

## 14.8.2015, Hveravellir, F734, F756, F727, Svitavatn See

On the way out from our detour to the camp place last night, we not only pass by impressive lava formations but also again at the hut Hveravellir with its Hot Pot. Of course we can not resist to have a second dip.



Passing through the Kjölur we advance further North. As the road 35 continues to be badly corrugated, we decide to take a small track running parallel to the 35. Next to us is six lane horse track „highway“!



The road F734 is much more challenging compared to the 35. First the track was quite muddy, then very slanted. There were very narrow passings through rocks and we thought more than once that we had to give up and turn around. But after a few last deep rivers crossings we finally made it through.



On the following highland track we could sit back and relax. At lake Blöndulon - which was dammed for electricity production - we have a coffee break, then drive over the dam to reach Audkuluheidi which will lead us to Svinadalur.





The highland track provides stunning views of the emptiness of the highlands. We continue on F727 through the Svinadalur valley until we reach lake Svinavatn.



Lake Svinavatn will be our place for the night. As soon as we stop it starts raining and strong wind gusts start shaking our home and for the entire night. Unfortunately it seems almost impossible to spend an evening outside...

## 15.8.2015, Blönduos

After the stormy night, we are surprised to wake up with sunshine. It is only a 20 km drive to Blönduos where we spend a quiet day to recover from yesterday's driving.



Of course we had a soak in the local hot pot and swimming pool.

Almost all poles in the city were decorated with knittings. Knitting oeuvres from long, dark, cold winter evenings...?



We take advantage of the good weather to stroll through the city. For a change we are neither blown away nor getting wet.

Blönduos is divided in the new and the old part and this former trading port was first settled in the year 1000 AD.



A huge flock of grey geese were enjoying themselves on a field next to the walk way and we could watch them for a while. Outside the cities the geese are very shy and do fly off readily even when still a long distance away. The reason must be that grey goose hunting is very popular and goose hunting tours are also advertised.



Again it is almost time to call it a day and we find one of our beloved gravel pits.





## 16.8.2015, Saudarkrokur, Hofsos

Today we want to circumnavigate the Tröllaskagi peninsula. Our first stop is the pretty little city Saudarkrokur.



We park next to the local sports ground where a lot of action is going on. Looks like a track and field competition. It very much reminded us of our school sport days.... Icelanders seem to be very sporty in the first place. Notice, that the stands for the spectators are grass covered.

The last remaining tannery of Iceland is located in Saudarkrokur. Here even fish skins from salmon, cod and other species are tanned! The friendly shop attendant shows us the work shop and explains that they only produce top quality. They even supply their skins to luxury fashion brands like Gucci, Prada, Jimmy Choo...



As we continue our way around the fjord to Hofsos the Icelandic weather shows us all it got.





Hofsos has a very nice swimming pool, which is a donation from two charitable and wealthy ladies.

But for once we did not visit the pool (it looked a bit crowded, too)...

Because Hofsos has a very interesting museum about Icelandic emigrants to America, which we want to visit. Between 1870 – 1914 huge numbers of Icelanders (estimated 16,000) have emigrated to the USA. The main reason was the inhospitable weather which worsened continuously around this period. The weather did not allow to work the paddocks, plant seeds and produce harvest. During the coldest years the soil did not even thaw at all and stayed frozen! We could very much relate to the people in those days. As we are experiencing such a cold summer in Iceland we can confirm how inhospitable this country can be.... We spent a lot of time in the museum and it's time again to look for a place for the night. This area is densely populated, but we find a track leading to the lake Hopsvatn.



## 17.8.2015, Siglufjörður

At 6am suddenly our car is shaking and we hear strange noises. As we check we find a few sheep standing under(!) our car. It seems that in Iceland a lot of sheep are not shorn anymore (we assume wool prices are too low), therefore one sheep is trying to scratch his old wool off his back at our Unimog tyre.





We continue our way in low hanging clouds, when we see a group of people near the road picking something from the ground. We are suspicious – as we know the blueberry harvest season has started – and stop a little further down the road to have a check. Indeed, we find the tiny wild blueberries.



After picking a few we cross over the pass and drive through a short one-lane-tunnel to reach Siglufjörður.



Siglufjörður is the Northern most city in Iceland. Also here a wealthy local investor is upgrading the infrastructure for tourists. The colorful houses are all newly renovated and a luxury hotel is about to be finished, directly at the former herring harbor.



At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the herring boom in Siglufjörður let the city grow from about one hundred inhabitants to around 15.000 at the height of the boom. Still today the city flag shows three herrings.





Therefore the main attraction of the city is the Herring Museum. In separate buildings the different aspects of the herring industry are shown. The catch, the processing/salting, a fishmeal factory, the barrel production and old machinery are exhibited. Hundreds of tons of salted herring were exported all over the world in wooden barrels.



Our entrance ticket gives us access to all four museums of the city. We can not find the 'Slip Boat Museum' and the Folk Music Museum is really small. Lastly the Poetry Museum was closed (Werner wasn't too unhappy about it...) So we were able to cover three museums in only 30 minutes.

During our museum spree the weather has cleared up. With sunshine everything looks so much friendlier. While looking for a spot for the night we see a viewing point right behind the city gates.



We make use of the nice weather and stroll around the area. A small forest had been grown with great effort and the help of volunteers. For the first time since we are in Iceland we can stroll through a forest with trees taller than us...



Once back at the view point it is getting dark and we decide to just stay here.



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### **18.8.2015, Dalvik, Hjalteyri**

Wow, what a great day! Sunshine and no wind, today is a real summer day... We continue driving around the Tröllaskagi peninsula when we have to pass through two tunnels. Between the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> tunnel is an opening of just a few hundred meters – the fjord Hedinsfjörður. Before the tunnels were built, this was the most remote fjord in Iceland.

At the view point of the Hedinsfjörður our Unimog is clearly more of an attraction than the fjord itself. A group of American tourists is stunned by the truck. One lady asks if she could have look inside and we were already worried having an entire tour group passing through our Unimog. But the tour guide quickly assessed the situation and rushed everyone to board the bus again.



We pass through one last tunnel and are awarded with a stunning view over the Eyjafjörður fjord (60km long and 24km wide). The highest peak at the fjord is Mt. Kaldbakur at 1167m. While enjoying the view we even discover whales in the fjord.





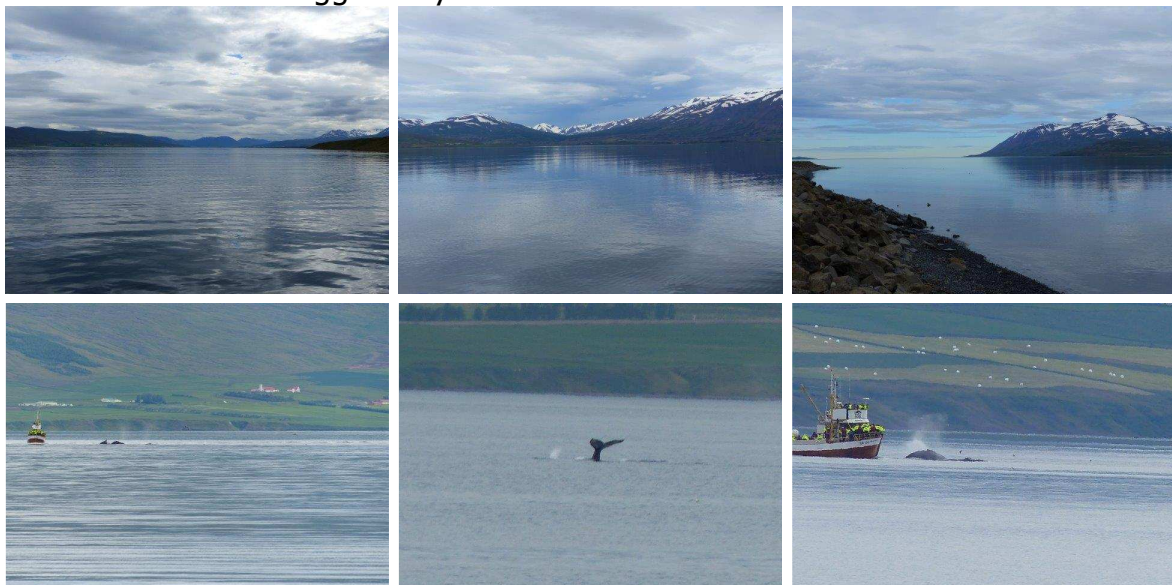
We continue to the city of Dalvík to have lunch in the „Gisli-Eiríkur-Helgi“ (named after an Icelandic fairytale about three naughty boys). The fish soup was very tasty and the good thing is, that the 'Soup of the Day' in Iceland always allows free refills.



Our destination for today is Akureyri, the second biggest city in Iceland. But before that we do one more detour to Hjalteyri. Here another former herring factory built in 1937 claims to have been the biggest herring factory in the world. Meanwhile the old factory is used by different companies including a Padi dive shop. They are doing frequent dives here – despite the cold water – as one can see geothermal underwater chimneys called Strytan in depths of 20 to 70 meters.

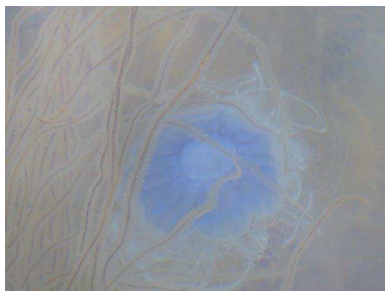


We enjoy the beautiful view from the jetty and again discover some whales pretty close by. We never thought that whales would swim so far into the fjord and even so close to the second biggest city in Iceland.





The jetty looks inviting and Werner can not resist to go fishing. For the first time in his life he caught a Sea Trout. Meanwhile Dewi is doing land based whale watching also from the jetty. We can hear the whales' blows all over the fjord. There seem to be so many whales around us.



There are blue jelly fish in the ocean and we also can smell shark meat hung up to dry. Fermented and dried Shark meat is a local delicacy.



We spent a relaxing afternoon and spontaneously decide to stay for the night. Akureyri can wait until tomorrow.

Werner's still lucky while fishing and our intake of Omega-3-fatty-acid supplement is secured.

At the jetty we meet a German who was also fishing and who lives since 10 years in Akureyri. He confirms again, that this year is the worst summer in 30 years in Iceland. He said that even for Icelanders this summer is "remarkably bad"! One theory is that the last volcanic eruption at the beginning of this year is influencing the local weather pattern. So, locals as well as tourists enjoy the first sunny and warm days.