

> DESTINATION GUIDE

EAST.IS

SUMMER 2025



AUSTURLAND
EAST ICELAND

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outside
the circle*

THINK OUTSIDE THE CIRCLE*

Austurland is the region in the east of Iceland often referred to as the East fjords or East Iceland. The region consists of firðir (fjords), hérað (shire) and hálendi (highland).

Austurland is characterized by small villages, dramatic coast-lines, narrow fjords, waterfalls and mountains. Here, nature is never far away, with a mix of rugged highlands, some of Europe's finest hiking trails, and many hidden gems off the beaten track.

With a population of 11.000 inhabitants on 15,792 km² Austurland is considered a rural area. Even though Austurland is sparsely populated, all of the region is well known for its creative communities and strong businesses. In recent years Austurland has become a vibrant destination for tourists looking for wild nature, authentic experiences and creative power.

In this destination guide we will introduce you to a sample of our region which has endless possibilities of exploring beautiful lesser-known nature sights. Here you can enjoy local food and culture and experience outdoor adventures, year-round, that you will never forget.

Destination Guide published by Visit Austurland
Cover photo: Sigtryggur Ari Jóhannsson. Location: Stóruð



Location: Klifbrekkufossar, Mjólfjörður
Photo: Agnieszka Daszkowska



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Austurland is home to sixteen fjords, collectively known as Austfirðir (the Eastfjords). These fjords stretch along the region's rugged coastline, from Vopnafjörður in the north to Álftafjörður in the south. Each fjord has its own unique charm, featuring lovely little villages, dramatic mountains, and stunning natural landscapes.

Location: Bjölfur, Seyðisfjörður
Photo: Þrinn Kolbeinsson

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*Venture beyond conventional
tourist routes and explore the
unique attractions of Austurland!*



Location: Gufufoss, Seyðisfjörður
Photo: Jessica Auer

*Austurland is home to countless undiscovered
waterfalls, cascading gracefully amidst breath-
taking landscapes, offering a tranquil escape far
from the crowds.*

Location: Flögufoss, Breiðdalur
Photo: Jessica Auer

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Geothermal bathing is a cherished Icelandic tradition, and the East is no exception. Take a dip in one of the region's many geothermal pools and engage in conversation with the best guides around — the locals.

Photo and location: Vök Baths, Lake Urriðavatn

Did you know Austurland (East Iceland) is home to Iceland's largest forest, Hallormsstaðaskógur? Explore its many marked trails and discover a side of Iceland you never expected.

Location: Hallormsstaðaskógur
Photo: Gunnar Freyr Gunnarsson



Location: Norðfjarðarviti lighthouse, Neskaupstaður.
Photo: Jessica Auer



Location: Stapinn in Stapavík (Lækjavík)
Photo: Söl Stefánsdóttir

HIDDEN GEMS

The magic of Austurland lies in its ability to feel both remote and accessible at once. Here, you won't find crowds, only the gentle embrace of untouched nature, inviting you to connect deeply with the land, its culture and its history.

Scattered across this breathtaking region are countless hidden gems, known only to the locals, waiting to be uncovered. Ask for their favorite spots and embark on a once-in-a-lifetime adventure filled with quiet wonder and unforgettable moments.

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Location: Dyrfjöll
Photo: Ólafur Már Björnsson



Location: Hengifoss, Fljótsdalur
Photo: Þráinn Kolbeinsson

HIKING PARADISE

Hiking in Austurland is an unparalleled experience, offering the opportunity to explore some of the country's most stunning and diverse landscapes. From dramatic coastlines and peaceful valleys, to towering mountains and lush trails, the region is a true paradise for hikers of all levels.

With over 600 km of marked trails, Austurland has something for everyone, whether you're seeking a gentle stroll or a challenging multi-day trek.

For adventurers seeking a deeper connection with the wild, multi-day hiking expeditions offer an extraordinary chance to journey through Austurland's untouched landscapes. These longer treks take you off the beaten path, where the breathtaking beauty creates an unforgettable experience.

Whether it's exploring remote highlands or winding through dramatic valleys and towering mountains, Austurland's trails allow you to connect with nature in its purest form.





Embark on a journey to Stóruð, where towering boulders, crystal-blue waters and the impressive Dyrfjöll mountain range come together to create a stunning landscape. This scenic hike, offering different difficulty levels, is sure to create an unforgettable hiking experience.

Location: Stóruð
Photo: Sigtryggur Ari Jóhannsson



EXPLORE STUÐLAGIL & STÓRURÐ

Austurland is home to some of Iceland's most awe-inspiring landscapes, with Stuðlagil Canyon and Stóruð offering two of the region's most spectacular nature experiences. These two destinations, each unique in its own right, promise unforgettable encounters with Iceland's raw beauty.

Stuðlagil Canyon is a geological marvel, famous for its towering basalt columns and the striking turquoise waters of the Jökulsá glacier river. The canyon was hidden beneath glacial waters until 2007, when the construction of the Kárahnjúkar Hydropower Plant reduced the river's flow, unveiling its incredible beauty. Visitors can hike along a well-marked trail that offers sweeping views from above, or take a closer look at the canyon's unique hexagonal formations and vivid turquoise waters from the riverbank.

Stóruð offers another awe-inspiring adventure. Nestled beneath the towering Dyrfjöll mountain range, Stóruð is a serene landscape of giant moss-covered boulders and crystal-clear blue ponds. Its network of hiking trails caters to all levels, providing an immersive journey through one of Iceland's most untouched wilderness areas.



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Austurland is home to 18 different museums that explore the region's unique culture, history, and geology. Whether you're interested in local traditions, the area's diverse natural wonders, or its fascinating historical heritage, these museums offer engaging experiences for all.

Location: Bustarfell, Vopnafjörður
Photo: Jessica Auer

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Austurland is a vibrant region with exciting events happening year-round. Winter brings thrilling experiences like the Austurland Freeride Festival and the enchanting List í Ljósi (light festival), while summer offers fun trail running challenges and lively music and town festivals. No matter when you visit, Austurland is always alive!

Location: Bræðslan, Borgarfjörður eystri
Photo: Ingibjörg Torfadóttir

THE PUFFIN CAPITAL

Hafnarhólmi marina in Borgarfjörður eystri

Austurland (East Iceland) is a haven for puffin enthusiasts, with Borgarfjörður eystri standing out as one of the most accessible and rewarding places to observe these beloved seabirds. The puffin season runs from mid-April to mid-August, and during this time, the cliffs and grassy burrows of Borgarfjörður's harbour come alive with their vibrant presence.

Hafnarhólmi marina, the unofficial puffin capital of Iceland, located in Borgarfjörður eystri, is considered one of the premier birdwatching locations in Iceland. With its thoughtfully constructed wooden platforms and viewing shelters, visitors can safely get within a few meters of puffins without disturbing their nesting sites. This setup ensures an intimate experience while protecting the delicate ecosystem. The local community has made significant efforts to enhance the birdwatching experience at Hafnarhólmi, creating facilities that blend seamlessly with the natural surroundings.

Whether you're a birdwatching aficionado or simply someone seeking an unforgettable connection with Iceland's wildlife, Hafnarhólmi offers an experience like no other. As you stand on the platforms, watching puffins glide effortlessly above the waves or scurry to their burrows, you'll feel an undeniable connection to this remarkable landscape — a memory to treasure long after you've left East Iceland.



Location: Hafnarhólmi, Borgarfjörður eystri
Photo: Þorsteinn Røy



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Location: Seyðisfjörður
Photo: Þráinn Kolbeinnsson



Location: Seyðisfjörður
Photo: Chris Burkard for Exploring Seyðisfjörður



Location: Brúnavíkurskarð pass, Borgarfjörður eystri
Photo: Aleksandra Wierzbowska

ACTIVE AUSTURLAND

Summer in East Iceland is a playground for adventure seekers, with its rugged landscapes offering everything from majestic waterfalls and dramatic canyons to towering mountains and fjords. With a high level of activity across the region, there's something for everyone — whether you're scaling peaks, kayaking through fjords, or enjoying a scenic walk through a charming town, East Iceland is full of exciting opportunities. For those craving a truly unique experience, embark on a midnight sun hike, where the glow of the never-setting sun casts a magical light over the wild terrain.

After a day of action-packed adventures, unwind in one of the area's geothermal pools or treat yourself to a relaxing spa experience, where warm, soothing waters offer the perfect way to recharge. Whether you're seeking high-energy activities or peaceful relaxation, East Iceland has it all.

Hiking
Town walks
Bike tours
Mountain bike tours
Jeep tours
Day tours via bus
Kayaking
RIB boat tours
Axe throwing
Horseback riding

Geothermal pools
Spa and wellness
Puffins
Reindeers
Fly fishing
Museums and culture
Various festivals
» Music
» Trail running
» Road cycling
» Town festivals

HOME OF THE REINDEER

Reindeer are a distinctive feature of Austurland's wildlife, providing visitors with a unique glimpse into the region's natural heritage. Introduced to Iceland in the late 17th century, these animals have since established themselves in the eastern part of the country.

For those eager to observe these majestic creatures, Austurland offers guided reindeer safaris that ensure safe and respectful wildlife encounters. You might also spot them unexpectedly as you travel through the region, adding a sense of adventure to your journey.

The Reindeer Park further provides an opportunity to learn about these fascinating animals in a controlled and educational environment.

Spotting reindeer in their natural habitat is often a highlight for visitors, creating unforgettable memories and a deeper connection to Austurland's unique fauna.





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Location: Vallanes Organic Farm
Photo: Gunnar Freyr Gunnarsson



Location: Skafthell Bistro
Photo: Michael Novotny

FLAVOR'S OF AUSTURLAND

Austurland is a treasure trove of culinary delights, boasting over 50 restaurants and local food producers that emphasize fresh, locally sourced ingredients. This region is home to creative individuals with a passion for showcasing the abundance of its fertile lands, rich waters and vibrant food culture.

With fresh seafood, game and wild berries, Austurland is a paradise for food lovers and anglers alike. The area's small-scale farms contribute to its diverse offerings, including lamb, cattle, freshly grown vegetables and even Icelandic settlement goats, making every meal a unique taste of the region's natural bounty.

Whether you're enjoying a casual meal or a fine dining experience, the local flavors provide an authentic and memorable part of your visit.

AUTHENTIC ESCAPES

*In Austurland, we welcome everyone with open arms.
We firmly believe that visitors arrive as guests and leave
as friends.*

*When it comes to accommodation in the region, there's
something for everyone, ensuring that all guests can find
an option that suits their needs.*

*The accommodations range from comfortable hotels to
cozy cabins, year-round campsites, and quaint guesthouses
in nearly every corner of Austurland, making it a destination
for all, zregardless of budget or travel style.*

Vopnafjörður 25 rooms	Mjóifjörður 7 rooms	Fáskrúðsfjörður 49 rooms
Borgarfjörður eystri 54 rooms	Eskifjörður 42 rooms	Stöðvarfjörður 15 rooms
Egilsstaðir area 320 rooms	Reyðarfjörður 84 rooms	Breiðdalsvík 88 rooms
Seyðisfjörður 68 rooms	Neskaupstaður 79 rooms	Djúpivogur 121 rooms



Location: Tiny Church hotel & BB, Stöðvarfjörður
Photo: Krzysztof Madejzki



Location and photo: Lake Hotel Egilsstaðir