

10.7.2015, Valahnjukur, Stakkholtsgja, Landeyjahöfn

We are driving the last 5 km to the Langidalur hut and the crossing of the Krossa is the last river crossing. This river can be a challenge, and many people didn't succeed crossing it. They had to be rescued by an emergency tractor. When we had to cross it, the river luckily didn't carry too much water. But anyways, for a real Unimog...



The Valahnjukur track begins behind the hut and we walked about 1 hour to the top. A breath taking view was the reward.



This is how it looks like from above when crossing the Krossa river. Here you can see a MAN truck.



However, all of the sudden there was such a cold wind that we literally rushed back down.

We had lunch break at the Stakkholtsgja gorge. A lot of tourists were there and passed by our car. Since we smelled like a burger van, we were afraid, that people would order meals from our truck ;-)



After lunch we walked into the Stakkholtsgja gorge. Another place which could serve as a movie location.



Finally we reached a river and watched another group of tourists, who were carried(!) over by their tour guide. Wow, what a service, this sight was even worth a picture.



All of the sudden, the tour guide was waving us. What could he mean? Did he want to offer his services to us as well? He had to wave several times before we walked towards him. After hesitating for a while, we accepted his kind offer. However, Werner walked on his own feet trough the waters, they were even only puddles against the New Zealand rivers he is used to cross.

We were climbing over rocks and stones and crossed other waters until our adopted tour guide John Gisli brought us to a small waterfall, which is inside the rocks and falls through a hole 'in the sky'. Very cool!



On our own, we would have never discovered this little gem.



Of course we stayed close to Jon on our way back, especially Dewi. And again, Jon was carrying bravely all women and children across the river. Who would have thought that our little walk would become so exciting.



It took about an hour to get back out of the Þorsmörk Nationalpark. After we were out and stopped to sort ourselves and see where to drive next, we noticed some 'burned' smell. After checking around the car we noticed that the rim of the right rear wheel was really hot. How could this happen? Since we couldn't do much on a parking lot and since the car was still moving, we continued our way. But not without checking several times how the tyre was doing.

After all, we were not driving far, only about 30 km to the ferry terminal Landeyjahöfn. This is where the ferries depart to Vestmannaeyjar Islands. We were contemplating doing an excursion to Vestmannaeyjar. However, the South of the main island is known to be the windiest place of all Europe. For our taste, Iceland's mainland was windy enough. Why should we go voluntarily to a place that was even windier?! The weather forecast for the next few days wasn't brilliant too, so we decided against it. This is how the islands look from afar:



Since there was space and no-one seemed to be bothered we just stayed at the parking lot of the ferry terminal. There were also other cars and camper vans parked as a lot of people cross over without taking their vehicles.



Also because of the brakes, we didn't want to drive any further. Hopefully, this wasn't anything serious, maybe just a little stone which got stuck after we drove the 'wild' road out of the Þorsmörk... A really beautiful sunset (actually the first nice one) could at least distract us from worrying about the brake.



11.7.2015, Hvolsvöllur, Hella, Pykkvibaer

For a change, it rained in the morning, so we took it slowly.

It turned out that the brake was fine today! It was most likely really a stone which had blocked the brake.

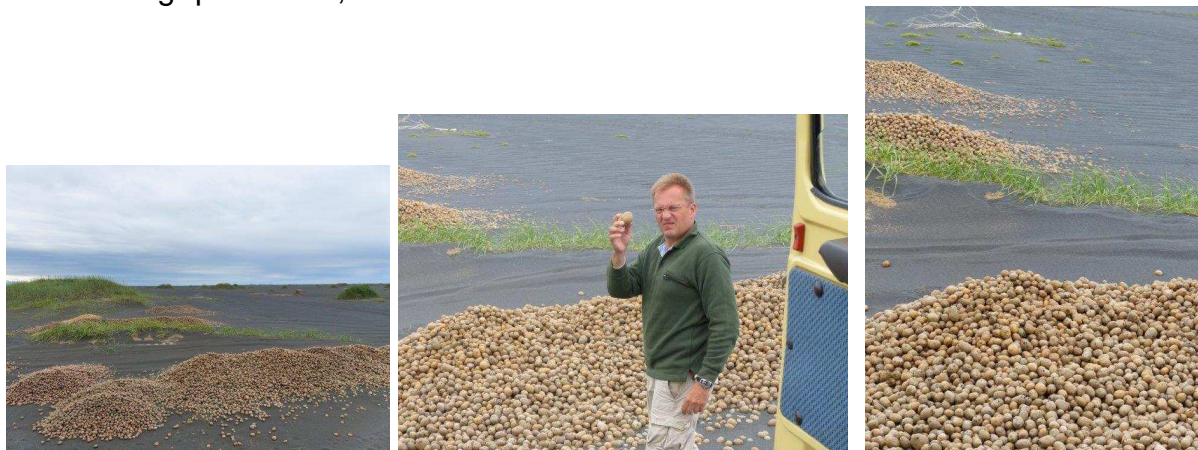
We were approaching civilization, there were more towns and they got bigger. We did some grocery shopping in Hvolsvöllur and fueled up in Hella. Turns out, that Hella has a nice swimming pool with slides – and we couldn't resist. It was cloudy, with some drizzling rain but the thermometer showed 14C! This is summer! So we were heading off to the outdoor pool in our bathers.

Squeaky clean we turned to the coast to Pykkvibaer, which is one of the oldest villages of Iceland. The first settler child was born here. But now it all looked lonely and run down. Interestingly in front of every house, there was a photo of the house at its better times. Most of the time it was hard to recognise the house.



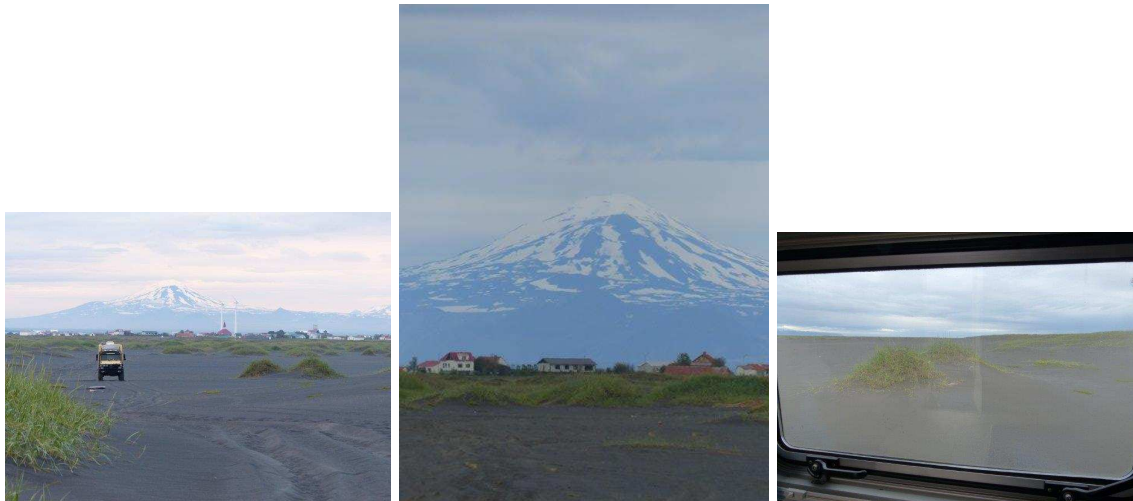
The farmers in this region make a living from growing potatoes and beets. On the way to the beach, we all of the sudden saw 'mountains' of potatoes, in the middle of the sand. We don't want to take a wild guess on what was possibly going on here... But the potatoes looked perfectly fine, most likely harvested last year. So we took some of them to try out. Can't stand food wastage...

Now the big question is, what is below all the other dunes on the beach?!



At 7pm we set up camp, we were all by ourselves between the dunes on the beach with view of Mt Hekla... Usually Mt Hekla is hidden behind clouds, but this time we were lucky to have a clear view of the mountain ridges around us.

For a while now, they are expecting Mt. Hekla to erupt any time. Therefore currently all tours on the Mt Hekla are suspended.



We were off duty and everybody had free time of their own. Werner tried his luck fishing for spur dogs on the beach. No luck this time, but he was visited by a seal.



Reisebericht 2015-07-12 Stokksery, Strandkirka

Also this morning we woke to the sound of drizzling rain on our roof. However the weather got better during the day.

Work had to be done first, before we were able to continue our way. We had to harvest the potatoes! Yesterdays test meal of the potatoes was successful, no-one reported sick... Therefore we were okay to collect some more.



We continued our way past white wool grass.



Until we reached by chance the Urridafoss waterfall in the Þjorsa river, the longest river of Iceland. He flows for 230 km from his spring until he reaches the sea. This river is also salmon spawning ground.



On the way we could see so many birds. Unfortunately they all were flying away once we approached them, trying to get a closer look.



At lunch time we reached Stokkseyri, a perfect timing, as this little place has two major attractions: „Fjörubordid“, a very good cray fish /lobster/langoustine restaurant (somehow, the names are all used at the same time here...) and secondly an exhibition about ghosts, elves and trolls. Since the weather forecast for the next two days wasn't good, we had to pre-comfort ourselves (well, you never know when such a good restaurants comes along again)





Afterwards we were too full to experience the world of elves... But apparently almost 80% of the Icelanders believe in elves and trolls. Reykjavik even has an elve school, where you can learn all about this other world.

We drove along the coast, with a stop in Eyrarbakki...



...until we reached Strandarkirkja. Here was finally the place, where we could see an elf house close up. While driving, we saw a few of the elves houses leaning against little hills, but they also live in stones. These places are almost holy and trying to move them, i.e. for a construction project can be risky business. Some companies trying to move the elves experienced bad luck afterwards. Iceland even has an Elve Commissioner.



In Strandarkirkja we found a free camping place. What a nice surprise, of course we stayed there over night. We tried to sit at the table outside, but again only made 20 min, until the wind blew us back into the car.

