



The oldest natural pool in Iceland

Secretlagoon.is



Illustrated by Elisabet Brynhildardóttir



EAT & DRINK

Restaurants, Cafés, Bistros & Bars

1 KAFFI GOLA

Looking for a hidden gem? Next to the historic Hvalsneskirkja church, you'll find this charming café! Run by four sisters bringing new life to the place their grandparents once called home. Set in a rebuilt barn, modern Scandinavian style, with big windows to enjoy the picturesque views. They serve brunch, lunch, coffee, and homemade dishes inspired by their grandmother's kitchen. **Hvalsnes, Suðurnesjabær (rural) 664 7580 | FB**

2 PUBLIC DELI



Just minutes from the airport, this new food hotspot is known for its relaxed vibe, great food, and friendly atmosphere. Everything's made from scratch—pizza dough, soups, sauces, and pestos. The wraps are a local favorite, and weekly specials never disappoint. Don't miss the adjoining shop, filled with Icelandic finds perfect for browsing or bringing along for the road. **Keilisbraut 771, Ásbrú | 556 1006 | publicdeli.is**

3 ISSI - FISH AND CHIPS TRUCK

Husband and wife team serving traceable and locally sourced fish & chips minutes from the airport. Grab hearty portions of crispy, tender fish topped with special seasonings on the fries - try the unique 'magic dust' blend. A juicy fish burger will fill up the hungriest visitors. Eco-conscious guests will love the renewable uses for its oil and any food waste. **Fitjar, Njarðvík | 789 7773 | issi.is**

4 MATKRÁIN BISTRO

A Danish-inspired bistro serving beautifully crafted smørbrød, open-faced sandwiches on hearty rye—and a menu full of fresh fish, local meats, and vibrant vegetable options. Swing by for a nourishing all-day brunch, enjoy happy hour and charcuterie combos from 3:00 PM to 6:00 PM, or treat yourself to a wholesome dinner at this modern yet cozy eatery. And whatever you do, don't skip the cakes! **Breiðamörk 10, Hveragerði | 483 1105 matkrain.is**

5 ÖLVERK - PIZZA AND BEER

Craft beer and wood-fired pizza—indulge in this classic combo and take a tour at the family-owned Ölverk brewery. Owners Laufey and Elvar have been harnessing nearby geothermal power to produce their IPAs, sour beers, pilsners and seasonal offerings since 2017, also growing chillies in nearby greenhouses for their distinguished flavor-bomb sauces! **Breiðamörk 2, Hveragerði | 483 3030 olverk.is**

Skál! = Cheers!

Beer was first allowed in Iceland in 1989. Now there are over thirty micro breweries in Iceland.

SHOP LOCAL

Food & stuff

6 NÁNDIN - THE PLASTIC-FREE FOOD STORE

The family brand, Urta Islandica, combines pure Icelandic herbs with a variety of ingredients, such as rhubarb, licorice, angelica, birch, kelp etc., producing salts, tea, jam and more. You can find their full collection and much more in their plastic-free and eco-friendly local store. Acknowledged for taking an active part in reducing plastic waste in Iceland. **Austurgata 47, Hafnarfjörður 470 1300 | urta.is**

7 ÁSGARÐUR WORKSHOP

In this haven for creativity, passion, and opportunity, 33 people with disabilities design and handcraft objects from natural materials ranging from wood and rock to plants and leather. This remarkable non-profit organization in rural Mosfellsbær enables each person to work with ideas and tools according to their capabilities, participating in the entire creative process. From toys that inspire play and imagination to jewelry and homeware, there's something to be found for everyone. **Álafossvegur 24, Mosfellsbær 567 1734 | asgardur.is**

CULTURE

Art, museums & exhibitions

8 THE HERITAGE MUSEUM AT GARDSSKAGI

Just minutes from Keflavik Airport, this charming seaside museum and information center is the perfect first or last stop on your journey during the summer months. Nestled next to the scenic Garðskagaviti Lighthouse, it brings

Iceland's past to life with four exhibits, vintage boats, a 1921-style shop, and a small kids' corner. Step inside to discover how Icelanders lived in the 1900s. Open from May to September—free of charge! **Skagabraut 100, Garður | 425 3008 | FB**

9 REYKJANES ART MUSEUM

Thought-provoking contemporary museum featuring local and international artists with a dash of stunning coastline views. Spacious exhibition halls showcase rotating presentations from visionaries like Larissa Sansour and glimpses into Iceland's captivating art scene. Educational programs for all ages engage the local community to inspire young artists. **Duusgötu 2-8, Reykjanesbær 420 3245 | listasafn.reykjanesbaer.is**

10 HAFNARFJÖRÐUR MUSEUM

Housed in several historic buildings, this museum vividly recounts the story of Hafnarfjörður and its residents. Discover seven exhibitions and embark on a journey into the past to learn about the lives of the locals in this coastal fishing village. Stroll along the harbor, breathe in the sea air, and enjoy a wonderful selection of nearby cafés and restaurants. Admission is free. **Vesturgata 6, Hafnarfjörður | 585 5780 museum.hafnarfjordur.is**

11 GLJÚFRASTEINN

Just 20 minutes outside of Reykjavik (UNESCO City of Literature), you will find the home of our Nobel Prize winner for Literature. An audio tour will guide you through its stunning mid-century modern interiors. With a discerning taste, his home is a time capsule, chock full of art, design—and books of course! **Pingvallavegur, Mosfellsdalur 586 8066 | gljufrasteinn.is**

12 LÁ ART MUSEUM

Take a break from exploring the natural wonders of the Golden Circle region and get inspired by the art scene. The ambitious LÁ Art Museum is renowned across the country for its classical and contemporary art exhibitions and cultural events. Afterwards, enjoy a cup of coffee at the museum café while the kids can play in the art corner. Free admission. **Austurmörk 21, Hveragerði | 483 1727 listasafnarnesinga.is**

PLAY

Activities, pools & spa

13 SKY LAGOON

Experience real Icelandic bathing culture at this dream-like oceanside geothermal lagoon just minutes from the City Center. We recommend The Pure Pass or the Sky Pass, which includes a Seven-Step Ritual that takes you from the lagoon to a cold plunge pool, sauna, cold mist, body scrub, and steam room. After relaxing in the lagoon, treat yourself to a taste of Iceland's culinary world with unique tasting platters at Smakk Bar. **Vesturvör 44, Kópavogur | 527 6800 skylagoon.com**

14 INSIDE THE VOLCANO

Journey to the center of the earth and explore a dormant volcano! The tour starts with a hike across a lava field to the entrance of the Þríhnúkagígur volcano where the real adventure begins. An open cable lift takes you into the magma chamber to explore the brilliant colors and rock formations. It's truly a bucket list experience. Operating from May to October. **519 5609 | insidethevolcano.com**

15 GEOTHERMAL EXHIBITION

Have a look inside the largest geothermal power plant in Iceland. The interactive displays and self-guided audio tour explain how renewable energy is harnessed for electricity and hot water. The Curiosity Corner space makes it fun for kids of all ages. In addition, enjoy the beautiful landscape, a multi-sensory installation, museum store, coffee, and a chat with friendly staff. **Hellisheiðarvirkjun | 591 2880 | on.is**

16 GEOTHERMAL PARK

This little park is well worth a stop on your road trip to learn about the geothermal history of the area. See thermal springs first-hand and discover how the townspeople have put that energy to good use. Boil eggs in the hot spring and eat them with a slice of bread baked underground in geothermal heat for up to 24 hours. During the summertime, top off your visit by soothing your feet in healing mud and then dip them in the warm pond. **Hveramörk 13, Hveragerði 483 4601 | FB**

17 LAUGASKARÐ - THERMAL BATH

A favourite pool of many Icelanders, finding it romantic and relaxing on summer days while they marvel at the surrounding beauty. Built in a way that shields from sterner elements of Icelandic weather. A large Flow through pool heated with geothermal steam ensures normal acidity and purity of the water. There is also a children's pool, jacuzzi, cold dip pool and authentic steam room built over a natural hot spring. **Laugarskarð, Hveragerði | 483 4113**

NATURE

18 GARDSSKAGI LIGHTHOUSE



Only 10 minutes drive from Keflavik airport, you can enjoy white beaches, panoramic sea views and rich bird life. Two lighthouses, a Heritage Museum, a restaurant and an information center.

19 BRIDGE BETWEEN CONTINENTS

20 GUNNUHVER - GEISER

21 GELDINGADALIR ERUPTION SITE

22 HEIÐMÖRK - FOREST

23 MT. ESJA - HIKE

24 GLYMUR - HIKE

25 PINGVELLIR NATIONAL PARK

Don't like the weather? Just wait for 5 minutes and you'll get something different! Make sure you bring layers with you, as Icelandic weather is notoriously fickle. It may look great outside right now, but wait, chances are it will change and then change again and so on.



WEST | NORTH | EAST | SOUTH
& REYKJAVÍK





- Support local businesses
- Go Green
- Find the hidden gems
- Create meaningful experiences

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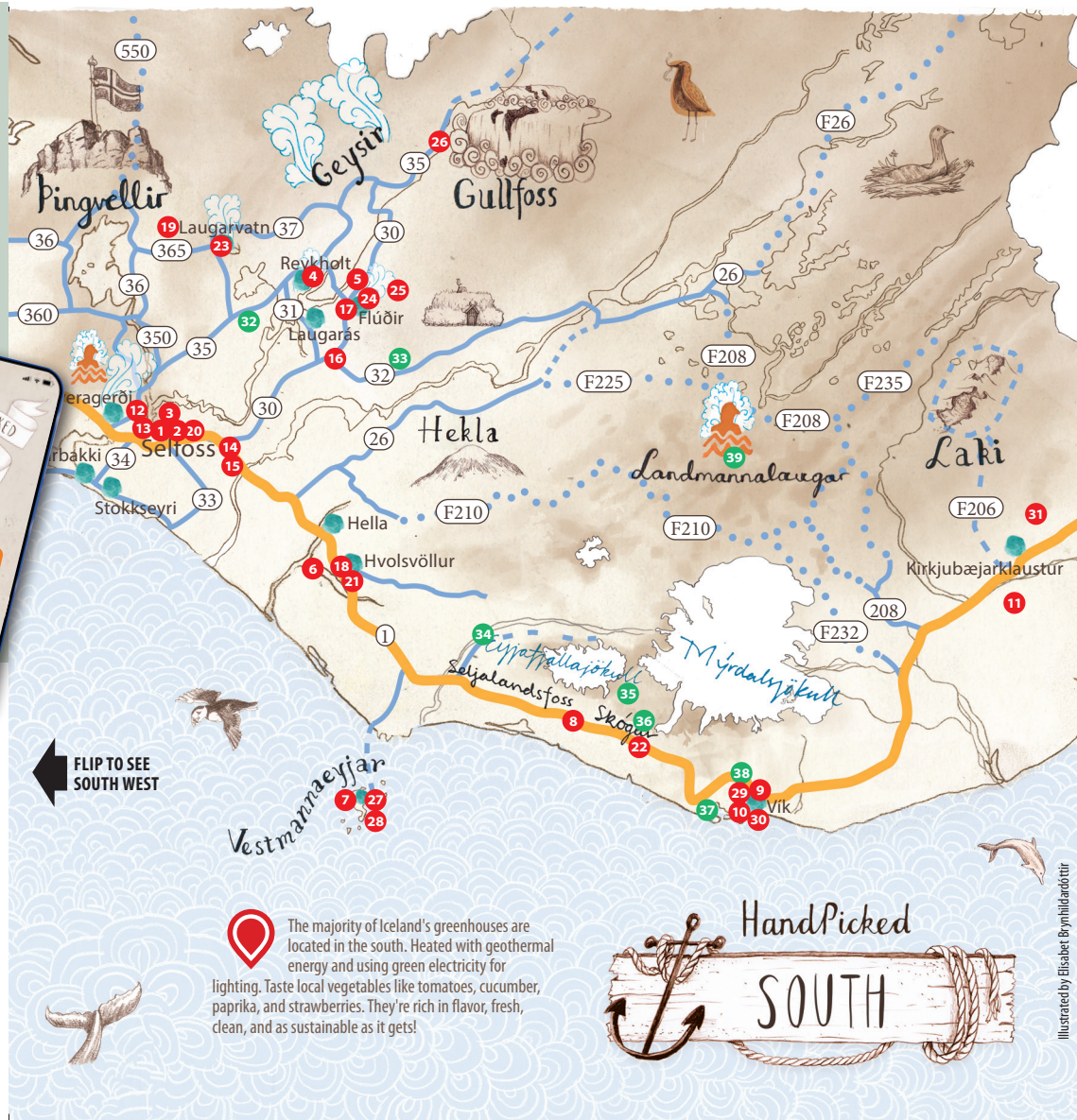
HANDPICKED ICELAND
Includes our favorite places around the whole country and Reykjavík.

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)



FLIP TO SEE
SOUTH WEST



The majority of Iceland's greenhouses are located in the south. Heated with geothermal energy and using green electricity for lighting. Taste local vegetables like tomatoes, cucumber, paprika, and strawberries. They're rich in flavor, fresh, clean, and as sustainable as it gets!



Illustrated by Elisabet Brynhildardóttir



When traveling in winter, it's always a good idea to check for winter openings.

EAT & DRINK

Restaurants, Bistros, Cafés & Bars

1 TRYGGVASKÁLI

Fine dining restaurant in the oldest house in Selfoss—this riverside restaurant is a favorite among locals and travelers alike. Once home to bridge builders, it now serves seasonal dishes from local ingredients. Enjoy the fish of the day, succulent lamb, or try something adventurous like whale, horse meat, or lobster soup. Cozy vibe, local flavor, and timeless charm all in one. **Tryggvatorg, Selfoss | 482 1390** tryggvaskali.com

2 BÓKAKAFFIÐ SELFOSSI - CAFÉ

Book café, a match made in heaven: books & high quality coffee. This charming café is where the locals go to find new and used books in English and Icelandic. Partake in Iceland's two favorite pastimes—reading and drinking coffee. Inviting and cozy, sit back and enjoy their Icelandic roasted brew in a cozy sofa or outside on a nice patio. **Austurvegur 22, Selfoss | 482 3079 | FB**

3 GK BAKERY

Head to Selfoss to find experienced bakers breathing life and love into the scene. Using locally sourced ingredients, these longtime friends—G & K—craft

sourdough breads, cinnamon rolls, croissants, and pastries with passion and good vibes. Whether grabbing something for the road or settling in at their cozy café, you're in for a real treat. **Austurvegur 31b, Selfoss 482 1007 | FB**

4 MIKA RESTAURANT

Where delicate langoustine and handmade chocolate meet, you'll find Michał and Bożena crafting their mouthwatering specialties from local ingredients at this family-run restaurant in Reykholt. New variety of cakes and desserts appear weekly, along with pizzas, salads, fish and meat. Their delightful handmade chocolates promise a sweet experience ideal to take back home. **Skólalbraut, Reykholt | 486 1110** mika.is

5 FARMERS BISTRO

"We serve what we grow" is the motto of this lovely slow-food bistro located at Iceland's only mushroom farm. A family affair founded to offer food from the region, it focuses on the farm's very own mushrooms, bell peppers, and other vegetables and herbs, all organically grown and handpicked in nearby geothermal greenhouses. Its location in the idyllic village of Flúðir makes it the perfect pitstop on your Golden Circle tour. **Garðastígur 8, Flúðir 519 0808 | farmersbistro.is**

6 HÓTEL RANGÁ RESTAURANT

The restaurant at this renowned hotel offers a modern take on Nordic cuisine. Head chef, Pétur Jóni, uses fresh local ingredients to create gorgeous seasonal plates. Beautiful views of the countryside make this a perfect spot for an unforgettable evening. Try a signature cocktail or sample the bar's extensive whiskey collection. **Hella (rural) | 487 5700 | hotelranga.is**

7 GOTT RESTAURANT

With their roots in the Westman Islands, culinary power couple Sigurður and Berglind have gotten rave reviews—and rightly so! GOTT is more than good—as its name translates—it's actually great! Expect generous servings made from scratch, fresh ingredients and healthy choices of fish, salad and soup, as well as classics with a unique flair. **Bárustígur 11, Westman Islands 481 3060 | gott.is**

8 FAXI BAKERY

Coffee to go? Or enjoy a pastry with a view of the infamous Eyjafjallajökull volcano? This bakery makes fresh cinnamon rolls every hour and has a selection of sandwiches, bagels, cookies, cakes, and espresso drinks. Their "happy marriage cake" is made from a recipe passed down through generations—you can taste the love in every bite! **Eyjafjallajökull | 835 9534 | instagram**

9 SUÐUR-VÍK RESTAURANT / CAFÉ

Perched on a hill, with a breathtaking view above the town of Vík, this quaint restaurant offers a good selection of gluten free and vegan options. From lamb and fish to Asian chicken, they are known for their fabulous pizzas and locally made ice cream. Go early for dinner or book ahead during high season. **Suður Vík, Vík i Mýrdal 487 1515 | FB**

10 BLACK CRUST PIZZERIA

The name says it all! Stop by this eatery to try the latest pizza trend—black pizza dough—which gets its color from natural charcoal, giving the pizza a slightly smoky taste and plenty of style points. You'll also find choices of sourdough and gluten-free pizzas, all piled high with toppings like Icelandic cheese, homemade pesto, langoustine and truffle-infused creme cheese. It's a pizza experience that's smokin' hot—literally! **Austurvegur 16, Vík | 854 6611 | FB**

11 GÍGUR RESTAURANT

The family that owns Hotel Laki takes pride in building relationships with local farmers and using only the best ingredients; the quality shines through with every bite. The menu features fish, meat, scrumptious burgers, and more. The expansive skyline makes for great views of the summer sun and winter's Northern Lights. Open daily from 7 to 9 p.m. **Efri-Vík, Kirkjubæjarklaustur | 412 4600** hotellaki.is

SHOP LOCAL

Food & stuff

12 HESPUHÚSÍÐ - YARN

Plant dyeing wool is a fascinating, age-old craft, and here, you can learn all about it. Visit this open plant dye studio and store, explore the plants and dye pots, and discover the tradition behind natural coloring from Guðrún, the owner. While there, pick up a few bundles of plant-dyed yarn for your next project, or check out the Icelandic flora and bird cards made by Guðrún. **Árbæjarvegur Vestri, Selfoss (rural) 865 2910 | hespa.is**

13 MOTIVO LIFESTYLE STORE

From Icelandic outdoor clothes, reasonably priced dressess to giftware and design products that are bound to make a statement, this must-stop boutique guarantees an enjoyable shopping experience. Check out the skincare products from established Icelandic brands, often made from local materials. No need to rush, sit down and enjoy a cup of coffee in the bar/café area or treat yourself with a glass of their popular sparkling wine, poured straight from the tap. **Brúarstræti 3, Selfoss 482 1700 | motivo.is**

14 THE WOOL CENTRE-PINGBORG

A unique wool shop in an old school-house and community centre, 8 km east from Selfoss on Route 1. Here, you'll find locally made woolen goods from specially selected lambswool in natural colors, beautiful sweaters as well as other knitted garments, wool for knitting, and a great selection of hand dyed yarn, loppi and sheepskin. Stop by and visit this wonderful wool shop, a true gem. **Pingborg 1, Selfoss (rural) | 482 1027 846 9287 | thingborg.is**

15 GALLERY FLÓI - ART AND DESIGN

Expert glassblower and ceramicist specializing in Viking glass beads handcrafted on the premises over an open flame. Inspired by Icelandic nature and archeological excavations, Fanndis Huld uses home-grown materials and timeless traditions to build experimental art objects. The gallery and shop also showcase this skilled artisan's creations in ceramics, metals, silver, wood, soap making, and mixed glass techniques. **Pingborg 1, Selfoss (rural) | 868 7486** galleryfloi.com

16 HREPPAMJÓLK - DAIRY SHOP



From cow to cup—this self-serve dairy shop offers fresh, traceable dairy straight from the family farm at Gunnbjarnarholt. Sip creamy chocolate milk, iced coffee, smoothies, or try their delicious skyr and ice cream. The cows live free-range in eco-conscious barns, and every product reflects their care. Also found in Bónus and Krónan—but best enjoyed here, at the source. **Gunnbjarnarholt, Selfoss (rural) hreppamjolk.is**

17 SÓLSKINSBÚÐIN - FARMERS MARKET

Stock up on fresh herbs, local meats, and vibrant veggies at this sunny little farmers market. Everything is sourced on-site or straight from nearby farms, with a focus on quality and Icelandic tradition. Don't miss the fresh bread, homemade cakes, and pastries—and if you're a coffee lover, don't leave without a bag of Iceland-roasted beans as a keepsake. **Melar, Flúðir | solskinsbudin.is**

18 UNA LOCAL PRODUCTS



A family owned store that offers a great selection of handpicked local products and souvenirs with a nice blend of unique handicraft art and design products. You'll find endearing hand-knitted sweaters here as well as natural Icelandic products such as jams, teas, spices, kelp sauce, rhubarb candy and more—this is the place for a fun shopping spree! **Austurvegur 4, Hvolsvöllur 544 5455 | FB**

CULTURE

Art, museums & exhibitions

19 THE CAVE PEOPLE

Unbelievably, until 1922 a few families were known to live in caves within Iceland. Traveling near the Golden Circle region, you'll find two such caves, built around the year 700 by Irish monks—now renovated to depict life as it last was. Curious? Stop by and take a look. They offer a 25-minute guided tour with stories to emerge you in a flashback from the not too distant past.

Laugarvatn (Rural) | 888 1922 thecavepeople.is

20 THE BOBBY FISCHER CENTRE

A small museum in honor of chess grandmaster Bobby Fischer featuring a permanent exhibition on the 'Match of the Century' which took place in Reykjavik in 1972 between Fischer and Spassky, considered to be one of the most glorious moments in the history of the game of chess. **Austurvegur 21, Selfoss | 894 1275** fischeretur.is

21 LAVA CENTRE

Iceland's landscape is awe-inspiring, we know—but there's so much more than what meets the eye. Come visit the #1 interactive experience to top them all. Learn about the monumental and complex natural forces that shaped Iceland over millions of years. The state-of-the-art Centre is hands-on and so compelling you'll lose track of time. A lovely café and a gift shop are on the premises. **Austurvegur 14, Hvolsvöllur | 415 5200** lavacentre.is

22 SKÓGAR FOLK MUSEUM

A treasure trove for enthusiasts of Icelandic history and culture. The museum is really three in one: a folk museum, open-air museum and a technical museum. Situated directly under the infamous Eyjafjallajökull and right next to the beautiful waterfall Skógafoss. **Skógar, Hvolsvöllur (rural) | 487 8845** skogasafn.is

Ironically we love our ice cream in any season or weather, usually with chocolate dip and candy sprinkled on top...mmm delicious!



PLAY

Activities, pools & spa

23 FONTANA

Immerse yourself in various mineral baths. Cool off in the lake Laugarvatn after relaxing in the Finnish-style sauna or their famous steam room, built over a natural hot spring where you can hear it simmer under your feet. You can also join the walk to their geothermal bakery, and taste their warm bread straight from the ground with butter and smoked trout. **Hverabraut 1, Laugarvatn 486 1400 | fontana.is**

24 SECRET LAGOON

Tucked into a steamy geothermal field near Flúðir, Iceland's oldest swimming pool offers a truly a refreshing soak. Fed entirely by bubbling hot springs, including the Liti Geysir, the water stays a toasty 38–40°C year-round and refreshes completely every 24 hours. Simple, natural, and rich in minerals—this is true Icelandic bathing. **Hvamsvegur, Flúðir | 555 3351** secretlagoon.is

25 HRUNALAUG HOT SPRING

This authentic bathing experience with three small pools was built by my (Gigi) great-great-grandfather. The first one was built in the late 1800s so his family could bathe and do the laundry. The second one was made of concrete at the beginning of the 1900s and was built for bathing the sheep. Today, the pools are mostly filled with happy travelers! **Ás, Flúðir | 615 2665 | hrunalaug.is**

26 SLEIPNIR GLACIER TOURS

Climb aboard a custom-built glacier truck, designed by the founder, and explore the vast beauty of Langjökull with this family-run and eco-friendly operation. Departing from Gulfoss,

Sleipnir offers year-round, 4-hour glacier tours and seasonal ice cave adventures. Expect panoramic views, fun sled rides, peaceful solitude, and Icelandic treats like kakó and kleinur. Family-friendly and often the only group on the ice. **Gulfoss parking lot | 5654647** sleipnirtours.is

27 RIBSAFARI SPEEDBOAT

Be prepared for the ride of your life "flying" on the water in a RIB Boat (Rigid Inflatable Boat). A knowledgeable and friendly guide, along with 800 horse powers will make your journey memorable to say the least. Not to mention, the various sights such as acoustic sea caves, sea birds, puffins, seals, dolphins and even whales. A must do adventure in the Westman Islands! **Tangagata 7, Westman Islands 661 1810 | ribsafari.is**

28 BELUGA WHALE SANCTUARY AND PUFFIN RESCUE CENTRE

Here, vulnerable animals have a second chance, and it's home to the world's first Beluga whale sanctuary, as well as the only facility dedicated to rehabilitating injured puffins. Meet the two Belugas up close before their move to the sea sanctuary, see puffins dive into the water, and explore the exhibit of native species in the aquarium. Your visit supports the first-class care of the sanctuary's residents. **Ægisgata 2, Vestmannaeyjar | 620 2724** belugasanctuary.sealifetrust.org

29 TRUE ADVENTURE

True Adventure is fully certified to the strictest standards so choose either an unforgettable zip-line tour or paraglide in tandem with an experienced pilot and give lift to your sky-bound dreams! Jaw-dropping aerial action above the green hills, valleys, streams and waterfalls of this most breathtaking of south coast locations.

Vikurbraut 5, Vík | 698 8890 trueadventure.is

30 LAVA SHOW VÍK

Get up close and personal with real molten lava as it's poured over ice, simulating the explosive power of a volcanic eruption. This family-owned, award-winning experience brings the 1918 Katla eruption to life through fiery visuals, expert storytelling, and plenty of heat. A unique blend of science and spectacle—this is Iceland like you've never felt it before. **Vikurbraut 5, Vík | 553 0005 | lavashow.is**

31 ICELAND BIKE FARM

Iceland's first and only natural mountain bike farm winds through dreamlike landscapes. Your heart will race at the sight of breathtaking beauty as you weave on the bike trail network within 11 thousand hectares of land. Bring your own bike or rent high-quality full-suspension mountain bikes or electric bikes at the farm. Be sure to take some time to unwind in the steamy sauna afterward, or consider booking a hut for the night. **Mörtunga 2, Kirkjubæjarklaustur (rural) | 847 1604 | icelandbikefarm.is**

NATURE

32 KERID - CRATER

33 ÞJÓRSÁRDALUR

34 GLJÚFRABÚI WATERFALL

35 FJADRÁRGLJÚFUR CANYON

36 SKÓGAFOSS WATERFALL

37 DYRHÓLAEY HIKE

38 REYNISFJALL HIKE

NATURE

27 KERID

28 ÞJÓRSÁR

29 GLJÚFR

30 SKÓGA

31 DYRHÓ

32 REYNIS

33 LANDM

34 FJADRÁ