

RANGÁ REVIEW

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page 2/3

FAT BIKE ADVENTURES

Explore the volcanic landscape on an all-terrain fat-bike, these ultra-cool, super sturdy bikes are made for Iceland

page 4/7

HIDDEN HIGHLANDS

Discover the wild interior of Iceland's lunar landscape, explore volcanic deserts, thermal meadows and frozen lakes

page 16/17

SOUL FOOD

Enjoy the delights of lovingly prepared seasonal dishes and savour the delicious flavours of Iceland's traditional winter cuisine





FAT BIKE ADVENTURES

Explore the highs and lows of Southern Iceland where no terrain is too rough and no route too challenging

Iceland has long been a top destination for mountain bikers who love the unexpected thrills this unforgiving land can present, but now it seems that Fat Bikes are taking Iceland by storm. Built to cope with the most extreme conditions these chubby wheeled monsters are proving a massive hit with hardier travellers or for those seeking an adrenaline fuelled biking adventure. Capable of coping with ice, snow, sand, dust,

lava, mud and water, these robust all-weather bikes are proving a hit throughout the year. On a fat bike, riders can scale volcanoes, cross black sand beaches, traverse frozen rivers, bounce over lava meadows and push themselves to the limit. Of course with Iceland's sensitive eco-system you must respect the environment and stick to one of the many tracks which are mapped out for bikers and hikers.

To get the most out of this wild and wonderful terrain why not team up with an expert guide who can tailor your route to your level of experience and design a trail that meets your personal requirements. Ask at reception about Fat Bike tours of Southern Iceland.

THE HIDDEN HIGHLANDS

The gateway to an uninhabited and unspoilt land

Head to Iceland's Highlands this winter and experience some of the region's most dramatic scenery. If you are touring the region and looking to go deep into the heart of this wild and enthralling landscape, then you must head to the Interior Highland. A gateway to a heart-stoppingly beautiful part of Iceland, the Highland offers travellers the opportunity to seriously get away from everything and see the extreme contrasts of this bold natural environment. Just under two hours from Hotel Rangá you will find the Highland Center Hrauneyjar, situated at the edge of the country's most impressive and active volcanic area. It is the last stop

before entering the vast and untouched interior of Iceland. This is the prime location from which to base yourself as the Highland Center Hrauneyjar not only offers excellent accommodation, it also has a very good restaurant and better still, all of your activities and excursions can be organised from here. The Highland Center Hrauneyjar is close to many of the most beautiful and popular attractions in The Highland - including Landmannalaugar, Þjórsárdalur, Mount Hekla, Sprengisandur, Veidivötn and Fjallabak. The vastness and lack of human impact on the surrounding area makes it one of the last places in Europe where freedom, natural beauty and solitude work in harmony.



Although an experienced driver can safely travel around the interior we recommend that for a once in a life time experience you hire a local guide who will take you to some of the wildest and most spectacular locations. Most of them are only accessible by 4x4 or some can only be reached by those with local knowledge and good 4x4 driving experience.





LANDMANNALAUGAR

This magical valley is located deep in the Highland interior, resting between beautiful gem-coloured mountains and the dark edge of the rhyolite lava field Laugahraun. The surroundings of Landmannalaugar are spellbinding with the richly tinted mountains offering a stunning backdrop to the hot and cold

thermal meadows and springs where you can bathe all year-round. This rich and fertile valley overflows with wild flowers in the Spring and Summer making Landmannalaugar a land of extreme contrasts where hot and cold meet in unison to produce an oasis of colour and enchanting natural elements.



VEIDIVÖTN LAKES

Fishing Lakes

The Veidivötn Lakes offer an oasis of tranquillity set within desert-like surroundings only 30 km from The Highland Center Hrauneyjar. The crater formations provide a distinct contrast between the black sand and crystal clear

water giving the scene a lunar quality. The lakes are rich in trout that are believed to be from one of the oldest stocks in Europe, making Veidivötn the perfect destination for those keen fishing enthusiasts.



SPRENGISANDUR

The route F26 gravel road traverses the wildest most uninhabited terrain found in Iceland. Sprengrisandur is the barren and bleak highland desert located on the east side between Hofsjökull – the rounded icecap marking Iceland's geographical centre – and Vatnajökull Iceland's north western front. This area has its own particular charm and historically this deserted region

was thought to be frequented by ghosts, giants, elves and outlaws. Today, Sprengrisandur attracts hikers and visitors looking to get away from the constant hustle and bustle of the outside world. The Sprengrisandur route remains a challenging one, whose unbridged rivers and stark scenery provide an insight into medieval Iceland's harsh living conditions.



To experience the very best The Highland has to offer, hire the services of a local guide or adventure company who know the region inside and out, that way you will have the opportunity to see the real hidden Highlands. To organise your Highland tour or to book accommodation at The Highland Center Hrauneyjar speak to reception at Hotel Rangá or check out:

www.thehighlandcenter.is

SUPER COOL SNOWMOBILING

One activity on the Iceland 'must-do' list has to be to try a little snowmobiling. Whether you simply want to have a taster session for a couple of hours or prefer to immerse yourself in the whole ice-cool adventure experience, snowmobiling is a wonderful activity for everyone.

The whole idea of snowmobiling on a glacier may seem a little too 'James Bond' at first, but in reality snowmobile tours can easily take you cruising across glaciers, lagoons, rivers and ice-caps.

Why not combine a high powered super-jeep tour with a snowmobile excursion on one of the glaciers as this makes for a perfect full day tour with a little adventure thrown in for good measure?



HIKE A GLACIER

Most travelers visiting Iceland for the first time have a list of 'essential' activities and it has to be said that Glacier Hiking features highly on that list

The good news is that the outlet glaciers from the icecaps on the South Shore are easily accessed and provide a whole host of glacier activities, ranging from easy hikes that can be adapted to suit almost everyone all the way up to more extreme glacier adventures. The duration of the shorter hikes is around 2½ – 3½ hours where you get a fantastic introduction to the magical world of glaciers, with their own water systems, crevasses, dirt cones, glacier mice, moulins and possibly ice-caves. If you are traveling in the area of the icecaps Myrdalsjökull and

Vatnajökull (the biggest icecap in Iceland and the third largest in the world), you should not miss the opportunity to join a glacier hike. The tours are operated on the outlet glaciers of the icecaps i.e. Sólheimajökull, an outlet glacier from Myrdalsjökull and Falljökull and Svínafellsjökull, outlet glaciers in the Vatnajökull National Park in the Skaftafell area.

Glacier Hiking is one of the most popular activities for guests staying at Hotel Rangá and a variety of Glacial experiences can be arranged and tailored to suit both groups and individual travellers.

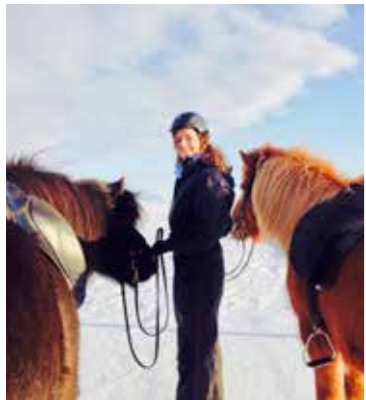




SIGHTSEEING FROM THE SADDLE

If you love the great outdoors and want to get out and explore the countryside from the comfort of the saddle, then you must try riding Icelandic horses. Sturdy and solid, intelligent and brave, these beautiful creatures make the perfect companions for exploring the rugged Icelandic terrain. Gentle, patient and strong, Icelandic horses are ideal for

beginners and younger riders or those who are less familiar with horses. The perfect excursion for friends and family, treks of various lengths can be arranged for both novice and experienced riders. Icelandic horses are some of the hardest on the planet and no matter what the weather they make sight-seeing from the saddle a magical experience.





STARGAZING AND THE NORTHERN LIGHTS

Stargazing expert Sævar Helgi Bragason explains why Hotel Rangá's observatory is particularly unique and gives an overview of how the telescopes and location of Hotel Rangá, are relevant globally

"Hotel Rangá is situated in a beautiful area in the southern part of Iceland, where the skies have excellent clarity and there is virtually no light pollution. Here we have a fantastic 360 degree view of the night sky with no trees or large buildings in the way (except of course the observatory itself), so it's the perfect place to go stargazing.

The Hotel Rangá observatory is by far the most advanced in Iceland. With a push of a button, the roof rolls off, revealing the night sky above us. Despite the fact that the roof rolls-off, the observatory offers exceptionally good shelter for the cold northerly wind, making it possible for us to stay outside for hours without freezing.

The observatory houses three very high quality telescopes. We have a large 14 inch Celestron Edge HD reflector and two apochromatic refractors: a 130mm from Astro-Physics and a 160mm by TEC. All the scopes are on computerized mounts that track the objects in the sky perfectly. This equipment is ideal for astrophotography, even basic research. We also have one other telescope, the largest one in Iceland, an 18 inch reflector.

The Hotel Rangá observatory is the only public observatory in Iceland that offers guided tours of the night sky by expert stargazers. Although we don't experience 24 hours of darkness, the Sun is only visible for about four hours during the darkest part of the year, making it possible for us to observe the stars for about 20 hours non-stop, without being freezing cold. That's pretty unique worldwide! (In similar latitudes around the world, the temperature can easily drop much lower than -10°C . It hardly ever does here, making it much more comfortable). Using the solar equipment, we can easily do some observing 24/7."

Are there any specific guidelines for Stargazing?

It's important to let your eyes get adapted to the dark. If you do so, you'll see even more stars and the Milky Way becomes more prominent. Even the faintest wisps of the auroras will be easier to see. It's also important to dress warmly. We offer our guests winter arctic-suits that are really warm. Finally, we encourage people to ask us questions on anything that has to do with the night sky.

Can you see any stars/constellations/planets from Iceland which you can't see elsewhere?

Not unless you live in the Southern hemisphere. Those who live in the Northern hemisphere, at a similar latitude, share the same sky. Therefore, we see the same stars, constellations and planets as others in northern Europe. However, we are ideally located to see the Northern lights, something people in more southerly latitudes hardly ever or never see. Although we don't train our telescopes towards them, simply because they're too widespread over the sky, they truly are a beautiful sight to see.

If the auroras appear while we are observing, we stop and enjoy the view, try to educate people about the auroras and help them take pictures.

Are there any astronomical events you will only be able to witness in Iceland (or outside of the UK at least) which we should be aware of coming up? Are any of these an annual occurrence?

The next few years will be a bit quiet with regards to big celestial events like eclipses. The next total lunar eclipse will be in January 2019.

» continues on pg. 14

» continues from pg. 13

Fortunately, the sky is pretty big so we never run out of interesting objects to look at.

Every year we follow some meteor showers. The best one for us is the Geminids in the middle of December. Weather permitting, keep a close eye on them. On a really good night, you might see roughly a hundred shooting stars per hour.

Tell us a little about your society's involvement with Hotel Rangá and how your presence there works in practice? i.e. how often are you or another member of the team there, how long do you spend with clients, what do you teach them?

The amateur astronomical society has been instrumental in building the observatory. A couple of years ago, Fridrik the owner of Hotel Rangá introduced this idea to us. We were ecstatic, as we had been trying to build our own observatory somewhere outside the city lights. We chose the equipment (telescopes, eyepieces, all the equipment) and had our say in how the observatory should be constructed (roll-off roof, height of walls etc). We even moved our telescope, the largest one in Iceland, from the light pollution in Reykjavik to the clear skies of Rangá. This truly is the best place to be. We'll try and be there every clear night for observing. We have spent anywhere from 2 hours to 4 hours with people in the observatory, sometimes longer if anyone wishes to. There's no limit, just what guests want. I am there personally as much as I possibly can.

What do guests do? We show them the best objects and try and teach them something about what they are seeing, be it the Moon, a planet or some far away cluster, nebulae or a galaxy. If a new comet appears, we'll of course point the telescopes to it. We also tell people about the myths in the night sky, Icelandic, Greek/Roman, even African.

Can you outline a couple of your lovely brief stories offering an explanation for a particular alignment of the stars? Are these known worldwide or unique "astro sagas" for Iceland?

We offer guided tours of the night sky. By that I mean I point out the what we are seeing with a laser pointer and tell people about the myths, legends and history of the constellations. The sky is full of not only stars but lovely stories, some of them unique for Iceland but most of them are known worldwide. By telling some of these stories, the sky becomes alive and I believe afterwards people are more open and eager to learn the science.

My favorite myth is the story of queen Cassiopeia, king Cepheus (the only husband-and-wife among the constellations) and their daughter Andromeda. All of these constellations are prominent and easy to see in the night sky.

One day, the story goes, Cassiopeia was combing her hair, looking in the mirror and said that she was the most beautiful woman in the world, even more beautiful than the Nereids, the sea nymphs. The Nereids did not like that and sought revenge, so they asked the sea god Poseidon to punish Cassiopeia for her vanity.

Poseidon duly obliged and sent a terrible sea monster (the constellation Cetus) that ravaged the coast of Cepheus's kingdom. To appease the monster, Cepheus was told that he had to sacrifice his daughter, Andromeda. One day he chained her by the sea and waited for the monster to eat her. However, before the monster could eat her, Andromeda was saved by the hero Perseus, who had just come from a mission to kill a Gorgon called Medusa (who had hair made out of snakes and was so ugly that you turned into a stone if you looked into her eyes). Perseus killed the monster, rescued Andromeda and they lived, of course, happily ever after.

All of these constellations are right next to each other in the night sky and very easy to point out. Many people recognize this story, which is even better."

Sævar Helgi Bragason is a science communicator and teaches astronomy in Reykjavík. He is also Hotel Rangá's stargazing expert. He is the author of two books, one about space science for kids and another on stargazing for people of all ages.





SOUL FOOD

Whilst winter in Iceland is often milder than you might expect, it is still traditional for Icelanders to be prepared for the colder season. Here, storing and preserving food remains a way of life for many. During the short days and long nights, locals prepare hearty dishes, lovingly prepared, warming the body and feeding the soul

Throughout the year, meats, fish, vegetables and fruit would be preserved in readiness for the freezing nights ahead. Curing, salting, pickling and brining are all traditional methods used in the Icelandic kitchen to conserve produce and keep it at its best for long periods of time.

These age old techniques are still used today and some of Iceland's most mouth-watering delicacies have been created using classic

cooking methods. At Hotel Rangá during the Autumn and Winter our seasonal menus feature many smoked and cured ingredients such as goose, duck, reindeer and locally caught salmon. However, our contemporary interpretations of classic Icelandic dishes are somewhat lighter and more elegant in appearance, of course, the philosophy and approach remains the same, to serve lovingly prepared, delicious food that nourishes the body and feeds the soul.



CURED SALMON WITH TROUT ROE AND DILL

SALMON

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 fillet of salmon
- 150g salt
- 150g sugar
- 1 lemon

METHOD:

1. Clean the Salmon fillet
2. Put the sugar and salt into a bowl
3. Add the zest of the lemon to the sugar and salt and mix
4. Put the salmon on a tray and pour the mix over it
5. Allow the salmon to cure for 35 minutes in the refrigerator.
6. Wash the salt and sugar mix off the salmon and dry
7. Cut the salmon into pieces
8. Take a blowtorch and lightly burn the top of each piece

DILL OIL

INGREDIENTS:

- 500ml olive oil
- 100g dill

METHOD:

1. Take the dill and put it into a blender with the oil
2. Put on a slow spin setting initially
3. Then put it on full power for 15 minutes until it becomes darker green
4. When the liquid is a rich dark green sieve through a fine pass

TROUT ROE

INGREDIENTS:

- 100g trout roe
- ¼ of fresh fennel bulb
- 1 small shallot onion
- 100ml dill oil

METHOD:

1. Cut the fennel and the onion finely and place in a small bowl
2. Mix the dill oil and the fresh trout roe in a bowl with the fennel and onion

To serve, plate up the ingredients delicately



A HOME-GROWN HARVEST

Savor a feast of flavours at Friðheimar

For a foodie experience with a difference take a trip to the thermal tomato greenhouses at Friðheimar, a glowing beacon amidst the dark winter landscape. Friðheimar harnesses the power of nature, producing delicious crops of tomatoes all the year around. A family business through and through, husband and wife team Knútur and Helena have implemented the latest technology in an environmentally-friendly way using green energy, pure water and organic pest controls to produce fresh, flavour-some tomatoes.

Take a tour around the greenhouses and see the bees busy at work, relax in the Mediterranean-like warmth and enjoy a



www.fridheimar.is

sensational home-grown lunch in the family run restaurant. Sit back and soak up the heady aromas of the tomato plants and enjoy a cheeky shot of Schnapps served in a fresh tomato cup or sample one of the tomato based cocktails such as a Happy Mary a winning formula of green tomato juice, Hendricks Gin and bitter lemon.

For a light lunch indulge in the mouth-watering Friðheimar Tomato Soup served with sour cream, home baked bread, cucumber salsa all presented with your very own basil plant – scissors on the side.

The restaurant also serves homely pastas, pies and ice-creams all with a tomato edged twist.



All in all, the Friðheimar experience is a warming retreat, the perfect pick-me-up for those travelling in the winter months where daylight is all too short and sweet.



FOOD GLORIOUS FOOD

Discover the history and heritage behind the infamous Icelandic mid-winter Buffet

The run up to Christmas in Iceland is all about the joy of festive feasting and nothing better encapsulates the essence of the season than the festive buffet.

The Christmas buffet in Iceland is, by nature, big, bold and bountiful, laden with hearty fayre and overflowing with flavour. Begin gently with a spicy glass of hot jöloglög then settle yourself in for a very long evening. Start off with a fish or

mushroom soup then move onto the heartier delicacies such as platters of smoked and cured meats and fish. Duck, goose, lamb, reindeer, salmon, trout and herring are all classic ingredients. Sample classic caramel glazed potatoes, delicious pates, and rich flavoursome sauces. If you have conquered the numerous Icelandic savoury specialties then finish off with sweet homemade cakes, desserts, cheeses and fruits.



Hotel Rangá's Christmas buffets are truly mouth-watering and a feast for both the eyes and the taste buds. Accompanied by live music, Rangá's festive feasts are held every Friday and Saturday night in December.



ART IN NATURE

Within the interior of Hotel Rangá you will discover the work of many inspiring artists who have left their mark in the form of paintings, murals, sculptures, ceramics and textiles. One artist who has contributed to the fabric of Hotel Rangá is Katrin Oskarsdottir who has painted beautiful representations of Icelandic animals and iconic designs in several of the rooms

Katrin grew up on a farm on the south coast of Iceland where she was surrounded by unspoilt landscapes and numerous animals. Whilst at school her art teacher noticed her natural artistic talent and encouraged Katrin to go to art school. Having studied graphic design and window decoration she graduated from Iceland's main art school and spent a number of years working in the graphic design industry. Moving back to her family farm Miðtún located near Hvalsöllur, Katrin felt inspired to draw and paint again, with the

countryside and animals being her main focus. Over the years Katrin has worked as a portrait artist and her work has featured in many exhibitions in the USA. In addition to exhibitions in the States, Katrin has also taken part in many art shows and events in Iceland. Her work has a gentle quality that seems to effortlessly capture the character of a person, animal or landscape. Katrin has strong links with Hotel Rangá as she has worked as the hotel's masseuse for the past fourteen years.

I was delighted when Fridrik asked me to contribute to the art project at Hotel Rangá and you can now find my murals in selected rooms. Topics I have depicted include the Icelandic national dress, wild sheep, horses, cows and the unmistakable Icelandic wool sweater.





IMMERSED IN CREATIVITY

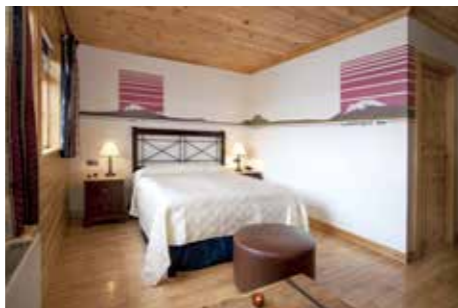
Iceland is a renowned destination for artists who travel from the distant corners of the globe to experience this unique island's exceptional beauty. With such an abundance of inspiration wherever you look, Iceland is proud to have so many creative artists and designers interpreting Iceland's beauty into original pieces of artwork



Over time, Hotel Rangá has become a destination for artists who come to draw, paint, photograph and capture the essence of Iceland in various creative forms. Within the hotel you will also find a private collection of art which includes the work of ceramicists, sculptors, textile designers, artists, photographers and artisans.

As you explore Hotel Rangá look out for work by both Icelandic and guest artists, many of which have made Iceland their home. In the rooms you will also discover wall paintings or murals which have been hand painted by local artists who have beautifully depicted Icelandic scenes such as Puffins on the Westman Islands, Icelandic Horses, Reindeer, the Northern Lights, The Volcanic Landscape, Wild Lupins, Elegant Swans and Swimming Salmon.

Also, at Hotel Rangá you will find rugs by designer Sigrun Lara Shanko depicting glaciers, volcanos, lava and the wild untamable Icelandic landscape. From the ceramics used in the Rangá Restaurant to the Patchwork map of Iceland in the lobby, you will find Hotel Rangá infused with art and design in many forms.



THE NJÁLS SAGA

Iceland has many historic sagas and its rich and dark heritage is portrayed most comprehensively in an epic portrayal of feuding families namely, Njáls Saga

Njáls saga, also called Njála, or Burnt Njáll, has to be one of the longest and certainly finest 13th-century Icelanders' sagas. It presents a clear picture of Icelandic life in a heroic and battle-torn age. The Saga has two heroes—Gunnar (Gunther) and Njáll. Gunnar is a brave, guileless, generous youth-like Sigurd (Siegfried) of the heroic legends; Njáll is a wise and prudent man endowed with prophetic gifts. Both are men of peace, but in a society in which the ties of blood impose inescapable obligations, neither Gunnar's goodwill nor Njáll's wisdom can save them from their fate.

The characters of the Njáls saga are vividly drawn and range from comic to the sinister. The high tide of Icelandic life is revealed in the meetings of the heroes at the Althing (Parliament) in times of peace and good fortune; but the high price for their unique lifestyles is always



Guests visiting the Njáls saga tapestry are invited to sew a few stitches and become part of Iceland's contemporary history.

hanging heavy over them.

To discover more about the complexities of the events that take place within the Njáls saga why not pay a visit to the Saga Centre in Hvalsöðullur. Here you will find a unique exhibition, where Njáls Saga is Introduced in several languages. The exhibition gives an overview of the world of the Sagas, the Viking age and the age of the settlement. In fact, it is here in the Hvalsöðullur region that the Njáls Saga actually took place one thousand years ago. Whilst Visiting the Saga Centre you must also take a little time to discover the The Njáls saga tapestry. A beautiful work of art in the making. The Njáls saga tapestry when complete will be around 90 m long and depict the Njáls saga in a tapestry form using the Bayeux stitch (laid couching work), a special type of stitch that was used in the Viking age.

AGE OF AURORA OFFER

Book your Autumn/Winter Age of Aurora offer now and make the most of Iceland's beautiful winter night skies. Experience stargazing in the Hotel Rangá observatory, spot the Northern Lights from your balcony, enjoy a moonlight dip in our thermal hot tubs and enjoy the finest Icelandic cuisine. Four-night stay including buffet breakfast from €816.00 per couple in a standard room

OFFER VALID - SEPTEMBER 1ST 2016 – APRIL 15TH 2017

The observatory is open every clear night and guests enjoy a complimentary guided tour of the night sky by our local astronomers.