

PORT OF ÍSAFJÖRÐUR

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Ísafjörður and the neighbouring towns all share the same background; they were founded on and grew around fisheries.

In the not so distant past, almost everybody's livelihood depended on fish and the question wasn't whether or not you worked in fishing and processing, but whether you did so on land or at sea. Later on, with advances in technology, that pattern changed and more and more of the workforce were deployed in related branches, such as machinery services, transport and other logistical aspects of the industry, as well as general service to the public.

By the end of the seventies it became clear that the industry was no longer sustainable, the fleet was far too large and this could not go on forever. Since then the emphasis has been on quality rather than quantity and massive social changes were to be seen in the years to come. These changes were painful and still are but ways have been found to counteract; new and innovative ways to fully utilize every single ounce of fish and other resources the sea has to offer, the manufacturing of tools and machinery for food processing in other parts of the world, and last but not least tourism which has been the fastest growing industry the Westfjords have seen since the trawler revolution.

Ísafjörður (pop. 2.768)

Ísafjörður is by far the largest of all the towns in the northern part of the Westfjords; in fact it is larger than all the other ones combined. That said, it isn't large at all if you only look at the statistics, with less than 3.000 inhabitants. But the metropolitan feel you get is unmistakable. Some say that this is because the isolation has forced the inhabitants to become culturally selfsufficient.

The town has a great deal to offer, and you can read more about the town centre and walks around town on pages 6-7.

Bolungarvík (pop. 882)

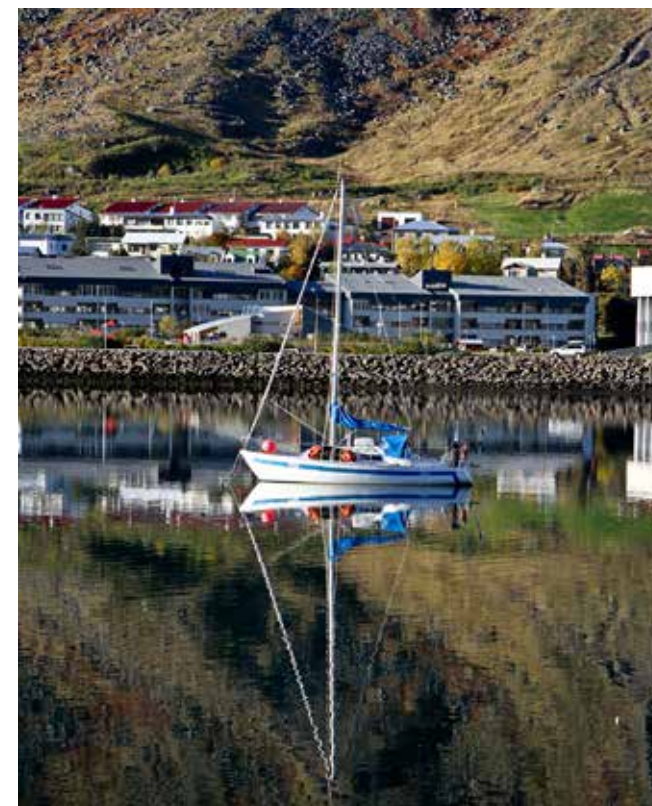
The second largest town of the area, Bolungarvík, is a stone's throw away from Ísafjörður, almost literally. The inhabitants have always been considered hard working, fiercely independent and a bit quirky (like most of the people in the Westfjords to be honest).

Bolungarvík has a lot to offer (see "By car" on pages 10-11) and is towered by Mt. Bolafjall.

Súðavík (pop. 151)

The small hamlet of Súðavík is to be found 20 kilometres south of Ísafjörður. A drive to Súðavík will lead you through the first, and by far the shortest, road tunnel ever built in Iceland, at appr. 50 metres. Note: It is of the utmost importance to honk the horn twice while driving through in order to show respect to the local trolls.

Súðavík has a variety of light industry firms and serves as a service hub for the farmers of Ísafjarðardjúp.



Suðureyri (pop. 268)

Suðureyri is the friendliest fishing village you will ever find. A bold claim, but true. The locals have in recent years been taking steps in underlining what makes this town special — ecological fishing. The fjord itself is among the narrower ones in Iceland, but when you get to Suðureyri it opens up towards the open sea.

Take a closer look at what Suðureyri has to offer in the chapter "By car" on pages 10-11.

Flateyri (pop. 187)

Flateyri is a small and charming fishing village a short driving distance from Ísafjörður. Notice the small toy boats floating on the lagoon as you enter the town, made by one man in particular.

This sets the tone in a way, seeing as the locals are as much into art and craft as they are into fish.

See more in "By car" on pages 10-11.

Pingeyri (pop. 237)

Pingeyri and the surrounding areas are steeped in Viking history, as it is the setting of one of the most famous of the Icelandic Sagas, Gísli-Saga Súrssonar. For the past thousand years or so, the inhabitants have concentrated on putting food on their table, either by farming or by fishing. In recent years they have been taking up an interesting approach to tourism.

See more in "By car" on pages 10-11.





Westfjords Maritime- and Heritage Museum

Museums

Westfjords Maritime- and Heritage Museum

The Westfjords Maritime- and Heritage Museum is located very close to the harbour where cruise ship passengers disembark. The museum building is one of four 18th century houses which have been renovated and are now amongst the town's most popular spots to visit.

The museum focuses mainly on fish and the fishing industry, which have been vital for this area ever since Iceland was settled. The Westfjords Maritime- and Heritage Museum won the "Best Icelandic Museum Award" in 2008.

Ísafjörður Culture House / Old Hospital



This elegant building was erected as a hospital in 1925, designed by one of Iceland's most distinguished architects, Guðjón Samúelsson. In 1989 the hospital was moved to a new building, but in 2003 the Old Hospital was reopened, now as a culture house with a library, archives, photo collection, art collection and more.

Ísafjörður Culture House usually has at least one exhibition open, sometimes even more. Admission is free.

The Old Blacksmith's Workshop, Þingeyri



The Old Blacksmith's Workshop was founded in 1913 and was the first of its kind in Iceland. It is still operating in its original shape, now as a living museum. An amazing atmosphere for all ages.

The Nonsense Museum, Flateyri

The Nonsense Museum in Flateyri is a venue for passionate collectors to publicly display their collections of hats, pens, boxes, uniforms, sugar cubes or whatever else they have managed to amass, often through several years or even decades of relentless work. The museum was opened in 2012 and was an immediate hit amongst visitors and locals alike.

Old Bookshop/Merchant's House, Flateyri

Flateyri is a fishing village some 20-30 minutes drive from Ísafjörður. In 2011, the old village bookshop, as well as the merchant's home, was opened as a museum. In the cozy atmosphere of the bookshop you can learn about the history of the village and buy second hand books, priced by weight. The merchant's home is accessible from the Old Bookshop.

International Doll Museum, Flateyri



If you stop at the Purka hand craft and café in Flateyri, make sure you don't miss the International Doll Museum, located in the same building. The museum contains some 200 dolls, dressed up in national costumes from all around the globe.

Jón Sigurðsson Memorial Museum, Arnarfjörður



Jón Sigurðsson, the leader of the Icelandic independence movement in the 19th century, was born at Hrafnseyri in Arnarfjörður in 1811. He spent most of his adult life in Copenhagen, where he tirelessly worked to help Iceland regain its independence from Denmark.

A firm believer in the power of the word over the sword, Jón Sigurðsson fought a peaceful battle, with eloquence and arguments. When the Icelandic republic was established in 1944, it was done on his birthday, June 17. Jón Sigurðsson's birthplace has now been turned into a museum to honor his legacy.

Located not far from the beautiful waterfall Dynjandi, the museum is around 90 minutes drive from Ísafjörður.

Ósvör Museum, Bolungarvík



In the old Icelandic society there were no towns or villages; the people lived on farms in the countryside. Fishing was, however, important and it was most often done during autumn and winter, while there was a "low season" in the countryside. Then, farmers and their laborers would migrate from the farms to the fishing stations by the seaside, where they spent several weeks living in small huts, fishing every day from their small and open rowing boats in freezing weathers. Due to its location close to rich fishing grounds, Bolungarvík became a fishing station as soon as Iceland was settled.

Ósvör Museum is a remake of one of the fishing huts that were erected in Bolungarvík. The museum curator meets visitors dressed up in fisherman's clothes, and educates them about the life and work of the fishermen of the earlier centuries.

Westfjords Natural History Museum, Bolungarvík

The Natural History Institute in Bolungarvík conducts various researches on the Icelandic nature, focusing mainly on zoology, botany, archaeology, ecology and geology. It also operates a beautiful museum with stuffed birds and mammals such as mink, fox, seal and a polar bear. Added to that, the museum displays a large collection of rocks plus temporary exhibitions of various kinds.

Arctic Fox Centre, Súðavík



The arctic fox is an original inhabitant in Iceland, having settled here at least 2000 years before the first human settlers came. The fox can be found all over the island, but it has a sanctuary in the Hornstrandir Nature Reserve, where it is protected from hunters. The Arctic Fox Centre in Súðavík is an exhibition and research institute dedicated to the fox.

Visitors will learn a great deal about this extraordinary animal, and even see some live ones outside the museum building. A waffle and a cup of coffee at the museum café are a sure way to perfect the visit.

Litlibær Farm, Mjóifjörður



If you drive from Ísafjörður along road 61, you will find Litlibær in just over an hour. Litlibær, which actually means Small Farm, is true to its name. It is difficult to imagine that this beautiful but tiny house once was the home to more than 20 people.

The National Museum of Iceland has recently renovated the building, which is now open for the public to visit. The waffles served there are amongst the best you can find, and don't forget to stop and watch the seals, sleeping just off the coast very close to Litlibær.



On your own

Old town (black line)

Total distance appr. 1,5 km

Walking north from the Information centre will take you past the old post office. Make a right hand turn down Skipagata and then a left into Tangagata. Then you find yourself in the old part of town. Most of the houses here were built in the late 19th century, which in Iceland is considered very old indeed. There are older houses to be found in Iceland, but few if any streets have maintained their presentment like the ones in old town Ísafjörður.

Make a detour into Smiðjugata on the way, passing Silfurgata before making a left turn to Austurvegur. At the end of Austurvegur you will find one of the oldest organized botanical gardens in Iceland where you can have a sip from our drinking fountain before going back through the centre of town towards the Information centre.



Uptown (red line)

Total distance appr. 2 km

Walking along Pollgata, by the sea, will eventually lead you to a roundabout (the only one in town). Cross the street and walk past what looks like the ministry of defence, but is actually a hospital, towards the botanical garden Jónsgarður. There you will find an arch made out of the jaw-bones of a beached blue whale. Walk along Túngata around the library (which used to be a hospital) and have a look inside where there is usually an exhibition on the 1st floor. On your way back down Hafnarstræti you can go into the town church and have a look at the altar centre piece, which consists of 749 clay birds made by the people of the parish.

A simple walk down the main street will take you past most of the shops, cafés and restaurants in town on your way back towards the Information centre.

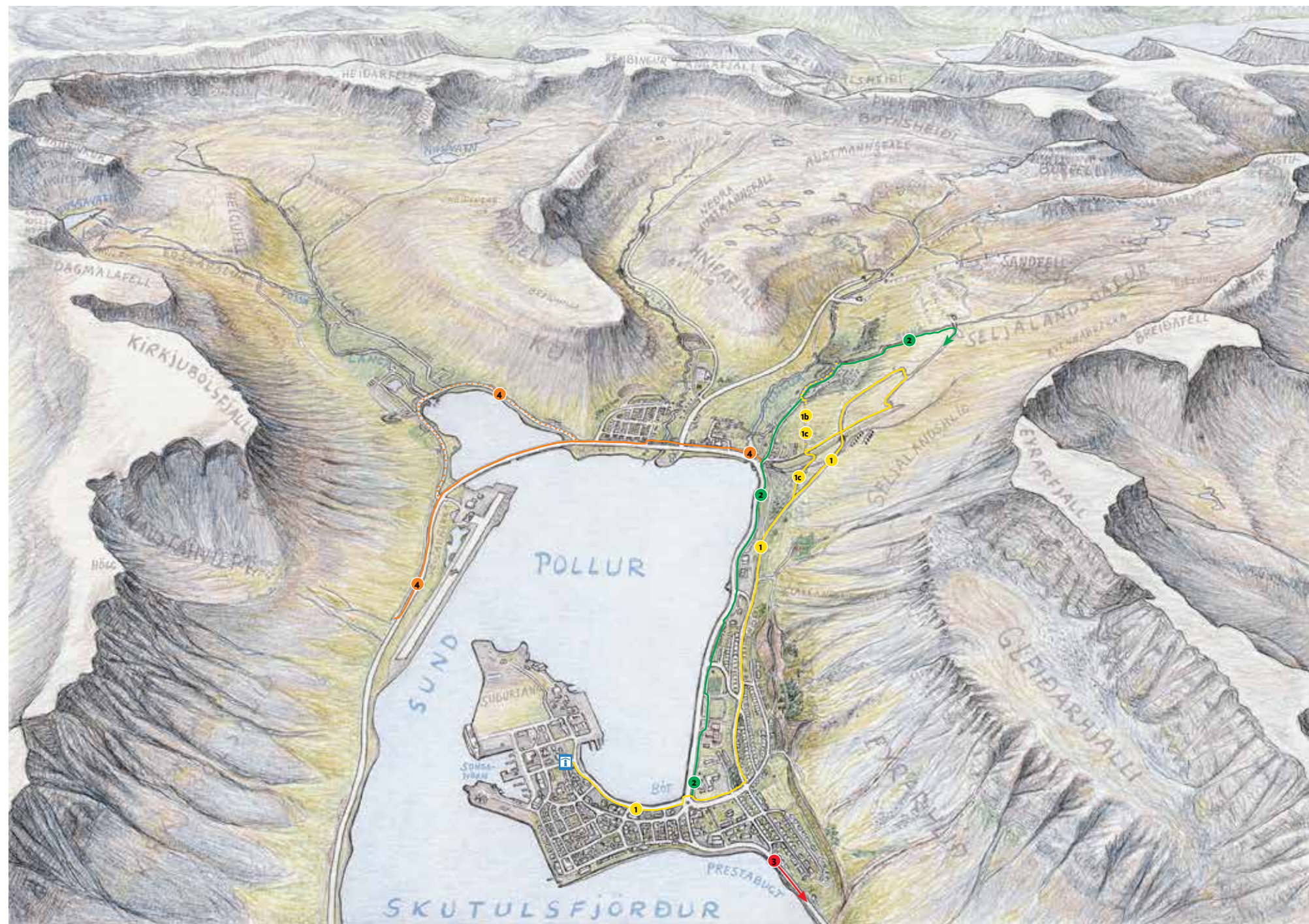
A ring around town (blue line)

Total distance appr. 3,5 km

Walk along Pollgata up to the roundabout and make a left turn. Your stroll along the path will take you past a kindergarten, the high school and the town's football fields (soccer fields for some). Right after you come past the football fields you will see a sculpture called The Ocean's Harp. Now turn right and work your way up to Seljalandsvegur. From there you can enjoy a really beautiful view of the fjord and the harbour as you walk back towards town. When you come to the end of Seljalandsvegur, take a few minutes to see the botanical garden Jónsgarður where you will find an arch made out of the jaw-bones of a beached blue whale. Continue in the same direction along Túngata.

When you reach the sea, make a right turn and then walk along Sólghata to the town church and have a look at the altar centre piece, a total of 749 clay birds made by the people of the parish. Finally, take a walk through the centre of town, passing most of the local shops, cafés and restaurants on your way back to the Information centre.





On your own

Hiking

Route 1: Avalanche wall

Total distance: 9-10 km

Follow the yellow line on the map. From the harbour, work your way through Ísafjörður until you come to the long hill that leads up to the cross-country ski area. The road that takes you up

this hill is actually open for cars, but during the summer it is mostly used by hikers and bikers. On your way up you walk through a very short tunnel and a little bit later you make a right-hand turn towards the old ski-hut, which is now just an abandoned building. From there you can enjoy a beautiful view over Ísafjörður. You should also see your ship quite clearly. To return to

town, walk on the top of the avalanche wall (easy to find from the house) but watch your step as the surface can be a bit rough. When you come to a path that cuts across the wall, turn left towards Ísafjörður.

Route 1b: Avalanche wall + Tungudalur

Total distance: 13-14 km

Same as described above except: As you walk down the avalanche wall and come to the path that cuts across it, now turn right and follow the yellow,

dotted line. The path will take you to the golf clubhouse. Walk along the road past the golf course until you have a campsite on your left hand side and a small but beautiful waterfall on your right hand side. If you want to get closer to the waterfall, follow the path, it only takes a few minutes.

Route 1c: Avalanche wall + Tungudalur Express

Total distance: 9-10 km

Start exactly the same as Route 1. Shortly after you start walking up the

road towards the cross-country ski area, you will find a path, marked with a blue sign. Follow the path, as indicated by the yellow, dotted line on the map. It takes you over the avalanche wall and all the way to the small waterfall. To get back to Ísafjörður, follow the green line past the golf course and further on to town.

Route 2: Tungudalur + cross country ski area:

Total distance 11-12 km

Follow the green line on the map. This rather strenuous walk actually starts on a flat and comfortable terrain. Use the walking path next to the road. As you come to the bottom of the fjord, some 3 km from the harbour, turn right to enter the valley of Tungudalur (a small river and a sign for golf and camping will indicate where to turn). When you come to the golf clubhouse, keep on walking past the golf course until you come to a car park and see a small but nice waterfall on the right hand side. Take the path on the right hand side of the river and follow it past the waterfall. The path might be unclear as you proceed higher up, but you will easily see the ski-hut above you, so just aim for it and follow the river. Note that parts of the path, especially when you go past the waterfall, can be somewhat challenging and uncomfortable to walk. Please be cautious.

When you reach the ski area, take some time to admire the view before descending back to town. You can either follow the gravel road or walk on the avalanche wall, as described in Route 1.

Biking

Route 3: Óshlíð (Bolungarvík)

Total distance: 25 -30km

Leave town as indicated by the red arrow. Please use the path next to the road. This relatively flat back-and-forth route first takes you to our small neighbouring village Hnífsdalur, some 4 km from Ísafjörður. As you come past Hnífsdalur you will see where the main road enters a tunnel. However, some 400 meters before the tunnel you

make a right hand turn onto a road that continues along the coastline. Now you are just about to enter the scenic but infamous Óshlíð. This road is now closed for car traffic but has become very popular for biking and hiking. Please note, though, that rocks and slides are not uncommon there. Also, as the road is not really maintained anymore, there are points where the forces of nature have done some serious damages, so please be cautious. From Óshlíð you have a wonderful view out to the sea, the coast on the other side and up to the mountains and cliffs right above you. After some 12-13 km you will come to a small, yellow lighthouse and the popular Ósvör maritime museum. If you wish, you can continue to the village Bolungarvík, 3 km further on. Return to Ísafjörður along the same route.

Bike 'n hike

Route 4: Naustahvilft (Troll seat)

Total distance 13-17 km

Bike out of Ísafjörður as shown by the green line on the map. When the green line turns right towards Tungudalur, you carry on straight, as shown by the orange line. Bike past the Bónus supermarket, to the residential area Holtahverfi. This is the end of the separate bike/walking path. From now on you are on the road. As you get past the residential area you can either take the shortcut across the fjord or turn right to go around it orange dotted line. Most people prefer to go around the fjord on their way to Naustahvilft, and then take the shortcut when they return. The bird life is often quite lively by the coast, and also at the airport which you will pass just before you find the small carpark that marks the beginning of the hike. There is no real path leading up to Naustahvilft, but this is a relatively simple walk, just straight up. It takes around 30 minutes for most people, and you are not much faster going down as you need to watch your step in the steep hill. Follow the pink and green lines back and remember to use the path as soon as you can.



On your own By car

It is quite popular to rent a car for a self-driving tour around the area. Our roads are (usually) quite easy to navigate and most of them are paved. At the tourist information office, you can get a free map of the Westfjords region to help you find your way.

Bolungarvík (13 km, one way)

From Ísafjörður you drive north on road #61. After some 4 km you come to our neighbouring village Hnífsdalur where you enter a 5 km long tunnel. When you exit the tunnel, you are at the outskirts of Bolungarvík. A right hand turn shortly after the tunnel will take you to the

popular Ósvör maritime museum and Óshólaviti lighthouse. In the village itself you will find the Natural History Museum located close to the small but often lively harbour area. Right above town you might see the avalanche walls, huge constructions that protect the village during winter and serve as an excellent outdoor area during summer. You can follow a path up to the top of the walls to enjoy a great view over the village.

Bolafjall (23 km, one way)

Bolafjall is a majestic mountain and a beautiful viewpoint right above the village of Bolungarvík. It has a road all

the way to the top but please note that if you have a fear of heights you might find the last part of the drive somewhat uncomfortable. To reach Bolafjall, you first drive to Bolungarvík (see above). As you drive the main street of the village you will find a left-hand turn where a sign points you to Bolafjall and Skálavík. Make the turn and simply stay on this street. It takes you through the village and soon turns into a gravel road. Quite far up the mountain you come to an intersection. To go to Skálavík you keep on going straight, but to go to Bolafjall you turn right and drive further up to a higher altitude. When you reach the top you find a spectacular view all the way over to Hornstrandir Nature Reserve. As you return, you might want to do a detour down to the tranquil and beautiful creek Skálavík. Please note that when clouds are low, the view from Bolafjall is very limited or non-existent. Also, the road is only guaranteed to be open in July and August although

the opening season is usually longer. Hence, it could be a good idea to inquire about the conditions before starting the drive.

Súðavík (22 km, one way)

From Ísafjörður, follow road #61 south. As you drive past the airport you will find the walk up to Naustahvlf (Troll seat, see section on hikes). Keep on following the coast and soon you come to Iceland's oldest and shortest road tunnel, only 30 meters long. Remember to honk the horn two times to greet the trolls in the cliffs. The main attraction in Súðavík is the Arctic Fox Centre, where you can most often see live foxes and learn all about the land mammal that settled Iceland long before humans did. Súðavík also has the family park Raggagarður, by far the best playground in the area. You will find beautiful hiking routes in and around Súðavík, and if you are interested in birds you should visit Langeyri where the arctic terns will be happy to attack you.

Hvítanes (Appr. 70 km, one way)

Hvítanes is a seal-watching spot, right on road #61. First drive to Súðavík, as described above, and then simply keep on driving. As you reach Hvítanes you might notice a small sign indicating a seal-watching area ahead. Park by the picnic table and don't forget to sign the guestbook in the plastic box. That box also contains binoculars for you to use and even some home-made jam from the farm Hvítanes. If you want to buy some jam, simply take a jar and leave the required money in the box. About 500 meters further you will find Litlibær museum, a small farmhouse that was rebuilt by the National Museum of Iceland. The coffee and waffles there make all the driving worthwhile.

Suðureyri (23 km, one way)

The eco-friendly village of Suðureyri is one of the most popular destinations in the area. To get there you first have to make sure you choose the correct tunnel to drive through. Leave Ísafjörður on road #61 south, and drive until you see the Bónus supermarket. Immediately after Bónus you turn right

onto road #60 which takes you to the tunnel. Inside the tunnel you turn onto road #65 and follow it all the way to Suðureyri. As you enter the village, you will see a small pond on your left-hand side. This is the home to a big family of codfish that love to meet and greet humans. Buy some fish food at the local minimarket and feed it to the cod. They will eat it right from your palm. To feed yourself, visit the local café or restaurant. A tour around the local fish factory can be arranged or you can join the popular "Food Trail" - a history walk where you get to taste samples of the village's fine sea food products. And don't forget to bring your swimsuit as Suðureyri has the only outdoor, geothermal swimming pool in the area.

Flateyri (22 km, one way)

To get to Flateyri you first leave Ísafjörður as described in the section "Suðureyri". A couple of kilometres after you exit the tunnel you turn right onto road #64 and stay on it until you reach the village. Flateyri has a few popular museums, such as the International Doll Museum and the Nonsense Museum (see section on museums). The Old Bookstore is a combination of a second-hand bookshop and a museum. Close to it you will also find a small exhibition dedicated to dried fish. Yes, dried fish. Like Ísafjörður and Bolungarvík, Flateyri has an avalanche wall to protect the village. A walk up to the wall will give you a beautiful view over Flateyri and the fjord Öndarfjörður. On your way back you might want to do a little detour to enjoy the white sandy beach on the other side of the fjord. Please be considerate, though, as this is a nesting side for eider ducks and other birds.

Þingeyri (49 km, one way)

To get to Þingeyri you first leave Ísafjörður as described in the section "Suðureyri". When you exit the tunnel you are in the fjord Öndarfjörður. Stay on road #60 to go over the mountain Gemlufallsheiði and enjoy the beautiful view as you descend down towards the fjord Dýrafjörður. Now you have Þingeyri right in front of you although it will still take some 15

minutes to reach it as you have to drive around the fjord. First, though, you have a chance to do a little detour and visit the famous Skrúður botanical garden, the winner of the international Carlo Scarpa award in 2013. Simply make a right-hand turn when you come down from the mountain, and let road #624 take you to Skrúður. After visiting the garden you return to road #60 and continue to Þingeyri. In the village you will find the Old Blacksmith's Workshop (see section on museums), a small Viking area, a café and a restaurant. If you are into outdoor activities you can rent a mountain bike or go on a horse riding tour. A 9-hole golf course can be found in the beautiful valley Meðaldalur, just outside the village. The mountain Sandafell, right above town, is an excellent viewpoint and the walk up to there is refreshing. For those interested in Icelandic culture, the Þingeyri area is the venue for one of Iceland's most famous sagas, the saga of Gísli Súrsson. The Valley Haukadalur, where Gísli lived, is just some 15 minutes' drive from Þingeyri, on a gravel road.

Dynjandi (87 km, one way)

The drive to Dynjandi is a worthwhile attraction in itself. First you reach Þingeyri as described above. As you enter the village there is a left hand turn to stay on road #60 towards Dynjandi. The remaining 39 km to the waterfall are on a gravel road. The maximum speed on gravel roads in Iceland is 80 km, but most people drive this particular road way slower than that. Anyway, it is a scenic route so just relax and enjoy life. After you come over the mountain road Hrafnseyrarheiði and descend to the fjord Arnarfjörður, you come to the Jón Sigurðsson Memorial Museum, dedicated to our independence hero Jón Sigurðsson who was born there in 1811. Now you should see Dynjandi from a distance, but you still have to drive some 20 minutes before you reach it. When you come closer to it, you will easily see where to turn off the main road and drive towards the waterfall. You can actually admire it from the parking place, but there is also a hiking trail for those who want to get up close and personal with it.



Services

Information:

Tourist Information Office. Aðalstræti 7, 400 Ísafjörður, Iceland. Tel: (+354) 450-8060. Email: info@westfjords.is
The Tourist Information Office also operates an info-hut at the harbour while cruise ships are in town.

Banks

Ísafjörður has two banks, Íslandsbanki and Landsbanki. Both are located in the town centre and are open on weekdays from 9:15 to 16:00

ATMs

ATMs/Cash machines can be found in Íslandsbanki bank, by the town square, and Neisti shopping centre in central Ísafjörður.

Car rentals

- Hertz (+354) 522-4490
- National (+354) 840-6074
- Avis/Budget (+354) 660-0617

Taxi

Please ask for assistance at the Tourist Information Office

Internet access

- "Snerpa hot-spot" wireless internet.
- Most cafés and restaurants offer free Wi-Fi for their costumers
- Tourist Information Hut at the harbour: Three computers with free access for up to 15 minutes.

Bike rental

- Vesturferðir/West Tours, Ísafjörður (+354) 456-5111

Swimming pools

- **Ísafjörður:** An indoor pool with a hot tub and a sauna.
- **Suðureyri:** An outdoor, geothermal pool with two hot tubs and a play pool for the children.
- **Flateyri:** An indoor pool with one indoor hot tub and two outdoor hot tubs, plus a sauna.
- **Pingeyri:** An indoor pool with a hot tub and a sauna.
- **Bolungarvík:** An indoor pool with three outdoor hot tubs, a waterslide and a sauna.

Golf

- **Ísafjörður:** Nine-hole course, plus a six-hole practice course.
- **Pingeyri:** Nine-hole course.
- **Bolungarvík:** Nine-hole course on a double system which serves as 18 holes.

Arts and craft

Craft stores and art galleries can be found in all the towns and villages in the area:

Ísafjörður:

- Karitas, Aðalstræti 20
- Rammagerð Ísafjarðar, Aðalstræti 16,
- Hvesta, Aðalstræti 18

Suðureyri:

- Á milli fjalla, Aðalgata 15
- Hárverk, Sætún 5

Flateyri:

- Purka, Hafnarstræti 11

Ingjaldssandur:

- Sæból, Ingjaldssandur

Pingeyri:

- Gallerí Koltra, Vallargata 1

Bolungarvík:

- Drymla, Skólagata 3-5
- Ósvör Maritime Museum

Súðavík:

- Kaupfélag Súðavíkur Grundarstræti 3
- Arctic Fox Centre, Eyrardalur 1

Public toilets

- Ísafjörður harbour
- Tourist Information Office

Pharmacy

The pharmacy is located next to the Tourist Information Office.

Emergency telephone: 112



Ísafjörður

Für Ísafjörður und die benachbarten Ortschaften hat der Fischfang und die Fischverarbeitung immer eine große Rolle gespielt.

Es ist noch nicht lange her, als sich das Leben fast aller Menschen hier um den Fisch drehte, und die Frage war nicht, ob man damit seinen Lebensunterhalt bestritt, sondern ob man das an Land tat oder auf dem Meer. Später veränderte der technische Fortschritt den Bedarf an Arbeitskräften und schuf neue Aufgabenfelder nicht nur im Umfeld der Fischverarbeitung, wie z.B. bei der Produktion und Wartung von Maschinen oder im Transport- und Logistikbereich, sondern ganz allgemein im Dienstleistungssektor.

Am Ende der 1970er Jahre wurde deutlich, dass es mit der Fischereiwirtschaft nicht so weitergehen konnte wie bisher – die Fischbestände gingen zurück und es gab zu viele Schiffe. Anstelle des Massenfischfangs rückte nun die Qualität in den Vordergrund, was tiefgreifende gesellschaftliche Veränderungen mit sich brachte. Diese Veränderungen waren nicht einfach und sind bis heute nicht abgeschlossen, werden aber von einer zukunftsorientierten Entwicklung begleitet: so erhöhen neue und innovative Methoden die Fangausbeute, Werkzeuge und Maschinen für die Lebensmittelverarbeitung werden exportiert, und nicht zuletzt ist seit den Umwälzungen in der Fischerei in den Westfjorden der Tourismus der am schnellsten wachsende Wirtschaftsbereich geworden.

Ísafjörður ist mit Abstand die größte Siedlung im nördlichen Teil der Westfjorde; in der Tat hat es mehr Einwohner als alle anderen Orte der Region zusammengekommen. Obwohl Ísafjörður mit seinen weniger als 3.000 Einwohnern keine Metropole ist, strahlt es einen unverkennbar städtischen Charakter aus.

Der zweitgrößte Ort der Region, Bolungarvík, ist fast nur einen Steinwurf von Ísafjörður entfernt. Die Bewohner

des Ortes haben den Ruf, sehr arbeitsam, eigensinnig und ein wenig schrullig zu sein (wahrscheinlich wie die meisten Menschen in den Westfjorden).

Die kleine Siedlung Súðavík liegt ungefähr 20 Kilometer südlich von Ísafjörður. Eine Fahrt nach Súðavík führt durch den ersten, und mit etwa 50 Metern bei weitem kürzesten, Straßentunnel in Island. Beim Durchfahren des Tunnels sollten Sie auf jeden Fall zweimal hupen, um die dort lebenden Trolle zu grüßen.

Suðureyri ist das schönste Fischerdorf, das Sie finden können. Diese Behauptung klingt kühn, ist aber wahr. Die Einheimischen haben in den letzten Jahren sehr viel getan, um auf eine Besonderheit ihres Ortes aufmerksam zu machen – den umweltverträglichen Fischfang. Der Fjord selbst gehört zu den eher schmalen Fjorden Islands und öffnet sich zum Meer hin erst etwa auf der Höhe von Suðureyri.

Flateyri ist ein kleines, bezauberndes Fischerdorf nur eine kurze Autofahrt von Ísafjörður entfernt. Wenn Sie in den Ort hineinfahren, achten Sie bitte gleich rechts neben der Straße in der Lagune auf die kleinen Schiffsmodelle, die von einem Bewohner des Ortes detailgetreu und mit viel Hingabe geschaffen wurden. Das ist lediglich ein kleiner Vorgeschmack, denn hier sind nicht nur fleißige Fischer zu Hause, sondern auch begabte Künstler und Kunsthandwerker.

Pingeyri mit seiner Umgebung ist eng verbunden mit der Wikinger-Zeit, denn diese Gegend ist der Schauplatz einer der berühmtesten isländischen Sagas, der Saga von Gísli Súrsson. Mehr als tausend Jahre lang haben die Landwirtschaft und der Fischfang das Überleben gesichert. Seit einigen Jahren erschließt Pingeyri aber nun auch neue und interessante Wege auf dem Gebiet des Fremdenverkehrs.



Ísafjörður

Ísafjörður et les villes des alentours partagent une histoire commune, elles ont été fondées et se sont développées autour de la pêche.

Le temps n'est pas si lointain où la plupart des habitants dépendaient du poisson. La question n'était alors pas de savoir si l'un travaillait ou non à la pêche ou à la préparation du poisson mais plutôt s'il le faisait en mer ou sur terre. Plus tard, avec les avancées technologiques, l'industrie se développa et la manœuvre se déploya sur de nouveaux services comme la gestion des machines, la transportation et autres aspects logistiques de l'industrie, ainsi que le service aux consommateurs.

Vers la fin des années 70, il devint évident que l'industrie de la pêche devait changer, la flotte étant bien trop importante. C'est à ce moment que la décision fut prise de privilégier la qualité sur la quantité et les années suivantes furent témoins de grandes transformations sociales. Ces changements ne se firent pas sans peine et les difficultés qui s'en suivirent se ressentent encore mais la région a aujourd'hui trouvé les moyens de se redresser. De gros efforts ont été placés dans l'innovation en matière d'exploitation maritime, afin de profiter de toutes les ressources que l'océan recèle. De même la production d'outils et de machines pour la préparation du poisson s'est développée dans d'autres parties du globe. Enfin l'industrie du tourisme est la plus dynamique que l'on ait vue dans les fjords de l'ouest depuis la révolution due à l'arrivée des premiers chalutiers.

Ísafjörður est la plus grande ville au nord des fjords de l'ouest; de fait elle est même plus peuplée que toutes les autres réunions. Cela est cependant relatif, car si l'on s'en tient aux chiffres, sa population compte seulement 3.000 habitants. Malgré cela, l'ambiance de la ville est celle d'une métropole.

Le second village de la région, Bolungarvík, est à quelque pas d'Ísafjörður (presque littéralement). Ses habitants ont toujours été considérés comme des travailleurs acharnés, attachés à leurs indépendance et un peu excentriques (tout comme la plupart habitants des fjords de l'ouest pour être honnête).

Le petit village de Súðavík se trouve à 20 kilomètres au sud d'Ísafjörður. En route pour Súðavík vous passerez dans le tunnel le plus ancien mais aussi le plus court jamais construit en Islande, environ 50 mètres. Note: Il est de la plus grande importance de klaxonner deux fois en passant dans le tunnel par respect pour les trolls des environs.

Suðureyri est certainement le plus pittoresque village de pêcheurs que vous puissiez visiter. C'est prétentieux... mais vrai. Ces dernières années les habitants se sont distingués en se créant une identité autour de la pêche bio. Le fjord est l'un des plus étroits d'Islande mais s'ouvre sur l'océan à l'entrée du village de Suðureyri.

Le charmant petit village de pêcheurs de Flateyri se trouve à une courte distance d'Ísafjörður. Observez les petits bateaux flottants sur l'étang à l'entrée du village, tous fabriqués par le même homme. Ce n'est que le commencement car les habitants de Flateyri aiment autant l'artisanat que la pêche.

Pingeyri et ses environs sont marqués par l'histoire des Vikings, car ils sont la scène d'une des sagas islandaises, Gísli-Saga Súrssonar. Depuis environ mille ans, le principal objectif des habitants a été de pouvoir se nourrir, avec les ressources de l'agriculture ou de la pêche. Ces dernières années, le tourisme a aussi été une ressource importante pour le village.



Ísafjörður

Ísafjörður y sus pueblos colindantes comparten el mismo origen; fueron fundados y crecieron en torno a la pesca.

En un pasado no muy lejano, la subsistencia de casi todo el mundo dependía del pescado y la cuestión no era si se trabajaba o no en la pesca o el procesamiento, sino si se hacía en tierra o en el mar. Más tarde, con los avances tecnológicos, ese patrón cambió y cada vez más trabajadores se dispersaron por ramas relacionadas como, por ejemplo, servicios de maquinaria, transporte y otros aspectos logísticos de la industria, así como en servicios generales al público.

A finales de los años setenta se hizo evidente que la industria ya no era sostenible, la flota era demasiado grande y aquello no podía durar siempre. Desde entonces se ha hecho hincapié en la calidad más que en la cantidad y estaban por llegar importantes cambios sociales en los años venideros. Estos cambios fueron dolorosos y todavía lo son, pero se han encontrado formas para contrarrestar el golpe. Formas nuevas e innovadoras para utilizar plenamente cada pescado y otros recursos que el mar ofrece, la fabricación de herramientas

y maquinaria para la elaboración de alimentos en otras partes del mundo, y por último pero no menos importante el turismo, que ha sido la industria que ha crecido más rápidamente en los fiordos occidentales desde la revolución de la pesca de arrastre.

Ísafjörður es, de lejos, el pueblo más grande de todos los de la parte norte de los fiordos occidentales. De hecho, es más grande que todos los demás juntos. Dicho esto, no es tan grande si sólo se miran las estadísticas, ya que cuenta con menos de 3.000 habitantes. Pero la sensación metropolitana es inconfundible.

La segunda ciudad más grande de la zona, Bolungarvík, es una piedra lanzada desde Ísafjörður, casi literalmente. Sus habitantes siempre han sido considerados trabajadores, muy independientes y un poco peculiares (como la mayoría de la gente de los fiordos occidentales para ser honestos).

La pequeña aldea de Súðavík se encuentra a 20 kilómetros al sur de Ísafjörður. Un paseo en coche hasta Súðavík le llevará por el primer (y más corto con diferencia) túnel de carretera construido en Islandia, con aproximadamente 50 metros. Nota: Es de suma importancia tocar el claxon dos veces mientras se conduce por el túnel con el fin de mostrar respeto a los trolls locales.

Suðureyri es el pueblo pesquero más amable que nunca encontrará. Una afirmación atrevida, pero cierta. Los lugareños han realizado acciones en los últimos años para destacar lo que hace de este pueblo un lugar especial, la pesca ecológica. El propio fiordo es uno de los más estrechos de Islandia, pero cuando se llega a Suðureyri, se abre hacia mar abierto.

Flateyri es un pequeño y encantador pueblo pesquero a poca distancia de Ísafjörður. Observe los pequeños barcos de juguete flotando en la laguna al entrar en el pueblo hechos por un hombre en particular.

Esto marca la pauta en cierto modo, dado que los lugareños están tan interesados en el arte y la artesanía como en la pesca.

Pingeyri y las zonas circundantes están inmersas en la historia vikinga, ya que es el escenario de una de las más famosas sagas islandesas, Gísli-Saga Súrssonar. Durante los últimos mil años más o menos, los habitantes se han concentrado en poner comida en la mesa, ya sea mediante la agricultura o la pesca. En los últimos años le han dado un interesante enfoque al turismo.

