



SAS CITY PORTRAIT

# Reykjavik

3rd ed.

**SAS** SCANDINAVIAN AIRLINES



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*The information given in this booklet is based on facts available in July 1971.*



*Front cover: Sundlaugar Reykjavíkur – swimming pool heated by water from hot springs.*

## Introduction

On a map it looks like a piece of laundry hanging from a Polar Circle "clothes-line", yet its geographical position and chilly name are equally misleading. Because of the warm waters of the Gulf Stream, Iceland has a mild climate with few extremes, the average January temperature of its capital, Reykjavík, being higher than that of New York and Vienna.

In fact, only one-eighth of the island is covered by ice, the remainder of the country presenting a contrast of thundering waterfalls, swift-flowing glacial rivers, geysers spouting boiling water, strange lava formations, hissing hot steam escaping from holes in the ground, rugged treeless mountains, many of which are volcanic.

Reykjavík is another example of the misnomers that seem to be typical of Iceland. The capital's name means "Smoky Bay" – given it about 874 AD by Norseman Ingólfur Arnarson, the first settler – yet Reykjavik is one of the few completely smokeless cities in the world, for most of the buildings are heated by water carried in huge pipes from the nearby hot springs.

Fleeing Norway because of a despotic ruler, Ingólfur threw his high-seat posts overboard when he sighted Iceland and vowed that he would make his new home where they were washed ashore. When he found them on the shores of Flaxaflói Bay he saw the steam drifting into the sky from the hot springs in the area and promptly named his new home Smoky Bay.

Despite being founded so long ago, Reykjavík did not develop as a township until the end of the 18th century, and when it was granted a municipal charter in 1786 it had 200 inhabitants. The population had reached only 11,000 in 1910 but there has been a rapid growth since the end of the second world war.

Today about half of the country's 204,000 population live in Greater Reykjavík and the adjacent areas. Reykjavík is a modern metropolis in every sense of the word –



skyscrapers and apartment blocks integrate with colorfully roofed buildings to form a sprawling, spacious capital with a cleanliness which has to be seen to be believed (even dogs are banned!). The hub of commerce, government and industry, Reykjavík is also the center of culture for a people with a heritage of the 13th-century Icelandic Sagas.

Today, too, this tiny nation maintains its forebears' interest in literature. The Icelanders read more newspapers and books than any other country in the world, with writers who have acquired international reputations including Nobel Prize winner Halldór Laxness.

Reykjavík is a city of surprises. Open-air swimming pools for all-year-round bathing. A lake in the town center where Arctic terns nest. A night life that is remarkably gay!

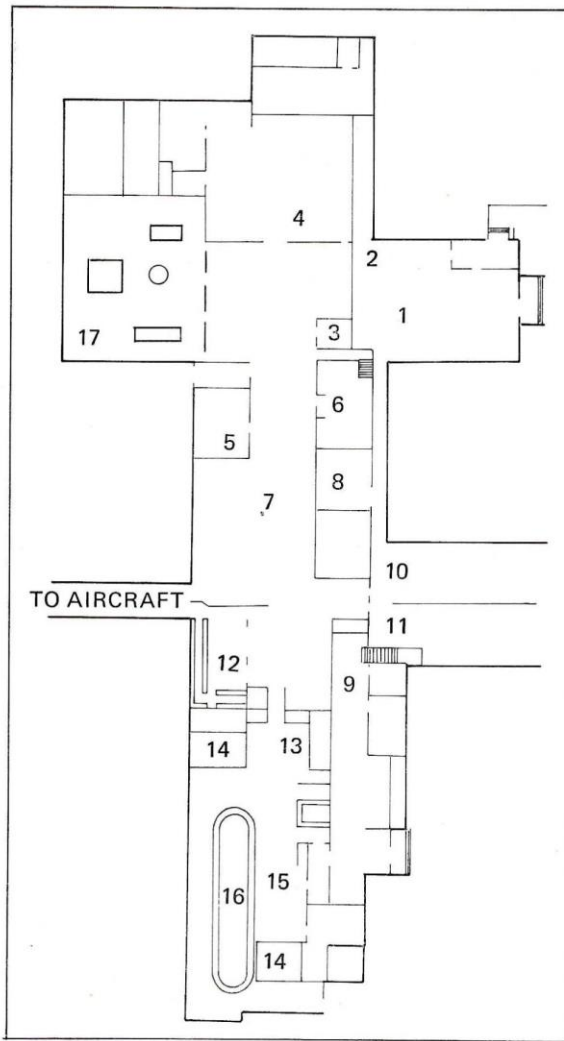
It is also a center for exploring the rest of the island. Strange lava architecture, the Vestmann Islands including the new volcanic island of Surtsey, magnificent waterfalls, glaciers with volcanic craters beneath them, geysers, bubbling hot springs and seething mud pits. Iceland offers a close-up view of Nature at its tempestuous best – and Reykjavík is your modern gateway to this ancient, thrilling land.

### Your arrival in Reykjavík

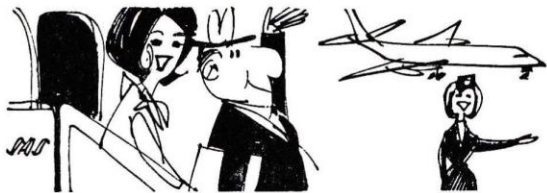
On arrival at Keflavík International Airport, situated 30 miles (50 kms.) from Reykjavík, you pass through customs and immigration control before boarding a coach to take you, in just over half an hour via a modern highway, to one of the two air terminals at Reykjavík Airport – about five minutes by cab or bus from the city center.

At both the Keflavík and Reykjavík terminals hostesses and other local staff are on hand to assist and to supply any information you may require.

### Keflavík Int. Airport



- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1. Departure Hall.                                       | 10. Cafeteria.                                    |
| 2. Check-in.   | 11. Transit Restaurant.                           |
| 3. Passport control.                                     | 12. Duty-Free Shop – for inbound passengers only. |
| 4. Duty-Free Shop – for transit and boarding passengers. | 13. Passport control – inbound.                   |
| 5. Toilet.   | 14. Toilets.                                      |
| 6. Toilet.   | 15. Customs.                                      |
| 7. Transit Hall.   | 16. Baggage.                                      |
| 8. Mail Office.  | 17. Icemart.                                      |
| 9. Car Hire.   |   |



All travelers, except nationals of Denmark, Norway, Finland and Sweden, must hold a valid passport. Nationals of only a comparatively few countries require a visa, which can be obtained without difficulty from the nearest Icelandic consulate.

The Icelandic monetary unit is the "króna" (plural "krónur"), divided into 100 aurar.

At time of printing, no bank or money exchange facilities were available at Keflavík Airport. A foreign money exchange is planned for the future and we advise you to ask on arrival whether one has been opened. If not remember to exchange your Icelandic currency in a bank in Reykjavík before proceeding to the airport.

Note: Icelandic is a difficult language to pronounce, having changed very little from the tongue spoken by the early Norse settlers – but, fortunately, English is widely understood and spoken. Peculiar to Icelandic are the letters Þ/þ and Ð/ð. Þ/þ equals th as in "thing", and Ð/ð is pronounced th as in "them".

## Hotels

Owing to the busy tourist season in summer (June–September) and especially in the months of July and August advance booking in hotels is necessary. Most Reykjavík hotels are now of international standard, all are centrally heated and the standard of cleanliness is generally high. Room prices do not normally include breakfast. The larger hotels are equipped with guest lounges, restaurants, cocktail bars and dance-floors.

*Hótel Borg* (D3)  
11 Pósthússtræti  
Tel. 11 440

*Hótel City* (D2)  
4a Ránargata  
Tel. 18 650

*Hótel Esja* (H4)  
2 Suðurlandsbraut  
Tel. 82 200

*Hótel Garður* (D4)  
(University) Hringbraut  
Tel. 15 918  
(June–September)

*Hótel Holt* (E3)  
37 Bergstaðastræti  
Tel. 21 011

*Hótel Loftleiðir* (E6)  
Reykjavík Airport  
Tel. 22 322

*Hótel Nes* (G4)  
21 Skipholt  
Tel. 26 820

*Hótel Saga* (C4)  
Hagatorg Square  
Tel. 20 600

*Hótel Vík* (D2)  
4 Vallarstræti  
Tel. 11 733

Summer accommodation is also available in simpler hostels and/or guesthouses, and private rooms can usually be obtained through a travel agency. There is an organized camping site alongside the outdoor swimming pool in the eastern sector of the city.

Electricity: The standard voltage in Reykjavík hotels is 220 A.C.

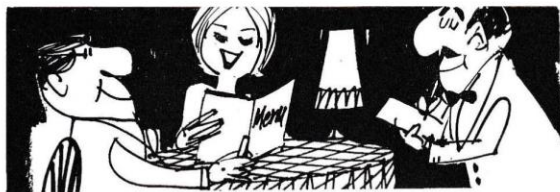
The hot water in Reykjavík and many other places is taken from hot wells. You may notice that from its faint sulphuric smell. Just before entering the city on your way from Keflavík you will see the huge tanks where the hot water is stored on a hill to the left. This spot, incidentally, offers a striking panorama of the city.

On excursions into the countryside you will often be booked into "summer hotels" – these buildings are boarding schools which are used as hotels during the period June to September. They are clean, comfortable and inexpensive without frills, and have restaurants serving good food. In a few places, there are other school-hotels where the prices are a little higher and the facilities "more elaborate".

## Restaurants and cuisine

The Icelanders are, of course, connoisseurs when it comes to fish. You'll find not only sea fish on the menu but also salmon and trout, when in season, from the





island's rivers and lakes. Try, too, shrimps and the small lobster, smáhumar, caught off southern Iceland.

Generally, Icelandic cuisine is similar to Danish food with a number of specialities, such as smoked mutton (hangikjöt), sheep's head (svið), ptarmigan in rich sauce (rjúpa), various types of pickled meats etc. (Þorramatur), dried fish (harðfiskur), and a form of yoghurt (skyr) eaten with cream and sugar.

You may come across two special Icelandic dishes during your visit – but one must be something of a gourmet to appreciate them at first taste. Hákarl, for example, is shark which has been buried in the ground. It has a strong smell, like old cheese, but is considered a real delicacy by the Icelanders. Another traditional dish is Hverabrauð (though not always available), a type of sweetish rye-bread baked in the ground in the natural heat of the thermal soil.

The most popular liquor is the Icelandic snaps “brennivín”, and asni (vodka and ginger ale) is almost the traditional drink! All the popular brands of international liquors, such as whisky, gin, etc. are of course also available.

Hotels and restaurants in Reykjavík which are licensed to sell alcoholic drinks are listed in this section. Note, however, that spirits cannot be obtained on a Wednesday, only wines like sherry and port. At other times drinking hours are from noon to 2.30 p.m. and 7 p.m. to closing time, which is usually about 11.30 p.m.

In Iceland, as in other Nordic countries, the sign “Bar” may mean a snack bar, not necessarily an establishment where liquor is sold.

Restaurant *Hótel Borg* (D3)  
Austurvöllur Square

*Hótel Esja* (H4)  
2 Suðurlandsbraut

*Glaumbær* (D3)  
7 Frikkirkjuvegur

*Hábær Garden* (E3)  
45 Skólavörðustígur

*Hótel Holt* (E3)  
37 Bergstaðastræti

*Hótel Loftleiðir* (E6)  
Reykjavík Airport

*National Theater* (E3)  
19 Hverfisgata

*Naust* (D2)  
6 Vesturgata

*Oðal Restaurant* (D2)  
Austurvöllur

*Röðull Restaurant* (G4)  
19 Skipholt

*Hótel Saga* (C4)  
Hagatorg Square

*Veitingahúsið* (also known  
as *Klúbburinn*) (H3)  
2 Lækjartegur

There are also several unlicensed restaurants, snack bars and cafés, some with dancing.

## Sights and excursions

The center of Reykjavík, the oldest part of the city, is located between the Tjörninn Lake and the harbor and includes two busy main squares, the Austurvöllur and the Lækjartorg. However, in recent years there has been a rapid expansion eastward from the sea, and restaurants, cinemas and new shopping centers are to be found in this new section of Reykjavík.

Daily city sightseeing tours by coach are available through travel agencies throughout the year.

**Einar Jónsson Museum** (E4) – a collection of interesting sculptures with an Icelandic and mystical background. Close by is the statue of Leif Ericson, Norse discoverer of America, donated by the United States, and the large new Hallgrímskirkja church.

**Ásgrímur Jónsson Gallery** (E4). Exhibition of paintings by one of Iceland's former leading artists in his house which he bequeathed to the nation. Open July–August 1.30 to 4 p.m. daily (except Saturdays). Rest of year on Sundays, Tuesdays and Thursdays.





**Ásmundur Sveinsson Sculptures** – Many of Sveinsson's sculptures can be seen in the parks of Reykjavík but most of his works, including his recent metal mobiles, are to be found in the garden and private gallery at his dome-shaped home in the city (I4). It is sometimes possible to visit the sculptor's studio. For more information contact the Tourist Office.

**Sundlaug Vesturbæjar** (open-air swimming pool – B3). A modern building and popular pool heated by water from the natural hot springs, with facilities for sunbathing.

**Sundlaugar Reykjavíkur** (swimming stadium – I3). A new swimming pool where international swimming contests are sometimes staged.

**Sundhöll Reykjavíkur** (indoor swimming pool – F4). Like the outdoor pools, this is also heated by water from the hot springs.

**Parliament House** (D3) – the *Alþing*, seat of the oldest legislative body in the world, founded in 930 AD.

**Jón Sigurdsson Statue** (D3 – opposite the *Alþing*). One of Iceland's national heroes, Jón Sigurdsson (1811–79) played an important role in helping the country to become independent.

**Lutheran Cathedral** (D3) – a 19th-century edifice in Austurvölur Square.

**Hallgrímskirkja Church** (E3). The city's largest new church, with a lift to look-out platform offering fine views.

**National Museum and Art Gallery** (D3) – on Hringbraut, featuring Icelandic history and culture. Open 1.30 to 4 p.m. (daily in summer).

**Árnagarður Manuscript Institute** (C4). Part of the University, this is a new building housing the ancient Icelandic manuscripts now being returned from Copenhagen.

**Náttúrugripasafnið Natural History Museum** (F3). Small but interesting collection, including a specimen of the rare and extinct great auk bird.

**Nordic House** (D4) – built jointly by all the Nordic countries as a center of Nordic studies. Architect: Alvar Alto.

**University** (D4) – Founded in 1911, the university has 1,800 students reading theology, law and commerce, medicine, philosophy, Icelandic studies and other subjects.

**Laugardalsgarðurinn** (J4). Botanical garden and small park near the outdoor sports stadium.

**Listamanannahúsið** (F4). New Art Gallery in the Miklatún Park due to open during 1971.

**Árbær Folk Museum** (off map) – an open-air museum on the city outskirts in which one can find old buildings brought from other parts of Iceland, including an interesting turf-roofed wooden and stone church. Open daily, except Mondays, 2 to 6 p.m. Folk-dancing displays are sometimes arranged during summer. In the nearby town of Hafnarfjörður, 7 miles (11 kms.), there is an aquarium and small zoo, with some Arctic animals, known as Sædýrasafnið.

## Excursions

Iceland is an exciting country to explore – and some of its sights are world famous. We list but a few of the many interest points within reach of Reykjavík. Ask any travel agent in Reykjavík for details of tours to the places below.

**Haukadalur.** Here is a geyser field. The Great Geysir, which gave its name to hot springs all over the world, seems to be dormant at present and very rarely spouts – but the nearby Strokkur Geysir sends a fountain of hot water and steam high into the sky at irregular intervals, every few minutes.

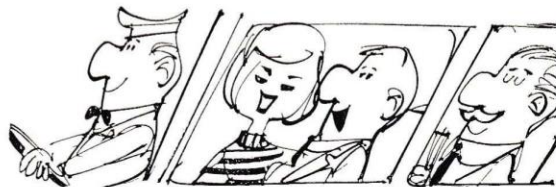
**Pingvellir** – 30 miles (50 kms.) east of Reykjavík. Not only is Pingvellir in an impressive location on Lake Pingvallavatn, surrounded by mountains, rocky chasms, with hot springs and glaciers forming a backdrop, but it is also the most historic site in the island. For it was here that the *Alþing* met once a year to make laws, including the law passed in 1000 AD to introduce Christianity into Iceland. The whole area is now a National Park.

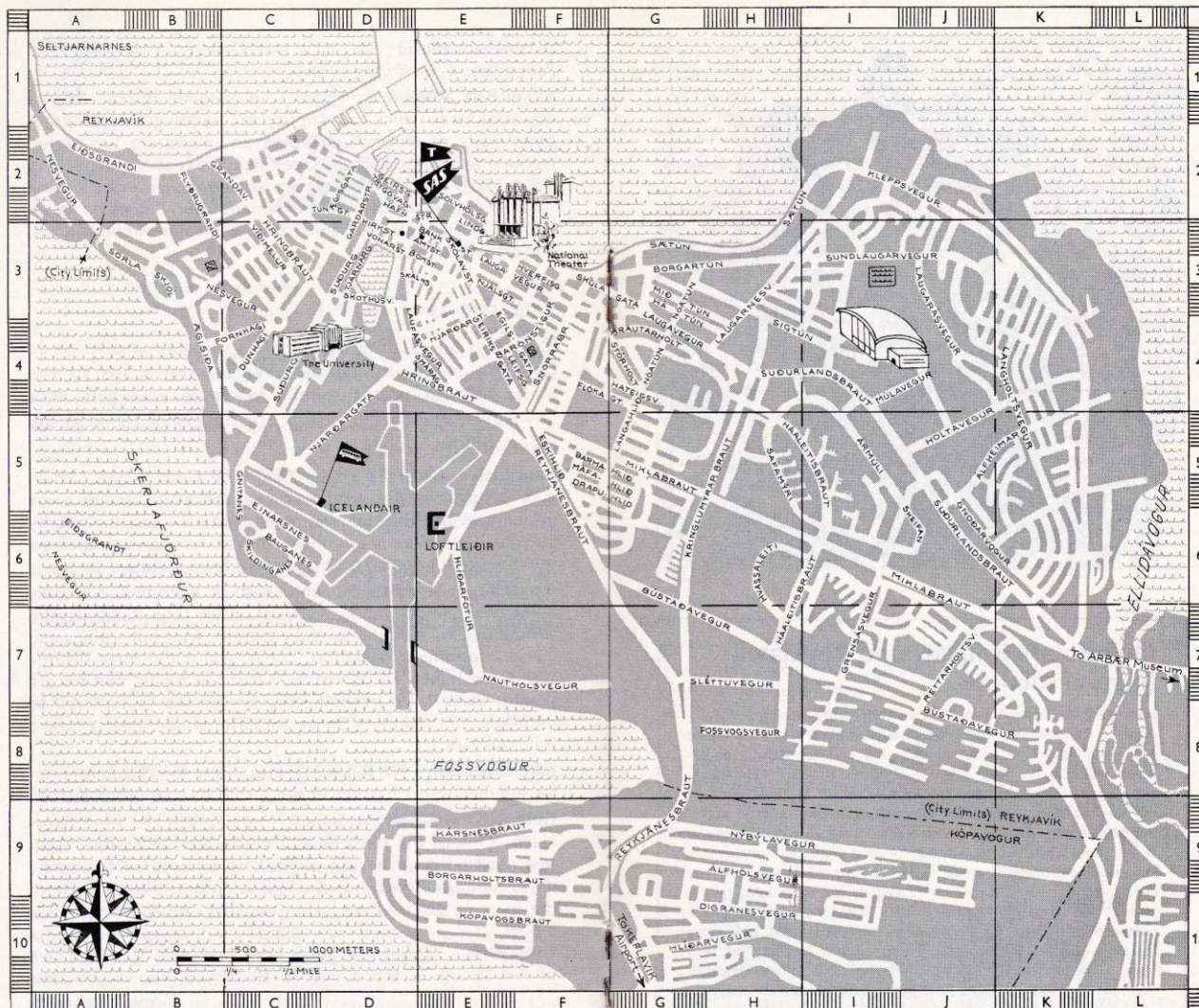
**Lake Hreðavatn** – 100 miles (160 kms.) from Reykjavík. A popular summer resort located in the fertile Borgarfjörður district.

**Gullfoss** (The Golden Waterfall), 75 miles (120 kms.) from Reykjavík. One of the most beautiful waterfalls in Europe, Gullfoss must be near the top of your sights to see. On a sunny day a rainbow forms over the falls adding to the spectacle of the foaming glacier river Hvítá tumbling into the deep gorge below.

**Hveragerði** – 25 miles (40 kms.) from Reykjavík. This is an area of hot springs – and a visit to Hveragerði shows you how

(cont'd on page 15)








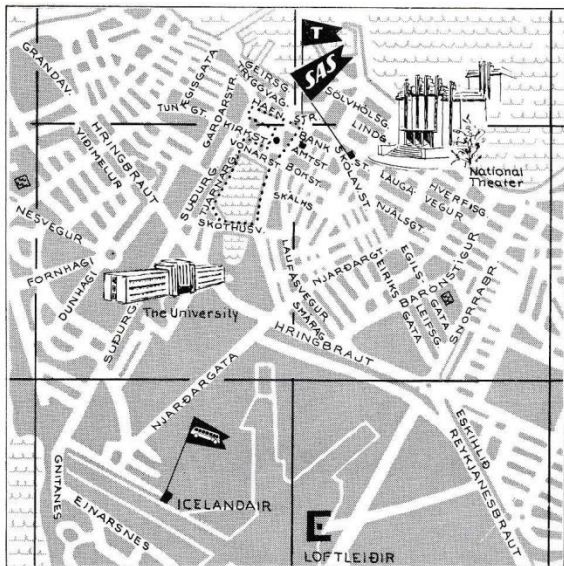
Code numbers in this booklet refer to the above map. Thus (E3) is located where lines drawn from "E" and "3" cross each other.

### Interesting sights in Reykjavík

- (D3) Parliament House.
- (D3) Jón Sigurdsson Statue.
- (D3) Lutheran Cathedral.
- (D3) National Museum and Art Gallery.
- (F3) National Theater.
- (D4) Nordic House.
- (D4) University.
- (C7) Árþær Folk Museum.

### Useful addresses

-  **SAS Office:**  
3 Laugavegur, tel. 21 199.  
Open 9 a.m. to 12 noon, 1 p.m. to 5 p.m., Saturdays 9 a.m. to 12 noon, Sundays closed.
  -  **Official Tourist Office:**  
Lækjargata, tel. 11 540. Open 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.  
**City Information Center (E3)** is open in summer at the main bus square in the city center.
  -  **Transportation to Keflavik Airport:**  
Bus from Reykjavik Airport (Icelandair Terminal).
- Distance from city center to Keflavik airport: 30 miles (50 kms.).



## One hour's walk around Reykjavik (central section)

Start at Austurvöllur Square outside Hotel Borg, facing the Telegraph & Telephone Offices, walk left and then first right along Kirkjustræti past the Lutheran cathedral and the Alþing parliament building on your left. Then turn left into Tjarnargata, cross Vonarstræti, and continue southwards on Tjarnargata along the western side of the Lake. Bear left again and proceed across the bridge over the Lake, from where there is a good view of central Reykjavik and Mount Esja beyond. Turn left once more and walk northwards along Friðkirkjuvegur back towards city center. After passing the Friðkirkja church on your right, take a look at the geese, ducks and seabirds that congregate here at a corner of the Lake. Continue along Lækjargata into Lækjartorg Square with the government offices in a low building on your right. Walk up the small grassy hill Arnarhöll to the statue of Ingólfur Arnarson, Iceland's first Norse settler, to admire the view of the harbor and Faxaflói Bay. Note the National Library and National Theater in Hverfisgata just to the east. Descend westwards, cross Kalkofnsvegur into Hafnarstræti, where you will find several souvenir shops. Turn left at the end into Aðalstræti, Reykjavik's original main street, walk south past the big Morgunblaðið newspaper building to one of the oldest houses in the city, now a shop known as Silli & Valdi (on your right). Cross Aðalstræti here, retrace your steps a few yards and turn right into Austurstræti, proceeding as far as the first traffic lights with the National Bank and the General Post Office on your left. Turn right here, and you are back at your starting-point in Austurvöllur Square.

(cont'd from page 11)

cleverly the Icelanders have made use of their one important natural fuel resource. Glasshouses in the valley are heated by steam from the hot springs, enabling such exotic fruits as bananas and grapes, as well as salad ingredients, to be grown.

**Krýsuvík** – 22 miles (36 kms.) south of Reykjavík. This is another area of hot springs, approached through an extensive moon-like landscape of contorted lava. The route passes through the pretty little town of Hafnarfjörður, and the excursion may be conveniently arranged to include a visit to the church and President's residence at Bessastaðir on the Álfanes peninsula between Hafnarfjörður and Reykjavík.

**Þjórsárdalur Valley**, containing at **Stöng** (83 miles – 135 kms. from Reykjavík) the excavated ruins of a farm dating from the 12th century, and the nearby **Búrfell** hydro-electric power station, with good views of **Mount Hekla**.

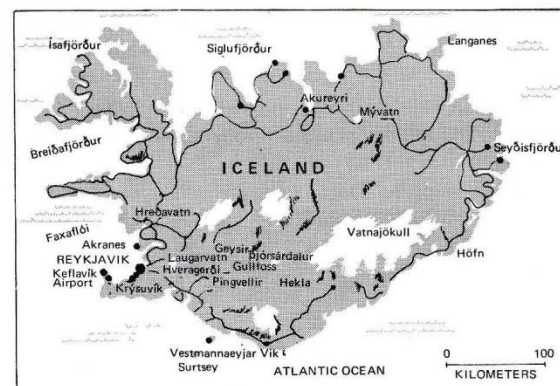
**Lake Laugarvatn**, 60 miles (95 kms.) from Reykjavík. A good center for country excursions and pony-trekking to such places as Þingvellir, Gullfoss and Geysir. Good hotel accommodation, warm springs and a swimming pool.

On your return to Reykjavík, via Hveragerði, you will have the opportunity of viewing **Mount Hekla**, the volcano which erupted as recently as summer 1970, from the top of Kambar Hill.

You can also see the **Vestmann Islands**. If you would like to visit these rocky isles there are regular daily air services operated from the capital by Icelandair. From Heimaey, the only town there, boat trips can be arranged to the outlying islands, including a sail around the island of Surtsey which was thrown up violently out of the sea in a volcanic eruption in 1963. Ask a travel agent for full details.

Ask, too, about the Midnight Sun flights crossing the Polar Circle and the island of Grímsey.

**Akureyri**. Beautifully situated at the head of the Eyjafjörður, Akureyri is the country's second most important town, linked







to Reykjavik by daily flights. As well as being Iceland's main winter sports center, it also makes a good headquarters for hiking and climbing in the surrounding mountains and for excursions into the dramatic Mývatn district with its geysers and sulphur springs. Lake Mývatn, 65 miles (105 kms.) from Akureyri, is a favorite spot with bird-watchers, being the home of thousands of ducks.

**Höfn in Hornafjörður** – A small fishing port at the southeast corner of Iceland, about one hour's flight from Reykjavik. Close by is some of the most spectacular scenery in the country, with the Skaftafell National Park and Vatnajökull, the biggest glacier in Europe, tongues of which in places descend almost to the main road. There is a good modern hotel at Höfn, which is a useful base from which to tour the area.

### *Excursions by boat*

Perhaps one of the most interesting and enjoyable excursions is the around-Iceland voyage by a State Shipping Department vessel. You board in Reykjavik and there are stops at picturesque small ports around the coast.

During the peak tourist season, you can also sail to the Vestmann Islands. There are departures five times per week from Þorlákshöfn on the south coast.

For more details contact the State Shipping Dept., Reykjavik (Skipaútgærð Ríkisins, Hafnarhúsið, Reykjavik, tel 17 650 – E2).

A ferry service is sometimes operated in summer from the capital to the nearby island of Viðey, once the residence of the Danish Governor.

The State Shipping Dept. operates small coasters that circumnavigate Iceland regularly and call at many small ports, but passenger accommodation is very limited. In addition, the Iceland Steamship Co. Ltd. (Eimskipafélag Islands) sometimes adds a circular tour of the Icelandic coast to the regular passenger sailings in summer between Iceland, Denmark and Scotland.

For details contact an Icelandic travel agency.

## Entertainment and night life

There are no nightclubs as such in Reykjavik, but the leading hotels provide music and dancing in the evening. Normal closing time is at 11.30 p.m., but some places remain open until 1 or 2 a.m. at weekends. It is advisable on Fridays and Saturdays especially to arrive about 9 p.m. in order to gain admission. Tables can be booked in advance. Some establishments charge an entrance fee of 25 krónur in the evening.

On the whole you will find people neatly and smartly dressed, the atmosphere friendly and informal, with the accent on youth. You can stand at the bar for a drink, but you are more likely to find people sitting at tables. Despite the smallness of the population, Icelanders are generally well-informed about the rest of the world.

Films from different parts of the globe are shown in the eight movie theaters in their original language, sometimes with Icelandic subtitles. There are evening performances at 5 and 9 and sometimes also at 7 p.m., programs not being continuous, so it is advisable to book a seat in advance, especially at weekends. On occasions films are replaced by variety shows or concerts (Icelandic or from abroad) at certain movie theaters.

If you do not understand Icelandic, the performances at the National Theater (season from September to June) may be "heavy weather", but guest performers from other countries, such as folk or ballet dancers, occasionally appear on the program. At the end of each season an opera or operetta is usually staged. If you're here in winter or early spring you may like to go along to the University Concert Hall (Háskólabíó) to hear the National Symphony Orchestra.

A small English-speaking theater presents light entertainment, with an Icelandic background, at the Glaumbær restaurant on certain evenings in July and August. News in English is broadcast over Reykjavik broadcasting station on long and ultra-short waves at 6 p.m. each evening for a large part of the year.





An international festival of art, including performers and exhibitions from abroad as well as Iceland, was first held in 1970 and is to be repeated in 1972 and every other year after that. In addition, 1974 will be a year of particular importance, for this is the 1,100th anniversary of the original settlement of Iceland.

During the period of the long sunlit evenings (approx. mid-May to late-July) you will find many people in fine weather taking a stroll or a ride in the outskirts of Reykjavík admiring the spectacular views of sea, sky and mountains.

## Tipping

There is one simple rule in Iceland – don't tip!

No one expects to be tipped and on some occasions it might even be considered bad manners. On hotel and restaurant bills, however, a service charge and sales tax, about 20 to 25 % are automatically added.

## Shopping and souvenirs

Most of the shops specializing in souvenirs and handicrafts are located near the city center, particularly in Hafnarstræti Street (D2), not far from the banks and travel agencies. Icelandic products can, of course, also be obtained at ordinary stores, most of which are in the main shopping streets: Austurstræti, Bankastræti and Laugavegur (D/E/F 2-3).

*What to buy:* You will find an intriguing selection of hand-made Icelandic articles – wood and whalebone carvings, high-class ceramics of clay and lava in attractive designs, and distinctive gold, silver and filigree jewelry. You can even buy necklaces made from whales' teeth! Knitted woolen sweaters, sheepskins and ponyskin rugs are also good buys.

But you may well prefer a modern painting by one of the up-and-coming Reykjavík artists, a doll dressed in national costume, or one of the pure wool rugs which are also very popular with visitors. Scarves, mittens, table-runners and cushions made of Icelandic wool are in good supply, and there is a wide variety of picture-books, postcards and color-slides. Original, typically Icelandic playing cards are also available.

Shops are generally open from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., Monday to Thursday, and until 7 p.m. on Friday. On Saturdays they close about midday.

## Transportation

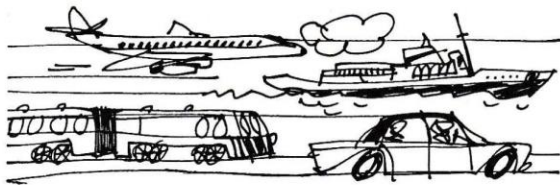
Though there are no railways or streetcars in Iceland, there is an adequate municipal bus service in Reykjavík, and taxis can be hailed on the street or summoned by telephone. All makes of cars are used as taxis in the city so look for a yellow disc next to the registration number bearing the letter "L" and an illuminated sign "LAUS" on the windscreen showing that the cab is vacant.

Because of the island's rugged terrain the easiest way of traveling between two towns is often by air or by boat. Icelandair operates an extensive domestic network of frequent air services, and the Icelanders have become some of the most air-minded people in the world.

Rental cars are available in Reykjavík and Akureyri, and the rates for a Volkswagen in summer 1971 were US\$7 per day and 7 cents per km. with gasoline extra and not including the sales tax of 11 %.

Apart from the highway between Keflavík and Reykjavík, the roads in Iceland – outside the towns – are mostly gravel- or cinder-topped and do not encourage fast driving. There are also plenty of sheep grazing alongside the roads and their somewhat erratic behavior calls for moderation in speed. On the other hand, excursion distances are comparatively short (see pages 11 and 14), so much can be seen on a day's tour.





Apart from the excursion opportunities by boat around the island, ferry services also help to cut intertown travel time. For example, M/S Akraborg links Reykjavík to Akranes across the Bay with a one hour's voyage 3 times per day saving a tiring coastal drive. And if you travel from the capital to Ísafjörður it is advisable to take the bus to Melgraseyri or Bæir, where you board the M/S Fagranes to complete the remainder of the journey.

## Sports

Football (soccer), basketball and handball are popular among the Icelanders, but on your visit you may well choose to enjoy the unique experience of playing 18 holes golf "in daylight at midnight" – contact Reykjavík Golf Club, tel. 84 735. Alternatively there's swimming – any time of the year – in pools heated naturally by hot springs, where sunbathing is also possible and sauna baths are available – an experience not to be missed. The atmosphere is free and easy, no special skill being required. Fishing for salmon can sometimes be arranged even in the outskirts of the city, in the Elliðaár river.

Iceland is, in fact, an angler's paradise. As well as salmon, sea trout and sea char can also be caught in the rivers, for they swim many miles upstream, while brown trout are found in many of the lakes. (Fishing season: salmon May 20 to September 20; sea trout April 1 to September 20.)

Permits for salmon fishing may be difficult to obtain because of the popularity of this sport among Icelanders themselves. Some personal acquaintance is often the best way of gaining access to rivers, but Icelandic travel agencies will help.

Permits for trout fishing are, on the other hand, readily available, especially for the lakes. Enquiries should be made to Reykjavík travel agencies. Visitors interested in sea angling can usually make arrangements through a local travel agency.

Horseback travel still plays quite an important role in Iceland, and it enables you to explore areas in the center of the island which are inaccessible by car. The sturdy Icelandic pony was brought to the country in the long ships of the Vikings, who settled here in the 9th and 10th centuries, and up to 35 years ago it was the most important means of transportation, apart from the boat.

You may be lucky during your visit to watch Glíma wrestling, an ancient sport peculiar to Iceland. Unlike orthodox wrestling, the glíma contestants wear special belts and try to make each other fall by pulling at these belts and using their feet. You can sometimes see glíma wrestling at the Arbær Folk Museum (off map), on the outskirts of Reykjavík, on a Saturday afternoon, or by arrangement with the *glíma* associations during their training sessions or contests.

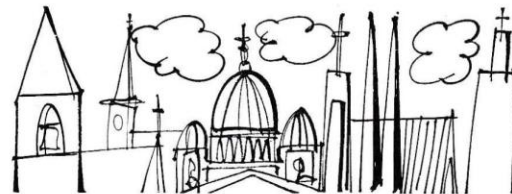
## Climate and clothing

Despite its latitude, just south of the Polar Circle, Iceland has a surprisingly mild climate thanks to the warming influence of the Gulf Stream. The temperatures seldom dip far below freezing point in the winter in Reykjavík.

Reykjavík, in fact, has a higher January temperature than both Vienna and New York!

In spring and summer there are long sunlit days with average temperatures about 50 to 60 degrees Fahrenheit (12–15 degrees C). But do remember to pack a raincoat for Reykjavík has frequent rainy spells. If you're planning trips inland, note that it can be chilly at night even in the summer: and you should therefore bring suitable clothing. But remember, too, to bring a swim suit – even in the winter – for Iceland's hot springs provide heated swimming pools all over the island all year round.

Please note it is also advisable to bring along a pair of good "hiking shoes" if you intend taking excursions outside Reykjavík.



## Religion

The overwhelming majority of Icelanders are Lutheran, the Evangelical Lutheran Church being the established church of Iceland. Only a very small number adhere to other creeds, chiefly Roman Catholic, Adventist and Pentecost, but there are also some Free Lutheran congregations.

Below is a list of the main churches near the city center of Reykjavík, where religious services may be attended:

*Roman Catholic:* Landakotskirkja, at Landakot in Túngata (D2).

*Adventist:* Adventiskirkja, 21 Ingólfsstræti (E3).

*Free Lutheran:* Fríkirkjan, Fríkirkjuvegur (D3).

*Lutheran:* Dómkirkjan (Cathedral), Austurvöllur Square (D3). Hallgrímskirkja, Skólavörðuhæð (E3).

(Note: There is no orthodox church or synagogue in Iceland).

## Special events and public holidays

Shops and offices are closed on the following holidays:

January 1	<i>New Year's Day.</i>
March/April	<i>Maundy Thursday.</i> <i>Good Friday.</i> <i>Easter Monday.</i>
Third Thursday in April	First day of summer celebrated with processions and festivities.
May 1	<i>May Day</i> celebrated with processions.
May	<i>Ascension Day.</i>
May/June	<i>Whit Monday.</i> Horse racing at Reykjavík
Late May or early June (on a Sunday)	<i>Seamen's Day</i> – Sjómannadagurinn. Seamen's exhibitions and displays.
June 17	<i>National Day.</i> Flags are flown and there are processions in the streets and general festivities.
First Monday in August	<i>Bank holiday.</i>



December 24	<i>Christmas Eve.</i> All entertainment establishments closed.
December 25	<i>Christmas Day.</i>
December 26	<i>Boxing Day.</i>
December 31	<i>New Year's Eve.</i> Firework displays and bonfires all over the country.

Other special events which are celebrated include:

January 6	<i>Twelfth Night.</i>
February (Monday prior to Shrove Tuesday)	<i>Bolludagur Day</i> when everybody eats cream buns!
February	<i>Shrove Tuesday.</i> <i>Ash Wednesday.</i>
June	<i>Midsummer Day.</i> Church services.
October 9	<i>Leif Ericson Day.</i> Celebrations commemorating the discovery of America by Leif Ericson the Icelandic-born Viking in 1000.
December 1	Day on which Iceland obtained independence from Denmark in 1918, now celebrated in the main by students only.

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*Unless you know the background, Icelandic names can be somewhat confusing – husband and wife, for example, have different surnames. The reason is that Iceland retains an old Nordic custom; when a woman marries she does not change her name. Sons and daughters are thus given their father's Christian name with the addition of "son" and "dóttir", and not their parents' surname.*

*You will find names in the Telephone Directory are listed alphabetically by Christian name, not surname.*

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*Edited by Alan C. Lovejoy*

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