

Special Issue
The City Awards

THE  **REYKJAVÍK GRAPEVINE**

Winter Edition
grapevine.is/bestof



Best Of

THE REYKJAVÍK GRAPEVINE CITY AWARDS

Reykjavík

2019

Dining

Bulletproof Dining
Guide To Hafnarfjörður

Drinking

Reykjavík In Four
Cocktails

Shopping

Our 30 Shop Awards
Fashion & Design

Activities

The 30 Funnest Outings
Aurora Spotting

Your Winter Adventures

Scheduled Flights / Six destinations

Westman Islands

One of the wonders of nature, surrounded by mountains, islands, volcanoes and seabirds.

Vatnajökull Region

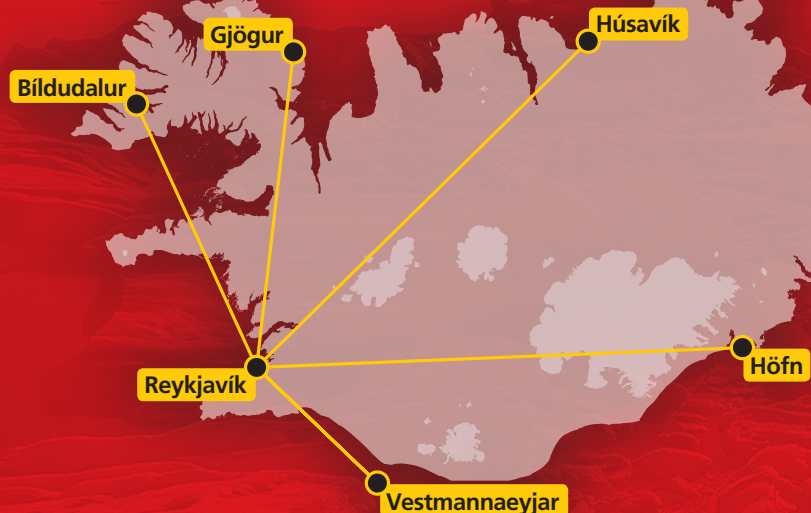
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Vestmannaeyjar in just one day

The Volcaon island of Heimaey (Home island) in the Westman Islands archipelago.



Ice Caves and the Diamond Beach

Explore the thrilling ice caves of Vatnajökull and Jökulsárlón's glittering diamond beach.



EAGLE AIR
FLUGFÉLAGIÐ ERNIR



AN INTRODUCTION

The Lighter Side Of Winter

It wasn't too long ago that winter was the "off season" in Iceland, even in our fair city of Reykjavík. Guesthouses and hotels alike were virtually empty from November to May, and the country's natural wonders were bereft of visitors.

This, of course, has not been the case since about 2010, when the Eyjafjallajökull eruption, which shut down air traffic across Europe, ironically enough began to attract more tourists to the country during the wintertime. Today, there is virtually no "off season," whether in Iceland in general or in Reykjavík in particular.

This is quite fortunate, as Iceland's capital has plenty to offer, all year round. Food and drink, both perennial indoor activities, naturally play a large part in this. We've selected the very best places to wine and dine, including some newcomers to the scene (p. 28) in the field of cocktails and fine dining alike.

Icelandic winters are actually milder than you might think, so there are still plenty of outdoor activities to engage in while in Reykjavík. This includes the very best spots to see the Northern Lights (p. 44)—something entirely possible even within city limits.

We would be remiss if we did not also point out that you can pick up a free copy of The Reykjavík Grapevine at any number of locations all around town. You would also do well to book the tours you're interested in, whether here in Reykjavík or anywhere else in the country, through our booking site, gotravel.grapevine.is.

Most importantly, we want to thank you, fair visitor, to Iceland, for being our guests. Reykjavík has plenty to offer, any time of year, and we always endeavour to point out the very best Iceland's capital has in store for you.

Andie Fontaine, News Editor

Best of Reykjavík:



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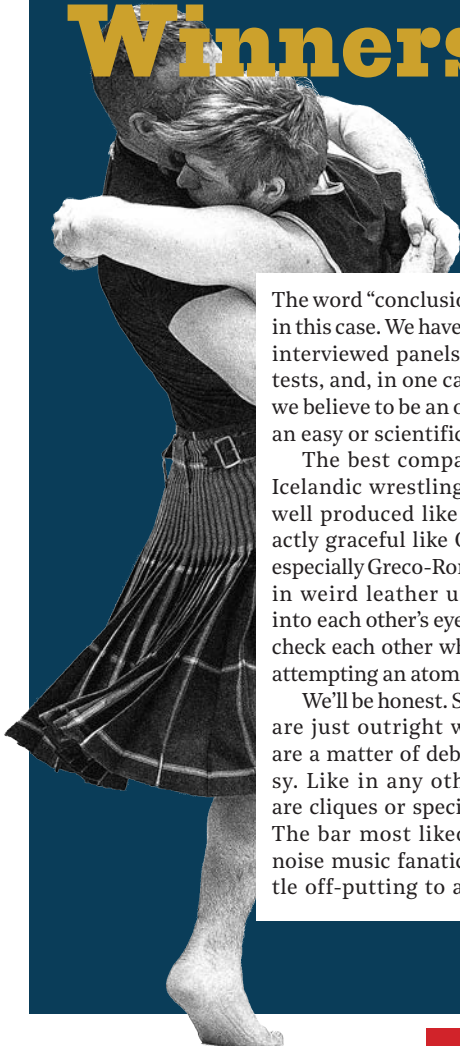


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THE AWARDS:

How We Picked the Winners



The word “conclusion” is a little strong in this case. We have argued, fought and interviewed panels, tried blind taste-tests, and, in one case, consulted what we believe to be an oracle. This was not an easy or scientific endeavour.

The best comparison is glíma, or Icelandic wrestling. It's not flashy or well produced like WWE. It's not exactly graceful like Olympic wrestling, especially Greco-Roman. It's two people in weird leather underwear, staring into each other's eyes and trying to hip-check each other while simultaneously attempting an atomic wedge.

We'll be honest. Some of the winners are just outright winners, but some are a matter of debate and controversy. Like in any other country, there are cliques or special interest groups. The bar most liked by a 22-year-old noise music fanatic might seem a little off-putting to a bespectacled jazz

enthusiast. We're not saying those two groups can't overlap. Maybe they can. Jazz people are good at improvising and noise music definitely needs more fans.

The thing is, this is a guide. It's a work in progress. It's an attempt at letting people know where we think they should go. We didn't all agree on everything, so the runners up could end up being more palatable to you, and the winners could be your third favourite. Yikes.

If this lack of certainty is too much for you: Imagine being the original tourist to Iceland. A wandering tax-evader from Norway who decides to settle on a rock almost uninhabited by animal life. A land that occasionally explodes, with geysers that burst scalding sulphur-scented water from the ground like a cannon ball at Satan's pool party. It's the kind of place where people would invent glíma.

THE GUIDE-GUIDE

How To Spot The Winners

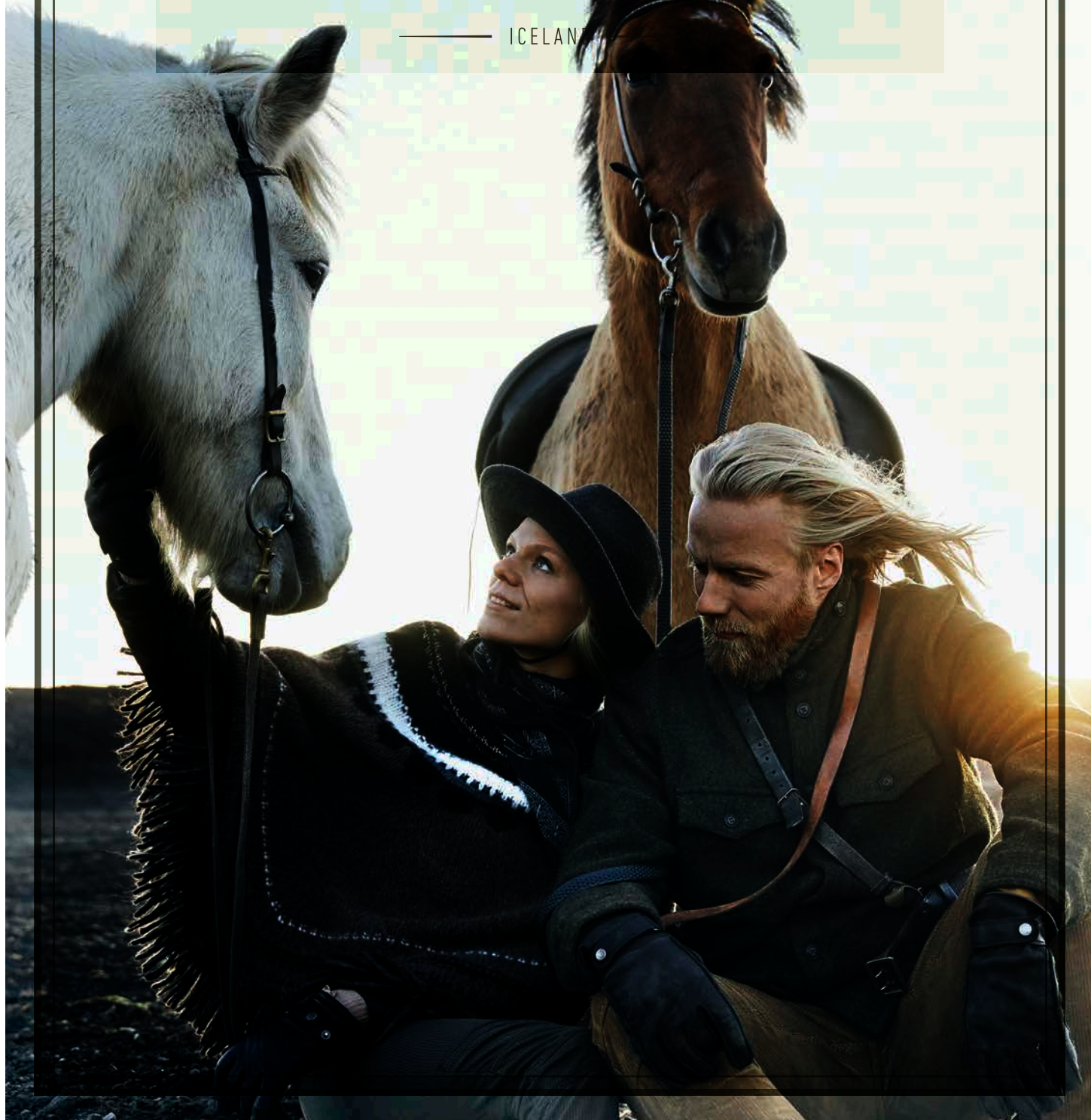
Look out for these stickers of recommendation, which we've handed out to this year's winners. They indicate your best option, whether you're looking for shopping, dining, drinking or fun days out in Reykjavík. We at the Grapevine know what's best!

Also, these are the stickers from our previous “Best Of” selections, given to winners from prior years. 🍷



Farmers Market

— ICELAND —



OUR STORES IN REYKJAVÍK: FARMERS & FRIENDS



Laugavegur 37



Hólmahlóð 2 / Grandi

WWW.FARMERSMARKET.IS

Dining

Delicious even if you can't pronounce it

Watching Iceland come into its own as a dining destination over the past five years has been a joy. The Icelandic restaurant scene is diversifying, and the definition of what may be deemed “Icelandic cuisine” is broadening and taking on new shapes. Thanks to this new-found culinary confidence—and the added footfall of tourism—this tiny scene is experiencing a moment of opportunity. Whether it’s carefully-pleated Sichuanese vegan dumplings or exploratory tasting menus at Nordic fine dining houses, the bandwagon has room for demanding diners. Our hand-picked panel of discerning gourmands have sought out the very best of Reykjavík dining to help you navigate the gastronomic waters of the capital area. From budget bites to fanciful fare, we’ve got you covered.

Best burger



Le Kock & Búllan

Joint Winners

Le Kock, Tryggvagata 14

Despite their fast-expansion and subsequent opening of a new main outpost at their current location, Le Kock’s burgers have, thankfully, remained consistent. The house-made potato rolls hold their own until the very last bite. No soggy bottoms here. You may want to ask them to be light handed with the sauce, though. Insider tip: their veggie burger (vegan optional) gives meat patties a serious run for their money.

Hamborgarabúllan, Geirsgata 1 & Bankastræti 3

Búllan’s meteoric rise to fame with multiple locations across Europe isn’t really surprising when you bite into one of their luxuriously decadent ‘Steak Burgers’—a glorious, juicy mix of tenderloin, rump and rib-eye, with the perfect meat-to-fat ratio. Búllan is a solid burger that seals Iceland’s reputation as a worthy burger destination.

Runner Up

Bastard Brew and Food Vegamótastigur

Bastard Brew & Food occupies the space formerly known as Vegamót, serving entendre-laden beers and snacks, from the “Hazy Bastard” ale to the juicy “Fat Bastard” burger served with a mound of brisket on top. The relish is a winner, and the pickles pucker. If your heart desires something classic, the Double Bastard is a smoky treat.



Previous Winners

2018: Le Kock
2017: Sæta Svinið
2015-6: Búllan

Best Vegan Burger

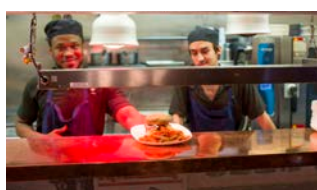


Veganæs

Tryggvagata 22

Veganæs has answered the prayers of those yearning for diner fare that also happens to be cruelty free. Despite towing the seitan line, the Spicy Seitanic Burger is crunchy, spicy, greasy and oh so satisfying. Vegan cheese meltiness issues aside, this is a toothsome burger and the accompanying fries are fancy with their herby frills. The cocktail sauce is also on the money, so mayo-deprived vegans can shed tears of joy. Who knew a vegan dive-bar could be this much fun?

Runners Up



Roadhouse Reykjavík Snorrabraut 56

When the panel praises a vegan burger as a “divine guilty pleasure,” you better believe it. Roadhouse’s celery root burger is a beacon of vegan-friendly hope in a mock-meat world. Relying on the inherent blandness of celery root, the grill lends it an unexpected smoky complexity. Simply delicious.



Hagavagninn Hofsvallagata 52

With one of Iceland’s most popular rappers behind the team, Hagavagninn opened shop in place of the old west side hotdog stand. Their vegan burger has a fan following thanks to the fat, juicy patty. The pickled red onions add pizzazz. As our vegan panellist confirmed: “it tastes even better after a dip in Vesturbjarlaug.”

Previous Winners

2018: Prikið
2017: Bike Cave
2016: Búllan

Best Pizza



Flatey

Grandagarður 11

A year after opening, Grandi’s Flatey easily stole the winner slot here. Along with their beloved leopard spotted Napoli-style pizzas, they have a Pizza of the Week offer to keep things fresh—and they are always great. Since Flatey opened, our keen-eyed panel suspects some alterations have been made to the original pizza crust recipe—however, Flatey remains uber popular with families, friend groups and couples. The pizzas come quick, there’s a pie to please everyone, and “customisations for picky palates” are done with a smile.

Runners Up



Eldofninn Efstaland 26

This out-of-the-way family-run pizzeria has a wood-fired oven, creating generously topped pies with a good crust. The panel pick is the egg pizza—jammy yolks on pizza is an underrated thing of beauty. While they seem to service half of Reykjavík with their deliveries, it’s also a cosy spot for a family dinner.



Hornið Hafnarstræti 15

With thin crust pizzas and a no-frills cosy flair in the decor, this is a local treasure. We swear by their Quattro Stagioni, but recently more Icelandic faves have joined the toppings list—smoked lamb or hangikjot, cream cheese, and—wait for it—bananas. Banana pizza meet pylsu sushi. Your culinary tour of Iceland is now complete. You’re welcome.

Previous Winners

2018: Flatey
2017: Hornið
2014-6: Hverfisgata 12

Best Soup



Ramen Momo

Tryggvagata 16

Likely the Northernmost Ramen joint, this family-run business is small in size, but delivers big on flavour. Reykjavík's first Ramen bar has springy house-made organic noodles, and they've recently levelled up the broth. We're suckers for their creamy Tantanmen—a deeply flavoured soup with Tonkotsu adding heft to the mellow sesame paste and hoisin-cooked pork. Add a drizzle of spicy chilli oil and you've got yourself the best bowl in town. There are six soups on the menu, including vegetarian options, and don't miss out on their zingy dumplings or 'Korean' house-made tea.

Runners Up



Hi Noodle Frakkastigur 9

This central ramen bar became an instant favourite for many. With a slow-cooked, temperature controlled broth, the chef—Chen—is aiming to consistently deliver his carefully designed recipes. The portions are a little modest: best order some dumplings on the side of your Dan Dan if you've a big appetite. Vegan option available.

Runner Up



Noodle Station Laugavegur 103

Before the ramen revolution of the two soup joints above, there was Noodle Station, serving vegetable, beef and chicken noodle soups with a pungent chilli-garlic aroma that floods the street outside. It's a thoroughly Western take on noodle soup... but damn, it's satisfying on a cold day.

Previous Winners

2018: Ramen Momo

Best Sushi



Fish Market

Aðalstræti 12

One of a handful of places serving fresh Icelandic wasabi—the others being ÖX and Grillmarket—Fish Market was also one of the first Icelandic restaurants to serve sushi. While the maki rolls are popular, we recommend the roe gunkan rolls—seaweed collared beauties generously topped with lightly cured fish eggs. The sashimi platter is an assortment of fresh seafood with a mound of crunchy wakame. Get a seat at the sushi bar, pair your food with the wasabi cocktail, and let Keto be damned.

Runners Up



Fiskfélagið Vesturgata 2a

Fish Company's lunchtime-only sushi is perfect for crummy days when only an elegant meal will cure workday blues. FC cleverly packages our pet peeve—pysu sushi (read below)—as a Lobster Maki Roll, with deep-fried langoustine insides, cuddling dates and peppers for a true Icelandic style sushi.



Sushi Social Þingholtsstræti 5

Sushi Social is a no-holds barred ode to the evolution of sushi on this island—aka 'pysu sushi'. Embrace the joys of island sushi, and assuage any guilt via the cocktail menu. Check out the surf and turf rolls, and keep an eye out for their Tuna festival.

Previous Winners

2016-8: Fish Market
2015: SuZushii
2014: Sushi Social

Best Bakery



Sandholt

Laugavegur 36

No other country comes close to Iceland's preferred ratio of bread surface to butter thickness. And marrying the two loves in loaves is local institution Sandholt. With their recent expansion, the lines are bearable, drawing 101 rats back to this beloved bakery. Their signature sourdough continues to be the envy of open-crumb bakers while their mastery of buttery viennoiserie is unparalleled. Try their Danish topped with rhubarb, or the Escargot—a rolled pastry studded with raisins. Gourmet sandwiches to go will make any journey that much better and their house-made sodas are a treat.

Runners Up



Brauð & Co. Frakkastigur 16

This Danish style reluctant bakers bakery has been the talk of the town ever since they first opened their doors. An express speed expansion hasn't been kind to their consistency, but thankfully, the dense rugbrauð—Danish-style bread—is stellar as always. Keep your eyes peeled for their 'bolla.'

Newcomer



Deig Workshop
Tryggvagata 14
Barring kleina and the odd US chain, we've been a doughnut starved nation. But thanks to Deig, fresh fried doughnuts are now a reality. Should we gush about the custard filled creme brulee doughnut or cry for the now discontinued surmjólk and Cheerios doughnut? (Bring it back!) They make pretty good bagels too. Psst... they open at 7am.

Previous Winners

2018: Joint: Sandholt / Brauð & Co
2013-7: Sandholt

Best Coffeehouse



Reykjavík Roasters

Brautarholt 2, Kárástigur 1, Ásmundursalur

Roasters has your geeky caffeine addiction covered. With their boffin-like obsession with the perfect roast, one of our panellists said: "this is your typical curated roast." Roasters offer the millennial experience without the Berlin sangfroid—it's the quintessential Scandi coffee house experience. Visit Kárástigur for take-outs, Brautarholt to work away from your desk, and Ásmundursalur to experience some gorgeous exhibitions.

Runners Up



Kaffihús Vesturbæjar Melhagi 20-22

"It's the perfect coffee house for different age groups and vibes," said our panel of this all-purpose neighbourhood coffeehouse and café. If you've had your first kid and you know your Muuto from your Ferm Living, this is the spot to grab a slice of carrot cake after a splash in the Vesturbæjarlaug pool.



Pallett
Strandgata 75, 220 Hafnarfjörður
Far off in Hafnarfjörður, Pallett is an airy, cheery little café filled with mismatched chairs, plants, and worn armchairs. There, every latté is a double-shot, the filter coffee is lovingly brewed, and an Americano comes with the water on the side, so people can dilute the espresso to taste. Don't miss their famous vegetarian sausage rolls either.

Previous Winners

2018: Kaffihús Vesturbæjar
2017: Reykjavík Roasters
2016: Stofan
2015: Kaffihús Vesturbæjar

BEST OF REYKJAVÍK 2019

Dining

Iceland's not cheap so it better be good

Best Indian



Austur-Indíafélagið

Hverfisgata 56

A tried and tested local favourite, Austur-Indíafélagið has single-handedly steered an entire generation to embrace spices and curries. Their small curated menu reflects regional Indian cuisine and their no-nonsense attitude toward “uncompromising authenticity” brings a freshness most on display with dishes like the Adraki Chaamp—bone-in lamb grilled to smoky perfection, transporting one to the streets of India. Instead of ordering an entire rotisserie, do like the Indians do and dine-in family style. The tandoori kulchas are perfect to mop up both curries and kebabs. Finish the meal off with some steamed rice and garlic-laced dal that alone warrants repeat visits.

Runners Up



Shalimar Austurstræti 4

Shalimar's daily rotation of weekday thalis still have our hearts skipping a beat. A grilled-to-perfection tandoori chicken, alongside an assortment of vegetables and meat, naan and rice is a meal fit for a queen, and all her minions. Our panellist shares that “what most don't know, is that their kheer—a slow cooked rice pudding like dessert—is an undiscovered gem.”



Hraðlestin Lækjargata 8

This small local chain has a few branches, but the mothership is the Lækjargata location, where you can sit in a calm environment and blast your face off with a rich, decadent, tasty vindaloo or a spot-on madras. Follow them on Instagram for Tuesday specials.

Previous Winners

2016-8: Austur-Indíafélagið
2014-5: Gandhi
2013: Austurlandahraðlestin

Best Chinese



Fönix

Bildshöfði 12

Don't be fooled by the industrial location—Fönix is a no-nonsense family joint that caters to blue collar workers, as well as homesick Chinese expats. The owners are a couple from the Sichuan province, and rightfully play to their strengths—the Mapo Tofu, available as a vegan dish or with pork, is a study in extracting big flavours from few ingredients. Ignore the deep-fried shrimp and discover the joys of the steamed dumpling—each one is a treasure chest of flavour and texture. Vegans aren't ignored here and the place is fantastic for groups big and small.

Runners Up



Tian Grensásvegur 21

While we hear whispers of a secret menu at Tian—the Chinese diners being treated to the real thing, while non-Chinese diners get chop suey—Tian's toned-down renditions of Western favourites fare well above the average. The Kung Pao chicken is deservedly popular—but try and get something from that enticing hidden menu.



Jia Yao Ármúli 5

Jia Yao rounds off our Chinese restaurant trio. Ármuli has been a tough neighbourhood to crack, but this Pan-Asian lunch buffet is hearty and well-priced, and there's an à la carte menu. The raw ambience can be a turn-off, but don't let that stop you from trying some authentic Chinese fare.

Previous Winners

2018: Fönix

Best Thai



Ban Thai

Laugavegur 130

Pad Thai may have been what imprinted Thai cuisine in the minds of most in the Western world, but Ban Thai continues to surprise, delight and coax even the most reluctant palate to embrace the breadth of Thai cuisine. Northern fiery curries or creamier Southern offerings, with a smattering of street-fare, Ban Thai is the quintessential Thai restaurant in town. A die-hard loyalist recommends getting the “green Thai curry with roti, which is a meal in itself, even though it is listed under appetisers.”

Runners Up



Krua Thai Skólavörðustígur 21

The little Thai restaurant recently moved to Skólavörðustígur and they've never been better. Their deeply flavoured curries are “redolent with fresh galangal, chillies and spices to warm cold days,” said the panel. If you're in a rush, stop for a nourishing bowl of soup at the bar.



Mai Thai Laugavegur 118

With quick service and a part-store-part-restaurant vibe, Mai Thai is popular for both lunch or takeaway. The menu changes every day, but ask for the fiery Laab—stir-fried minced chicken salad chock full of sliced shallots, mint, coriander and obsession-worthy toasted rice powder. Spicy, crunchy and fresh.

Previous Winners

2014-8: Ban Thai
2013: Yummi Yummi

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BEST OF REYKJAVÍK 2019

Dining

From fancy meals to free refill Plokkfiskur

Best Goddamn Restaurant



Snaps

Pórsgrata 1

Year after year, regardless of how many restaurants open and close, Snaps remains a timeless classic. Be it lunch, date-night dinner, lazy weekend brunches or a boisterous Christmas work party, Snaps is the perfect venue for a boatload of memories. Steady standbys include the deeply savoury onion soup (with a union of its own, we suspect), the house-made fries with crispy rosemary that beg to be a meal on their own, and a textbook crème brûlée topped with an envious snap. As one panellist concluded, “they are also that rare joint with a 3,000 ISK bottle of wine.” It isn’t only the food that makes Snaps such a beloved institution; it’s that hard to pin down the je ne sais quoi that simply works.

Runners Up



Mat Bar Hverfisgata 26

Mat Bar’s rapid menu changes make it hard to pin down a favourite dish to return for, but hey, change is fun, too. Consistently experimental, the kitchen’s focus on the open fire grill has translated to successful winners like the scallops, grilled carrots and cabbage and recently, the dumpling variations.



SKÁL!

Hlemmur Mathöll, Laugavegur 107
SKÁL! is the street-food avatar of the famed restaurant Slippurinn. Located in Hlemmur Mathöll, it’s a stylish and dazzling eatery that’s much easier to get to than its Westman Islands mothership. With locally-sourced and foraged ingredients whipped up into ingenious recipes, SKÁL! simply never fails.

Previous Winners

2018: Mat Bar
2017: Snaps / Matur og Drykkur
2014-6: Snaps

Best Place For A Fancy Meal



Óx

Laugavegur 28

Forget dropping in at Óx, for this place only takes eleven guests from Wednesday to Saturday. Visitors are instructed to arrive at 19:00 sharp for a two and a half hour food journey, which combines Icelandic traditional cuisine with a European flair. You pay upfront and everything is included—even wine pairings. It’s truly an intimate experience unlike anything else you’ll find in the city. Foodies, don’t miss it.

Runners Up



Grillið

Hotel Saga, Hagatorg

Grillið’s service and level of craft is the best in town. Think caviar served on a film of seabuckthorn, or a salt-baked, glazed beetroot with the consistency of Turkish delight. Not content with sweet and unctuous desserts, they layer in salt and bitterness with effortless staging: the meringue with Sichuan pepper is brûléed at the table, sending mauve streaks of bilberry running through the ice cream. This is what raising the bar looks like.



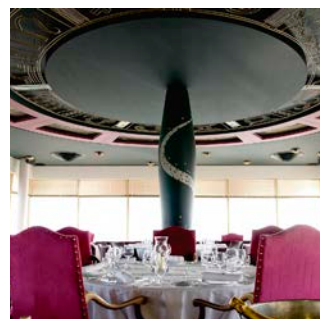
Grillmarket Lækjargata 2a

The locally-sourced menu of Grillmarket have been a hit with diners since this place opened its doors. A favourite ‘fancy place’ for locals, the restaurant also upped its game by offering fresh, locally grown Icelandic wasabi. Our panel suggested pairing the wasabi with a steak, and something decadent from the exhaustive wine list.

Previous Winners

2014-8: Dill

Best Tasting Menu



Grillið

Hotel Saga, Hagatorg

Winner winner, five digit chicken dinner. We are delighted to pay our long-overdue respects to the grand mama of Reykjavík fine dining. “Their tasting menu takes you on this whole journey that makes you lose all track of time,” said one of our dreamy-eyed panellists. When it comes to swank, there is nothing like a 300° view of the cityscape whilst having your senses assailed by a menu that celebrates seasonality, complexity and depth without ever giving in to fussiness. This is old school glamour meeting a truly innovative kitchen that blazes a path for ambitious dining.

Runners Up



Mat Bar Hverfisgata 26

This stylish Hverfisgata restaurant offers a constantly rotating small plates menu comprising ingenious takes on familiar ingredients. The best way to try a few at once is to go for the chef’s choice tasting menu—everyone gets to try everything, so the conversation will flow as smoothly as their excellent wine and cocktail selections.



Apótek Austurstræti 16

Apótek’s tasting menu takes quality Icelandic ingredients and serves them with refreshing and interesting twists from the kitchen. The service is excellent, the plating is aesthetically pleasing, and the whole experience is reliably high quality. A carefree meal at Apótek is the perfect medicine for a tiring week.

Previous Winners

2017-8: Dill

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BEST OF REYKJAVÍK 2019

Dining

If they're over 7mm wide they're chips, not fries

Best Cheap Meal

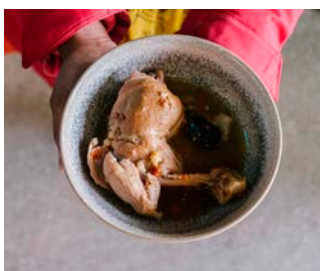


Icelandic Street Food

Lækjargata 8 & Laugavegur 85

You can't beat the prices at this tiny spot with a big heart. All the soups are available in a bread bowl with—wait for it—unlimited refills! You can choose from a lamb soup, a buttery traditional plokksúpa and a veggie soup, and your refill can even be a taste of another dish. Iceland prides itself on the quality of its lamb and fish, so kjötsúpa and fiskisúpa are safe bets. If you'd like to try affordable local food, and you're very, very hungry, this is the spot.

Runners Up



Chicken Soup at Vietnam Grandi Mathóll, Grandagarður 20

In a foodhall environment packed full with tempting choices, this chicken soup is a clear stand-out dish. The serving is generous, and best of all, it comes in at well under 2,000 ISK. "There's a whole chicken thigh in there," said the panel. "The broth is slow-cooked for that deep, rich comfort-food flavour. I'll be coming back for this one."



Lamb Street Food Grandagarður 7

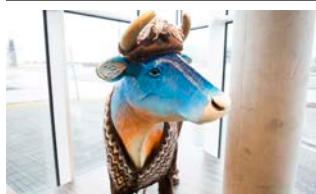
Food wrapped in a flatbread is a universally-loved thing of beauty. At Lamb, they take things a few steps further and make everything from scratch. Anything you order sits under the 2,000 ISK tag. What's lesser known however, is that their wraps are perfect for sharing, making it the cheapest meal in town by far.

Previous Winners

2018: Icelandic Street Food
2017: Bike Cave
2016: Noodle Station

2015: K-Bar (RIP)
2014: 10-11 after 14:00

Best Family Restaurant



Hamborgara-fabrikkan

Höfðatorg, Kringlan

The Hamborgarafabrikkan burger chain is a kids' favourite, and it's ideal for a lunch outing with the family. There are plenty of distractions for young diners, including borrowed iPads and headphones to keep the kids entertained and distracted. The child-friendly vibe explains why it continues to be a popular haunt for birthday parties, so don't be surprised by the chorus of "húna á afmæli í dag" wafting around the room every now and then.

Runners Up



Kaffi Laugalækur Laugarnesvegur 74a

For many a young parent, the cafe stop at the end of a long stroll is the proverbial pot of gold. Kaffi Lækur is especially popular with new parents, with a special kids' corner for crawlers and drawers. The generously topped chicken and pesto 'litla gula hænna' and the 'shawarmabaka' are our top lunch picks. The parents will love this spot, and there's plenty for kids, too.



Hard Rock Café Lækjargata 2A

A good family place needs to be appealing to parents and kids alike. The Hard Rock Café caters perfectly to the needs of a family group, with a diverse menu, special kids plates, colouring menus, free drink refills, and lids on drinks to help contain spills.

Previous Winners

2018: Jamie's Italian
2017: Hamborgarafabrikkan
2016: Laundromat
2015: KEX Hostel

Best Vegan Meal



Sumac

Laugavegur 28

One of the persistent faves with the local vegan community, despite not catering solely to vegans, Sumac's Middle Eastern-inspired fare makes it the vegan destination to beat. No insipid 'nut steaks' in sight here: instead, the kitchen treats vegetables as the star of the show, eggplants are grilled to silkiness, the cauliflower roasted whole; often draped with bright pomegranate arils, it's a treat for anyone. Ask for the Lebanese wine; the interesting backstory of its harried continuance seals the outing.

Runners Up



Gló Laugavegur 20b

Healthy hot-spot Gló's Laugavegur location is 100% vegan, and completely delicious. Their signature skál (bowl, in English) menu comes in several variations—from an Indian dahl bowl with a side of mango chutney, to the fad-pleasing keto bowl to keep your net carbs in check—and the burgers and mainstay spinach lasagna are always tasty.



Veganæ Tryggvagata 22

One of our few exclusively vegan places, Veganæ shows how vegan food can be just as down-and-dirty as a burger joint. "You don't need to have a yoga mat under your arm when you go there," said the panel. It's in a lively spot: catch a drag show while you're dining.

Previous Winners

2018: Skál and Mat Bar
2016-7: Kaffi Vinyl (RIP)
2015: Teni (RIP)



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Best Brunch



Coocoo's Nest

Grandagarður 23

Family-run restaurant Coocoo's Nest offers a memorable brunch, with options ranging from a filling, spicy breakfast burrito to green eggs on sourdough bread. Located out on Grandi (they've been out there since before it was cool), the walk along the harbour will clear your head on the way; in summer, you can sit outside and catch the sun, and in winter, the cosy interior feels almost like a secluded fairy-light-strung yard. The service is right, the food spot on, and the healthy beetroot mimosa is a fresh and tasty hair of the dog.

Runners Up



Snaps Þórsgata 1

Snaps serves up the perfect laid-back brunch for your Sunday morning recovery session. Choose from various omelettes, classic eggs benedict, and croque monsieurs, and add a mimosa if the mood strikes you. If that isn't your tipple of choice, they have a great bloody mary and a g'n't menu.



Cafe Paris Austurstræti 14

Cafe Paris is a bright bistro with casual panache with food to match. The panel praised the fried chicken and waffles, and the stacks of pancakes with bananas and almonds. They lamented, however, the cancellation of table service, which diminishes the Parisienne vibe and kept this otherwise excellent joint off the top spot.

Previous Winners

2018: Cafe Paris
2017: Vox
2016: Coocoo's Nest

Best Lunch Place



Hlemmur & Grandi Mathöll

Hlemmur & Grandagarður 16

When it comes to lunch, Reykjavík's two food halls are top of the pile. It is, after all, a major increase over the zero food halls we had in 2016. As you might expect, the main attraction is the variety on offer. Members of a group can mix-and-match their dishes and drinks from the different concessions to fit anyone and everyone's hunger level, budget, vegetarianism, allergies, etcetera. Chase your heart's desire, be it Nordic, Thai, Mexican, Korean, a pastry, a panini, or just a plain ol' pile of lamb meat.

Runners Up



Hannesarholt Grundarstigur 10

The historic Hannesarholt culture building has gotten a new lease of life. Formerly a quiet coffee spot, it reopened as a restaurant focusing on locally sourced produce. It's a concise selection: we tried the juicy, crisp salmon with wholesome beets and quinoa. Vegans can rejoice too: there's always one option on the menu.

Newcomer



Mimisbar Hagatorg

Rather than a limp slice of pizza or reheated soup, Mimir has a Michelin-level kitchen and two handsome portions of colourful, Nordic deliciousness for under 2,000 ISK (at the time of writing) in a swanky but unpretentious dining hall. "Mimir, FYI, is the disembodied brother of the Norse god Odin. Pretty metal.

Previous Winners

2017-8: Snaps
2015-6: Ostabúðin (RIP)

Best Ice Cream



Skúbb

Laugarásvegur 1

Ice cream is one of those ethereal pleasures that encapsulates the mantra of living—be present. Unlike the sugar crazed concoctions in every supermarket aisle, Skúbb elevates the ice-cream games with their flavour-forward, dense, creamy scoops. Seasonal favourite mango is an absolute treat, while the dark chocolate brownie is lusciously bitter. The non-dairy sorbets are intensely fruity, indicating the absence of imitation flavours. Every scoop is a downright treat, especially with the promise of summer looming large.

Runners Up



Ísbúð Huppu Álfheimar 2-6

Selfoss based ice-cream joint Huppu, with their happy cow logo, may not be a vegan haunt, but this thoroughly Icelandic incarnation serves up all the time honoured local classics—creamy soft serves, assortment of dips and toppings with fruit to candy ratio being 1:100 and the hyper-local bragðarefur ice cream and candy smoothie.



Valdís Grandagarður 21 & Frakkastigur 10

Despite stiff competition, Valdís continues to draw the crowds. If you cannot bear the thought of queuing behind an impatient Icelander—ticket system long forgotten—they now sell their wares in supermarkets. The store scoops are a notch above though, so drop in at Grandi or Frakkastigur.

Previous Winners

2018: Skúbb
2013-7: Valdís

Best Lamb



Matarkjallarinn

Aðalstræti 2

Icelandic lamb is raised simply—all summer long, the sheep are left outside to graze, and come fall, the lamb makes a bee-line to the plate. It's only fitting that Matarkjallarinn honours Icelandic lamb in the most unpretentious fashion. Grassy and intense, Icelandic lamb needs to be handled delicately for its unique flavour to shine through—do too much and you'll overshadow this tender meat. By foregoing frivolous add-ons, Matarkjallarinn lets the lamb speak for itself.

Runners Up



Grillmarket Lækjargata 2a

Grillmarket is still the go-to place for many locals looking for a fancy evening out. For most, it means ordering the lamb and a bottle of wine. And rightfully so. The lamb chops or charcoal grilled steaks are always a winner—the smoky char is but a natural foil to the grassy meat.



Apotek Austurstræti 16

Whatever lamb is being served here, rest assured it'll be a meal to remember. With experienced chefs who share an unbridled passion for meat and fire, all the plates come out perfectly executed. Currently, they have a rack of lamb that's a visual treat—get it while it lasts.

Previous Winners

New category!



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BEST OF REYKJAVÍK 2019

Dining

Greasy burger, or glazed, torched cod head?

Must-Try Dining Experience



Skál

Hlemmur Mathöll

Helmed by one of Iceland's finest chefs—Gísli Matthías Auðunsson—anything you order here will be your definitive culinary memory of Iceland. “Seasonal” and “local” aren’t just clickbait terms at Skál. Be it smoked carrots on sourdough or crispy seaweed with cured roe, nothing is as simple as it seems. From Icelandic lamb to Arctic char or a scrumptious vegan meal, Skál has you covered. They boast a natural wine selection, cocktails on tap, and they debut new drinks regularly, like the Sultuslaurur rhubarb cider. A culinary adventure like no other, Skál also won’t break the bank.

Runners Up



Cod Head at Matur og Drykkur Grandagarður 2

Shook value aside, Matur og Drykkur elevated Icelandic cooking with this singular dish—a whole, butterflied cod head, simmered in chicken stock and glazed. “The deep fried cod tongues are the best part,” said the panel. “And the fish head is basically prime cod cheeks.” An unmissable treat.



ÓX

Laugavegur 28

ÓX is Iceland’s first chef’s table dining experience for only 11 diners each night. Determined to be discreet, the restaurant is housed in the far end of Sumac; it is an intimate dining experience where the walls between the chef and diner are dissolved over an intimate and leisurely tasting menu.

Previous Winners

2017: Snaps
2015-6: Ostabúðin (RIP)

2014: Bergsson Mathús

Best Italian



La Primavera

at Marshall House Bar +
Restaurant - Grandagarður 20

25-years ago, Leifur Kolbeinsson introduced Icelanders to fresh pasta at his iconic eatery La Primavera. It closed a few years later, but Icelanders still reminisce about it. Now, Leifur is back in the kitchen at the Marshall House restaurant, with the same focus on simplicity. “I didn’t even know cod roe could be so... sophisticated,” mused the panel as we dined at the anniversary pop-up. Thanks to diner pressure, La Primavera made a comeback as a permanent fixture at Marshall House. A delicious full circle, if ever there was one.

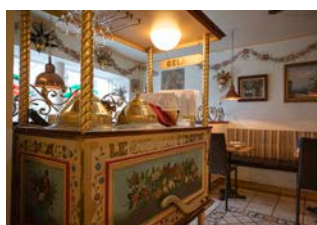
Runners Up



Hornið

Hafnarstræti 15

It might not be fancy, but O.G. Italian joint Hornið is still going strong. The thin-crust pizzas are 100% satisfying—we recommend the prawn-covered seafood option—and you can get all kinds of hearty comfort-food pasta dishes, should your heart so desire. Support a true classic and drop by.



Italia

Laugavegur 11

Italia has the dual distinction of being run by actual bonafide Italians and being the second-oldest Italian joint in town (1991). This is a place for fried eggplant parm, seafood pastas, and decor cheesier than their rigatoni. And don’t forget—bring the whole family.

Previous Winners

2018: Marshall House

Best Seafood



Fiskfélagið

Vesturgata 2a

With a band of talented chefs in the kitchen, Fish Company is the definitive seafood restaurant in Iceland. Banging out consistently great dishes ever since they opened, the restaurant has grown beyond their reputation for fusion kitschiness. Today, their Japanese-inspired cod, swimming in a charred onion dashi, or the North African style wolf-fish with perfectly cooked black chickpeas, all enunciate a finesse and understanding of ingredient, region and technique that other restaurants can only aspire to.

Runners Up



Fish Market

Aðalstræti 12

“They seem to take the extra step for freshness,” said one panellist of Fish Market’s seafood. This upscale eatery serves everything from lightly salted cod to controversial minke whale—details like ponzu dipping sauce, and fresh Icelandic wasabi takes the experience up a notch. Booking recommended, but impromptu sushi bar stools are sometimes available.



Messinn

Lækjargata 6 & Grandagarður 8

Messinn has been so popular since opening that they now boast a large buffet style branch in Grandi. Continuing to serve ‘fish-in-pans,’ Messinn’s once-generous portions have dwindled, our panel noted. Thankfully, the taste and consistency have remained largely unchanged. We also adore their plockfiskur (although the panel suspects the recipe has changed recently).

Previous Winners

2018: Fish Company and Fish Market
2014-7: Fish Company

Best Place For A Group



Apótek

Austurstræti 16a

Housed in a stunning downtown space, Apótek, meaning “pharmacy” in English, was once an actual drug store. A wall plaque with the names of its long gone patrons remains. New patrons, however, are likely to drop by for their regular dose of cocktails, finger foods, small plates, cakes... and eye candy. Who doesn't love a “hottie bartender”? The service is amicable and the staff usually go out of their way to ensure everyone is having a good time in this lovely, spacious dining room.

Runners Up



Tapas Barinn

It's a non-traditional take on tapas, but the atmosphere is on point. With food served for the whole table, the selection is huge, with langoustine, puffin, lamb, and more global fare. If you're looking for a place where the food and drinks keep coming and the service never falters, you've found it.

Newcomer



Eiríksson Brasserie

After the shock closure of Skelfiskmarkaðurinn, another large, glitzy restaurant opened just around the corner. Eiríksson is a high-end restaurant with truffle-themed menu, perfect service, and big tables for groups. Book in advance, it's having a honeymoon moment of popularity.

Previous Winners

2019: Skelfiskmarkaðurinn (RIP)
2015-8: Tapas barinn
2014: KEX

Best Gastropub



Public House

Laugavegur 24

The gastropub trend may be fatigued in the UK, but in Iceland we are only getting started, it seems. One of the first gastropubs is still one of the most popular. The menu is about as large as they come for the category but they manage to strike a balance between sumptuous shared plates, solid beer selection, and cozy nooks to spark a romance or catch up with a friend.

Runners Up



Brewdog

A pair of newcomers changed the gastropub game in 2018. The first is Brewdog, whose menu transcends bar food. Using Icelandic ingredients with touches from the Brewdog chain, you can get a range of delicious burgers, seafood, sides and a mouth-watering battered Mars bar for dessert. Guilty pleasure heaven.



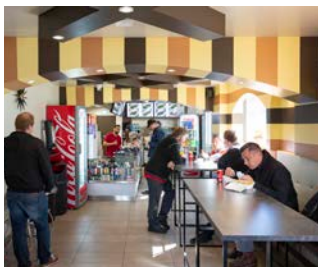
Bastard Brew & Food

Just around the corner, the homegrown Bastard Brew & Food brew pub is giving Brewdog a run for its money. You can grab a medley of burgers, sharing plates and comfort food from around the globe. As one of our panellists slurred: “I’ve somehow never been there without hitting a happy hour.”

Previous Winners

2018: Skál

Best Late Night Bite



Mandi

Veltusund 3b

Mandi can't possibly be a controversial choice. A Syrian kebab spot that's universally loved in Reykjavik, check out the crispy falafel, lamb wraps and fries covered with a mystery white sauce. Newly renovated with increased seating, and reliably open into the early hours, you won't find a better place to pass out face-first into a plate of lamb shawarma at five in the morning, or stumble home with that hangover-battling late night bite.

Runners Up



Hiðllabátar

If you can't decide between chicken, beef, shrimp, teriyaki or veggies for your drunk munch, stop by Hiðllabátar, where they serve up literally anything you can imagine on a hero sub. Pick up the Sýslumannbátur with extra cucumber—you won't regret it.



Devitos

Anyway you slice it, Devitos will set your late night belly rumbles right. If you were born in the 80s, then chances are you've binged on a late-night bite at Devitos. Available by the slice or as whole pies, if you're in town on a weekend, Devitos will be your last stop before Neverland.

Previous Winners

2017-8: Mandi
2016: Ali Baba

Best Newcomer



Eiríksson Brasserie

Laugavegur 77

This fancy dining room occupies the space of an old bank, and still has a certain moneyed feel. However, the prices aren't at all bad, especially if you pop in for an after work cocktail on happy hour. The menu runs the gamut of firm favourites, from seafood pasta to potato pizza, lamb dishes and fries with bearnaise—but everything is done to perfection, served quickly, and more often than not comes with a truffle flavour. We approve—so much so that we're slowly returning to try the whole menu.

Runners Up



Hipstur

A new food hall opened recently—Reykjavik's third in as many years. There are lots of things to try, but Hipstur takes the cake by offering Swedish-style brioche buns filled to bursting with shrimps, delicious soups and fresh, tasty sandwiches that feel very fancy. Worth the trek.



Hi Noodle

Reykjavikingur are sadly starved of many Asian cuisines (please, someone open a Korean place!) compared to more cosmopolitan European capitals. So we welcomed Hi Noodle with open mouths. Their ramen is lovingly prepared, and their juicy dumplings are a filling side portion. Go say “Hi!” to Chen.

Previous Winners

2019: Skelfiskmarkaðurinn (RIP)
2018: Nostra
2017: Hlemmur Mathöll / Mat Bar



DINING

A Little Cove of Cornucopia

Downtown gains a neighbourhood fresh fish and veggie store

Words: **Shruthi Basappa** Photo: **Art Bicnick**

There was a collective sigh of despair when Kjöt og Fiskur downed shutters on Bergstaðastræti. In a short span of time, the neighbourhood had seen Frú Lauga, Kjöt og Fiskur and Matarbúr Kaja open and close; each opening met with cheers and each subsequent closure with disappointment that yet another downtown business favoured by the locals was done for.

Hoping to break the curse, is Gnægtahornið. “We are not only a fish store,” store owner Gunnar Guttormur Kjeld emphasises. The opening has been met with wide enthusiasm, especially by the local residents. In a quickly changing urban landscape, where

commercial needs of tourism are often at loggerheads with residents, it is understandable why the opening of a neighbourhood store garners this attention.

The basement store is simply furnished — there are rows of locally brewed Kombucha, preserves, and spreads from Vellir Svarfaðardal, various fish products and a smattering of organic vegetables. Further ahead, there is cod in an olive tapenade marinade, Arctic char with capers, fresh cod and a full basket of oysters at just 350 ISK per piece sits invitingly. Vegans and vegetarians are considered and a handful of salads and patties are on offer. Behind the store, is a work room

where fresh catch of the day is processed to be sent off to restaurants and to sell instore.

Community ecosystem

Gutti, as Gunnar is known, has long felt the need for more variety of produce. With his background in wholesale seafood supply, he has been behind the scenes in the supply chain industry. But why retail? “Honestly, I wanted to diversify,” Gutti laughs, going on to add, “Supermarket choices are all the same, you know,” he explains. “What one sells, the others do, too. The fish in the same marinades, the same vegetables, seasonal or not.”

“Take the oysters for instance,” he continues, “I’m in the position of offering them to people, in small quantities at a reasonable price. It is a unique thing given their short shelf life, and removes the hassle of buying oysters if you weren’t a restaurant.” Having tried them myself, I have to concur that the fanciful feeling of eating oysters in your pajamas at home is vastly underrated.

Gutti has ambitious plans. “I want to create this community ecosystem, a food exchange,” he says passionately. “Where the lemons we supply to a restaurant comes back to Gnægtahornið as say, fermented lemons, a full circle. We’ve been working with Lækjarbrekka, and I am keen on bringing on board more industry professionals to lend their expertise. Chef Eva has been the anchor in this operation and has brought in variety for vegans and vegetarians.”

Fresh, local, abundant

Gnægtahornið refers to the horn of plenty in Icelandic. In an effort to offer more than what the supermarkets currently do, Gutti is working closely with Seyðisfjörður initiative, Austurlands Food Coop, to bring hitherto unavailable fresh produce to Reykjavík residents.

To minimise food waste, in-house soup for lunch is also on the cards. The no-food waste principle extends to the seafood as well. The traditional ýsa í raspi is made with leftover sourdough bread crumbs. The fiskibollur too, gets an update with the addition of vegetables.

“Being creative can be challenging and not falling back on the established norms is very challenging because it is so tempting to fall back on what’s been done before.” It is early days yet, but Gnægtahornið might just be the corner of plenty 101 has been waiting for. 🍷

Info: Gnægtahornið

Visit the store at Bergstaðastræti 14, 101 Reykjavík
[f /Gnaegtahorn](https://www.facebook.com/Gnaegtahorn)

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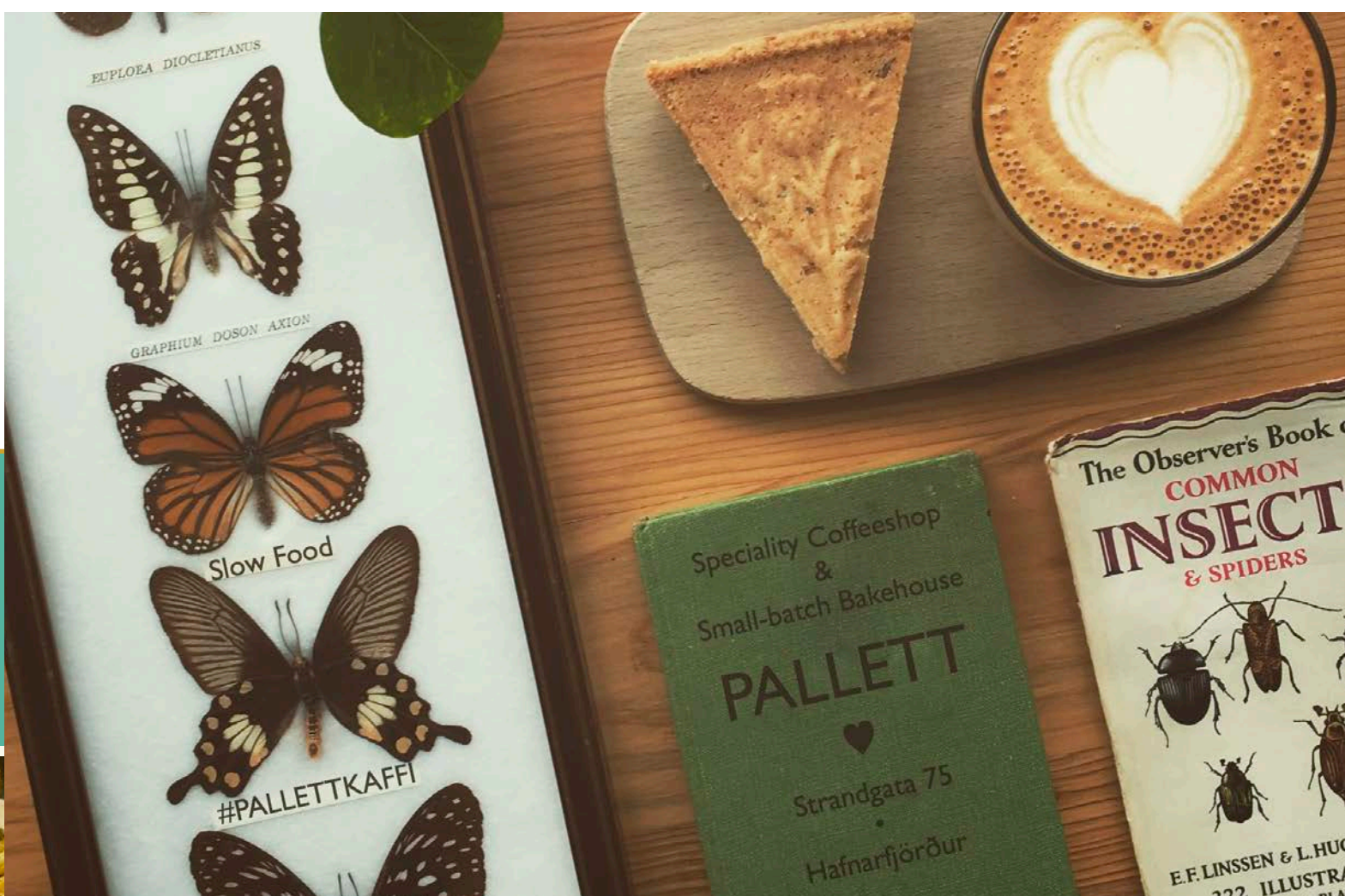
Opening hours: 16:00-21:00

Closed on Mondays





NOT TO BRAG BUT :)



Located just 15 km from downtown Reykjavik, Hafnarfjörður has been a thriving independent entity for a long time, thanks in no small part to the fierce loyalty its inhabitants, “Hafnfirðingar”, show to local businesses and institutions. And they’ll welcome you with open arms as long as you don’t do anything crazy like call them a Reykjavik suburb or speak ill of either of their handball teams.

The elephant in the room (if elephants wore tusks on their heads)

Icelanders generally aren’t shy to flaunt their Viking heritage, but Hafnarfjörður took it to another level with its annual Viking Festival and a permanent miniature Viking settlement called The Viking Village—both of which sprang from the loins of a small group of private Viking enthusiasts in the 90s.

The village is essentially a hotel and gift store built around the Viking theme restaurant Fjörukráin. As far as theme restaurants go, Fjörukráin is quite ambitious—far more elaborate than the Finnish Viking restaurant chain Harald, but less so than Medieval Times (unless you count the annual staged Viking brawl). It exhibits a pleasant lack of anachronistic building materials and an abundance of elaborate woodwork, which has only gotten better with age—for the weathering of time is kind to Viking theme restaurants in ways that space age theme restaurants can only dream of.

The food itself, well, it’s about what you’d expect from a theme restaurant, but there’s something for all tastes, everything from



GUIDE

The Bulletproof Guide To Eating Out In Hafnarfjörður

A Reykjavik foodie tours the eateries of Iceland’s third-biggest town

Words: **Ragnar Egilsson** Photo: **Art Bicnick**

classic Icelandic lamb stew to a “Viking banana split”.

Food Wars: A New Hope

Located on Strandgata, just up the road from Fjörukráin, Von has quickly secured its spot as the best Hafnarfjörður has to offer in fine dining. The name means “Hope” and it is well-earned as the town wasn’t brimming with fine dining options before their arrival four years ago.

Fortunately, Von more than holds its own against the best in Reykjavik and does so without breaking the bank. Go there for fresher-than-fresh fish plucked from the harbour just across the

road—the firm-but-delicate wolf fish with tarragon mayo and polenta and the incomparable ling ceviche are two standouts. And don’t miss the rotating cocktails on tap and 650 ISK beers for a happy hour which, at least on the night of our visit, extended well into the night.

Coffee and Cakes

Next door to Von is the town’s finest coffee house, the vegetarian-and-generally-friendly Pallett. It may also very well be the coziest coffee house in the greater Reykjavik area. This is the place to grab a random book from the shelves and plomp down in a pillowy nook with a classic scone, a hand

pie and a cup of hot chocolate or full-flavoured coffee.

Further along, Strandgata is the oldest part of downtown Hafnarfjörður. As in parts of downtown Reykjavik, the building styles are charmingly discordant, and void of frivolity like city planning. This will eventually lead you to coffeehouse Súfistinn, which led a step forward in Iceland’s artisan coffee scene in the 90s and has felt at ease in that decade ever since—a place to enjoy creamy cakes and cheesy lasagnas to the sounds of smooth jazz.

Where Strandgata ends, the controversial Norðurbakki apartment blocks of Norðurbakki take over, housing book café Norðurbakki and popular soup-and-sourdough bakery Brikk.

Hot dog burgers

No Icelandic town is complete without its signature burger and Hafnarfjörður is no exception. In that category, there is no competing with the madness at Pylsubarinn (“the hot dog bar”). Sure, you could go there and order a normal hot dog or an average burger but who has time for that!? This is home to a deep-fried hot dog with a slice of melted cheese and french fry seasoning served over french fries, baked beans or literally anything they have laying around in their burger hut, because we live in a democracy, dammit!

But to really go “full Hafnarfjörður” you will want their Fjarðarborgari (“fjord burger”) served with hot dog mustard, ketchup, fried onions and pickled red cabbage. It is basically an Icelandic hot dog with a floppy 90gr burger instead of a weiner, making it the most Icelandic burger in existence. 🍔



Barflies
REYKJAVÍK





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Wood-oven pizza
ready 5 minutes



Fresh local
health food



Healthy meal
for your flight

BEST OF REYKJAVÍK 2019

Drinking

Tipsy or wasted, the choice is yours

There is one thing abundantly clear from our very scientific drinking research: craft beers and gastropubs have arrived in force. You can't throw a stone without hitting someone washing down a dry-aged chilli burger with a local IPA. After a few stable years, Reykjavík's bar scene seems to be shifting in general, with more wine, cocktails and fancy beers available than ever before. Some facts of life, however, remain the same: alcohol is expensive, but that doesn't stop us from partying. Bottoms up, babe.

Best Goddamn Bar



Kaffibarinn

Bergstaðastræti 1

"Kaffibarinn!" said the panel, in unison, when the category was announced. The mothership of Iceland's nightlife has stood firm while the competition rises and falls. A reliably great drinking hole, it has happy hour prices by day, a diverse DJ lineup by night, and charming staff to welcome you at all times. "Kaffibarinn has always been my favourite bar," said one panellist. "I've been going there forever. The staff are amazing—they put up with your shit. Maybe the most fun part is the randoms you meet. It's the place where everybody knows your name."

Runners Up



Bravó Laugavegur 22

An unassuming pub-style hangout, Bravó has been quietly carving out a new identity in recent times, partially due to some new owners at the helm. "It caters to a lot of groups, and has more going on that you'd think," said the panel, "It's becoming like a Kaffibarinn for the young crowd, and their concerts have been packing the place out."



Gaukurinn Tryggvagata 22

For those who lie on the eccentric fringes of culture, look no further than Gaukurinn. With a rotating roster of metal shows, drag extravaganzas, retro gaming competitions, and their legendary Tuesday karaoke nights, the bar is a one stop shop for weirdos of all varieties. Stop by during happy hour for a burger at Veganæs, their conveniently located vegan diner.

Previous Winners

2018: Kaffibarinn
2017: Húrra
2016: Prikið

2015: KEX Hostel
2014: Boston (RIP)

Best Place To Start The Night



VEDUR

Klapparstigur 33

This charming, low key hole-in-the-wall bar is a firm favourite: with comfy seating or bar stools where you can watch the friendly bartenders get to work mixing your cocktail of choice. "You can watch the street life going by through the big windows," said the panel. "It's in a vibrant spot." The great location and happy hour mean it's the perfect place to begin a night out on the town. "You can be dressed up or down there," said the panel, "and it's right downtown, so you can head anywhere afterwards."

Runners Up



Bió Paradís Hverfisgata 52

A cinema bar might seem like an odd choice here, but Bió Paradís is a cinema like no other. "There's plenty of space, nooks to hide in, and good prices," said the panel. "And the smell of popcorn hanging in the air is intoxicating. If you decide against partying, you can just go and watch a movie."



Miami Hverfisgata 33

If your dream pre-game involves cocktails, ping-pong, and sitting on art deco poofs pretending you are Tony Montana, head over to Hverfisgata's Miami to live your fantasy. While they are a great place to hit up late in the night, arriving early ensures you'll get a quiet sitting area where you can properly appreciate your delectable drinks.

Previous Winners

2018: Mat Bar
2016-7: KEX Hostel
2015: Loft Hostel
2014: Kaldi Bar

Best Place To End The Night



Kaffibarinn

Bergstaðastræti 1

This classic party place is still the late-night hangout of choice in 101 Reykjavík. The raucous local crowd is a mixture of Iceland's fashion folks, artists, hipsters and intelligentsia—as seen in the KB "Barflies" photo book. "It's a perfect meeting point where you can go for the dancefloor, space out in the back, or chat all night in the smoking area," said the panel. "The staff are always genuinely nice to you, even if you're pretty drunk. Everyone goes there. It's the only place I'd go after putting a friend in drag and end up having my numerology done by a stranger."

Runners Up



Kiki Queer Bar Laugavegur 22

If you're going out dancing, Kiki can't be beat. With DJs playing pop classics and an energetic, disinhibited crowd, the panel enthused: "It's so much fun! You can dance, hug your friends, kiss your spouse... you can let everything out and dance your ass off in a safe, welcoming environment."



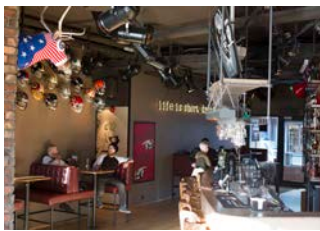
Ölstofan Vegamótastígur

On the other end of the spectrum is the no-frills drinking room of Ölstofan. With low music, dim lighting, lots nooks to converse in and a big central bar, "It's a no-bullshit place," said the panel. "There's an interesting older crowd, it's always open late, and you can have a pint and chat without anyone bothering you."

Previous Winners

2018: Prikið
2017: Kaffibarinn
2016: Húrra
2014-5: Paloma Basement (RIP)

Best Sports Bar



American Bar & English Pub

Joint Winners

American Bar, Austurstræti 8-10

With screens as far as the eye can see, a long bar that goes on for days, all the burgers and snacks of your junk food dreams, a dedicated big-screen viewing room in the back, and a "sun" terrace to smoke on at half time, American Bar is the perfect place to watch the big game. Whether it's boxing, NFL or Premier League, they always have a wide range of screenings. Grab yourself a brewski and prepare to shout at the screen in some kind of vicarious catharsis of random victory or loss.



English Pub, Austurstræti 18

Iceland's main spectator sport of choice is the English Premier League, and there's nowhere better to settle down for a day of matches than the English Pub. With a dark wooden Anglo-kitsch interior, a long bar with plenty of staff, and loads of comfortable seating, it's hard to glance anywhere without your eye alighting on a screen. Football-loving tourists gather here to shout at the screen and berate Gylfi Sigurðsson's latest penalty miss, so it's the closest you'll get a true football pub atmosphere, too.

Runner Up



Lebowski Bar Laugavegur 20a

Another big huge place with lots of screens showing lots of games, this fully carpeted bar honouring The Dude is another nice laid-back place to just zone out with some good sports. Unpretentious and even graced with its own mascot, Púki the cat, who drinks virgin White Russians in the window.

Previous Winners

2018: American Bar
2017: Lebowski Bar
2016: American Bar
2013-5: Bjarni Fel

Best Craft Bar



Skúli Craft Bar

Fógetagarður

This cosy drinking hole has a great selection of local and guest craft brews, with the option of a flight of beers for the indecisive or curious. Set on a ground floor with giant windows around most of the bar, one may prefer the open feeling or feel a bit exposed, but it's a lovely place. "The staff are real beer nerds," said the panel. "There are board games, good snacks and food vans out back. It has that dude energy, but it's perfect for a quiet drink."

Runners Up



Brewdog Frakkastígur 8

The Brewdog empire's Iceland outpost is an instant hit. "Sure, it's a chain, but they have a really good beer selection," said the panel. "The menu is great, and the staff are friendly and accommodating. They have both Brewdog and Icelandic beers, and Wings Wednesday."



Session Bar First Floor, Bankastræti 14

Session Bar is a minimalist craft-beer-focused drinking den housed in a former hair salon in the heart of downtown. There are sixteen beers on tap, both Icelandic and international, and they have a focus on keeping the prices affordable, in contrast to Reykjavik's generally pricey craft bars.

Previous Winners

2018: Mikkeller & Friends (RIP)
2017: Microbar
2016: Mikkeller & Friends (RIP)

Best Wine Bar



Port 9

Veghúsastígur 9

Cosy and tucked away with a secretive vibe, Port 9 is a hidden gem with an extensive wine list. From the house selections, to the by-the-bottle list, to the endless handwritten book of rare and fine wines, there can be only one winner here. "You can barely find it," said the panel. "It's intimate, and the customers have gone out of their way to end up there." It's not too stuffy or formal though. "I've been there in my pyjamas and nobody said anything," said one panellist. "It's also the only place in Reykjavik for that special Tinder date."

Runners Up



Klaustur Kirkjutorg

Since the "KlausturFókk" scandal, when drunk MPs were recorded having a horribly sexist conversation, this cosy establishment has seen an unexpected bounce in popularity. "For wine and secrets go to Klaustur," laughed the panel. "Drink your Pinot Noir in silence at Iceland's current most infamous bar."

Newcomer



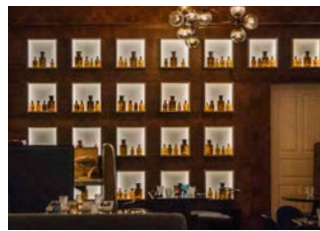
Vinstúkan Tíu sopar Laugavegur 27

Aiming to fill the market for wine bars in Reykjavik, Vinstúkan Tíu Sopar features natural wines from small producers at affordable prices. While "Vinstúkan" is an old Icelandic term for wine bar, "Tíu Sopar" is a play-on-words for ten sips, riffing on the bar's location in the spot that was once the Tíu Dropar café.

Previous Winners

2018: Port 9
2017: Microbar
2016: Mikkeller & Friends (RIP)
2015: Skúli Craft Bar

Best Place For Cocktails



Apótek

Austurstræti 16

Apótek is a beautifully decorated restaurant in the heart of downtown. It's actually styled as a pharmacy, hence the name Apótek. They refer to their bartenders as pharmacists and offer a great selection of cocktails, or as they call them 'painkillers', 'stimulants' and 'tranquillizers'. The restaurant is famous for its exquisite menu, wide selection of wine and beautifully crafted desserts. However, their cocktails are also otherworldly. Try the Stranger Tides, a blended malt with amaro and lime served with a bouquet of mint, for a singular experience.

Runners Up



VEDUR Klapparstígur 33

If you don't want bitters made out of Californian dandelions or rose-petal sprayed ice in your espresso martini, this much-loved relative newcomer does the classics just how you like them. "The barmen here are great," said the panel. "It's the classics done to perfection."



Miami Hverfisgata 33

Miami's cocktail menu takes your favourite classics and mixes them up into complex 21st century drinks. With a focus on sustainability and a strict adherence to the bar's gorgeous 1980s Miami Vice aesthetic, their selection is a standout in the thriving Reykjavik cocktail scene. They've also, and we're not joking, got cuba libres on draft.

Previous Winners

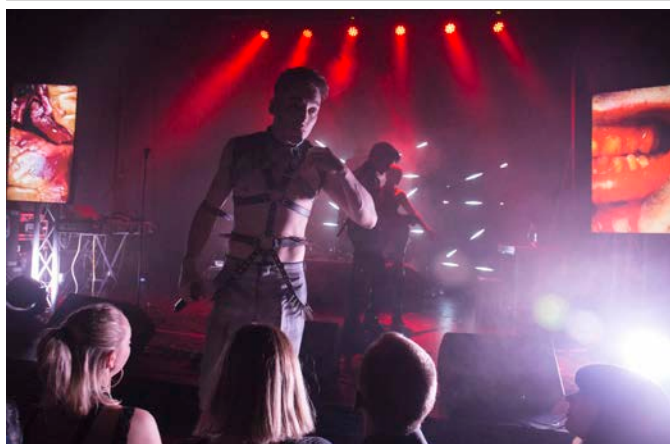
2018: Hverfisgata 12 (RIP)
2015-6: Apótek
2014: Slippbarinn
2013: Borg, Hotel Borg

BEST OF REYKJAVÍK 2019

Drinking

Why have just one happy hour when you can have nine?

Best Place For Live Music



ÍÐNÓ

Vonarstræti 3

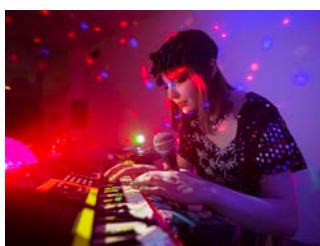
This beautiful, classic concert hall has been rejuvenated into the new heart of the 101 music scene. From release concerts to collaborative gigs to one-day festivals and all-out parties, the cool kids of Reykjavík are putting their concerts on here; the creative, buzzing atmosphere and varied events have made it into a thrilling creative hub for the city. “People who chase music are going to ÍÐNÓ,” said the panel. “There’s room to move, and it’s labyrinthine inside. It’s having a real moment. It’s been a slow transition, but ÍÐNÓ is just where the music scene is right now.”

Runners Up



Gaukurinn Tryggvagata 22

Gaukurinn has become the thriving centre of the city’s alt-music scene, including heavy music, goth shit, noise and drag. “It’s a huge place for the punk, goth and metal scenes,” said the panel. “The geeks you knew in high school are now handsome bad boys in leather jackets.”



MENGI Óðinsgata 2

Although you can get a drink, MENGI isn’t exactly a bar—it’s a white cube venue that’s like Gaukurinn’s cool grown-up auntie. “You get an ASMR feeling,” said the panel. “You go just for music. They have something going on most days, and it’s always on time. For their consistently brilliant programming, MENGI deserves recognition.”

Previous Winners:

2017-8: Húrra

2015: Café Rosenberg (RIP)

Best Smoking Area



Hressó

Austurstræti 20

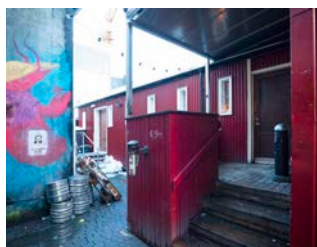
With a massive, well-ventilated tent area featuring picnic tables, ashtrays and countless heaters, you might well forget you’re outside at all when you go for a cigarette at Hressó. Smoke your face off and get lost in your conversation without feeling like you’re in the arctic—and rejoice!

Runners Up



Gaukurinn Tryggvagata 22

The smoking area at Gaukurinn is pretty legendary. An enclosed area separate from the main room, covered with a ceiling and heaters—how is this legal, by the way—it has fine benches and tables to sit around working on your lung cancer. Come watch young poets, grungy rockstars, and dolled-up drag queens meet up for a drinking competition to Faith No More.



Kaffibarinn Bergstaðastræti 1

Kaffibarinn’s tiny, unassuming smoking area is one of the best you’ll find for conversation. “It only seats seven asses, and it’s a total bottleneck,” said the panel. “People huddle like penguins in the arctic—that’s how we Icelanders get through the winter. But that’s where some of my most fascinating 3 a.m. situations have happened.”

Previous Winners

2018: Boston (RIP)
2017: Hressó

Best Happy Hour



Kaffibrennslan

Laugavegur 21

The former Hemmi og Valdi is still a firm favourite for those who like a bargain beer. At 550 ISK a pop for beers and 750 ISK for wines from 16:00-20:00, in a beautiful, comfortable wooden house, you can’t really argue. “It’s such a nice house,” said one panellist. “I had my first snog there. It’s cheap and easy, with a really good vibe.” The panel also praised the “location, location, location. It has a perfect outdoor area for summer, and you can sit upstairs in the rafters in winter. Cheap beer and a nice place to sit, what more could you want?”

Runners Up



Slippbarinn Myrgata 2

A hotel bar famous for making cocktails in Reykjavík before they were cool, today’s Slippbarinn has a kick-ass happy hour. “You can get a beer for 500 ISK, and 1200 ISK cocktails,” said the panel. “It’s a huge hallway with weird nooks, crannies and lounges to hide in. And there’s a fireplace!”



MIAMI Hverfisgata 33

Although nonplussed by the late night crowd, our panel love the good prices and plush interior of the MIAMI design bar. “They have all the fancy beers on happy hour, with table service,” they said. “It’s great before all the yuppies get there. The interior is just crazy, and a must-see in itself.”

Previous Winners

2018: Kaffibrennslan
2015-6: Húrra
2014: Café Rosenberg (RIP)



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Best Newcomer Bars



Brewdog

Frakkastigur 8

With a glut of new bars to choose from, the attention to detail of Brewdog pushes them to the top of the pile. Turns out, being part of chain played out positively in this instance, with a professionally put

together bar that maintains a laudable consistency. “They have such strict standards,” said the panel. “They had protocols about who they hired, the training, and making sure the staff are all educated about the beers. They delayed opening to make everything perfect—they really took the time and did the work.” Scottish and Icelandic beers, great food, and good vibes... well done, Brewdog!

Luna Flórens

Grandagarður 25

This unusual drinking spot in the Grandi neighbourhood certainly has a lot of character. Referred to as a “gypsy bar”—or, preferably, a “witch bar”—it’s a cosy room that



feels like a wooden shack hidden deep in the forest. It’s full of crystals, intriguing decor and—most importantly—absolutely kick-ass cocktails. It’s not yet firmly on the map in the minds of many, so you can drink there in peace, far from the packed out bars downtown. It’s a secret between us. Don’t go telling everyone about it, y’hear?

Runners Up

Eiríksson Brasserie Laugavegur 77

The fancy new restaurant on the block also has a beautiful seating area at the front of the house where you can order an expertly made cocktail and watch Laugavegur life go by through the giant windows. There’s a happy hour with a range of beers and a cocktail of the week for a good price. These guys know what they’re doing.

Beljandi Bar Mathöll Höfða, Bildshöfði

East Iceland’s best craft brewery comes all the way from Breiðdalsvík to Mathöll Höfða. Although they have brews on a few taps around town, now you can try a wider range of their delectable drinks. It’s a little far out of town—but dine at Hipstur while you’re there to make it worth your while.

Previous Winners

2019 (Spring): Brewdog

2018: Veður

2017: Pablo Discobar

Slippbarinn Mýrargata 2



Slippbarinn has been a leading force in injecting cocktail trends into the Reykjavík pub scene. Nestled by the marina and based on the ground floor of the aptly-named Hotel Marina, it’s a strong contender for the best place to kick off a Friday night. The cocktail list is made up of dozens of drinks spread out over two menus, mostly courtesy of Slippbarinn’s head mixologist Alana Hudkins. One of her stand-out creations is the smoky, habanero-laced Summon the Dark One (2800 ISK) but, for the faint of heart, there’s always an abundance of basil gimlets to be had.

What gives Slippbarinn a leg-up in the pregame department is their daily Cocktail Happy Hour from 15:00 to 18:00 and a solid selection of bar snacks for sharing.

“Decorated like the bastard child of John Waters and Don Johnson”

GUIDE

Reykjavík In 4 Cocktails

A pub crawl for the debonair souse

Words: **Ragnar Egilsson**

Photos: **Art Bicnick, Timothée Labrecq & Alisa Kalyanova**

The winter darkness has descended, so I venture into the night in search of something fancy to wet my whistle and lift my spirits. Follow in my footsteps with this shambolic cocktail pub crawl that takes you from the rim of the Grandi area, through the ground zero of Iceland’s nightlife, sampling some of the best Icelandic cocktails along the way.

Apótek Austurstræti 16



For your next tippie, head up Austurstræti in the direction of Laugavegur. If Slippbarinn fired the opening salvo, Apótek may have entrenched itself as Reykjavík’s current favourite cocktail spot. Apótek is a spacious, upscale restaurant whose cocktail creations have picked up a bundle of local awards. With regular guest bartenders, diverse cock-

tails, and head ‘pharmacists’ Hrafnkell and Sean fixing to shake up the menu, this is the place to try something new. We recommend the spicy Stranger Tides (2890 ISK) with an amaro and whisky base.

Miami Hverfisgata Hverfisgata 33



Take a slight detour off the main drag to Hverfisgata and you’ll find yourself transported to a

land of pink cocktails and rolled-up blazer sleeves. Decorated like the bastard child of John Waters and Don Johnson, Miami Hverfisgata isn’t the place for subtlety, so grab a velvet ottoman and forget all about it, whether it be the UnFortunate Mistake (2590 ISK) with Mozart-kügel and coldbrew coffee, or the period-appropriate Punch Bowl (2590 ISK) with rum, tequila and Carmen Miranda’s weight in mixed fruit.

Veður Klapparstigur 33



Straight up Klapparstigur from Miami, on your left-hand side, sits Veður. You will be in safe hands with any of the resident bartenders there, but if you catch Tomas on a shift, he may just make you the best cocktail of your trip. No food or frills here, grab a seat by the bar and ask for a recommendation. If in doubt, order their take on the classic Paloma. 🍹



“Were there an official food of drunk people, it would be the schwarma.”

DINING GUIDE

Greta's Dream Day In Reykjavík

Your guide to staying green in the city

Words: **Lea Müller** Photos: **Art Bicnick & Stock**

Unless you've chosen to deem the life's work of thousands of scientific experts to be “fake news,” you're likely a bit terrified about the climate emergency. And that's okay. While watching Greta Thunberg sail around the world might give you comfort, you shouldn't be all, “You go girl!” and then carry on living without reflecting on your individual day-to-day consumption choices. The “someone-else-will-fix-this-attitude” simply doesn't work. In fact, there are many simple things everyone can do to work towards the world that Greta envisions. To make these decisions easier for you, we created this list with the best environmentally-friendly options Reykjavík has to offer.



Plastic's not fantastic

Life on an island brings with it two inherent problems. Many things have to be imported and thus don't only come with an inflated carbon

footprint but also come wrapped in plastic. There are, though, some options for green grocery shopping.

Frú Lauga on Laugalækur offers a variety of both local and



unpackaged products, and in **Hei-lsuhusið** in Kringlan, you can refill your brought-from-home containers at the bulk-booth. For you caffeine-heads, pick up some coffee in aesthetically-pleasing paper bags at **Reykjavík Roasters**.

While not everyone can afford splashing the extra cash on green choices, we can all refuse plastic bags when shopping. It won't hurt your fruit or veg to be bare on the counter. It's all about baby steps. For instance, if you're a regular nammiland visitor on Saturdays, keep your candy bag and reuse it. You should also bring containers for take-away goodies. This has already become an established habit in other countries—let's be part of that change.

New Old is always better

We all know that the prices of goods in retail stores do not represent their true cost. Most products come with externalised costs that are neither paid directly by customers nor by producers, but in the long-run, manifest in pollution and the exploitation of unskilled labourers.

If you want to get off the capitalist treadmill, Reykjavík offers a variety of second-hand stores that will not only resolve your crisis of

conscience but also save you some cash. **Extraloppán** in Smáralind satisfies every fashionista's heart and the multiple **Red Cross** stores even donate their profits to a good cause. For pre-loved furniture, head to **Góði Hirdirinn** in Sævarhöfði or browse the Facebook page **Gefins, allt Gefins**.

Vegan is the new meat

It's now widely acknowledged that veganism is the most sustainable diet. Vegan dishes require way less water than a beef-burger, and don't result in cow farts full of potent methane, which accelerates global warming. **Gló** on Laugavegur, **Veganaes** in Gaukurinn, and **Burro** on Veltusund are only some of the best vegan restaurants in town.

I am a passenger
Admittedly, making green-choices in transport can be a toughie. That said, the recently introduced scooter rental Hopp is a viable alternative to cars and buses when getting around the city. Environmentally friendly long-distance travel is hindered by the fact that Iceland lacks a railway system, but you can still reduce your emissions by finding someone headed your destination on car-sharing platforms like **Samferða**. Who knows, if you're very lucky you might even hitch a ride in a Tesla. 🍷



BEST OF REYKJAVÍK 2019

Shopping

Icelandic style and design has escalated in scope over recent years, with an ensuing explosion of local stores. While high prices mean that you probably aren't going to be going on a shopping spree in Reykjavík, there are plenty of unique products to be found that are worth your hard-earned cash. From obscure rarities by long-broken-up Icelandic bands to the perfect vintage hand-knitted lópapeysa, here's your essential guide to shopping in Reykjavík. Remember to make responsible financial decisions. Good luck out there.

Best Goddamn Store



Fischer

Fischersund 3

For most categories, one of the first questions out of the mouths of panel members was "does Fischer qualify?" From packaging-free shampoo, to frequent art openings, to a special perfume section, the store—which has only been around for just over one year—serves up a sensory, highly aesthetic shopping adventure. "They are paving the way for a new type of store in Reykjavík," the panel determined, praising the stores out-of-the-box thinking, and their careful focus on customer experience. "This is a place I barely want to mention," one panellist continued. "It's so good I don't want it to win and get crowded!"

Runners Up



Góði Hirðirinn Fellsmúli 28

Góði Hirðirinn, or "The Good Shepherd," looks like a cross between a stylish hoarders house and an eclectic garage sale. Take an afternoon to rummage around this Aladdin's cave in search of hidden gems, which could be anything from old Icelandic books to blue leather armchairs to a bag of old toys.

Drekinn Njálsgata 23

"Drekinn is the last 'sjoppa' in 101 Reykjavík," one panellist declared. "It hasn't changed over the years, but it has remained relevant." This grungy convenience store/vape palace/bo-dega/hamburger joint is a remnant of pre-tourism Reykjavík. "That hamburger smell really takes you back," they concluded. "I hope it always stays the same."

Previous Winners

2018: Húrra Reykjavík
2017: Krónan
2016: Bónus

Best Design Store



Akkúrat

Aðalstræti 2

This local design mecca has a fascinating and ever-evolving range of products on sale from local designers, but also brings cherry-picked Nordic and international pieces to Iceland.

"They have Icelandic design you can't find anywhere else," said the panel, "but also so much Scandinavian design." From day one, Akkúrat was known for carefully curated shelves filled with works from promising and emerging designers, many of whom are still in the early stages of their career. So, who knows—take a punt on a striking hoodie or handmade cup, and you could have a future classic on your hands.

Runners Up



HAF Store Geirsgata 7

The HAF Studio store is a pristine renovation filled with highly desirable homewares, from stylish lamps to light fittings worth renovating for. "HAF is a place to watch right now," said the panel. "They have an amazing space and everything is well picked." Watch your wallet: you'll want it all.



Hönnunarsafnið Garðatorg 1, Garðabær

This store, located within the Museum Of Design and Applied Art, serves up a quirky array of design objects and books, some related to the exhibits within, some completely random. "They have a workplace in the store when you can watch artists create right in front of you" one panellist praised.

Previous Winners

2017-2018: Akkúrat
2016: Kraum (RIP)
2015: Spark Design Space (RIP)
2013-4: Kraum (RIP)

Best Fashion Boutique

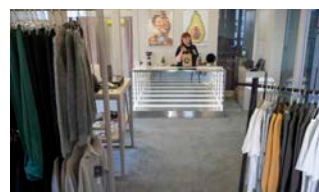


Yeoman

Skólavörðustígur 22

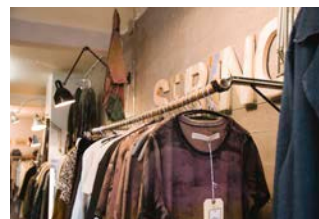
Having dressed everyone from up and coming artist JFDR to grand dame Björk, Hildur Yeoman is a star of the local fashion scene. Her trademarks are busy prints on fine fabrics, cut into flowing shapes; she also dabbles in extravagant evening wear such as her striking mirror-ball effect gown. The store also spotlights interesting stuff Hildur has encountered on her travels, from jewellery to exotic tea. "You can't see an awards show without someone wearing Yeoman," said the panel. "Her pieces are uplifting." Influenced equally by nature and the occult, inside her patterns you'll find icons and imagery that in endlessly fascinating combinations.

Runners Up



Akkúrat Aðalstræti 2

Alongside all the intriguing magazines, ornaments and homewares, Akkúrat also has a strong line of streetwear, including their signature Döðlur sweatshirt range. Cozy, oversized, and bearing a unique spin on the Icelandic "D," nobody else back home will have one of these.



Aftur Laugavegur 39

Aftur created that distinctive 101 Reykjavík look of flowing black dresses and oversized sweaters. While it has, in recent years, kept that aesthetic up, it has since added to it a focus on eco-friendliness and sustainability. "It would be wrong to talk about Icelandic fashion without talking about Aftur," one panellist said.

Previous Winners

2011-2018: KIOSK (RIP)

Best Clothing Store



Húrra Reykjavík

Hverfisgata 50 & 78

"They single-handedly changed the scene and changed 101 Reykjavík," the panel said of Húrra Reykjavík. From their inception only two years ago, the store has cemented itself as the go-to locale for the trendiest foreign streetwear brands. Each of their locations—one for men and one for women—have stayed relevant, always on brand with the latest trends and always selling lines you never thought you'd see in the city. They are also credited for spurring a sneakerhead scene—one that got so crazy that teenager boys actually slept outside during the last Yeezy release.

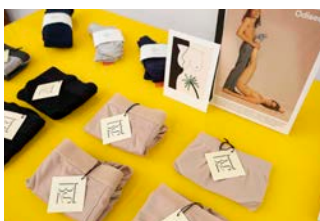
Runner Up



Geysir

You can't talk about shopping in Reykjavík without mentioning Geysir. Chock-full of elegant woollen staple pieces, the store has striking billboards dotted around the town depicting an old world, arcadian vision of Iceland—pick something up and feel that halcyon fantasy in your day to day urban existence.

Newcomer



Kvartýra

This minimalistic, Bauhaus-esque spot took the Icelandic fashion scene by storm upon opening in 2018, with its eclectic streetwear selection. "They have designers that no one else has, designers that you wouldn't know before going there," said the panel. "I love them—I really hope they last."

Previous Winners

2018: Kvenfataverzlun Kormáks & Skjaldar
2017: Húrra Reykjavík

Best Secondhand Shop



Hertex

Garðastræti 6

A true-blue second-hand shop, you never know what you're going to find at this Salvation Army outlet. "Their selection is bizarre, the prices are fair, and the service is amazing," raved the panel. "The ladies there will help you so much." The stark store, covered with clothes of all shapes and colours, is a delight for all senses that'll have you alternating between, "Who would throw that away?" to "Who would buy that?" Each of the panellists had found something spectacular there, or at least something with a good story. Get ready to start digging.

Runners Up



Spúútnik

More of a downtown boutique than a second-hand store, Spúútnik's well-curated selection has defined 101 Reykjavík style for almost a generation. With most pieces being imported from abroad, expect top quality streetwear brands, fur jackets, and everything you see your favourite Instagram influencer wearing...before they're wearing it.



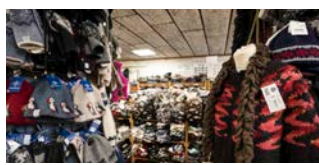
Stefánsbúð/P3

Stefánsbúð/P3's selection of second-hand is radically different than those at other Reykjavík vintage locales. Their rack of old high-end designer clothing is unlike what you'll find anywhere else in the city. "For me, I don't want old clothes, I want vintage pieces," one panellist explains. "They're doing something different and it's beautiful."

Previous Winners

2018: Fatamarkaðurinn
2017: Spúútnik
2016: Kolaportið
2015: Hertex

Best Place To Buy A Wool Sweater



Handprjónasambandið

Skólavörðustígur 19

Many Icelandic wool sweaters, or lópapeysa, are mass-produced outside of Iceland and shipped back in for sale. So where to find the real-deal? The answer is Handprjónasambandið, Iceland's hand-knitting association. Stacked from floor to ceiling with cosy woolly goodness, the store offers sweaters, gloves and more, in every colour of the rainbow. You'll usually find the name of the person who made it attached to the sweater. How's that for authenticity?

Runners Up



Rauði Krossinn

The Red Cross is not only the cheapest option for a lópapeysa, but it's also one of the more unusual. "It's very old Iceland. You search around and you feel like you're getting someone's Grandpa's sweater," one panel member says, before smiling. "And you are. It's lovely"



Farmers Market

For a more stylish take on the Icelandic sweater, look no further than Farmers & Friends. Their designs update the traditional lópapeysa into a fitted and distinctly high-street getup. Pair it with fitted trousers and heels and you'll blend in at any Scandinavian fashion event.

Previous Winners

2016-2018: Handprjónasambandið
2015: Red Cross
2014: Handprjónasambandið

Best Jewellery Shop



Orrifinn

Skólavörðustígur 17b

Orrifinn was decided, unanimously and almost instantaneously, by the panel as the best jewellery shop in Reykjavík. There was no debate. The beloved storeroom presents sensual, raw, detailed and carefully crafted pieces that manage at once to be timeless while still distinctly modern. "Were I to get engaged or married, this is where I would buy the ring, no question," one panellist exclaimed. "There's no other place doing what they do, and it's very trendy and well-made."

Runners Up



Hildur Hafstein

Slightly hippy, full of mystical symbols and teaming with craftsmanship, Hildur Hafstein has created a niche all her own in the Icelandic jewellery community. "Her works are very Egyptian and spiritual," one panellist explained. Her shop, tucked away just off Skólavörðustígur, is chock full of long, delicate necklaces, textured horns and gorgeous stones.



Aurum

Aurum has been a mainstay of Icelandic jewellery for years. "You can always go in and find something," one panel member said. "It's very Icelandic and very much based in Icelandic culture and nature," they continued. New collections pop up often, so make sure to stop by for a new look if you haven't been by recently.

Previous Winners

2018: Orrifinn

Best Homeware Shop



Geysir Heima

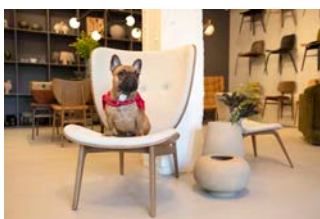
Skólavörðustígur 16

If you're into Scandinavian style, you should probably grab an inhaler before entering Geysir's Skólavörðustígur homeware shop. From its iconic wool blankets to woody scented candles to minimalist glassware, the store contains a diverse and tasteful selection of Nordic style that's bound to energise you. For a break from the stimulation, head down to their basement exhibition space. As one panel member put it: "Geysir is a part of Reykjavík, and everything they do, they get it right."

Runners Up



Epál
Harpa 8 Skeifan 6 & Laugavegur 70
Epál has been a mainstay of the Reykjavík design scene for more than 30 years. "They are the only one that sells Scandinavian style like this, and I am at the age where I want to collect pieces for my home," one panel member explains. "For selection and price, Epál is the best place for that."



NORR11
Hverfisgata 18A
NORR11 is expensive, but even if you can't afford it, the shop is worth a trip for the inspiration. The showroom presents works from a multitude of Nordic designers. "It's like an art gallery at times," one panellist says. "I go in there and leave with so many ideas for projects."

Previous Winners

2018: Geysir Heima

Best Bookstore



Bóksala Stúdenta

Sæmundargata 4

Located within the main building of Háskóli Íslands, this university bookstore runs the gamut from speciality academic texts to classics, new fiction, notebooks and much more. "They have everything you need there and you often end up picking up new books as you're walking around," one panel member explained. Another plus? The on-site coffee shop serves up what are potentially the fairest priced coffees in town, as does the Háskóli Íslands cafeteria next door.

Runners Up



Bókin
Klapparstígur 25-27
Bókin is not a shop one goes to for the newest, best-seller releases. No, it's a collectors-only locale made to wander around and dig through. "It's an adventure. It's chaotic. There are definitely ghosts in there," one panel member said. "You walk around and wait for something to call out to you."



Books In The Back
Freyjugata 1
Reykjavík's only dedicated art book shop is located in the back of the Harbinger gallery. Stocked with a well-curated selection of independent and self-published pieces, it fills a much needed gap in the Reykjavík scene. Stop by for everything from the newest Icelandic poetry to local children's books.

Previous Winners

2018: Bókin
2017: Mál og Menning
2016: Eymundsson Austurstræti
2015: Sjónarland

BEST OF REYKJAVÍK 2019

Shopping

Stuff is better than money anyway

Best Record Store



Reykjavík Record Shop

Klapparstígur 35

Reykjavík Record Shop is a haven created by music nerds, for music nerds. Presenting the best of the Icelandic and international scenes, every piece has been meticulously curated to ensure that you're getting the crème de la crème of music, be it contemporary or classic. The real beauty of the shop, though, comes from its workers—local musicians, DJs, and tastemakers who'll give you a customised experience. While the panel contained everyone from LP collectors to casual listeners, they all had positive tales about the store. As one panel member put it: "There's no place like Reykjavík Records."

Runners Up



12 Tónar
Skólavörðustígur 15
12 Tónar is known for its choice selection of local music and old rarities. Run by an Icelandic label, those working there are so knowledgeable about the scene they'll hand select records based on your taste. In the basement, couches with CD players and headphones provide a cosy listening location.

Previous Winners

2018: Reykjavík Record Shop
2017: Lucky Records



Lucky Records
Rauðarástigur 10
You can pretty much guarantee Lucky Records will have at least one record in any genre. Packed to the brim with everything from techno to reggae, you could easily spend a whole afternoon crate digging in this grungy, punky shop. "Make sure to look under the tables for the old selections," one panel member urged.

2015-2016: Reykjavík Record Shop
2013-2014: Lucky Records

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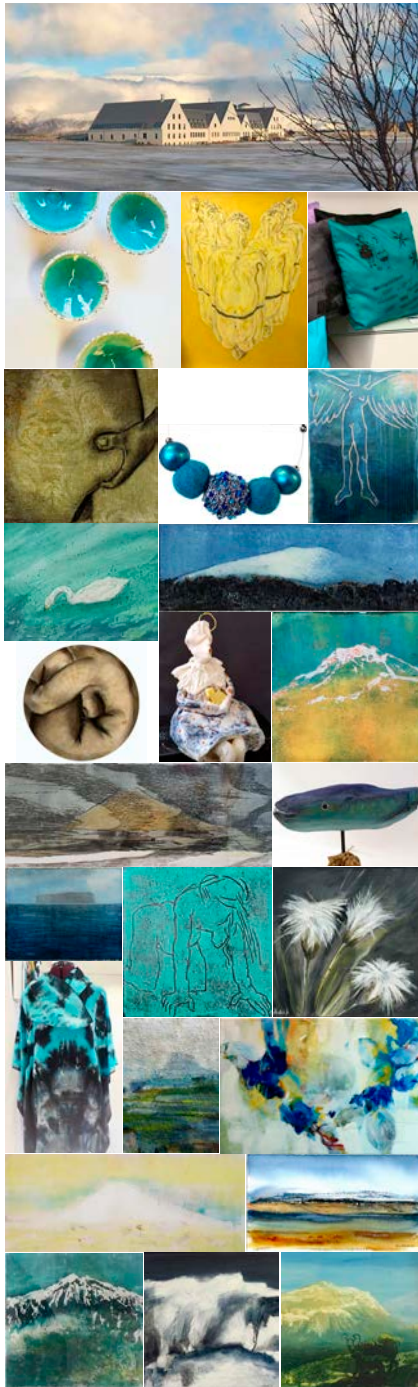
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101 REYKJAVÍK, GARDASTRÆTI 2

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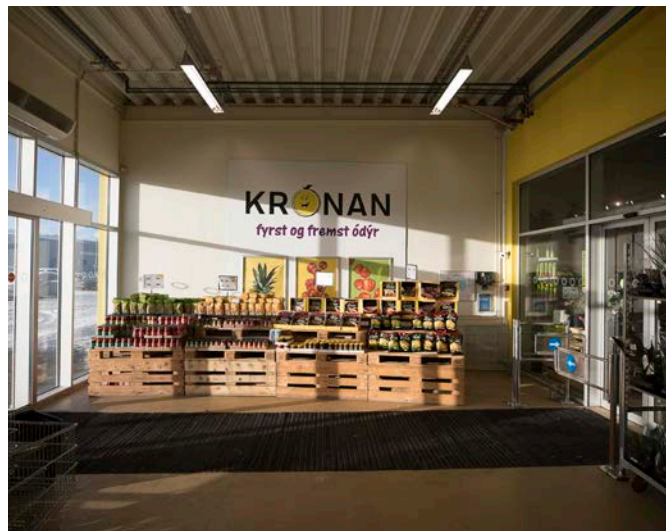
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BEST OF REYKJAVÍK 2019

Shopping

Stuff is better than money anyway

Best Grocery Store



Krónan Grandi

Fiskislóð 15-21

For the third year in a row, Krónan has proven that it is the best grocery store in town. "If you're looking for fruits, vegetables, or fish, Krónan at Grandi is unequivocally the best," the panel determined. They also praised its selection of vegan and international products, which, all emphasised, you just can't find anywhere else. "Other places might have vegan and vegetarian products, but nowhere is it as cheap as at Krónan," one panel member—a vegetarian—emphasised. For downtown rats without cars, Krónan might seem like a bit of a trek, but the panel urged that the prices and selection are so far beyond that of downtown grocery spots, it is absolutely worth it.

Runners Up



Melabúðin Hagamel 39, 107

Foodies need look no further than Vesturbær's Melabúðin, where the shelves are packed with artisanal deli meats, fresh figs, rare cheeses and all sorts of unexpected, hard-to-find treats (bloody mary fans: get your celery salt here). "When I have an event, I go to Melabúðin," one panellist said. "Everything there feels special."

Previous Winners

2017-2018: Krónan
2016: Bónus



Frú Lauga Laugalækur 6, 105

Just outside of the 101 bubble in nearby Laugardalur, Frú Lauga is the only exclusively local and organic shop in Reykjavík. With a greenhouse on the premises, it's also the only place you can buy fruits and herbs that might have been picked earlier that day from a plant right beside you.

Hidden Gem



Nexus

Álfheimar 74

Size-wise, Nexus is more flagship than hidden gem, but it's still off the beaten path for downtown rats and those visiting Iceland. A local hub for the culture surrounding comics, sci-fi, role-playing games, table-top games, and everything related, the panel credits Nexus with encouraging geekdom to flourish in Iceland. "Nexus has built an empire and created a culture," said the panel. "And it all started with a small, nerdy specialist shop." Nowadays, they have Warhammer, Manga, D&D, movie screenings, and much more. "To be honest," one panellist said. "I've read many Grapevine Best of Reykjavík awards, and always wondered: where is Nexus?"

Runners Up



S/K/E/K/K Hofsvallagata 16

S/K/E/K/K's offbeat selection features a mixture of unusual, eclectic home decor and collectible high end design products. Tucked away in an unassuming spot in downtown Reykjavík, you could walk past and never know it was there. "Everything they have is so well-chosen," said the panel.



Geisladiskabúð Valda Laugavegur 64

Valda is by far the most obscure shop in the city. "They've been around forever and have never changed," one panel member said. From old gameboy games to bootleg metal cassettes to DVD seasons of shows long cancelled, this packed-to-the-brim gem is full of curiosities.

Previous Winners

2018: Hyalin Reykjavík

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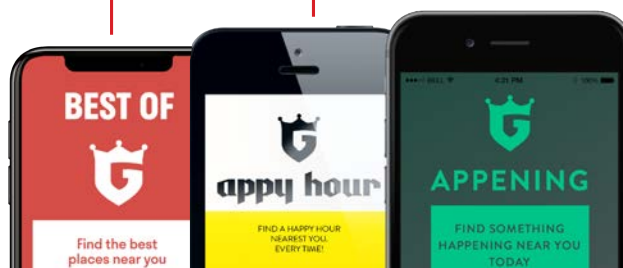
The Reykjavik Grapevine Apps

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Happy Hours

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**Melkorka
Porkelsdóttir**
DJ

Describe your style in 5 words: Bubbly, gothique, adorably stupid glitterclown.

Favourite stores in Reykjavík: Wasteland has some cute picks. It's like Nammiland made out of pigmented denim and suede. Sometimes I cruise Húrra Reykjavík to window shop luscious shoes, but mainly to feel my inferiority complex kick in at the sight of the perfectly stylish models working there.

SHOPPING

Reykjavík's Fashion-Forward Fancies

Words: **Hannah Jane Cohen** Photos: **Art Bienick**

Fancies is a Grapevine segment in which we feature the best of Reykjavík style, telling you where those with amazing aesthetics shop and what they're currently loving. In this Best Of edition, learn the style secrets of a DJ, a musician, and real-life pageant queen.

Melli the masochist, that's me!
Lusting After: Plump, red "Kinky Boots" boots. Jackie Burkhart's roller disco outfit from That 70s Show. Both Billy Porter's and Ragga Gísla's personal wardrobes—and there just happen to be some pieces by Iris van Herpen and Christian Cowan inside as well. And I'm a huge lamb so I daydream of Mimi's pink racetrack suit she wore in the "Loverboy" video—stunning.

**Guðrún Ýr Eyfjörð
Jóhannesdóttir**
Musician

Describe your style in 5 words: Comfortable. Turtlenecks. Flashy but stripped down.

Favourite stores in Reykjavík: I often shop at Yeoman, Spútnik, GK Reykjavík, and Húrra Reykjavík. Those are my go-to shops.
Favourite piece: Quite recently, I bought these shoes that have LED lights in them. I felt like a five-year-old when I found them, I was so happy. They are really bright and can be static



or blink—I'm kind of afraid I'm going to give someone a seizure.

Hulda Vigdísardóttir Queen Beauty Iceland 2020

Describe your style in 5 words: My friend once described me as "a genius at getting ready in a short amount of time." I could be wearing pyjamas and in 30 minutes be full glam. But I like trying different things with my style, mixing this and that together.

Favourite stores in Reykjavík: I love AndreA by AndreA. That's probably my favourite. I also love COS and Monki. Hildur Yeoman is beautiful, too.

Funny fashion story: I actually got my pageant gown just the day before the event and tried it on for the first time at the pageant. I'm very tall so there had to be adjustments—my Mom actually did them. She was awake the whole night sewing it for me! The funny thing is that Sunneva, who won the Queen Beauty Iceland title last year, also tried on her dress for the first time on the same day of the show. There must be something with this title. I was so glad it fit! 



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Gunnar Ingi Jones
musician

Morning: I wake up around 8:00, having slept exactly eight hours. I'm feeling rested as fuck. I head to the gym—I go to **World Class**—and only do bicep curls and maybe a little shoulders to get my daily dose of swoleness. Right after the gym, I go to **Sundlaug Seltjarnarness** for a little splash in the hot tub and then the cold pot. Because this is my perfect day, a lot of random people compliment me on how good I look as I walk to the pool.



Ásrós Helga Guðmundsdóttir
musician

Mid-morning: I'd do some exercises and afterwards, take a hot shower and sing like there is no tomorrow. Then I'd drive downtown, ideally in some eco-friendly car, to a set where I am about to act for a cool Icelandic movie. I work until the afternoon but before I head back home I go shopping. Unfortunately, there are barely any plastic packaging-free options when it comes to food in Iceland, but I'd try to get as much as possible from stores like **Heil-suhúsið** in Kringlan.



TRUST THE LOCALS

Perfect Day

Words: **The Grapevine Perfect Day Dpt.**
Photos: **Art Bicnick & Birta Rán Björgvinsdóttir**
& **Monika Konarzewska & Ásrós Helga Guðmundsdóttir**

No one who knows Reykjavík better than the locals—no matter what that one suburban Mom on TripAdvisor might tell you. To help you out, we asked some of our favourite locals how they'd spend a perfect day in the city.



Ragga Hólm
rapper

Lunch: My favourite food is sushi, so I'd head to **Osushi** for lunch. They'd have a special train just for me. I'd just sit in the middle with a virgin mojito, and they'd know my specials, so I don't get the boring bites. It's so sunny and warm out that I'd have to wear my shades inside.



Gala Noir
drag queen

Afternoon: Let me put on a dress and favourite pair of high heels for my Reykjavík Vintage Walk. We start at Hlemmur. While we are here, let's grab a chai latte at **Te & Kaffi**. First, we head to Fatamarkaðurinn—they have amazing vintage stuff. The **Icelandic Red Cross** is nearby and we'll check it out as well. Afterwards, we'll take a walk along Laugavegur to **Spútnik**.



Einar Stef
musician

Evening: I would catch a movie marathon at **Bió Paradís**. It's 'The Matrix Trilogy,' of course. I would get a big bucket of popcorn and a SodaDream, because in a perfect world they offer SodaDream in Bió Paradís. Then, after the movies, despite only consuming things all day, I am still hungry, so it's time for dinner. So I go to Hverfisgata 12, which never closed, and I get the potato and truffle pizza and it's the best version of itself that it has ever been.



Sigrún Ásta
stylist

Late at night: After dinner, we head to a concert—FM Belfast are performing. We dance wildly into the night. What a show! We continue on to **Kaffibarinn**, where DJ Margeir is playing his awesome tunes. We wrap the night up with a pizza and head home. 🍷



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Al fresco art

Start at the Einar Jónsson Museum, which is located in the heart of Reykjavík, right next to Hallgrímskirkja and presents a great place to learn about Icelandic art history. While there's an entrance fee for the museum, the serene sculpture garden around back is free to visit. It includes 26 statues placed there by Einar Jónsson and his wife, who used to live on the top floor of the museum. Pro-tip: Don't miss out on the mysterious "King of Atlantic" sculpture, as well as the figurative representation of spring.



Tiny spaces of inspiration

After leaving the sculpture garden head over to Skólavörðustígur to check out some of the gallery shops lining the street. If you're interested in photography swing by at Fótógrafi, a tiny space crammed with a camera collection and cool black and white prints on the walls. You can buy

"It's a curious journey this human life we lead, we are the guests and our hotel is the earth. While some check out, others arrive instead."

CULTURE GUIDE

Save That Cash, Get Some Culture

How to enjoy art for free in Reykjavík

Words & photos: **Lea Müller**

Culturally immersing yourself in Iceland can be an expensive undertaking. But it doesn't have to be. You can discover artistic masterpieces and cultural curios free of charge while wandering the streets of Reykjavík. So if you're an art-enthusiast on a budget, let us take you on a two-hour stroll through town.

some artwork for yourself but if you want to make it a no-spend-ing day, just skim.



Mural, Mural on the wall

As you venture on, you will soon notice that Reykjavík also offers a great deal of contemporary street art, so take a jaunt to the corner of Laugavegur and Klapparstígur to discover a building entirely covered in a mind-boggling mural. The work was commissioned for Iceland Airwaves 2015 and is called 'Ode to Mother,' inspired

by the Ylfa song 'Óður til Móður' (other murals from that Airwaves series can be seen by along Laugavegur, by Hlemmur, on the backside of Gamla Bíó, and in the old harbour). Keep your eyes open for smaller murals and graffiti, which change the face of the city as you continue your stroll.



A walk around Tjörnin

Next, head downhill to the shores of Tjörnin to marvel at statues by various artists. One of the most popular is Halla Gunnarsdóttir's likeness of Tómas Guðmundsson

perched on a city bench, an Icelandic poet famous for praising the city's beauty. So sit down on the bench next to him and enjoy the view over the pond while reflecting on his poem 'Hotel Earth' from 1933: "It's a curious journey this human life we lead, we are the guests and our hotel is the earth. While some check out, others arrive instead."

Behind Tómas is Einar Jónsson's imposing The Spell Broken, and further down the pond-side path is the Women's Sculpture Garden, featuring the works of several female artists.



The Nordic House

On your final stop, enter the university district where you can kill two birds with one stone by visiting the Nordic House. Firstly, the building is a masterpiece designed by the Finnish architect Alvar Aalto. Inside though, you can enjoy more art for free. The venue is notorious for providing a platform for Nordic artists, hosting several exhibitions each year ranging from design awards to Greenlandic photographers.

So there you go! Are you feeling more cultured? Now, take that money you just saved on your artistic afternoon, and buy yourself an ice cream. You deserve it. 🍦

WASTELAND

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BEST OF REYKJAVÍK 2019

Activities

Get off the internet already!

So, you've shopped in the shops, drank the drinks, and eaten all the foods. And whilst those things are all super fun, culture and the outdoors are the missing pieces of the puzzle for a perfect trip. Whether it's a gleaming museum or a grimy artist-run gallery, a springtime hike or a trip to try and glimpse the aurora, here's where to do it.

Best Pool

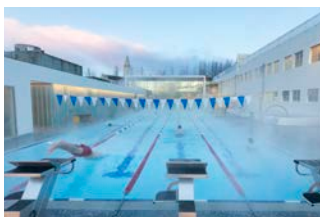


Vesturbæjarlaug

Hofsvallagata 107

West-side bathing haven Vesturbæjarlaug has it all. There's a diverse variety of hot tubs from the social to the secluded, a steam bath, a sauna, optional outdoor changing rooms for summer, a sunlamp with chairs for wintertime sunbathing, friendly staff, and—last but not least—it has an unbeatable retro charm. You'll find tourists mingling with Icelandic VIPs as they relax and talk about their day in the best goddamn pool in Reykjavík. To top it off, Kaffi Vest is just across the street, so grab a coffee and snack in a cosy atmosphere afterwards.

Runners Up



Sundhöllin Barónsstígur 45a

The classic-yet-contemporary Sundhöllin is Reykjavík's oldest swimming pool. It was thoroughly renovated in 2017, and while it kept its beautiful old-school men's changing rooms, it emerged with refreshed female changing facilities, a new outdoor pool, a new reception area, and a big communal hot pot for chilling and chatting.



Laugardalslaug Sundlaugavegur 105

Although Laugardalslaug is the largest pool in Reykjavík, it's often crowded by tourists. "It has become the tourist pool," said the panel. "They all get sent there while the locals enjoy the other pools of Reykjavík." It does, however, have a huge range of hot pots and facilities, also used by the post-workout crowd from the World Class gym.

Previous winners

2018: Sundhöllin
2017: Lágafellslaug

2016: Neslaug
2014-15: Vesturbæjarlaug

Best Gallery



i8

Tryggvagata 16

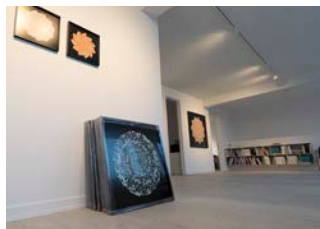
The internationally lauded i8 gallery was instrumental in putting Icelandic art on the map, and remains a mainstay in keeping it there. Although it's a commercial gallery, the works on show are rarely conservative—expect to see conceptual cutting-edge museum-sized displays, rather than conservative and conventionally appealing wall-based work. The gallery is home to many of Iceland's finest contemporary artists and also brings international names to Reykjavík. Best of all, there's a sharp wit and a sense of fun running through the gallery's roster, in sharp contrast to the often academic or po-faced offerings of the contemporary art scene.

Runners Up



Kling & Bang Grandagarður 20

After finding its new home in the well-received Marshall House art museum complex, the Kling & Bang collective have done their very best to continually make people smile with wonder at their creative, ambitious, vibrant and varied solo exhibitions and groups shows. Keep it up!



BERG Contemporary Klappartígur 16

Located in a building that was formerly a glass factory, Ingibjörg Jónsdóttir's BERG Contemporary constantly contains a kick-ass roster of Icelandic and international artists, and an ever-growing reputation to match. It's right in the heart of downtown, too, so it's easy to drop by for a look as you meander through the streets.

Previous winners

2015-18: i8
2014: Kling og Bang
2011-13: National Gallery

Best Art Museum



Reykjavík Art Museum

Various Locations

Boasting with three different locations scattered through Reykjavík, you will be able to discover anything you could be looking for there, whether you fancy Icelandic sculpture at Ásmundarsafn, Kjarval paintings at Kjarvalsstaðir or various contemporary exhibitions at Hafnarhúsið. "With one ticket, you get it all," says the panel. We'd like to give a particular shoutout to Kjarvalsstaðir, which has been on a laudable hot streak of mounting exciting contemporary exhibitions alongside the Kjarval collection; Ásmundarsafn also sets contemporary work in conversation with Ásmundur Sveinsson's classic oeuvre.

Runners Up



The Marshall House Grandagarður 20

This fairly recent addition to Reykjavík's art museum scene has captured locals' hearts. Hosting three galleries—NYLÓ, Kling og Bang, and an Ólafur Eliasson workshop—it can be found in Reykjavík's constantly developing and hip Grandi district. The mixture of its location, the variety of its offerings and the beautiful interior design make it worth every visit.



Einar Jónsson Museum Eiríksgata 3

Despite the stunning beauty of its sculpture garden, The Einar Jónsson Museum still feels like a secret gem in the very heart of Reykjavík. There are epic sculptures on subjects such as life, death, birth, society and religion, and Einar's apartment is lovingly preserved inside. It's guaranteed to bring a little magic into your life.

Previous winners

2018: The Marshall House
2016-7: Hafnarhúsið
2012-15: Reykjavík Art Museum

Best Artist-Run Space



Gallery Port

Laugavegur 23

This humble gallery and workshop is hidden in plain sight on Reykjavik's largest shopping street, Laugavegur. Along with Harbinger, Gallery Port has done a lot for the emerging art scene, with a fast-moving and diverse exhibition program. "It has this 'happening vibe,'" says one of the panellists. "It is very international and based on more than money-making." This is your perfect anti-art-snob gallery and promises to surprise you again and again with every visit.

Best Museum



Wonders Of Iceland

Perlan, Öskjuhlíð

Have you ever wanted to walk safely through a 100m long ice cave? With the new "Wonders Of Iceland" exhibition in Perlan, an immense glass dome that sits on top of six hot water tanks, it is finally possible. This highly interactive exhibition will let you experience (and feel) the power of volcanoes and earthquakes, while also offering a realistically built bird cliff and the aforementioned ice cave. "It is kid-friendly and highly educational," says the panel. "Plus it is situated in a really interesting building." It truly is a great adventure for people of all ages.

Best Cinema



Bíó Paradís

Hverfisgata 52

Bíó Paradís is THE local cinema. They shows alternative films in many different languages whilst also screening blockbusters. They have many special screenings (party screenings, cult classics, or worst film series,) there's always the smell of popcorn when you enter (their popcorn machine, Kamilla, just turned twenty), and they have always have great music playing, which makes it a great place to just hang out in general. The great staff serve beer, pizza and sweets, the posters are made by local artists... the list is endless.

Best Place To Take The Kids



Tjörnin

City Centre

What could be cooler than playing football in one of the many parks and fields around the Tjörnin city pond on a beautiful, bright summery day in June? Not much. Situated right next to the city hall, it offers everything that kids love. "You can feed the ducks and swans, and in winter you can walk right across to the other side when it's frozen, or play ice hockey," said the panel. There are also benches for hardworking parents to get their well-deserved rest while the kids are playing, or the nearby IDNÓ for a coffee and cake break.

Runners Up



Wind and Weather Window Gallery

Hverfisgata 37
Being both unique and impressively casual, this gallery is accessible for everyone. "I've walked by a million times before I noticed it was a gallery," said one of the panellists. It is truly a hidden gem of the city, while being mockingly obvious. It's like window shopping but with art.

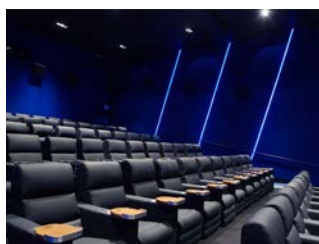
Runners Up



Whales Of Iceland

Fiskislóð 23-25
This is another museum which uses modern technology in the right way—life-sized whales that you can touch, audio guides, touchscreens with all the information and even virtual reality glasses are available. "It's really different from everything else," said one of the panellists. It's an educational playground for kids and adults alike.

Runners Up



Smárabíó

Hagasmári 1, Kópavogur
Situating in one of Reykjavik's shopping malls (the one that looks like a phallus from above), Smárabíó deserves appreciation because of their high-end equipment. "Smáralind has the best projectors and amps," said the panel. "It is the place to go to see films in the best blockbuster quality."

Runners Up



Nauthólsvík

Öskjuhlíð
"Nauthólsvík has it all," said one panellist. "The cold ocean, a hot tub, sand, trees and lots of space." Need we say more? Reykjavik's one and only beach is a great place to take the kids, and whoever else wants to join in the fun—and the nearby café is perfect to relax with some lunch or a drink.



Iðnó

Vonarstræti 3
This old and absolutely beautiful building has become a space for all kinds of performances and events. The sheer diversity and passion behind the schedule is an ode to Reykjavik's art and culture life. Whether it is concerts, workshops, ambient nights, or film screenings, Iðnó has it all.



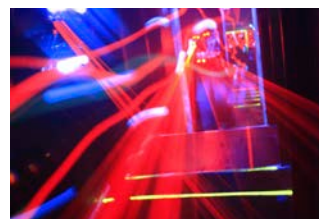
The National Museum Of Iceland

Suðurgata 41
This museum makes history fun and adventurous, covering everything from early culture to clothing, metalsmithing, religion and more. It's expansive, interactive and well curated. "It also has a great bookshop," says one of the panellists, adding one more reason to go and visit this gem.



Egilshöll

Fossaleynir 1
Boasting with the biggest screens of Reykjavik, Egilshöll is worth the trip, even though it is situated in the outskirts of town. It is the best place to get junk food before seeing a trashy blockbuster with high production values, and you can go bowling afterwards in the same building.



Lasertag Kópavogi

Salavegur 2, Kópavogur
Kids acting up? Teen tantrums? Vent your frustration as a parent by blasting them with a harmless laser beam. Located in one of Reykjavik's surrounding suburbs, Lasertag Kópavogi can be reached via a short drive or a 30-minute bus ride, and the panel unanimously agreed: it's worth it.

Previous winners

2018: Listastofan (RIP)

Previous winners

2018: National Museum of Iceland
2015-17: Árbæjarsafn
2011-14: National Museum of Iceland

Previous winners

2016-8: Bíó Paradís
2015: VIP Theater
2014: Bíó Paradís

Previous winners

2017-8: Whales Of Iceland
2014-6: Húsdýragarðurinn
2013: Fjölskyldugarðurinn

BEST OF REYKJAVÍK 2019

Activities

Seriously, try the pools, it's not like back home.

Best Day Tour



Snowmobile/ATV

Sólheimajökull

From the reception building near Sólheimajökull you can either go snowmobiling on the top of Myrdalsjökull, or motoring over the black sands of Sólheimajökull on an ATV. Both are just stunning—highlights include a view of the distant Westman Islands if you go snowmobiling, or motoring through exciting sand canyons to the famous DC-3 plane wreck, if you opt for the ATV.

Runners Up

Glacier Hike

Various locations and suppliers

The best way to get up close and personal with a glacier is an guided ice hike. With an experienced glacier guide, a helmet and crampons provided, it's safe to hike up a glacier tongue, taking in the deep blue hues and shining icefalls, and learning about glaciers' features.



Snorkelling at Silfra Pingvallavatn

Going snorkelling in the rift between the Eurasian and North American tectonic plates took our panel's collective breath away. "It's overwhelming in the most magical way," they said. "There are so many sights and sensations—it's truly something you won't be able to experience anywhere else."

Previous winners

New Category!

Best Hike



Mount Esja

Across the bay

Situated only 10 km north of Reykjavik, it offers hikes of various lengths for both beginners and advanced hikers and absolutely gorgeous views on the landscape below. "You also get a stunning glimpse of the city," says the panel. **When you go there in winter, make sure to bring hiking poles and crampons, if the conditions demand it, and be ready for ice and deep snow.** You can get to the trailhead by public transport, making it the only proper hike you can do in Reykjavik without a car.

Runners Up

Heiðmörk

After only a 20 minute drive you will be able to hike through this huge nature reserve with forests and lakes. One of its highlights are the red rocks of Rauðhólar. In addition, there are a lot of trees (something really rare in Iceland), barbecues and you can even go horse-riding and fishing.



Öskjuhlíð

Öskjuhlíð is a hill in the centre of Reykjavik, covered by trees and barbecues, making it a popular site for bonfires and ceremonies. It is very peaceful and absolutely magical. To top it off, you might end up at Perlan (a futuristic glass dome with restaurants and museums) if you get lost.

Previous winners

2018: Esja
2017: Reykjadalur
2016: Móskarðshnjúkar

Best People-Watching Spot



Loft Hostel

Bankastræti

There are so many great things to be said about Loft Hostel. It has a balcony from which you can watch people/ tourists on Laugavegur. It has regular events such as concerts and yoga classes, and water colouring nights where all kinds of people get together (to watch other people.) Last but not least, it is also a hostel (surprise) and brings together locals and people from all over the world. Really, could there be any better spot to watch people? The panel does not think so at least.

Runners Up



Breiðholt

The infamous 111 district of Reykjavik is a melting pot of many different cultures and very different people. "You can sit on a bench anywhere and just watch people for hours," said the panel. Mjódd, one of Reykjavik's biggest bus stations, is also situated there and is another great people watching spot.



ÍÐNÓ

Vonarstræti 3

Situated right next to the city pond, Íðnó offers the ultimate coziness for people watching. You can sip on your coffee and devour your dumplings while gazing at passers-by through the generous windows. "You will also see funny tourists screaming because of the geese at the pond," says the panel.

Previous winner

2018: Hlemmur Mathöll
2017: Kaffihús Vesturbæjar
2016: Grandi

Best Place To See The Aurora



Fossvogur and Öskjuhlíð

City Centre Area

This walk leads you along the creek that divides Reykjavik and Kópavogur. "Its right by the ocean," says the panel. "Nobody ever goes there, it's so peaceful." Additional perks include a mystical graveyard and, if you walk a little further, Reykjavik's only "city forest" up on the Perlan-topped hill of Öskjuhlíð.

Runners Up



Ægissíða to Gróttta

Vesturbær to Seltjarnarnes

Ægissíða is literally the west coast of Reykjavik. Running along the sea, this walk is sheltered from traffic and light pollution and thus perfect for a peaceful and romantic walk of any duration. In winter, it becomes even more magical with some of the best chances to see northern lights in Reykjavik. If you walk long enough, you'll end up at Gróttta at the tip of the Seltjarnarnes peninsula with its iconic lighthouse. "It's one of my favourite places to be in general," said one of the panellists. "Plus it has the best bonfires in town."



Viðey

Ægisgarður 5

You may associate this cute little island in Reykjavik's harbour with day trips, or perhaps an evening visit to Yoko Ono's Peace Tower, but this is also one of the best places in town to catch the Northern Lights. When you arrive at the dock on the island's west end, simply follow the footpath up the hill, and make a right.

Previous winners

2016-18: Gróttta
2015: Öskjuhlíð
2012-14: Gróttta



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Welcome



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BLUE LAGOON
ICELAND

Zorbian Hringbraut 119



Do your friends worry about your obsession with shawarma? Have some of your friends stopped eating with you, because you always suggest eating at Mandi? If you answered 'yes' to either of these questions, don't worry, it's perfectly normal for people living in Iceland. And there's good news! A new Syrian place called Zorbian has opened in the JL Húsið (where XO used to be). They serve wraps, hummus, and shawarma, but hamburgers and pizza are also on the menu. Bring the kids! **SPO**

Laundromat Café Austurstræti 9



Have you ever wanted to have lunch and do your laundry in a public place? You're in luck. The Laundromat Cafe on Austurstræti is open (again) for business. Whether you want brunch, a sandwich, or a burger, they have a quality selection of food made to order. Best of all, the staff is friendly and know the menu so well, they could recite it to you with their eyes closed (please don't ask them to do this). **SPO**

FRAKTAL Hringbraut 119



In mathematics, a fractal is a non-regular geometric shape that presents a seemingly infinite series of patterns at every level of magnification. You often find them in nature, like clouds, snowflakes, blood vessels, and cauliflower. In Reykjavik, a FRAKTAL is a democratic, worker-run space that has taken up residence in the former Listastofan gallery. The cooperative offers work desks for artists to rent, event spaces, and there are plans for a vegan café, kitchen, and print shop. No math classes yet, though. **HJC**

NEW IN TOWN

Eat, Drink, Virtual Fly

New activities, dining and drinking in 101 Reykjavik

Words: **Hannah Jane Cohen, Samue O'Donell**
Main photo: **Art Bicnick**




Gummi Ben Tryggvagata 22



From the velvet curtains that hang at the entrance to the cool-coloured lights illuminating the bar to the dozens of beers on tap, the new Gummi Ben sports bar was custom created for watching the big game. In addition to a cosy atmosphere they have a total of 20 TVs and projectors, so you can watch whatever match you want. Just ask the bartender. **SPO**

FlyOver Iceland Fiskislóð 43



Iceland is a relatively small place, but seeing all its wonders during your week-long vacation might prove a tad difficult. Enter Fly-Over Iceland. On this virtual ride, soar over glaciers, mountains, lava fields and more, all from the comfort of an amusement ride seat. Now, no matter the weather, you can tell all your friends you saw the Northern Lights. General tickets are 4,000 ISK for adults and 2,000 ISK for children 12 and under. **HJC** 



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SATURDAYS | 20.00-23.00
DJ @ LÓA BAR - BISTRO
LAUGAVEGUR 95-99, 101 REYKJAVÍK

SATURDAYS | 18.30-20.30
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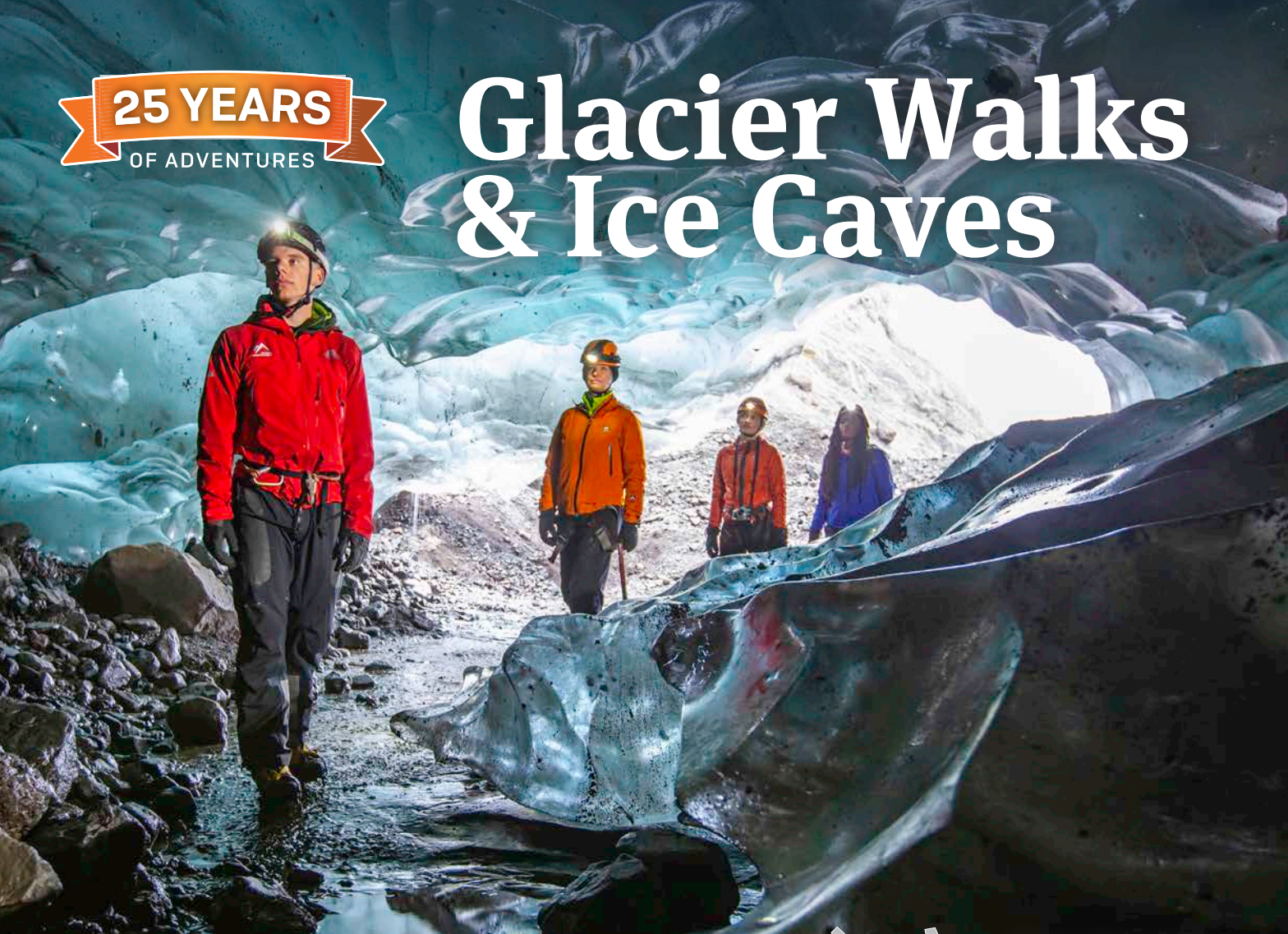
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