



The oldest natural pool in Iceland

Secretlagoon.is



Illustrated by Elisabet Brynhildardóttir

Eat & Drink

Restaurants, Cafés,
Bistros & Bars

1 Kaffi Gola

Next to the historic Hvalsnes-kirkja church, you'll find this newly opened 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 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.

Fítjar, Njarðvík | 789 7773 | issi.is

3 Matkráin Bistro

A Danish-inspired bistro serving beautifully crafted smørrebrød, 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

4 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

Local Shops

Food & stuff

5 Neskja - Chocolate confectionery

The founders of this newly opened micro-confectionery are already well versed in all things chocolate. Their handcrafted sweets combine carefully selected ingredients, bold flavour combinations and balanced textures. From rich caramel and nut sweets to liquorice with a proper Icelandic kick, sampling is encouraged before settling on favourites to take home.

Hafnargata 7b, Grindavík | 431 4444
neskja.is

6 Nándin — The Plastic-Free Food Store

The family behind the store has spent years foraging and blending Iceland's wild herbs into salts, teas, jams, and more. Located in Fjörður Shopping Center in Hafnarfjörður, the store brings together their full Urta Islandica collection alongside produce from other small Icelandic makers, with

vegan and gluten-free options throughout. The owner is often there to talk you through it all.
Fjörður Shopping Center | 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 Garðskagi

Just minutes from Keflavik Airport, this seaside museum and information center makes for a perfect first or last stop in summer. Climb one of only two lighthouses in Iceland that open their doors to visitors—the views over the Atlantic are worth every step. Explore exhibits on early 20th-century Icelandic life, vintage boats, and a 1921-style shop, free of charge. Open May to September.

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 — Home of Halldór Laxness

Just 20 minutes outside of Reykjavík (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 LA 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 Discover Grindavík

For years, the town of Grindavík has been ravaged by volcanic eruptions and earthquakes, making global headlines. Learn about the town's remarkable story in a genuine conversation with a local who has experienced it all firsthand. This small tailor-made tour is based on community, geology, and Grindavík's history and vision for its future. Call ahead for bookings or via Facebook.

698 2243 | discovergrindavik.is

14 Sky Lagoon

Where Iceland's bathing tradition meets a spa ritual. Just minutes from the city center, the seven-step Skjól experience takes you through the geothermal lagoon, cold plunge, sauna, body scrub, and steam room, ending with a refreshing crowberry elixir, with the ocean as your backdrop. Finish at Smakk Bar with Icelandic tasting platters, or grab a keepsake on your way out.

Vesturvör 44, Kópavogur
527 6800 | skylagoon.com

15 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 Þríhnúkaígur 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

16 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

17 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

18 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

Don't like the weather?
Just wait for 5 minutes and
you'll get something different!

19 Garðsskagi Lighthouse

Enjoy two lighthouses, a Heritage Museum, a restaurant and an information center.

20 Bridge Between Continents

21 Gunnhver - Geiser

Fagradalsfjall volcano erupted in Geldingadalir on March 2021.

23 Heiðmörk — Forest

Oasis for hiking, playtime and grilling.

24 Mt. Esja — Hike

One of the most popular hiking treks just outside of the capital region.

25 Glymur - Hike
Up to this 2nd highest waterfall is a moderately challenging 2–3 hour hike.

26 Þingvellir

The world's oldest parliament dating back to 930 and continuing until 1798.



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them all!

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South & Reykjavík

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LOCALS

Hi, I'm Gigi!

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Got a favorite we missed? Drop us a line. team@handpicked.is.



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handpickedguide.com



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Illustrated by Elisabet Brynhildardóttir

Nature / Sights

32 Kerið - Crater

33 Þjórsárdalur

34 Gljúfrabúi Waterfall

35 Fjaðrárgljúfur Canyon

36 Skógafoss Waterfall

37 Dyrhólaey Hike

38 Reynisfjall Hike

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 Selfoss Book Café

Bookcafé, 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 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 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 Micha and Božena crafting their mouthwatering specialties from quality 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.

Skólbraut, 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 a popular pitstop on your Golden Circle tour.

Garðastigur 8, Flúðir | 519 0808
farmersbistro.is

6 Vínstofa Friðheima - winebar and restaurant

Sipping wine inside a greenhouse is exactly as good as it sounds. Set in one of the oldest glass-houses on the Friðheimar estate, order the legendary tomato soup or go for burrata ravioli, piccollo-tomato salad or homegrown strawberries topped with champagne. The kitchen is open until 9 pm, and no reservation needed for groups under six.

Reykholt, Bláskógabyggð
486 8894 | vinstofa.fridheimar.is

7 Hótel Rangá Restaurant

The restaurant at this renowned hotel offers a modern take on

Nordic cuisine. The head chef, uses fresh local ingredients to create gorgeous seasonal plates. Beautiful views of the country-side 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

8 Midgard Adventure Restaurant

Not just a family-owned restaurant, but a friendly gathering place with cosy vibes for hungry travellers and locals alike. Expect hearty Icelandic classics mixed with plant-based delicacies from locally sourced ingredients such as freshly caught fish, highland-raised lamb and potatoes grown just down the road. And their popular beetroot soup won't disappoint!

Dufþaksbraut 14, Hvolsvöllur
5783370 | midgardbasecamp.is

9 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 authentic wood-burning pizzas.

Bárustigur 11, Westman Islands
481 3060 | gott.is

10 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

11 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 í Mýrdal | 487 1515 | FB

12 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

13 Gígur Restaurant

Located in Hótel Laki, this kitchen is built on relationships with local farmers, and the slowly baked lamb shank alone makes it worth seeking out. Expect fish, meat, and burgers on the menu, all sourced with the same care. From the rooftop balcony, the views stretch across the South Iceland skyline: the midnight sun in summer, the northern lights in winter. Open from 18:30-21:00

Efri-Vík, Kirkjubæjarklaustur (rural)
412 4600 | hotellaki.is

Local Shops

14 Hespuhúsið – 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.

Árbærjarvegur Vestri, Selfoss (rural)
865 2910 | hespa.is

15 Motivo Lifestyle Store

From Icelandic outdoor clothes, reasonably priced dresses 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

16 The Wool Centre – Þingborg

A unique wool shop in an old schoolhouse 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, lopi and sheepskin. Stop by and visit this wonderful wool shop, a true gem.

Þingborg 1, Selfoss (rural)
482 1027 | 846 9287 | thingborg.is

17 Hreppamjolk 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

18 Sólskinsbúðin – Farmers Market

Stock up on fresh herbs, local meats, and veggies at this sunny little farmers market. Everything is sourced on-site or straight from nearby farms, with a focus on quality and 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

19 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. Hand-knitted sweaters as well as 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

20 Caves of Laugarvatn

Step into two historic caves tucked along the Golden Circle, once home to local families. Small guided tour that runs every 30 minutes, filled with personal stories and a glimpse of daily life 100 years ago, including how people survived in this humble dwelling. It's a peaceful, simple, and surprisingly meaningful experience. Closed during winter.

Laugarvatn (Rural) | 888 1922
thecavepeople.is

21 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
fischersetur.is

22 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. café and a gift shop are on the premises.

Austurvegur 14, Hvolsvöllur
415 5200 | lavacentre.is

23 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 right next to the beautiful waterfall Skógafoss.

Skógar | 487 8845 | skogasafn.is

Play

Activities, pools & spa

24 Laugarvatn 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

25 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 Litli Geysir, the water stays a toasty 38–40°C year-round and refreshes completely every 24 hours. Simple, natural, and rich in minerals.

Hvammssvegur, Flúðir | 555 3351
secretlagoon.is

26 Hrunalaug Hot Spring

This authentic bathing experience with three small pools was built by my (Gigi's) 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

27 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 Gullfoss, 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.

Gullfoss parking lot | 5654647
sleipnirtours.is

28 Caves of Hella

Step into one of South Iceland's most intriguing mysteries. A family of three-generations have excavated and opened up five man-made caves on their land where legends of Irish monks and echoes of farm life linger in the cool, earthy air. Join a one-hour guided tour led by a local guide for a truly compelling and authentic storytelling experience.

Ægissíða 4, Hella | 620 6100
cavesofhella.is

29 Ribsafari Speedboat

Be prepared for the ride of your life "flying" on the water in a RIB Boat (Rigid Inflatable Boat). A knowledgeable 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.

Tangagata 7, Westman Islands
661 1810 | ribsafari.is

30 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.

Ægissatú, Vestmannaeyjar | 620 2724
belugasanctuary.sealifetrust.org

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Ægissatú, Vestmannaeyjar | 620 2724
belugasanctuary.sealifetrust.org

31 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

32 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

33 Iceland Bike Farm

Iceland's first and only natural mountain bike farm winds through surreal landscapes spanning 11,000 hectares. Your heart will race as you weave through the trail network within. Bring your own bike or rent mountain bikes or e-bikes at the farm for all ages. Afterward, unwind in the hot sauna or book a hut for the night.

Mörtunga 2 | 847 1604
icelandbikefarm.is