

20.7.2015, Valahnukur, Grindavik, Reykjavik

After yesterdays freezing experience we got smarter and wrap up against the cold immediately in the morning. But luckily it wasn't as biting cold as yesterday.

First we went up the cliff Valahnukur where we had camped at, then continued our round around the Reykjanes peninsula. The first light house of Iceland was built on Valahnukur in 1878, but it doesnt exist anymore. After an earthquake it got badly damaged and had to be taken down.



Via Grindavik we drive through fancy lava fields until we reach the Reykjanes Nature Reserve. There we take road 427 which leads through the Vigdisarvellir valley. Only a few sheep and a few cars cross our way... We reach lake Kleifarvatn – which is 97m deep and of course inhabited by a lake monster(!) – before we turn around and drive back to the capital.



On our way to Reykjavik, shortly before Hafnarfjörður (by the way a partner city of Cuxhaven in Germany), we discover a huge fish drying area. You could almost find it by its smell alone ...

In the past, dried fish was the main staple for the Icelanders and they say the Icelandic nation survived mainly on dried fish. In this harsh climate and poor soil conditions for farming there are not many crops growing... The fish has to hang and dry for about six weeks before it is moved into freezers. When more food alternatives were available, the demand for dried fish lessened. However, meanwhile the dried fish is rediscovered, because it is healthy and nutritious. It is also exported to other countries, i.e. Africa.



Around 5pm we reach Reykjavik and as you know, with no further delay we set course to Nautholsvik and go straight into the Hot Pot. We also stayed for the night, but not in the hot pot, on the parking lot.

21.7.2015, Reykjavik, Hvalfjörður

Since we are back to Reykjavik and Nautholsvik, the next day starts with 'the same procedure as every year': first the Hot Pot, then cafe Sandholt...

We could easily continue with this routine for another few days... But it is time to move on, so late afternoon we pack up and drive to the next fjord, the Hvalfjörður, also the longest fjord of the West.



Since we departed late, we already needed to look for a parking spot for the night and find a nice spot on a small peninsula near Hvammur. A little hill offers some wind protection, however it is located next to a (holiday) house. No one to be seen, only some birds...



We thought it should be alright and stay for the night. But of course, late at 11pm the inhabitant of the house comes home. Luckily he just let us stay and didn't say anything.



Since we are at the fjord and the sea, Werner can't resist and takes out his fishing gear. Dinner is secured.



22.7.2015, Hvalfjörður, Akranes, Borgarnes

Today we drove along Hvalfjörður and see a boat, which is driving at the same speed next to us into the fjord. It raised our interest as it was too small and tidy to be a fishing boat, but it was also no whale-watching-sightseeing-boat. As we reach the end of the fjord we can see that something big was hanging at the side of the boat. With a big shock we discovered two whales hanging on the side of the boat. Even two! How sad, the first whales we get to see in Iceland are dead whales. We signed a petition a few days ago in Reykjavik against whaling, but doesn't help much, does it? We drive around the corner and all of the sudden are in front of the whaling station in Midsandur. We are just too curious and stay to watch to whole sad procedure until the very sad end.



Soon after us the anti-whaling-protesters arrive. We really appreciate their efforts and tell them that they are doing a great thing! We support them in our thoughts. Really, what's the point?

We continue our way around the fjord until we reach Akranes. It is possible to shorten the way from Reykjavik to Akranes through Iceland's first under water tunnel. Through this tunnel Akranes is connected to Reykjavik even by regular bus service and therefore is a thriving city. Obviously also a sporty city, because it has 10 (ten!) soccer fields. We stock up groceries and fuel. At every filling station you can get water for free and can clean your car with mops, which are connected directly to the hose. Very practical.



Today it took a bit longer to find a place for the night. The little detour we chose was going along farm houses and farm land.

Farm land is very precious in Iceland and is retrieved with great effort from the barren soil in Iceland. Everywhere deep drainage channels have to be dug out to drain the land. Therefore, if you are close to a farming area, not much extra space is available as it would be "wasted" land. Every little road we take ends in front of a farm house... But the veryvery last little road all of the sudden ends unexpectedly at the sea. How lucky we are. But we could not figure out, what the stake was supposed to do there.



A lot of birds were on the beach and we could watch them from our kitchen.

Iceland is indeed a birds paradise, no predators, enough food and water...

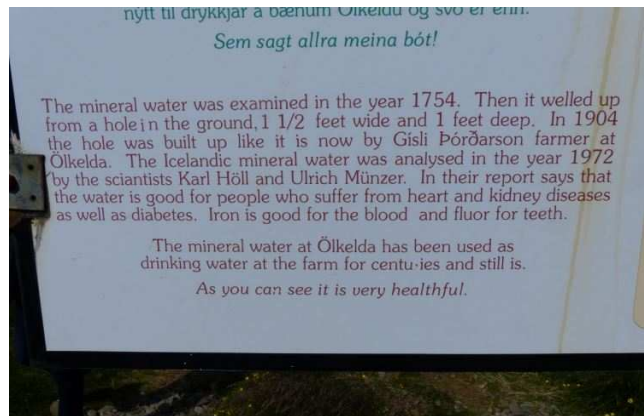
23.7.2015, Lysuholslaug, Malarrif

We get the impression that the weather at the West Coast is better than the rest of the country. The weather forecast always showed better weather for the West, so we had some hope. However, with our luck so far we were not so sure if it would be still sunny once we arrived here...



We continue along the South Coast of the Snæfellsnes peninsula with the snow covered Snæfellsjökull volcano always as a background panorama.

The first 'must-do' of the day is the mineral water spring „Ölkelda“. This water is naturally carbonated and contains many more minerals than ordinary water. A water analysis from 1972(!) claims that the water is good against heart and kidney diseases. We try a sip, but honestly, it tastes awful and is even murky. Sorry, definitely too healthy for us...



Soon after we reach Ytri-Tunga, where we see some seals, the Harbour Seal (aka Common Seal). They look quite big, but are as relaxed as all the other seals we have seen so far.





Early afternoon we reach Lysuholslaug, which has a pool with natural spring water, no chloride or any other chemicals added - they claim. (As you can see, we can't resist any nice café and hot pools). Well, the water is green of algae and the pool floor and walls are covered with a thick layer of algae therefore very slippery. Let's strongly believe that this algae bath is healthy.

After our bath, we pass by Budir where we see the slag crater Budaklettur (88m). It looks a bit like Ayers Rock in Australia. The Bremer Hanse had a branch office in Budir in the 16th century and about 100 people supposedly lived here. Now the only remainder are a hotel (the white twin buildings) and the church (on the right hand side next to it).



Finally we reach Malariff, the southernmost tip of the peninsula. From far you can already see the cliffs of Londrangar, which are 75m high. Malariff has a little light house and a place to camp.



Upon arrival, there is no wind at all! This very first calm evening calls for a premier: We launch the boat for it's maiden trip in the North Atlantic sea!



It was quite some effort to get the boat over the pebbles to the water, but it was worth it. The boat did fine, the skipper, too. Plenty of fish was brought home, now we can eat fish for breakfast, lunch and dinner.

