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HANDPICKED ICELAND
Includes our favorite places around the whole country and Reykjavík.



PICKY LOCAL!

Hi, I'm Gigi, and I'd be happy to be your go-to friend, helping you make the most out of your time in Iceland. For over 14 years, my picky friends and I have been exploring, testing, and sharing unique local experiences through HandPicked. These are the places we truly love—and for good reason.



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Send me a line gudbjorg@handpicked.is | [Handpickediceland.is](https://handpickediceland.is)



Illustrated by Elísabet Brynhildardóttir



EAT & DRINK

Restaurants, Bistros, Cafés & Bars

1 CAFÉ SUMARLÍNA

This charming seaside café is a favorite stop for travelers craving comfort and Icelandic warmth. Tuck into hearty burgers, nourishing seafood soup, and homemade pizzas—rumored to be the best in the region. Pair your coffee or hot chocolate with a warm Belgian waffle or their famous chocolate cake, topped with whipped cream. A perfect pause on your Ring Road journey.
Búðavegur 59, Fáskrúðsfjörður
475 1575 | FB

2 SESAM BREADHOUSE

Ambitious craft bakery and café producing sourdough bread and pastries, offering light and affordable lunch. They offer a wide variety of traditional treats and quality coffee. Try the Icelandic "snúður", "kleina" or their amazing rye bread. The atmosphere here is relaxed and personal and a great stop during a journey on the east coast.
Hafnargata 1, Reyðarfjörður | 475 8000
sesam.is

3 AUSTRI BREWERY

Icelandic breweries are known for taking on a unique twist, but this one from the East wins hands down. Their focus ties in with the region's culinary

roots and in turn – they turn the names of the beers into tongue twisters. Check out their taproom and give your tongue a workout with Steinkettill or try a hot one with Skezza, the wasabi infused double IPA ale.

Fagradalsbraut 25, Egilsstaðir
456 7898 | FB

4 NIELSEN RESTAURANT

In the oldest house in town with outdoor seating and terrace you'll find a former Michelin star chef, Kári and his wife Sólveig serving lunch and dinner. Their motto, "Flavors of East Iceland" indicates their use of local ingredients. Showcasing the freshest fish available, reindeer tartare, and other innovative and vegetarian meals that change according to the season.
Tjarnarbraut 1, Egilsstaðir | 471 2001
nielsenrestaurant.is

5 ELDHÚSIÐ RESTAURANT

For an exceptional dining experience off the Ring Road, visit the historical Gistihúsið-Lake Hotel Egilsstaðir (est. 1903). Serving traditional cuisine with a contemporary flair, highlighting local ingredients. Give the 3-course farm menu a try, featuring local beef, goat cheese, and skyr. Eldhúsið also has a reputation of having one of the best lamb dishes in Iceland. There is only one way to find out!
Egilsstaðir 1–2 | 471 1114
gistihusid.is

6 FISH AND BUTCHER SHOP

This hidden authentic gem, nestled in Egilsstaðir's industrial area, specializes in the freshest local meat and fish at

Fjótisdalur, Egilsstaðir (rural)
440 8822 | wilderness.is

reasonable prices. Try the daily lunch special, featuring crispy fish and chips made with your choice of fish, or indulge in lobster fried in garlic butter. The owner, Gestur, whips up the sauces himself and can help you pick out fish to cook on the spot or take home—turning you into a master chef in no time!

Kaupvangur 23b, Egilsstaðir | 471 1300
FB (kjöt og fiskbúð Austurlands)



Svið = Sheep head, is a traditional Icelandic dish. It's a sheep's head cut in half, burned to remove the hair and then boiled. Today –not that popular!

7 MÓÐIR JÖRD – ORGANIC CAFÉ & SHOP

Built from local wood from their own farm, Vallanes, this Nordic-style hut houses a café as well as a shop for their brand, Móðir Jörð (Mother Earth). A leader in organic agriculture in Iceland, they use their own produce to prepare delicacies, snacks or light meals for their guests. Inspired by the slow food movement and sustainability, you'll feel the tranquility and wholeness this place has to offer.
Vallanes | 471 1747 | modirjord.is

8 WILDERNESS CENTRE CAFÉ

The passionate locals share their knowledge and invite you into their open kitchen as part of the family, offering you a full Icelandic kitchen experience. They offer local courses, homemade soups, bread, cakes, and desserts. Here you'll find authentic slow food and slow tourism at its best!

Fjótisdalur, Egilsstaðir (rural)
440 8822 | wilderness.is

9 HENGIFOSS FOOD TRUCK

For the love of waterfalls and food! Parked right by the Hengifoss trail, this little food truck serves traditional lamb soup, fresh-off-the-iron waffles (Grandma's recipe), and homemade ice cream. Try the only sheep's milk ice cream in Iceland, or if you prefer, vegan or gluten-free options. Swing by from May to October for well-earned treats before or after your hike.
Rd. 933, Egilsstaðir (rural) | 666 4476
saudagull.is/matarvagn/

10 SÍREKSSTAÐIR

For a true farm-to-table experience, book a table at Hjá Ökkur (Our Place) Restaurant serving locally grown and thoughtfully prepared food. The lamb is raised on the farm and the fish is wild, caught in a nearby lake. The restaurant is open during the summer and by appointment during the fall and winter.
Síreksstaðir, Vopnafjörður | 848 2174
sireksstadir.is

LOCAL SHOPS

Food & stuff

11 HÚS HANDANNA – CRAFT AND DESIGN

Environmentally conscious lifestyle store that carefully chooses products that are good for people and the planet. Whether the product comes from the region, around Iceland, or from the Nordic countries, you are guaranteed to find authentic goods that support the local community and sustainability while impressing your friends! Take home a unique keepsake that portrays excellent craftsmanship, Icelandic design, local delicacies and so much more.
Miðvangur 1-3, Egilsstaðir | 471 2433
hushandanna.is

12 BLÓÐBERG



You'll find the ultimate Icelandic design boutique in an artfully black and white painted house in this small but creative village. Erna, the owner, has mastered the art of cool and cozy with her curated selection. From trendy wool sweaters to locally made ceramics, fur accessories and more. Stop by for one-of-a-kind gifts from Icelandic brands.

Norðurgata 5, Seyðisfjörður | 822 5258 | FB

CULTURE

Art, museums & exhibitions

13 SLÁTURHÚSIÐ CULTURAL CENTER

While focusing on performing arts, this vibrant cultural hub also hosts ambitious and inspiring art and photo exhibitions, often centering on pressing topics such as climate change. It encourages guests to ponder and connect ideas of the past and the future while celebrating the knowledge of our ancestors and the tradition of craftsmanship in modern mass-manufactured society.
Kaupangur 9, Egilsstaðir
897 9479 | slaturhusid.is

14 SKAFTFELL ART CENTER

Located in the unique micro community of Seyðisfjörður, Skaftfell is devoted to promoting and exhibiting visual art, the main focus being contemporary art. With running exhibitions the whole year through, and a residency program for visual artists and scholars, Skaftfell is a place of constant happenings!

Austurvegur 42, Seyðisfjörður
472 1632 | skaffell.is | FB

15 TECHNICAL MUSEUM OF EAST ICELAND

The exhibition Búðareyri tells a story of transformation that spans a century of innovation. Through an interactive display and creative storytelling, you can discover a part of the town often referred to as the cradle of technology. Don't miss the outdoor exhibit at the Harbor Garden honoring the vital role of women in early 20th-century Seyðisfjörður.
Hafnargata 38, Seyðisfjörður | 472 1696
tekmus.is

16 SKRÍÐUKLAUSTUR – CENTRE OF CULTURE AND HISTORY

Explore the former home of writer Gunnar Gunnarsson, built in 1939, and discover his extraordinary story. Enjoy art exhibitions and visit the ruins of a 16th-century monastery. Families can join the figure Uggi on a playful digital adventure. Choose a multimedia guide or a personal tour, and then conclude with a locally sourced meal at Klausturkaffi.
Skríðuklaustur, Egilsstaðir (rural)
471 2990 | skriduklaustur.is

17 WILDERNESS CENTER

A creative exhibit that recreates fascinating tales of history, culture and nature from the Icelandic outback. The owner, a film director and historian, has carefully designed the experience to allow you to forget yourself in a world of outlaws and roaming reindeers, where the forces of nature rule. Located on the edge of Northern Europe's biggest wilderness, the center's surroundings are an attraction in itself.
Fjótisdalur, Egilsstaðir (rural)
440 8822 | wilderness.is

18 BUSTARFELL MUSEUM

One of the best preserved turf houses in Iceland. Take a journey through the

history of farming and changes in lifestyle from the late 18th century to the mid-20th century. The farm has been owned by the same family since 1532, and they still live on site. You can get traditional cakes and coffee at the café.

Bustarfell, Vopnafjörður (rural)
855-4511 | bustarfell.is

PLAY

Activities, pools & spa

19 WILDERNESS CENTER – TOURS

Offering a variety of uniquely authentic, experiences at the edge of the largest, uninhabited wilderness in Northern Europe. Their day tours include a midnight horse riding adventure and a hike to an abandoned farm. Explore life in the outback in the same sustainable manner as our forefathers, or try an exciting jeep adventure in the highlands!
Fjótisdalur, Egilsstaðir (rural)
440 8822 | wilderness.is

20 FINNSSTAÐIR HORSE RENTAL

Quality and an enjoyable experience are the hallmarks of this family-run horse rental, renowned for its well-trained horses, skilled guides, and spectacular riding paths. Specializing in riding tours for experienced riders, they also cater to beginners. At the farm, you can also cuddle some friendly farm animals at the petting zoo, try the nine-hole footgolf course, and enjoy refreshments at the barn-turned-dining area. There's even a spacious rental house in case you want to stay on!
Finnstaðir, Egilsstaðir (rural)
892 1803 | finnsstadir.is

21 LAUGAVALLADALUR BATH

An oasis west of river Jökulsá á Dal, where you can enjoy a hot geothermal stream and shower under a warm waterfall where the stream runs into the

valley's main river. Located 20 km north of dam Kárahnjúkar. Please be wary since the temperature may vary.

Kárahnjúkar road

22 VÖK BATHS

Geothermal bathing is taken to a whole new level with Vök Baths. Only a few minutes drive from the town of Egilsstaðir, off the shores of Lake Urriðavatn, are Iceland's first and only series of floating pools. Surrounded by the lake itself—blurring the boundaries between nature and you. Sustainability is taken seriously at Vök Baths where you can also enjoy a pool bar and a bistro.
Lake Urriðavatn, Egilsstaðir (rural)
470 9500 | vokbaths.is

23 SELÁRDALSLAUG - POOL

A small, modest swimming pool, beautifully located on the banks of the salmon-rich Selá River. It opened in 1950 and was built mostly by volunteers. The pool features a hot tub, a cold tub, indoor showers, and locker rooms with good accessibility for individuals with disabilities. There is something about overlooking one of the greatest salmon fishing spots in Iceland from a warm swimming pool!
Selárdalur, 3 km north of Rd. 85
473 1499

It might sound ironic, but Icelanders love their ice cream—rain, shine, or snowstorm. In fact, we even have a word for it: **isbítur**—which means going for a drive just to enjoy ice cream on the road.



NATURE

24 GERPIR

To have a look at the easternmost tip of Iceland, a drive to Vöðlavík is required and a short hike. There you can enjoy a wild and uninhabited stretch of nature.
Road 958

25 PÁSKAHELLIR

A small cave eroded by the thrashing ocean stands by the seaside of Neskaupstaður National Reserve. Poking through are holes that were formed by prehistoric trees destroyed by lava flow.
Bakkavegur, Neskaupstaður

26 HALLORMSSTAÐUR FOREST

Iceland's largest and oldest forest with numerous hiking routes and marked trails, open spaces and playgrounds. In late summer, large quantities of berries

and mushrooms are yours for the taking. While in this beautiful area, make sure to visit Atlavík beach.

Road 931

27 HENGIFOSS WATERFALL

The second-highest waterfall in Iceland and it is particularly picturesque. Known for red clay strata patterns created by sediments from a forest destroyed by flowing lava. It takes 40–60 minutes to walk from the parking lot to the waterfall.
Road 933

28 STUÐLAGIL

Thanks to the Kárahnjúkar Hydropower Plant, the water levels dropped in the glacial river Jökulsá á Dal, revealing the stunning Studlagil basalt columns canyon. A photographer's dream!
Road 923

FLIP TO SEE SOUTH EAST

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& REYKJAVÍK