

Iceland

July 23 – August 3, 2024

National Geographic Expeditions

Tuesday, July 23

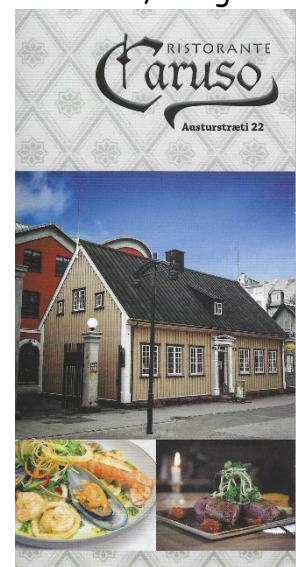
Afternoon flight to Chicago and then on to Reykjavík. Picked up early at the Graduate. That was the last thing that went right! There is a lightning storm in O'Hare and the airport is closed. Finally get to Chicago about 10:30 pm instead of 6:30 pm. When it is apparent that we are going to miss our flight to Iceland, Randy gets us re-routed coming in the next day with an additional stop in Frankfurt!!! United gives us a hotel voucher and a food allowance. As it happens, our original flight to Iceland had mechanical problems and was cancelled. We were lucky to be re-routed before everyone else. (The direct flight to Reykjavík the next day was already full.) We stay the night at the Springfield Suites just outside of O'Hare. Got the shuttle just before it left O'Hare. Had a pizza at the bar at the hotel and, with no suitcases, went to bed in our nothing-at-all.

Wednesday, July 24

Get up, shower, brush our teeth (with a hotel supplied toothbrush), comb our hair (with a hotel supplied comb), and get into yesterday's clothes. Have breakfast at the hotel and take the 11:00 am shuttle to the airport. Board and take off. Have wine and dinner in the air and try to get some sleep.

Thursday, July 25

After an Egg McMuffin for an early breakfast, we get the news that there is an environmental protest at Frankfurt and we have to divert to Munich, hold there, and get some more fuel. We are on the ground for about an hour, fuel up, and, finally, fly off. We guess that the authorities got the protesters, who had glued themselves to the runways, removed. We get in in time to catch our flight to Reykjavík. However, that flight is delayed also. Finally, get boarded. Buy a sandwich on the plane and get into Reykjavík about three hours late. Passport control consists of flashing our passports to an officer at the end of the stairway (we had to get an EU stamp in Frankfurt.) Our luggage comes through. Halleluia!!! A National Geographic driver is still there for us. It is a forty-minute drive to the "Canopy" hotel in the center of town. We call our guide, Hafliði, to tell him we are there. We met him at 7:00 pm. He recommends an Italian restaurant, "Caruso's" for dinner. It is very good. We directly back to the hotel and crash. We have essentially missed two days of our tour.



Friday, July 26

Up and breakfast in the hotel. Bus to a huge thermal spring with boiling water and steam gushing out of the ground. Along and across the road you could see other steam vents. Next up the road was a unique waterfall: water coming out below a layer of lava, a very large spring into a very short waterfall. Upstream of that is a real waterfall with the water going under a lava bridge.

Go to our next hotel for a buffet lunch. We are able to get into our rooms and Jan is able to change from pedal pusher jeans to long jeans.

After lunch, we go to a lava tube cave. Go down into the cave at a place where the ceiling has collapsed. Very different from the limestone caves in the US. Various formations: stone straws, minor drip structures, and splashes on the floor where the lava has dripped from the ceiling. The most interesting feature was the ice cycles growing up from the floor.

Back toward the hotel and on to the thermal baths. Jan stays behind but Randy enjoys the bath.

A glass of wine and then dinner. The appetizer is very thinly cut raw beef. Fish is the main course.

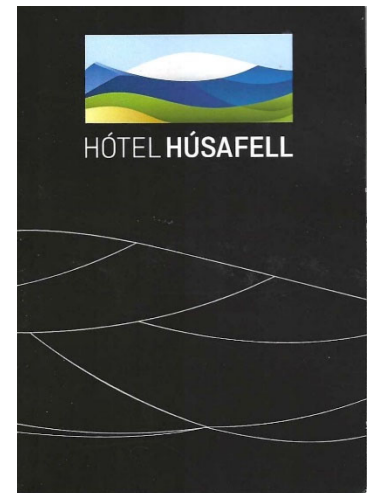
Back to the room and bed.

Saturday, July 27

Up, breakfast, and out on a driving tour of the peninsula. First stop is the shark museum where we learn about the processing of shark meat. Shark is poison raw. The meat is first fermented to let the uric acid escape and then dried. It has little taste but is very chewy. The schnapps that the museum served with the shark was very strong. We went up to the drying shack that looked like a tobacco barn. The smell was purported to be very strong but Randy couldn't smell anything. Along the way, we see waterfalls coming down the sides of the mountains (many small streams). Stop to see the mountain that was featured in "The Game of Thrones". There was a waterfall on the other side of the road and we were able to get a picture of both simultaneously.

Have a piece of cod for lunch with a piece of freeze-dried lettuce on top. Very interesting.

Try to get into the black sand beach but it was too crowded. Bus had to back up a narrow road to get us out. Next stop at a statue of a man that was half man and half troll. We didn't see it because we were too long in the bathroom. Walk along a basalt cliff past arches to a harbor overlook. By this time, it is raining pretty hard. Stop at a black (painted) church and head to the hotel.



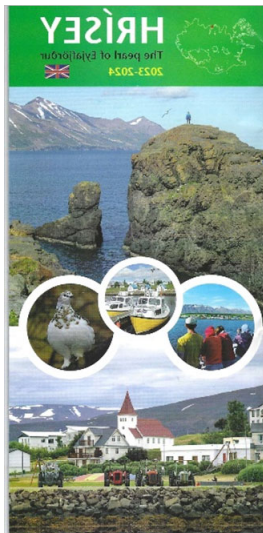
Sunday, July 28

Drive to northern Iceland. Stop at falls before going over the mountains. Stop for lunch. Stop at a well-to-do turf farmhouse. Central corridor with rooms for cooking and storage off it. Also, guest bedrooms up in the front. Auxiliary farm rooms beside main house. Main room with beds crosswise in the back. A wool processing room upstairs in the front. At the church next door, see a stature of the wandering woman and the grave of the "ghost" in the cemetery. Then on to Holman for another turf house.

Go to the hotel for a lecture on lava tubes. Dinner at a local restaurant which consisted of fish soup and apple cake for dessert.

On to the room for journaling and bed.

Monday, July 29



Start the day by going through the Herring Museum. The first room is where the herring girls lived. Main floor was a museum of various photographs and artifacts. Upstairs was a recreation of their living quarters. The next building showed the history of herring fishing. The final building housed the boats. There we had a herring tasting plus, again, some strong schnapps. The drugstore was right up the street and open. We got Jan some hydrocortisone. Didn't seem to help much. Take a ferry ride over to a small island for a fish lunch. Quite good. Take a hayride around the lower part of the island. Though it was advertised that there were many birds on the island, we saw none. Hayride was unfortunately uneventful.

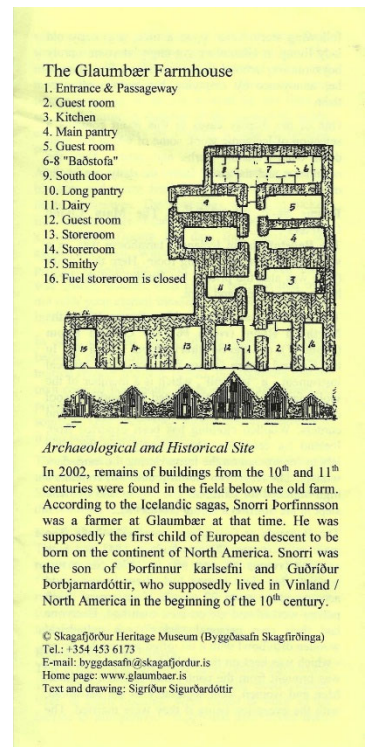
Back on the mainland and on to the "Waterfalls of the Gods". Hike to the falls and back. Bus to the rift zone, which we will be exploring tomorrow.

Tuesday, July 30

Explore various stops along the Ásbyri Canyon. First stop, a small pool hidden among towering vertical cliffs. First view the pool at its level and then from a platform from above. Many in the group hike up to the base of the cliff; we don't. We find some very interesting flowers along the trail.

Next stop, a view of the river. Along the way, a spherical cave which we don't go into because of the rough rocky path. We continue down to the huge fast, flowing river. Box lunch in the park.

Last stop was a huge waterfall on the same river. We just see the edge of the top. We don't go down to the edge. Instead, we walk back to the bus and see the upper falls. Walk over to it and take some pictures. Then walk quickly back to the bus.



Archaeological and Historical Site

In 2002, remains of buildings from the 10th and 11th centuries were found in the field below the old farm. According to the Icelandic sagas, Snorri Þorfinnsson was a farmer at Glaumbær at that time. He was supposedly the first child of European descent to be born on the continent of North America. Snorri was the son of Þorfinnur karlselfni and Guðrjúfur Þorbjarnardóttir, who supposedly lived in Vinland / North America in the beginning of the 10th century.

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Text and drawing: Sigríður Sigurðardóttir

Then on to our hotel for dinner and some sleep.

Wednesday, July 31

Start the day with a visit to a basalt crack that resulted in a covered pool and a large separation on top of a raised fold in the earth. Make a tough steep climb to the rim of a volcano and look down into the caldera.

On to an area of basalt columns and take a two mile walk through them. Take many pictures including ones of us poising at two arches. On exiting, get lunch at the café consisting of soup, bread and apple pie.

Finally, a walk through some pseudo creators, areas where the lava has run over wet lands and big bubbles of steam create cones.

Back to the end of the fjord at Akureyri. Check into our room and walk through the town. Up to the church and back to the hotel for a drink. Dinner and to the room to journal and bed.

KEAHOTELS

Thursday, August 1 - Whale day

Head out to the whale cove. First stop is the Whale Museum that has prepared skeletons of all the whales around Iceland. Also see portions of the baleen (teeth) that the filter feeders (like the humpbacks that we see later) use to catch the krill. After a quick pizza for lunch, we embark on our whale watching boat. We are given a pair of fisherman's coveralls and we are off. First, we see puffins sitting on the water and flying by. See three different humpback whales. The first one always surfaced with its mouth open. The other two were diving deeper and raised their tails as they dove. Wonderful trip.

We bussed back to the hotel in Akureyri. Some people stopped at a hot bath along the way, but we went directly to the hotel.

It was raining when we got to the hotel (luckily, it wasn't raining during the whale watching ride ... but we were so covered up, it probably wouldn't have mattered if it had). We had a glass of wine. The farewell dinner was delicious. Back to the hotel for an early bed.

Friday, August 2

Departure day for most people. Up at 5:00 for an early flight from Akureyri to Reykjavik (to the domestic airport). Flight is short and a little bumpy on the landing. Go to the Perlan Museum (this is an old water storage facility in Reykjavik). First walk around the perimeter looking over Reykjavik. Then to the planetarium for a show on the northern lights. Next to a re-creation of an ice cave. Finally, a video of the lava flowing from the recent eruption.

Buffet lunch at the Hilton and then to the airport. Walk to the "Aurora", a hotel right next to the airport. Check in and take a nap. A



Airport Hotel
KEF Terminal Aurora

Room: 319

Guest:



drink at the bar and dinner complete the day. Do a bit of packing and go to bed.

Saturday, August 3

ORGELSUMAR Í HALLGRÍMSKIRKJU
ORGAN SUMMER IN HALLGRÍMSKIRKJA
ELÍSBET ÞÓRDARDÓTTIR
ORGEL / ORGAN – LAUGARNESKIRKJA
ÞÓRÐUR ÁRNASON
GÍTAR / GUITAR
LAUGARDAGUR 3. ÁGÚST KL. 12
SATURDAY AUGUST 3RD AT 12HRS



GILDIR SEM AÐGONGUMÉÐI
ENTRANCE TICKET

Efnisskrá / Program

J.S. Bach (Winkel) (1685 - 1750)	Konsert í A moll BWV 593 1. Allegro
J.S. Bach Camille Saint-Saëns (1835 - 1921)	Air on Gúr Svitru nr. 3 BWV 1068 Svanurinn
Ronald Benge (1910 - 1979)	Elizabethan Serenade
Stanley Ayres (1930 - 1993)	Cavatina
Alak Knapfler (1949)	Going Home

Wake up to find that our flight to Chicago has been cancelled and we were rebook for Sunday through Newark. Get another night at the Aurora Hotel and go down for breakfast. Go to the airport and get a shuttle bus to the city center. Hike up to the cathedral. Find out there is going to be an organ and guitar concert and we get tickets. Very nice, but quite stark, interior to the church. Concert was enjoyable. Go down the street toward the port to look for lunch. Find a cute grilled cheese place. Enjoy both the food and the ambience. Continue our walk down the street and into a souvenir shop. Randy gets the wobbles. We walk back to the bus station (with a few stops along the way) and return to the hotel. Go down for happy hour and dinner at the hotel. Same small menu but we make different selections.

Come back to our room and find that our flight might be delayed or cancelled. Randy gets on the app and mistakenly changes our flights to Monday. He can't change them back, and he has to call United. Finally gets flights changed back to Sunday. Mood is very much improved. Pack up, journal, and go to bed.

Sunday, August 4

Get the 11:45 am flight to Chicago getting in at 1:45 pm. Uneventful flight. The flight to Cincinnati leaves at 8:50 pm. Eat dinner in the airport and board. Bags are almost the first ones out. Get shuttle to UC and finally get home after midnight. It was good to get here finally.



Map of Reykjavik

SAGA MUSEUM

See one of Reykjavik's most popular museums. Experience historical figures and events in this old historic house by the Reykjavik harbor. Open: 10-17

0 500 1000

www.mapofreykjavik.is

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