdal, then the head chef at Grillið, who quickly became her mentor. Soon after, he asked her to stay. And so Micaela, who was once so adamant to relegate Iceland to a holiday-only destination, ended up staying.

Months turned into years and when the opportunity arose to work as chef de partie in the country's first five star hotel, she happily took on the challenge. "I love surrounding myself with people that are way better than me, that's when I learn the most, and I never want to stop learning more. If I hear colleagues talking about something I don't know, I just

go to the bathroom to Google it. I love that."

### All shall pass

But nobody's an expert, and everyone experiences self-doubt. In fact, Micaela admits that that's "a weekly struggle" for her. "I know that it is only a feeling and that it will pass, so I find a way to be at peace with it, and let it take its course," she explains. Nonetheless, it's always best to build a good support system, she reiterates, and, as she says, "to have the kind of people around you that you can go to and say 'I've been lacking motivation.'" For Micaela this person is head chef Georg Arnar Halldórsson.

But what is it about the cutthroat and stressful culinary world that so captivates the young Finn? "The fast-paced lifestyle, the learning curve, the people. This industry is all about the people," she says. "And if the people are right, the atmosphere is amazing and you're always having fun. It doesn't even feel like work, you want the tough days, the late nights and the early starts." 🍷

*The Islanders is our series where we interview interesting people in Iceland about their unique lives. Know someone we should speak to? Email [grapevine@grapevine.is](mailto:grapevine@grapevine.is)*

### WELL, YOU ASKED



## Problematic Bugs and Unfortunate Dating

Words: **Asha Edmondson**

### What are your mosquito populations like?

The universe knows that Icelanders have to put up with enough climatic and environmental hell, so it decided to give us the gift of no mosquitos. The blood-sucking bugs of dismay are clearly not as cut out for Icelandic winters as us Icelanders are, so Mosquitos: 0, Icelanders: 1. Don't fret though! If you are visiting Iceland and you're homesick you can get a reminder of home sweet mosquito-ridden home by visiting the midges at Lake Myvatn. The midges are so similar to mosquitos that tourists often claim to have found mosquitos in Iceland. Don't be like them, you now know better.

### What is dating life like in Iceland?

This question brought about lots of discussion in the office, as many of us have not personally experienced the Icelandic dating scene. The most conclusive answer we got is that dating in Iceland involves drunkenly hooking up with someone enough times that it is more convenient to move in with each other than not. If you're trying to find your rom-com-esque love story, Iceland is not the place for you. However, if you're done with the back and forth of normal dating and you just want to settle down with the first person you meet, Iceland is perfect for you.

### What do Icelanders do in a (rare) heatwave?

If you can consider 15°C (disregarding wind chill of course) a "heatwave," then Icelanders do the same exact thing as every other day, except with maybe one less jacket. In fact, while the rest of the world has been melting in puddles of their own sweat for the last few weeks, we in the north Atlantic have actually been able to enjoy a nice stroll outside in short-sleeves on a few occasions. Thanks for your sacrifice everyone else, finally a weather win for Icelanders! 🍷

### CITY SHOT by Joana Fontinha



National heroes



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