

26.7.2015, Stykkisholmur

After the heavy partying last night everyone is getting up late... We also take it easy, enjoy the good weather and have brunch instead of breakfast. Still, we are among the first to leave the campsite and start driving along the Kolgrafafjörður.



We turn into the 558 towards Hraunsfjardarvatn. At this fjord the lava stream was flowing actually into the water of the fjord. According to our map we can drive around the fjord and come back out at the main road. That was the plan...

We were already half around the fjord and managed already to drive through quite a sizable ditch in the road, when we come to an even much bigger „hole“ in the road. The terrain and road was quite steep (much steeper than it appears on the photo). We did not want to take the risk of getting stuck and we did not know how bad the rest of the road would be, so we turned around. We did not want to get stuck here at a boring hole, if we would get stuck than with style in the highlands...



We passed by some pretty amazing landscape till we arrive in the afternoon in Stykkisholmur. This nice little town is in fact the biggest town on Snaefellsnes.



Already in the 16th century Stykkisholmur was a trading port, mainly because of the good natural harbour and the initiative of the German traders from Oldenburg and Bremen. The light grey ‚Clausenhus‘ is dating from 1874.



It was here, that we learned, that all scenes from the movie „The Secret Life of Walter Mitty“ supposedly playing in Greenland were actually filmed in Iceland. A shop at the harbour of Stykkisholmur was `playing` the bar in „Greenland“. From that bar, Ben Stiller went to board the helicopter. Of course we wanted to find “the bar”.



In the movie



In original

We continued driving along the Alftafjörður. As we could not find many good spots to stay for the night, we ended up staying close to the road 54. However luckily there was little traffic.



For dinner we had healthy fish with healthy beach potatoes and healthy veggies.



27.7.2015, Laugar, Klofningsnes peninsula

Today we will complete our drive around the Snaefellsnes peninsula. We liked the peninsula very much as we had a lot of sun and the landscape is amazing.

We continue to drive around the Hvammsfjörður and are stunned by the view of hundreds of islands.



We had a quick stop in the town of Budardalur as we wanted to fill up our car and stock up on groceries. However, the town is much smaller than we thought and we realized that we should have restocked in Stykkisholmur. But in Stykkisholmur we unfortunately were distracted by the nice weather, good coffee and the apple cake... So we only buy live saving onions and could not fill up the Unimog, as the unattended filling station with self service did not accept any of our cards.



Next stop was the swimming pool and hot pot in Laugar. A nice pool, next to the Edda Hotel which was a former school house. The photos of the graduation classes are still on display in the hotel lobby. In the pool with blue sky and sunshine we almost felt like on holiday... ;-)

Afterwards we circled the Klofningsnes peninsula. Most tourists skip this peninsula therefore it is very quite and we did hardly see any other cars.

Looking for a camping spot for the night we drove a detour to point Dagverdames and looked at the church there. The few graves are all from the 19th century. Not far from the church we found a nice wind protected spot for the night.



There is little wind and we put our outdoor gas stove to work again. Wearing multiple layers of clothes we even managed to have dinner outside. For a change we have our own harvested biological beach potatoes.

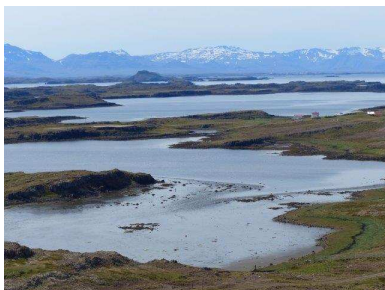


After dinner the weather was still fine, so we managed an evening walk.



28.8.2015, Reykholar, Skalmarnesmuli

Today we start our tour of the Westfjord area. We will start in the South and want to drive clockwise around the many fjords.



First we do a detour to Reykholar, where we had a quick look at the Nordur Salt Factory. They use their abundant geothermal energy to evaporate salt water and eventually there is salt left to be harvested from large basins.



We continued along the many fjords. As there are no bridges over the fjords we have to drive around them. Driving around them is time consuming, first going all the way into the fjord, then driving back towards to sea on the opposite site. Also we had to drive many passes up and down, some where were really steep with 12% and 16% incline. We enjoyed ever changing great views of the mountains and the sea.



Along the way we stopped several times to enjoy the view, had afternoon coffee and soon it's time again to hunt for an overnight camping spot. We drive a 14 km detour to Skalmarnesmuli. The single car track is glued to the mountain edge. At the end of the road there is mini village with a few houses and a church. Most houses were not used anymore and therefore we stayed for the night.



We were able to enjoy some evening sun before dinner and before it cooled down too much again.



29.7.2015, Laugarnes, Kleifaheidipass, Raudarsandur

After filling up the Unimog in Flogalundur we pass by the swimming pool Laugarnes in Bardaströnd which is located directly at the beach and is heated by the hot spring Krosslaug. This pool is more than 100 years old! The hot pot was quite 'mossy', but it was very spacious. The swimming pool felt like sitting in a gigantic bath tub, the water was so warm! This was our best bathing experience so far, unfortunately we had to continue our trip.



We climbed over the Kleifaheidi Pass, which is 404 m high. (Actually, we find it quite funny that a highland area is called „Heidi“ in Icelandic...) On the top of the pass we visited Kleifabui, which was built by the road construction workers in 1947 when they did the road.





Soon after the pass we reach our destination for today Raudarsandur (Red Sand) at the South West corner of the Westfords region. Over an extremely steep pass with many narrow curves we descend to sea level and soon we see the red sand beach.



We could not give the Kaffihus of Raudarsandur a miss and tried the chocolate cake and the waffles, as our travel guide book highly recommended them. (Well, these two cakes covered already 2/3 of the menu!)

Soon we are the last guests and the coffee shop literally closed while we were still sitting on the terrace. We then drive to the end of the road and follow the signs to the beach, but we could not reach the beach because of huge drenches which were just dug on that day.



We meet the local farmer lady chasing home their cows and she confirms that there is no possible walk way to the beach. We learned that they are digging drenches replacing the fences on the farm, as every winter the fences get destroyed by the weather. It is too much work to remove the fences before winter and put them back in spring. During winter storms sea water is forcing its way up to the farm which is located more than 1 km from the sea! We believe her after we find dead fish in the paddock grass...



We wanted to stay at the end of this road for the night as there was an official parking sign and we assumed no one would bother. For dinner it was Thai green fish curry.



However, at about 11pm the local farmer lady comes over and asks us, if we plan to stay for the night. Another German couple has meanwhile joined us with their campervan, the man came over and joined the chat with the lady.

The magic figure of 1 million visitors to Iceland will be reached this year and we have learned that many Icelanders are overwhelmed by so many visitors. The ones who generate an income from tourism are of course happy, but the others are not sure if yet about this development and if they like so many tourists in their country. They have their difficulties...

The farmer lady asked us very earnest why we had come to Iceland and why all these tourists are all of the sudden so interested in Iceland.

Until 2 to 3 years ago every car on this road wanted to go to her farm, but now in summer there are every day so many cars coming, that she actually had to set up this parking spot. Well, she allowed us to stay on her land for the night, but we should not tell anyone else...

The other German told us afterwards, that in 2010 his car rental company was the 62nd car rental company established in Iceland. This year they have licensed the 270th car rental company in Iceland! There is definitely a tourist boom ongoing here. We'll see if it is short or long lived...

