

UNA MAGAZINE

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FORWARD

In this issue we will take a tour around Iceland our experiences and interests..

Along the way we will pause at popular tourist destinations like a local pub Brekken (our source of information), a harbour and the art gallery.

The scene is set for each story with a description of the surrounding landscape. We try to share with our readers a few pieces of practical information which could be useful during their adventure and excursions in Iceland, the breathtaking green land.

As Worldwide Friends volunteers we are aware of the level of unspoiled Icelandic landscapes. We focus on a local annoyance called lupines and live majestic creatures, whales. Some articles contain elves from folk tales and warm woollen sweaters, lapapeysa.

We treat this camp as a great opportunity to show our living experiences, cultures and behaviours from our countries. We would like to introduce ourselves to depicts how different and also how similar we are.

I sincerely hope that readers from over the world, from every age will enjoy our history presented in our words and photos.

Best wishes,
Editorial board

What did we look for in Iceland? Read our favourite quotes about our adventure and try to find yours!



Luis

It doesn't matter the country, the city, the culture and the landscape. It's only about sharing your life with all kind of people.



Madlen

You never know.

Fernando

Spending money on travelling
is not a waste of money.



Weronika

I want to make a masterpiece
from every single while.
Katarzyna Nosowska & O.S.T.R.



Eugenia

We will never be
the same as before
this travel.



Seokwon

Happiness only comes from
facing fear and taking a
risk.



Gemma

Life is either a great adventure
or nothing.
Helen Kellen



Andrea

Doing nothing is better than
being busy doing nothing.
Lao Tzu





Emma

The purpose of life is to live it, to taste experience to the utmost, to reach out eagerly and without fear for newer and richer experience. - Eleanor Roosevelt



Hazal

Life is about courage and going into the unknown.



Francesco

Life is a journey, and who travel live twice.



Clara

Two roads diverged in a wood
and I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made at the difference.
Robert Frost



Andrea

Happiness is not a moment but the way to copy with life.



Karolina

You are not allowed to fear.
Everything has its time.
You are the source of every goal.
Mela Koteluk

Land of dreams

A trip around Iceland filming the 'Worldwide friends' spirit



Luis Márquez

camp leader

1700 kms. 7 days traveling around Iceland. 4 work camps visited. 6 people in a filming crew. 3 cameras. 1 van. These are some numbers of the adventure 'Land of Dreams', an amazing experience that a group of volunteers have felt at the end of July within the Worldwide friends organization. The aim of this project, now in the edition period, is to show through 5 HD short documentaries what the purpose of WF is. To show the feelings of the volunteers and camp leaders and to catch the atmosphere of living in Iceland and helping this special country with the volunteer work.

Sauli Kahkonen and Luis Marquez, two professional journalists with plenty of experience on TV, have been the camp leaders of the project, with the help of Jaana, Martina, Stefano and Alessandro, volunteers that come from Finland and Italy.

Reykjavik, Skogafoss, Vik, Jokursarlon, Stovadfjordur, Eskifjordur, Neskapstadur, Raufarhofn have been some of the filming sets of 'Land of dreams': all of them amazing and beautiful places, all of them true examples of the amount of feelings you can live when you visit Iceland, but the most important in these videos are people. Human stories of people from all over the world. Volunteers from South Korea, Taiwan, Russia, Canada, United States, Germany, France, Italy, Spain, Mexico, Finland, Denmark, Japan open their

hearts in front of the camera and talk, calmly and honestly, about this mind-blowing experiences that have change their lives. To share and live during two weeks with such a different people, cry and laugh with them, fight and make peace again, and, in some cases, even fall in love, only can happen in this kind of international environment that Worldwide friends provide to volunteers and camp leaders.



Projects like the Stovadjordur 'teenage camp', the 'Close to Nature' camp in Eskifjordur, the 'Renovation team' in Raufarhofn or the crew of volunteers that worked, and enjoyed, in the Eisnaflug heavy metal festival in Neskaptadur, will be showed in the videos, but in all of them the viewer will feel the spirit of this organization, that host more than one thousand volunteers every year, and that become part of their lives for ever.

And yes, it's true, I'm Luis Marquez, one of the camp leaders of this project and others during the summer of 2015, and I'm writing this before leaving Iceland, and, trust me, I can tell you that these three months have changed my mind in many different ways, and, of course, right now I am a better person and I have friends from

places that I wouldn't have imagined before coming here. Just some advice: Watch the videos in wf.is, check your schedule and join us. Iceland, the true Land of Dreams, is waiting for you.



WORK IN PROGRESS

- the old school in Eskifjörður -



After the old school in Eskifjörður was given to the Worldwide Friends organisation in 2013, the renovation team and the volunteers started to renovate the entire building. A lot of work needs to be done before it will become a hostel for travellers and volunteers.

With its amazing view of the mountain "Holmatindur" and its unique charm, the old school is one of the most interesting buildings in Eskifjörður. It was the first building in town that was built as a school. Before then, the inhabitants used residential dwellings to educate their children, but as the population increased, the town needed a larger building. So in 1910, the residents agreed to build a school, and within three months, it was completed. The basement served as the canteen and library, as well as the storage area. There were two classrooms and a gymnasium on the main floor, which could be also used for town meetings..

It seems that there were also a music school and community work for the church on the main floor.

Unfortunately, today the house is not in the best condition: floorboards and panels on the inside walls are coming apart, and the plumbing is damaged. Houses built in this time were not insulated at all, so it is necessary to insulate and renovate the building completely. Under the conditions that the Worldwide Friends organisation would renovate the house and use it for some youth related work, the old school was given to them in XX. The plan for the future is to restore the building to its original condition and to use it as a hostel for volunteers and travellers.



Currently the renovation team of Worldwide Friends is working on replacing the plumbing in the building.

In summer, the plan is to change the weather coat of the house, which means the corrugated iron on the roof and the walls of the main floor will be removed and replaced with new ones. The basement of the house will be painted in its original colours. In the winter, new windows will be built and subsequently installed during the summer of 2016. Additionally, the renovation team intends to use the original main entrance, which is on the east facade of the building. In order to make this possible, they need to restore the door and make a new frame around it. In this case, it is also necessary to repair the stairs up to the original entrance. Inside the building, there will be a complete reshuffle of rooms; the renovation team will move the toilets downstairs and install shower rooms at the same time. The kitchen will be moved to the dorm room of the easternmost part of the building. After that, rooms that are used as the kitchen, bathrooms, dining room and food storage will be converted into two dorm rooms and most of the basement will be converted into dorm rooms as well. The long-term plan is to rebuild an extension into the back of the house which used to be the master room.

There is a lot of work to do, but the renovation team cannot wait to get started with the transformation and make their vision of restoring this historic building a reality.



LUPINS: BEAUTIFUL BUT DANGEROUS

Contrasting colors, in my opinion that is what defines best Iceland's landscape.

When I arrived to Iceland, in my way from the airport (KEF) to Reykjavik, I got surprised not to see any big tree, it was such a black scenery of soil and stones with few grass. However, even darker were the beaches with black sand.

Furthermore, this darkness makes a big contrast with the mountains covered by a mantle of green moss. Its softness invites you to lay down and relax, what seems very easy thanks to the peaceful silence.

Besides, I was astonished by the amazing blueness of the sea water and glaciers, what makes the scenery even more unbelievable.



Finally, I looked up to the sky; it was completely overplayed by a white dense carpet of clouds, just a few rays of sun were able to reach the ground.

Under the sunlight, I could appreciate a storm of colors: yellow, pink, white... but most of all violet. Despite its beauty, the presence of this color is not positive for Icelandic flora due to its belonging, the lupins.

Lupinus Nootkatensis

Lupinus Nootkatensis is a plant native to North America which was introduced to Europa late in the 18th century.

At first it was used to combat erosion, but, surprisingly, this plant grows very well in Icelandic soil.

In brief, Lupins can grow unhindered and create monoculture which prevent native flora from flourishing.

For this reason, Worldwide Friends organization has created a work camp called "Close to nature" whose aim is to avoid Lupins quickly spreading.

I've been talking with Manon, the camp lider, about the importance of their work: "Lupins is an invaded species. It spreads all over Iceland and prevent Icelandic plants to grow. So it is important to hace this work camp for protecting Icelandic nature".



Andrea Ortega

Volunteer

Beer in Iceland

Seok Won Lee
Volunteer



Beer has been the most popular alcohol drink since it was invented 7000 years ago. It's really hard for a drink to survive for thousands of years but it has been a steady-seller. Nowadays it is not strange to see people drinking beer all over the world - from Europe to Asia, to America, and to Africa.

While it is easy to hear about Iceland's magnificent landscape, about Icelandic people believing in elves, or about some

fascinating Icelandic musicians like Sigur Rós or Björk, it is hard to find people talking about Icelandic beer. However, Iceland has lots of stories about beer in its heart. So today, we'll take a slight look at beer in Iceland: history of beer, beer industry and Vinbúðin, and various kinds of beer in Iceland.

History of Beer in Iceland

History of beer in Iceland started with the history of vikings. Vikings settled in Iceland in 892 A.D. and the history of beer was started around 4000 B.C., so it would be okay to say so. While there isn't that many historical records about beer in Iceland during ages of vikings and during middle ages, we can talk about a notable event during 20th century - a prohibition of beer in Iceland.

There was a proposal of a prohibition of all alcohol in 1908. It went through a referendum and the country voted for a ban on all alcoholic drinks. While this law

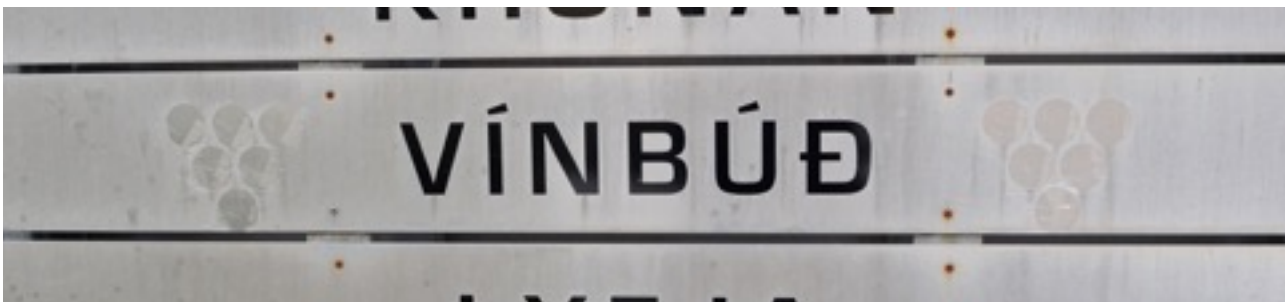


started to take effect from 1st Jan 1915, it soon faced opposition from Spain. Spain said that they will refuse to buy Iceland's sea products unless they lift the ban and buy wines from Spain. As a result, Iceland legalized drinking of wine in 1921.

Like the case of wine, prohibition of other alcoholic drinks in Iceland didn't last long either. The prohibition was repealed in 1935, but beer with an alcohol content higher than 2.25% still remained prohibited. It was mainly because people participating in the temperance movement thought that beer would cause a lot of social problems due to its low price and its wide acceptance. Thus, it took another several decades for beer to be legalized.

The first crack of temperance movement appeared in 1980. A business man went to court and said that the general public should be granted a right to bring duty-free beer from other countries just like airline crews. Although he lost the lawsuit, it provoked public opinion which is against the law prohibiting sale and consumption of beer.

Finally a bill of beer legalization passed in the lower house on April 1988 and passed in the upper house on May of same year. The beer was legalized at last on 1 March 1989 and now Icelandics celebrate Beer Day on 1 March.



Beer Industry and Vínbúðin in Iceland

There are several breweries in Iceland. Among them, Egill Skallagrímsson Brewery and Vífilfell (Viking Ölgerd) are the two biggest Breweries and only commercial breweries (in contrary to microbrewery) at the same time. Egils beer and Viking beer are made from these breweries. They offer a wide selection of lager beer and it seems like that ale beer is not in the center of public interest.

One notable thing about these breweries is that unlike those of other countries, beer is not the only product of them. Egill Skallagrímsson Brewery produces Brennivin (Icelandic traditional spirit) and orange soda with beer, and Vífilfell produces some sodas from Coca-Cola Company along with fruit juices and chocolate milk drink, beside Viking beer. Maybe it is because beer had been prohibited until 1989 and there wasn't enough time and chances for new breweries to grow, which was a common case in Germany and Belgium.

Another interesting fact about beer in Iceland is that there's only one place that you can buy a beer - Vínbúðin. All alcoholic drink with an alcohol content higher than 2.25% can be sold only in Vínbúðin and pubs, which means that you cannot buy a beer in a supermarket. Egils Pilsner, which only contains 2.25% alcohol, is the only beer on sale in regular supermarket.

Plus, taxes on alcoholic drinks are not a percentage of price. They increase in proportion to the alcoholic content of the liquor. It is one of the measures of Icelandic government to decrease consumption of alcohol, just like *Vinbúðin*.

Various Kinds of Beer in Iceland

Here, I will classify and introduce my opinions of some beers from Iceland in accordance with their brands. You will be able to get a glimpse of some Icelandic beer.

Viking Beer

Viking Ölgerð offers a wide selection of lager beers, which are No.1 bestselling beer in Iceland. One distinguishing characteristic of Viking beers is that its taste is clean and simple. In some way, this beer can be called standard of lager.

Viking Lager is a pale lager beer with a clear yellow color. You can feel a light floral aroma and taste from it. It also contains a weak malty taste with a bitter and dry finish. (2/5)

RateBeer.com introduces Viking Sterkur as a malt liquor, but you can experience a pilsner from it. While it seems that Viking Sterkur is a little bit similar to Viking Lager except it's higher alcohol content, this one has a darker color, stronger aroma of hop, and a much more bitter finish. (2.5/5)



Kaldi Beer

Kaldi beer comes from a microbrewery called *Bruggsmidjan Kaldi*. A clerk at *Vinbúðin* explained that it is the No.2 bestselling beer in Iceland, which is right next to Viking beer.

Kaldi Lager is a pilsner beer which has speciality in its subtle bitterness. While it starts with a standard and clean flavor, you can feel an earthy and spicy hop with a little bit of fruit. The finish is dry and comes with medium bitterness. Grain, spicy hop, and bitterness will be the most appropriate words that explain this beer. (3.5/5)

You can feel an aroma of toast and caramel from Kaldi Dökkur. The flavor is also toast and caramel with light hops and bitterness. Mild body but you will feel bitterness in the finish. If you like a flavor of caramel and you are okay with a bit watery beer with bitterness, you will really like this beer. (3/5)



Norðan Kaldi is a pale ale with a mild body that comes with a flavor of caramel and herbal hops. It has a soft feeling in your mouth and a mild bitterness at the same time. Because there are a lot of lager beers in Iceland, this pale ale beer can be a special choice for you. (3.5/5)

Einstök Beer

Einstök Beer Co. produces 5 kinds of nice ale beers. Unlike other breweries, they export a lot of their beer to America. (That doesn't mean other breweries do not export at all though.) Among them, Einstök Icelandic White Ale and Einstök Icelandic Toasted Porter are superb. I personally think they are one of the best beer in Iceland.

The style of Einstök Icelandic White Ale is brewed with the Belgian tradition of Witbier, including orange peel and coriander. The aroma comes mostly from the coriander. The palate is quite thin but the finish is long. You can feel the cleanliness of Icelandic water from palate to finish. (3.5/5)



Einstök Icelandic Toasted Porter is a porter beer as you can see in its name. You can feel dark chocolate and coffee from its aroma and flavors. It's similar to Guinness, but the palate and finish are opposite. Like Einstök Icelandic White Ale, the palate is relatively thin but it has medium body and the bitterness of the finish lasts long. (4/5)

Iceland or Fishland?



When you come to Iceland, you have some expectations. About the weather for example or about the food. The Icelandic weather is a very interesting topic but let's rather focus on the food. When you arrive in Iceland, you hope to eat fish, well more precisely a lot of big fresh fish and I won't blame you for that. Indeed, the second biggest island after Great Britain is surrounded by water (logical you would say since it is an island). Anyway, Iceland has maritime boundaries with Greenland, Norway and other countries, and its coastline is about 5000 km long. So when it is about seafood, Iceland is the place to be.

The island has 200 nautical miles of exclusive fishing zone that it is to say 758 000 km² of opportunities to catch some fish. The country has thus some of the richest fishing grounds in the world. Nevertheless, why is it interesting to talk about the fishing industry in Iceland? I will answer it right away: the Icelandic economy is heavily dependent upon fishing and this activity is in fact one of the main pillars of the Icelandic economy, that's why Iceland is seen as one of the most modern and competitive seafood industries in this whole world.

The island has been able to create this kind of heavy industry thanks to its respect towards the

environment. Iceland practices indeed a sustainable harvest and a protection of the marine ecosystem. And even with the crisis that hit the peaceful island, fish still represent the country's leading export items and seafood remains the backbone of the economy. Although Iceland has stuck by the International arena (or at least European) for the fish's trade, the country had to make some radical changes. Before the world crisis of 2008, the Icelandic economy was revolving around the fishing sector with a dependence in the fishing market. Thereby, Iceland has established fishing fleet with advanced technologies and has developed its economy in other sectors like building.

But do not worry, Iceland is still a fishland, full of species such as cods, flatfishes and catfishes. Besides, if you come to one of the fjords of East Iceland like the nice village of Stodvarfjörður you will be able to see for yourself that fishing remains a very popular activity. In this sector, the job opportunities are numerous and the salaries are high. Many are the imposing Icelandic people who propose a boat tour, to fish and to taste some delicious fresh stark or dry fish.

Emma Georget
Volunteer



Our huge and friendly neighbors

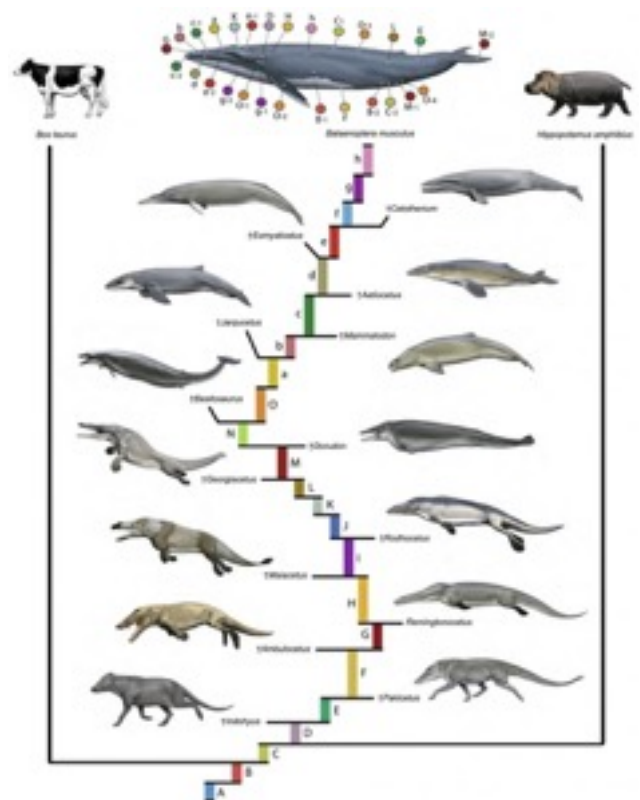
One of the main attractions in Iceland are the whales. A lot of tourist and volunteers come to this country with the hope of watching them, and in the next article we are going to explain some stories about these friendly and huge animals. Enjoy the ride! / by Evgeniya Gubanova

History of whales

Evolution is not always a movement to the new things. Sometimes it turns back, but often it is not degradation. So, the principle of that evolution belongs to whales. The Cetaceans not even unregressed, but left behind a lot of species, living on a ground nowadays. The history of Cetaceans started 55 million years ago. According to the Darwin's Theory of evolution, one species follows another, adding new features. Gradually, future whales lost their legs, changed spine and hands.

But the Cetaceans still, like another mammals on the ground:

- breathe with the air of atmosphere, using their pulmonary system.
- their bones of their fins looks like bones of our hands.
- the movement of tail and spine is more similar to the running animals, than to fish.
- like another mammals, they are warmblood and newborns are growing up with mother's milk



Whales nowadays

Dimensions of Cetaceans are the greatest: the average length of a Blue Whale is 25 meters, and weight is 90-120 tons. So, these species are the biggest animals living nowadays on our planet. From previous ancestors, whales separated on three suborders, consist of 127 extinct and 38 living genus: archaeoceti, mysticoceti and odontoceti.



INTERESTING FACTS:

- Blue Whales are the biggest animals on the Earth ever.
- If you take a look at the evolution's picture, you will see that whales are the closest relatives to hippos.
- Whales use their lower jaw for hearing.
- They eat one million calories per day.
- Their tails are unique, like our fingerprints.
- They can live without sleeping for three months.
- They can imitate human speech.

Killing Whales

Almost every part of a whale's body had a particular value in human's life before the 20th century. The fat of the Cetaceans was used as soap, margarine and theatrical makeup. Processed muscles were used as a fertilizer for plants and as food for animals. Whalebones were used in production of mattresses, toothbrushes and corsets. Nowadays, meat of whales are a delicacy, and their sperm is used in production of cosmetics. Excessive murder of these great creatures of nature badly affect their quantity; most of the Cetaceans are in The Red Book now.

TAKE A LOOK AT NUMBERS BELOW:

There is a statistics of killing whales just in Faroe Islands:

1900-1999: 1225 per year
1980-1999: 1511 per year
1990-1999: 956 per year

The Fin Whale, in danger of extinction now, can be killed in Iceland nowadays.



The Cetaceans are beautiful, big and harmless creatures, whose power defy imagination. Still, killing whales isn't forbidden in Norway, Faroe Islands, Iceland, Greenland and Canada. The life of these glorious animals is in our hands, and only we can stop this horrible murder.

Evgeniya Gubanova
Volunteer



I met Johan Johannesson

By Andrea Guiati /

Maybe you don't know where Stodvarfjordur is... it doesn't matter. Because anytime and anyplace you feel good, means there is a Stodvarfjordur inside you. Iceland means, as you probably know, frozen or ice country, but, I tell you what, the more cold is the country, the more warm and friendly people living there are.

This short story is regarding an Iceland's fisherman, one of the last.

I met Johann Johannesson (Joi for everybody) one day of my life and, at that moment, the time starts to slice slowly through my eyes into the sea. You don't need a map to find him, just come in Stodvarfjordur, and ask of Joi and about his little boat named Anne Kristin, as his daughter (see picture). Joi is 64 years old, and has lived here with his wife for a long time until she died 2 years ago. When I met him the first time at his home in Stodvarfjordur, it was pretty funny because Joi doesn't speak english at all.

So, how can a foreign (Italian) talk (comunicate) with an Icelander without know a word of this language? Simply: With a phone and another Icelander (that speaks English) on the other side that translates on real time with Joi: every minute I was talking in english on the phone and giving the same one to Joi, and Joi talking on the phone in icelandic and giving me back the phone again.

After 15 minutes we, me and Joi, start to smile. You probably doesn't know but, I can tell you, a smile can broke any wall in front of you. Do it every day, it works.

After we spent some hours on the ocean with his little boat "Anne Kristin".



I can assure you that all your problems will disappear during this trip fishing our soul.

When you are inside this little boat on the ocean and you understand that you are really a little part of our nature, well, in that moment you will discover that you are not fishing fish but yourself: your soul will be cleaned.

Doesn't matter if the weather is good or bad: you will feel good anyway.

Joi said to me that all the people on this little village of 150 persons was selling fish, and they could living with this job, but after the crisis of 2008 (and even before that time) everything changed, and people was looking for a better (and safe) job, because they cannot anymore send to Europe the fish that they catch due to the high cost of transport.

Most of the people in Stodvarfjordur now work on the fisher factory Lodnvinnsla in Faskrudsfordur and on the big alluminum factory Alcoa in Reydarfjordur.

It's for this reason that now only a few people has a boat and still fish on the sea.

I'm wondering if a fisherman could anymore exist into this "quick" world.

I do not have the answer, but for sure I will be by on the side of the "fisherman"... always.



SWEATER WEATHER

Visiting Iceland do not hesitate at a chance to buy the traditional woollen goods. For a long time Icelandic sweaters have been world famous.

One of the villages where employment is largely textile-based is Stöðvarfjörður, located in the east of Iceland. As a Worldwide Friends' volunteer I had an opportunity to personally track the local textile industry and get to know about their knitting traditions.



Vaðmál or homespun, woven woollen cloths, were Iceland's most important export until stockfish (dried fish) became predominant in the 14th century.

Long before knitting brought in payment from exports the actual wool itself was used in Iceland as money to buy other goods. Woven into cloth was known as wadmál and was internationally accepted as coinage.



There were many different kinds of cloth. Striped wadmál, the better quality hafnarvadmál, and the most common type "trade" wadmál woven to be sold.

Woolworking was a domestic craft, mainly women's work. The technique of knitting is still alive and is commonly used at everyone's homes. In fact, the average Icelander owns about fifteen sweaters. Sweaters are particularly made by an older generation, including men. Lapapeysa sold in the handicraft market in the Salthúsið in Stöðvarfjörður are made by a group of ten people. The shop is opened for 3 months per year and they sell about seventy sweaters in that time. As the seller - Sara Jakobsel Michelsen said, the local production doesn't include exports to other places in Iceland or abroad. For the impact of hand knitting, the input is not too big but

presents an extraordinary quality and precision of the realisation.

In the past pattern knitting showed an influence from Scandinavian designs, however recently the designs have been taken much more seriously and they have stopped making copies of the Scandinavian designs and are going back to their Icelandic roots.

Some of the designs are reminiscent of many familiar Scandinavian designs but there are those which seem to be relate to Iceland alone. There is a ribbon fold pattern which seems to appear nowhere else in colour and can be seen in every recent designs worked with natural browns, cream, rust and black of the sheeps. Today the most popular yarn is loopy - the soft, almost untwisted one.



The ribbon pattern is simplified in many sweaters today. Two border pattern - simple geometric patterns are ideally suited to the thick yarn. There is used also arrowhead border pattern. All kinds of patterns are similar and being small geometric designs. The patterns that we can admire in Stöðvarfjörður mirror features, which are typical for the whole Iceland.

Unique woollen cloths are pleasingly felt and allow you to feel the nature that the cloth

“The average Icelander owns about fifteen sweaters.”

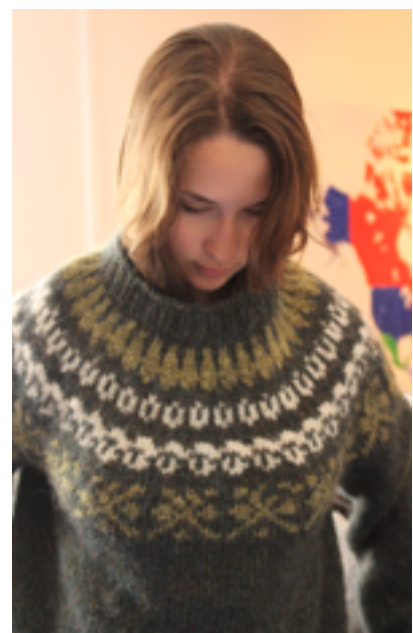
- SARA JAKOBSEL MICHELSEN

long bright nights and recall the taste of the adventure.

Weronika Tyce

Volunteer

came from. They are not only a mandatory item in an Icelander's closet but also an common garment for all tourists during Icelandic sweater weather. Lupapeysa may be a memorable souvenir, which let us think back to the cold evenings, and the





LOOKING FOR THE ELVES

Francesco Galasso

Volunteer

Nowadays if somebody searches the word "elf" on google he will find more than ten million results.

In Iceland, the country where we could find elves in the oldest myths and people used to believe in them, today they are just linked to tourism.

The first thing that I noticed in Keflavik airport was a big advertisement saying "troll and elf tour, 50 euros". I'm looking for them. I'm looking for elves, and I know that neither google nor any touristic infopoint would give me the answer. That's why I tried to talk with people about them. They answered me as if I was talking about Santa Klaus or the Easter Rabbit. I needed to find someone else, someone that still believed in them, that could give me real information, real legend.

real stories... where elves, troll, old heroes and masters are the main characters, settled in Iceland, for sure.

I've been for ten days in a little village of the east of Iceland, Stovadfjordur, little enough to preserve its people from tourist invasion.

There is just one place in Stovadfjordur where you can always find someone, where old men and fishermen meet other.

One morning I went there to take a coffee, it was a damn cold July's thursday, and I found only one person indoor: an

old woman. Suddenly I realized that there I could find the answer to my question, and stop wondering how to get this information: old people always know old legends and stories, they always preserve the ancient memories of a country. So I decided to sit next to her, while reading a novel in Italian, written by an Icelandic author. She started to look at the book, recognizing the author, but trying to understand the language. So I started a very simple conversation. It was very difficult to interact with her, she couldn't speak English properly. I offered her a coffee and after twenty minutes talking about the weather, I decided to ask her about the fairy tales and the elves. She looked at me in a weird way: "nowadays, just few people believe in them"

Suddenly, she started to collect her stuffs and to leave the table. I immediately said: "please ma'm. I believe in them a little. I mean, I don't believe in anything, but Iceland and fairy tales inspire me. Tell me something about them".

After few seconds she smiled, sat down and started to talk. "We first need to know that there are different kind of elves", she told me.

"One kind is tall, as the lord of the rings (literally words) the other kind is little and fast. They are everywhere, and if you try you can feel their presence."

"Here in Stovadfjörður there was a rock where children used to play with invisible creatures, where even if it was just a rock, flowers used to grow on it, and sometimes during the long winter's night a little door appeared on the northern side.

Some years ago the rock was moved, because they needed to build a parking car. Now there is nothing on it anymore, just a simple rock.

Then she told me about the trolls, evil and big creatures that, if sunlight catches them, they transmute into stone.

"If you'd like to look for them, you might find their face in the stones, bigger and uglier than human's, yep, but you will be able to recognize their eyes, nose and even their teeth. Try with your computer, changing the light of the picture, and the troll will appear"

So we kept on talking about them, and she told me that in Reykjavik I could find a library where there are a lot of old books. Finally she looked at her watch, and she said "now I need to go, they are waiting for me. good by Italian kid"



JAMES BOND



GAME OF THRONES



INTERSTELLAR



THE SECRET LIFE OF
WALTER MITTY

Shot in Iceland

Thank you Mother Nature for having Iceland on Earth. These lands are heaven for the lucky people who live here. Since the nature is so inspiring, people want to show these beauties to the all world. Filming many movies and TV shows in Iceland? You will be surprised when you know how many shows that you watched shot in Iceland. With the changing surroundings and various forecasts during the day, Iceland is perfect for using the scenery that was shot in another part of the world.



Many scenes of famous movies like Batman Begins, The Secret Life of Walter Mitty, Tomb Raider, Interstellar and James Bond were shot in famous places in Iceland. Nowadays "Game of Thrones" which is a very popular British TV show, is also being shot in the amazing landscapes of Iceland.

Beyond The Wall of Game of Thrones

Nowadays the British TV show, Game of Thrones is very popular all around the world. Did you know that it was also shot in Iceland? Volcanic but frozen, Iceland is truly the right place for the Ice and Fire kingdom of Game of Thrones. With the harsh environment in the winter, it is the best place in the world to shoot the harsh cold winter scenes.

Actors found it difficult while shooting, for example fighting scenes upon a cliff while snowing. In the end, all the effort they made, were worth it.

Barren, alien, beautiful but brutal... This mysterious landscape is the perfect location for the land Beyond the Wall.



Producer Chris Newman said they wanted as much of the scenery to be as true to life as possible, and that they weren't "doing anything in postproduction to add mountains or snow or anything." Hence, many of the locations used in these scenes are available to be visited... should you be able to bear the cold.

Filming places included Höfðabrekkubeiði, the Myrdalsjökull glacier, the Vatnajökull glacier - Europe's largest ice cap- and Lake Myvatn which, although a protected area, is easily accessible for visitors. The lake is known for the area of the "black castles". Majority of the scenes were shot in the lake but also Skaftafell National Park is also on the list.

"Life is about
courage and
going into the
unknown"



Here is the list of the some of the famous movies that shot in Iceland:

Batman Begins

Faust

Interstellar

Journey to the Center of the Earth

Land Ho!

Tomb Raider

Prometheus

Star Trek

The Secret Life of Walter Mitty

The Secret Life of Walter Mitty



"Life is about courage and going into the unknown". That is the motto of the movie that pushed Walter to discover more and to come to Iceland after the photographer of the Life Magazine. The movie tries to make people discover, and have more and more adventures. All the amazing scenes were from Iceland: even the Greenland and Afghanistan scenes. For example for the

Himalayas&Afghanistan scenes they were in Skagafoss Waterfall in Vatnajökull National Park and for Nuuk in Greenland, they shot in the southeast of Iceland- Höfn. Other scenes were in Stykkishólmur, Snæfellsnes peninsula, Seydisfjörðvegur, Grundarfjörður. Also the soundtrack of the movie is quite related to the movie. The scene that Walter Mitty was in Iceland for the first time, "Dirty Paws" from the indie Icelandic band 'Of Monsters



and Man' plays in the back. Is it a coincidence? I don't think so. To me, movies make people learn more things about the world and other people. Some of them push you to another place and can teach you something. This movie made me to find an opportunity to come to Iceland and have some adventures like Walter Mitty.

HUMANS OF WORLDWIDE FRIENDS

[Inspired in Humans of New York blog]

We believe in the interest of daily conversations and we are passionate about human stories and thoughts. That's why we have been collecting quotes and short stories from people in our work camp. We have realized that volunteers have lots of amazing stories to share and interesting reflections on life, friendship, culture... And we invite you to discover them!



Weronika and Karolina (Poland) "We were in the same class in Kindergarten, primary school and high school. We are neighbours and our parents are friends. We both have sisters of the same age. We also used to spend our holidays together. Our friendship was a "must" because when you are a child, you need someone who is similar and who you can speak with.

"Now we study in different cities and rarely see each other. So we are happy to be here together."



Seokwon (South Korea) "You guys don't feel strange about talking to people from other culture and countries. I really kind of envy you. Do you know there's a kind of private space? (laughs) At least for Asians. Because there's literally no distance between you guys. You all have got very close in four days. If a bunch of Asians came here we wouldn't have enough time to get close!"



Fernando (Spain) "World Youth Day is an event for young people around the world. It's organized every two years by the Catholic Church. Millions of people take part in them, it's a huge event. I went to the 2011 one in Madrid as a volunteer, and it really changed me. There, I met different people and discovered many cultures, nationalities and ways of living religion and faith. Before going to the WYD I was more sceptical, it really opened my mind. I returned home thinking it had been the best experience of my life. I was really moved when I saw the Pope from two meters away, during the mass they organized for volunteers. It started to rain heavily but the Pope Ratzinger decided to stay until the ceremony ended like all of us."



Madlen (Germany) "I've been away from home since I turned eighteen, it has been seven years. I've never been back. My grandparents raised me because my mother worked a lot, but I had a really nice childhood. Sometimes I feel bad about not sharing many moments with them because most of the time I'm far away. But I'm lucky I have these socks, they make me feel like home because my grandmother made them. Actually, I stole them from my mother (laughs).

Aga (Poland) "I wanted to find a challenge for myself and have some time for thinking. So I chose Iceland. Sometimes it's hard to travel alone because you can't talk to people or share with them your experiences like what you see and who you meet. But on the other hand, you have the possibility to meet the local people. This trip is more about people than places. I didn't have a plan and I still haven't got one.





Luis and Daniel (Spain) "For me friendship is not about the number of years that we have known each other. For example, I met this guy two months ago and I feel like he's my real bro. In the first moment we connected, it was magical. We are in the same moment of our life: a moment of changes."

"Maybe we don't have to speak a lot, but we always know what the other is thinking. I remember when we were in a concert together and I just stopped to say "I'm happy to be here with you Luis"."

"I love our hangover mornings (hug each other)."



Emma (France) "I would never jump naked in the sea because it's too cold and I'd feel very uncomfortable with all the volunteers there. I think some of the people here are crazy. For example, they're planning on going camping in the nature and I don't think I could do that. Oh, and party every night it's also too much for me."



Alyona (Russia) "I think I will have to go to rehab after this, it's such an intense experience. But yesterday, around the campfire I realized that what I'm doing makes sense. It's my first time as a camp leader in the teenage camp; we were kind of forced (laughs). I felt a little bit nervous about it, but now I'm very happy. We can learn a lot from teenagers, they get excited about everything. Unfortunately, the older you get, the more experience you have, you create some filters through which you see the world. When you communicate with younger people, they are more innocent and excited about things."



Hazal (Turkey) "My grandparents from Iran met my father during a trip to Istanbul and both families started sending letters to each other. Some years later, my father went to Iran and finally met my mother. The volcano exploded (laughs), they got married two years later and moved to Turkey. Until then, everything was ok, but after the wedding both families started to hate each other. My father was poor, but for my mother being with him was enough, she was powerful. Four years ago my mother got cancer and her parents blame my father and his family for that. When I was a child I thought they were going to get a divorce, but they didn't because they are strong and love each other. I'm really proud of that story!"



Andrea (Italy) "I like talking to everyone: I don't care about religion, nationality... (stops to take a picture). My purpose is to learn all the languages in the world. After that, there would be no reason for anyone to tell me "I don't understand you". Sometimes people just say that because their mind is closed. People will try to stop you, but believe me, if a person tells you "don't do this" it's only because he or she can't do it. [...] We are in this world not to make war, but to exchange the best that we have. Maybe I'm wrong but honestly I don't see any difference between me and a monkey or a fish. That's why I don't believe in God. I believe in nature."



Evgeniya (Russia) "There are no words to explain how much I love my parents. They help me with everything. I don't have brothers or sisters, so they really miss me now that I'm living in Moscow city because of my studies. They live in different houses because my mother works in the centre of Voronezh and it's better for her to live there, while my father lives in the surroundings. They had a little dog who became their daughter, but about two months ago she died. It was awful for my mother because she is alone now. And I'm really sad about that."



Andrea (Spain) "I saw on the Internet that buses in Iceland are expensive, while hitch hiking is common. So even though that's weird in Spain, Fernando and I decided to give it a try. I thought it would be easier, but we had to wait an hour and a half the first day, so I was a little bit disappointed. The advantages of doing this is the money you save and the attitude you adopt thanks to it. You never know what are you going to do next, where are you going to sleep. You have to be very patient, wait and enjoy the moment. You can meet very nice people who can explain to you their stories or help you with interesting tips about Iceland. It's actually relaxing, I love it."



Francesco (Italy) "That was a really stupid idea. I started to climb that waterfall and when it was too late I realized I couldn't do it. Stones were falling to Clara's and Fernando's heads while I climbed, and the wall was too wet and steep to continue. The first thing that I thought when I arrived to the top was "I'm alive". Then "Clara is trying to climb!" so I turned to warn her: "Clara don't do this, trust me, don't!". But they both tried, so they threw their hiking sticks to me and almost hit me. Seokwon was there too, but he quit after almost falling to the water. Luckily, in some moments you find a way to manage the situation thanks to adrenaline. We are heroes, real adventurers."



Gemma and Clara (Spain) "We had just met and we went shopping for this trip. It was weird. Clara suggested buying chicken in cans: I thought she was crazy."

"It was difficult for us to find the White House hostel but we finally arrived there at 3am. We had to sleep in the garage with the bikes (laughs). I think our adventures together as "strangers" have made our friendship stronger really quickly, and that's awesome!"

"I think that Clara is the best companion I could have for this adventure in Iceland because we kind of complement each other."

Gemma Solé and Clara Bara
Volunteers