

PORT OF ÍSAFJÖRÐUR

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ÍSAFJÖRÐARBÆR
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Ísafjörður is the principal town of the Westfjords region, right up in the northwest corner of Iceland. The Westfjords are regarded as the most remote part of the island and even the Ring Road (the main traveling route for visitors driving „the full circle around Iceland“) avoids the Westfjords altogether. Despite enormous improvements in our road system, our region still remains the least visited. Paradoxically, that is turning out to be an attraction in itself.

The Municipality of Ísafjarðarbær consists of Ísafjörður and the neighboring towns of Þingeyri, Flateyri, Suðureyri and Hnífsdalur. The other neighbors, Bolungarvík and Súðavík are not part of Ísafjarðarbær Municipality, although the whole area is in many ways undivided when it comes to employment and various services.

Traditionally, these are all fishing towns that grew, prospered, declined and prospered again according to how the fishing industry fared. Changes in recent years and decades have seen the economy evolve to become more varied, as other industries and services have played an increasingly important part. Tourism is one of the fastest growing industries in the Westfjords despite (and also because of) the area's alleged remoteness. The unspoiled nature, the tranquility amidst flourishing culture and rich

traditions and history have all proved to be appealing for the adventurous traveler, who is brave enough to divert from the safety of the Ring Road.

Ísafjörður (pop. 2.744)

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 – with cafés, restaurants and museums galore. Ísafjörður has a big hospital, schools at all levels (even a small university) and numerous branches from government agencies, so the town serves as the “capital” of the Westfjords peninsula.

Read more about the town center on page 12 and walks around town on pages 6-7.

Bolungarvík (pop. 1.000)

The second largest town in the area, Bolungarvík is a stone's throw away from Ísafjörður, almost literally. The inhabitants have always been considered hard working and fiercely independent.

Bolungarvík has a lot to offer (see “By car” on pages 10-11) with Ósvör Museum and the skywalk on the top of Mt. Bolafjall being the most popular attractions.

Súðavík (pop. 176)

The small hamlet of Súðavík is to be found 20 kilometers 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. 30 meters. Súðavík has a variety of attractions, such as the Arctic Fox Centre, Raggagarður Family Park and the hike to Valagil canyon, just outside the village.

See more in the “By car” section on page 10-11.



Suðureyri (pop. 299)

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 towards the ocean.

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



Flateyri (pop. 191)

Flateyri is a small and charming village 23 km outside Ísafjörður. This village is the home to a very popular Folk High School where people can study without emphasis on credits and grades. Here you will also find the oldest original store in Iceland amongst numerous other places worthy of a visit.

See more in the „By car“ chapter on pages 10-11.

Pingeyri (pop. 280)

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. Pingeyri is a paradise for those who love the outdoors, as it has numerous beautiful hikes within its vicinity, whether it is the very accessible Sandafell mountain or the highest mountain in the whole Westfjords area, Kaldbakur. You can also explore the area by car, by bike and even on horseback.

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



MUSEUMS

Westfjords Heritage Museum

www.nedsti.is

The Westfjords Heritage Museum is located very close to the harbor where cruise ship passengers disembark. The museum building is one of four 18th century houses which have been renovated and are now among the town's most popular attractions. The museum focuses on the life and work of the people in the Westfjords through the centuries.



Ísafjörður Culture House / Old Hospital

www.safnis.is

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, and 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.

Hversdagssafn / Museum of everyday life

www.everydaylife.is

Located right in the center of Ísafjörður, this small

museum investigates the mundane and the common, finding the poetry that comes forward when no one is looking. It is a collection of local voices, memories and story fragments that give a glimpse into people's lives in the Westfjords, while also touching on the things we all share.

Kertahúsið

www.kertahusid.is

Is an Interactive Candle Workshop in the center of Ísafjörður. The workshop allows guests to watch our handcrafters make our unique design candles that are inspired by Icelandic nature and architecture. Guests can also make their own scented candles which are infused by scents in our nature, birch, arctic thyme, angelica and different local flora. Dip candles in colours and purchase various design and delicacies that are made locally.



The Old Blacksmith's Workshop, Píngeyri

www.nedsti.is

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.

Skálinn Viking Centre, Þingeyri

How did the Vikings live? What did they eat? And what about their clothes and jewelry? A visit to Skálinn Viking Centre will give you a rare glimpse of the Viking life. Try on their clothes, bake your own Viking bread and more. The Viking Centre is open for groups of four people or more. Please book your visit in advance.

The Old Bookstore in Flateyri

www.gamlabokabudin.is

In Flateyri you will find the oldest original store in Iceland, The Old Bookstore. This is a unique establishment and has become an extremely popular spot to visit due to its great history and cozy atmosphere. There you can buy local products, books that are priced by weight and international luxury goods from brands that all have more than a 100 years' history. You can also see where the founder of the store lived. His home is all original, like a real time capsule from the years 1920-1950. A visit to the Old Bookstore in Flateyri is truly a unique experience that you should not miss.

International Doll Museum, Flateyri

If you stop at Gunnukaffi 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

www.hrafnseyri.is

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 independence from Denmark. A firm believer in the power of the word over the sword, Jón Sigurðsson advocated for independence through peaceful means, using eloquence and persuasive arguments. When the Icelandic republic was established in 1944, it was done on his birthday, June 17th. 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 approximately a 70-minute drive from Ísafjörður.

Ósvör Museum, Bolungarvík

www.bolungarvik.is/osvor

In the old Icelandic society there were no towns or villages; the people lived on farms in the countryside. Fishing was, however, important and was commonly carried out during autumn and winter, when 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 would spend several weeks living in small huts while fishing every day in their small and open rowing boats in freezing weather. Because of its proximity to abundant 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 greets visitors while dressed in fisherman's clothes and provides information about the lives and work of fishermen in earlier centuries.



Arctic Fox Centre, Súðavík

www.melrakki.is

The arctic fox is an original inhabitant in Iceland, having settled here at least 2000 years before the first humans arrived. 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.



Litlibær Farm, Skötufjörður

If you drive from Ísafjörður along road 61, you will reach Litlibær in about 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 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. 1,8 km.

From the tourist information office, follow the main street („Aldrei fór ég suðurgata“ named after our annual music festival). As you come past the harbor area stay on Aðalstræti (i.e., the street further from the sea).

Very soon you come to the local handcraft store and the Nonsense Museum. 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 center of town.



Guidelines

- The Ísafjörður harbor is a lively place all year round. Not all streets in this part of town have sidewalks so please keep to the sides of the road and be careful not to get in the way of people working in the area.
- A stroll around the old town in Ísafjörður is highly recommended. The houses there are frequently mistaken for museum buildings so please note that they are private homes. Kindly avoid entering them (unless you are invited, of course) or taking pictures through the doors and windows.
- Many of the streets in the old town are narrow one-way streets. Although traffic is usually quite slow, please be mindful of oncoming cars and bikes and keep to the sidewalks as much as possible.
- Please remember that our nature is fragile and in the harsh arctic climate it may take decades for any damage to be repaired. We also take pride in our clean environment so kindly remember to bring all your litter back with you. When hiking in the nature, remember not to leave any lasting signs of your visit.
- Craft stores and art galleries can be found in all the towns and villages in the area. It is highly appreciated when visitors pay a visit to find unique souvenirs hand made by locals.
- The children in town frequently play outside in the playgrounds. Please do not take pictures of them without permission.

Uptown (red line)

Total distance appr. 2,3 km.

From the tourist information office, follow the main street („Aldrei fór ég suðurgata“ named after our annual music festival). As you come past the harbor area stay on the street Pollgata, next to the sea. This will eventually lead you to a roundabout (the only one in town). Cross the street and walk past the hospital and continue to the public garden Jónsgarður. There you will find an arch made out of the jawbones 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 will walk past the church and then simply continue along the main street where you will find most of the shops, cafés, and restaurants in town.

A ring around town (blue line)

Total distance appr. 4,3 km.

From the tourist information office, follow the main street („Aldrei fór ég suðurgata“ named after our annual music festival). As you come past the harbor area stay on the street Pollgata, next to the sea. This will eventually lead you to a roundabout (the only one in town). Now make a left hand turn and stroll along the path that will take you past a senior citizens' home, 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 harbor as you walk back towards town. When you come to the end of Seljalandsvegur, take a few minutes to see the public garden Jónsgarður where you will find an arch made from the jawbones of a beached blue whale. Continue in the same direction along Túngata. When you reach the sea, carefully cross the "highway" and walk the new hiking path leading you along the shoreline where you can enjoy the view out the fjord and over to Snæfjallaströnd on the other side. When the path ends, turn onto Sundstræti, and work your way through the old town.



with a blue sign. Follow the path, as indicated on the map (see “1b” on the map). It takes you over the avalanche wall to the golf course, and then you follow the road to the small waterfall. To get back to Ísafjörður, follow the green line past the golf course and then the orange line to town.

Route 1c: Ísafjörður Avalanche barriers

5 km (with option to extend)

From the harbor, work your way through Ísafjörður. Go past the church, the culture house and the garden Jónsgarður (with the whalebone arch) and continue to the highest street in town, Urðarvegur. Right behind the houses you can turn left and walk along the avalanche

barriers (or take the paths behind them if the barriers are too steep for you to climb). As you come to the end of the first avalanche barrier turn right to enter the small forest and follow the path through it. After a few minutes of walking you will see a wide, rough path that takes you to your right, and out of the forest. Follow the path along the hill until it comes to a road where you can either walk down and then towards town, or extend the hike to merge with options 1, 1a and 1b.

Route 1d: Ísafjörður avalanche barriers

5 km (with option to extend)

Exactly the same as 1c except that instead of going through the small forest you go below it and find another avalanche barrier which offers a really beautiful view over town. Soon after the barrier you come to an intersection where you can either find your way down to the road that leads back to town or extend the walk by taking a path that soon will merge with hikes 1, 1a and 1b.

Route 1e: Ísafjörður avalanche barriers Express route to a viewpoint

Total distance 3-4 km.

Start exactly as in 1c. Once you are behind the houses at Urðarvegur, find the metal steps that take you up to the highest avalanche barrier. Walk to the end of the barrier (be careful as the surface is rough). Enjoy the view and then return the same way.

BIKING

Route 2: Óshlíð (red arrow)

Total distance: 25 - 30 km.

Leave town as indicated by the red arrow on the map. Please use the path next to the road. This relatively flat back-and-forth route first takes you to our small neighboring village Hnífsdalur, some 4 km from Ísafjörður. There, instead of following the road into a tunnel, you make a right hand turn in order to stay by the coast. 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 rockfalls and slides are not uncommon there so you need to be careful. You should not use this road in rain or wet conditions. Also, as the road is not maintained anymore, there are points where the forces of nature have done some serious damage, so please be cautious. After some 12-13 km you will come to a small, yellow lighthouse and the popular Ósvör maritime museum. From there you can continue to the village Bolungarvík, 3 km further on. Return to Ísafjörður along the same route.

BIKE 'N HIKE

Naustahvíft / “Troll seat” (orange line)

Total distance 12-13 km.

Bike out of Ísafjörður as shown on the map. Please stay on the path rather than the road itself. Bike past the Bónus supermarket, to the residential area Holtahverfi. This is the end of the separate biking/walking path. From now on you are on the road so please be very careful. As you get past the residential area you can either take the shortcut across the fjord, or turn right to go around it (dotted line). Most people prefer to go around the fjord on their way to Naustahvíft, 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. Leave the bike at the carpark and start working your way up the hill. The “path” leading up to Naustahvíft is very primitive and can be slippery, especially on the way down. The walk up takes around 30 minutes for most people, and you are not much faster going down as you need to be very cautious.

Red = asphalt
Gray = gravel



ON YOUR OWN BY CAR

It is quite popular to rent a car and go for a self-drive 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.)

From Ísafjörður you drive north on road 61. After some 4 km you come to our neighboring village Hnífsdalur where you enter a 5 km long tunnel (toll-free). 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 small but often lively harbor area. Right above town you might see the avalanche barriers, huge constructions that protect the village during winter and serve as an excellent outdoor area during summer. You can park and walk the barriers to enjoy some great view over the village.

Bolafjall (23 km.)

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 road. As you come through the village the road surface turns to gravel, but it is still open for all types of cars. 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. When you reach the top you can enjoy some spectacular view all the way over to Hornstrandir Nature Reserve. To add to the experience, the brand new skywalk takes your visit to new

heights, literally. As you return, you might want to do a detour down to the tranquil and beautiful Skálavík. Please note that when clouds are low, the view from Bolafjall is very limited or non-existent. Also, the road is only open during the summer season. Hence, it could be a good idea to inquire about the conditions before starting the drive.

Súðavík (22 km.)

From Ísafjörður, follow road 61 south. As you drive past the airport you will find the walk up to Naustahvilt (Troll seat, see section on „bike & hike“). Keep on following the coast and soon you come to Iceland's oldest and shortest road tunnel, the 30 meters long Arnarneshamar. Once in Súðavík, you will soon find the Arctic Fox Centre, where you can see live foxes and learn all about this amazing animal 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, not least Valagil, a beautiful ravine with a waterfall, just a few minutes' drive outside the village. If you are interested in birds you should visit Langeyri where the arctic terns will be happy to attack you.

Hvítanes (Appr. 70 km.)

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 point ahead. Shortly thereafter you find a parking area, and from it there are walking paths that take you closer to the seals. About 1 km after Hvítanes 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.)

The eco-friendly fishing village of Suðureyri is one of the most popular destinations in our area. To get there, take road 61 out of Ísafjörður. Just after you drive past the Bonus supermarket, turn right onto road 60 which takes you to a long tunnel.



At the intersection inside the tunnel (yes, intersection **inside the tunnel**), turn onto road 65 and follow it all the way to Suðureyri. To get to know the village properly, join the "Fisherman Seafood Trail" tour - a history walk where you get to taste samples of the village's fine sea food products. If you drive through the village, you will reach the tip of the peninsula in just a few minutes. There you can enjoy some beautiful view and tranquility. The small turf house you see is a replica of an old fishing station. When visiting Suðureyri, don't forget to bring your swimsuit as this is where you will find the only outdoor, geothermal swimming pool in our area.

Flateyri (22 km.)

To get to Flateyri you leave Ísafjörður along road 61. Just after you drive past the Bonus supermarket, turn right onto road 60 which takes you to a long tunnel. At the intersection inside the tunnel, just keep on driving straight (still on road 60). A couple of kilometers after you exit the tunnel you turn right onto road 64 and stay on it until you reach the village. Flateyri has a couple of popular museums, such as The Old Bookstore which is a combination of a store 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 top of this wall will give you a beautiful view over Flateyri and the fjord Önundarfjörður.

Pingeyri (49 km.)

To get to Pingeyri you start exactly as when going to Flateyri (see above). After the tunnel, simply stay on road 60 to drive over the mountain Gemlufallsheiði and enjoy the beautiful view as you descend down towards the fjord Dýrafjörður.

Now you have Pingeyri right in front of you, although on the other side of the fjord. Here is a chance to do a little detour and visit the famous Skrúður botanical garden, the winner of the international Carlo Scarpa award. Simply take a right-hand turn onto road 624, which leads to Skrúður. After visiting the garden you return to road 60 and continue to Pingeyri. In the village you will find the Old Blacksmith's Workshop (see section on museums on page 4-5), a Viking Centre (see also section on museums on page 4-5), and a small Viking area next to the swimming pool. 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 history and culture, Haukadalur, just outside Pingeyri, is the venue for one of Iceland's most famous sagas, the saga of Gísli Súrsson and now has a center dedicated to this classic tale.

Dynjandi waterfall (59 km.)

The drive to Dynjandi is really scenic, and a worthwhile attraction in itself. First you drive towards Pingeyri as described above. A few kilometers before reaching Pingeyri you make a left-hand turn and then continue to a long tunnel (too-free). After exiting the tunnel you are just a few minutes away from the falls. You will easily see where to turn off the main road and drive towards the waterfall. The last two kilometers or so are on a gravel road, everything else is asphalt. You can actually admire Dynjandi 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, located at the Heritage Museum.

Tel: (+354) 450-8060. Email: info@westfjords.is The Tourist Information Office also operates an info-hut at the harbor while cruise ships are in town.

Banks

Ísafjörður has two banks, Íslandsbanki and Landsbanki. Both are in the town center and are open on weekdays.

ATMs

ATMs/Cash machines can be found in both banks, Íslandsbanki and Landsbanki. Open 24/7.

Car rentals

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

Taxi

Please ask for assistance at the Tourist Information Office.

Internet access

- Most cafés and restaurants offer free Wi-Fi for their customers
- The information-hut at the harbor has free Wi-Fi.

Bike rental

- Borea Adventures, Ísafjörður (+354) 456-33221
- The Fjord Hub thefjordhub@gmail.com / Facebook messages.

Electric scooters

- Hopp (please use the Hopp app).

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 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 plus an outdoor hot tub
- **Bolungarvík:** An indoor pool with three outdoor hot tubs, a waterslide, and a sauna.

Most swimming pools also offer cold tubs.

Golf

- **Ísafjörður:** Nine-hole course, plus a six-hole practice course. A put-course next to the hospital.
- **Pingeyri:** Nine-hole course.
- **Bolungarvík:** Nine-hole course on a double system which serves as 18 holes.

Arts and craft

Stores with arts and craft can be found in most towns and villages in the area.

Public toilets

- Ísafjörður harbor
- Tourist Information Office
- Edinborg Culture House

Pharmacy

The pharmacy located close to the town center, at Pollgata, the street next to the sea.

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 zusammengenommen. 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.



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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 réunies. 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.



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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.

