
> DESTINATION GUIDE

EAST.IS

WINTER 2025



 **AUSTURLAND**
EAST ICELAND

think
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: Skarphéðinn Þórisson



Location: Stuðlagil
Photo: Björn Steinbekk



Photo and location:
Vök Baths, Lake Urriðavatn

 **AUSTURLAND**
EAST ICELAND



think
outside
the circle*

Location: Vestdalur
Photo: Dusky Mercak



DISCOVER AUSTURLAND'S WINTER MAGIC

In Austurland, winter is more than just a season; it's a celebration of contrasts and natural beauty. This enchanting time invites you to embrace both exhilarating adventures and peaceful moments of relaxation. With clear night skies and minimal light pollution, Austurland is one of the best places to witness the Northern Lights.

Though the sun may be a little shy, when it does make an appearance, it paints the sky in stunning shades of pinks and oranges. Polar stratospheric clouds are also known to appear, adding a rare and otherworldly touch to the already magical scenery.

The winter landscapes here are nothing short of mesmerizing, offering endless opportunities for exploration and connection. Hike to frozen waterfalls, soak in the warmth of natural hot springs, or simply immerse yourself in the serene beauty of snow-covered wilderness. Throughout your journey, you'll also experience the rich culture and history of this extraordinary region.

Whether you're seeking adventure, tranquility, or a taste of authentic Icelandic culture, Austurland's winter magic promises an unforgettable experience.

Location: Hallormsstaðaskógur
Photo: Lilja Sigríður Jónsdóttir

SLOW DOWN - DISCOVER MORE

Austurland invites you to slow down and embrace its unique magic. Rather than racing through a list of sights, it's a place to savor every moment — whether connecting with locals, enjoying a peaceful walk, or simply relaxing in nature's quiet beauty. Here, you can explore at your own pace, creating memories that truly last.

Slowing down doesn't mean skipping adventure — it means opening yourself to spontaneous experiences and meaningful connections that go far beyond the typical bucket-list rush.



Location: Hallormsstaðaskógur.
Photo: Lilja Sigríður Jónsdóttir



The Reindeer Park in East Iceland provides an opportunity to learn about these fascinating animals up close and personal.

Location: Reindeer Park
Photo: Ragnhildur Aðalsteinsdóttir

think
outside
the circle*

East Iceland has easily accessible roads winding through breathtaking landscapes, making it the ultimate destination for road trips. From majestic mountains to cascading waterfalls, every turn offers a new adventure.

Location: Breiðdalur
Photo: Páll G. Asgeirsson



Stroll through Austurland's charming small towns, where colorful houses, friendly locals and stunning views create a peaceful and memorable experience.

Location: Seyðisfjörður
Photo: Ragnhildur Aðalsteinsdóttir

DISCOVER AUSTURLAND'S HERITAGE

Austurland offers a rich cultural experience with over 20 museums that showcase the region's history and traditions. Whether you're interested in local art, folklore or the area's maritime and agricultural past, these museums provide an insightful look into the life and heritage of the region. It's a wonderful way to learn more about the unique stories that shape the region.



Location: Langabúð Cultural Center, Djúpvogur
Photo: Michael Novotný

UNWIND THE ICELANDIC WAY

In Austurland, bathing is more than a way to relax — it's a deeply rooted cultural tradition. From geothermal spas and hot pools to outdoor swimming facilities, there's no shortage of places to unwind and recharge.

For the adventurous, taking a refreshing cold plunge is a must-try Nordic ritual, believed to awaken the senses and enhance well-being.

Whether you're soaking in soothing warmth or embracing the invigorating cold, Austurland's bathing culture offers a unique opportunity to connect with nature and immerse yourself in authentic Icelandic traditions.



Location: Blábjörg Resort, Borgarfjörður Eystri
Photo: Ragnhildur Aðalsteinsdóttir

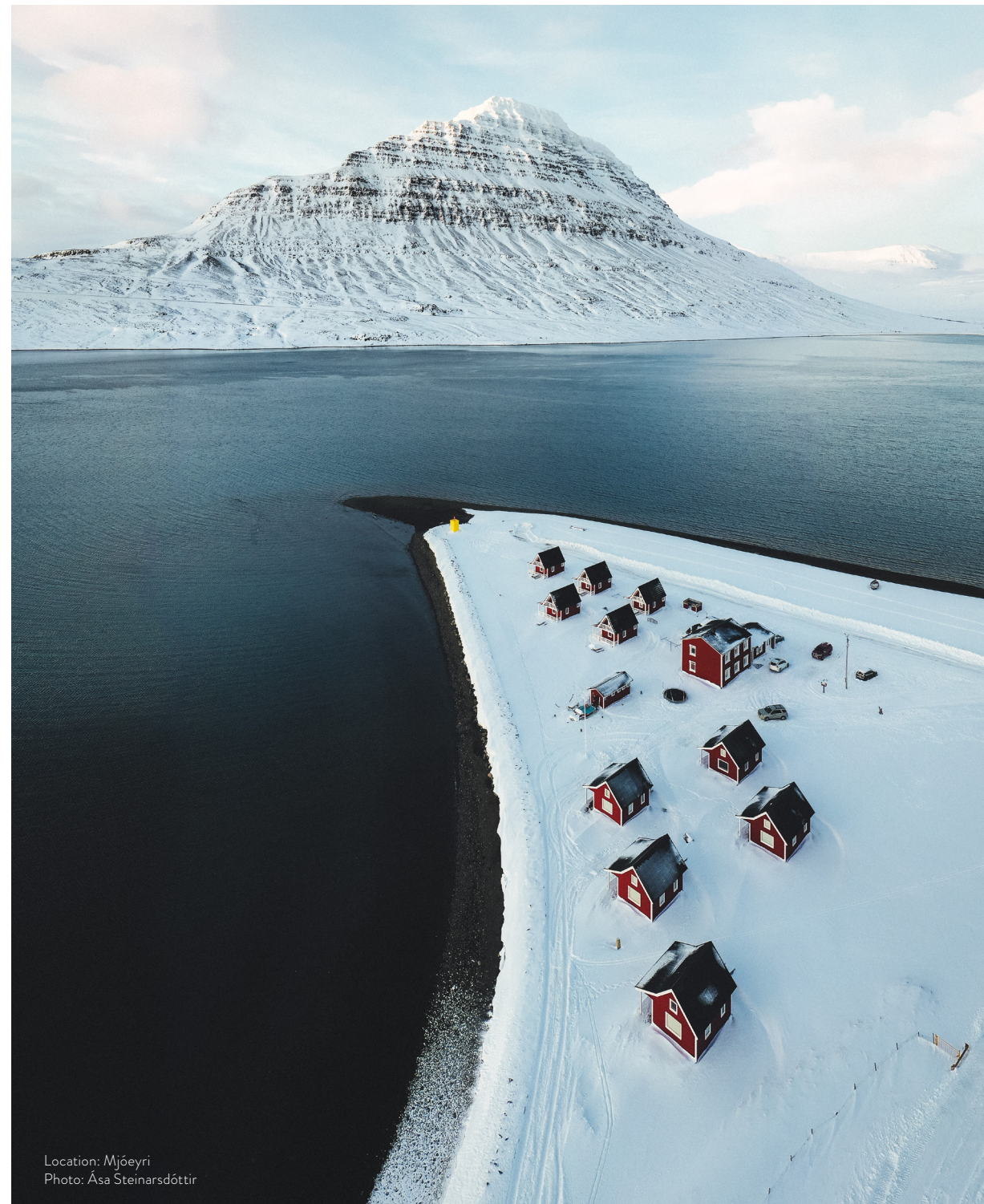


AUSTURLAND
EAST ICELAND



 **AUSTURLAND**
EAST ICELAND

Location: Viðfjörður
Photo: Chris Burkard for Austurland Freeride Festival in Eskifjörður



Location: Mjóeyri
Photo: Ása Steinarsdóttir

FROM SUMMIT TO SEA

Austurland offers incredible off-piste skiing opportunities, with untouched slopes where you can carve your way from towering mountain peaks down to the fjords, immersing yourself in the raw wilderness.

One of the region's many annual highlights is The Austurland Freeride Festival — a thrilling event that brings skiers and snowboarders together for an unforgettable backcountry experience.

FJORDS AND FRESH POWDER

Skiing is a big part of everyday life in Austurland, whether it's hitting the local ski resorts, enjoying a peaceful cross-country ski through the snowy landscape, or venturing out for mountain skiing—locals make the most of the winter season in their own unique way.

The two local ski resorts, Oddsskarð, located between Eskifjörður and Norðfjörður and Stafdalur, near Seyðisfjörður, offer a variety of slopes for all levels, with stunning fjord views that make these small, local resorts a perfect winter escape for both locals and visitors.

For the adventurous, mountain skiing offers the unique opportunity to ski from summit to sea, taking in stunning views and a thrilling connection with the rugged landscape along the way.

For those who prefer a quieter adventure, cross-country skiing in Austurland offers scenic tracks through forests, mountains and along the fjords, providing a peaceful way to connect with the winter landscape.

No matter your skill level, you can be sure that Austurland has something for every skier, offering a range of experiences to suit all tastes and abilities.



Location: Lindarbakkí, Borgarfjörður Eystra
Photo: Ragnhildur Aðalsteinsdóttir



think
outside
the circle*

Location: Oddsskarð Ski Resort
Photo: Gunnar Freyr Gunnarsson



WINTER PLAYGROUND

In winter, Austurland comes to life with a wide variety of activities that let you fully experience its stunning landscapes and unique charm. The season transforms the region into a hub of adventure, with something for everyone — whether you're exploring the great outdoors or discovering the warmth of its small towns. From outdoor adventures to cultural experiences, there's always something new to try and enjoy, ensuring you'll never run out of exciting things to do.

- Hiking
- Snow shoeing
- Cross country ski
- Ski resorts
- Mountain skiing
- Jeep tours
- Horseback riding
- Reindeer spotting
- Bus tours
- Northern lights hunting
- Star gazing

- Museums and culture
- Geothermal pools
- Kayaking
- Reindeer park
- Spa and wellness
- Various festivals
 - » Austurland Freeride
 - » Festival
 - » Days of Darkness
 - » List í Ljósi (light festival)

MAGIC IN EVERY SEASON

Austurland changes with every season, each offering its own unique magic. Spring brings renewal, with wildflowers in bloom and rivers swelling from the melting snow. The landscape awakens, inviting explorers to witness the vibrant transformation and enjoy longer days filled with soft, golden light.

Summer casts a spell of endless daylight, where the midnight sun bathes waterfalls, fjords, and mountains in a magical glow. This season is perfect for outdoor adventures, offering the chance to explore hidden gems while enjoying the vibrant, lively atmosphere.

As autumn arrives, the landscape is painted in rich hues of red, orange, and yellow, creating a peaceful atmosphere ideal for reflection. The crisp air and darkening skies also offer prime opportunities to witness the northern lights in their full splendor.

Winter in Austurland transforms the region into a serene, snow-covered wonderland. The quiet beauty of snow-capped mountains and frozen lakes is perfect for winter activities, and the northern lights provide a breathtaking display against the frosty skies.

