

27.8.2015, Maelifellsandur, Strutur

After yesterday's stormy night, it looks like the weather god shows mercy and sends sunshine! Just in time as we have big plans for today. At the next large river crossing (a tributary to the Markarfljot), we want to take photos of each other crossing the river – as normally we cannot photograph ourselves while we are in the car...



Even before we reach the big river our road is already running spectacularly in the riverbed. We were not even sure if we are on the right track...



After a few more kilometers we arrive at the big river crossing.....





... and the drivers are allowed to show all their skills!



After we successfully mastered and photo-documented all river crossings we continue our journey through this breathtaking landscape.



Theresa and Pierre earlier discovered a gorge behind lake Alftavatn and as we are traveling with two vehicles we decide to give it a try and drive there.



However, we should have read the „small print“ of this adventure: The track is not running along the lake, but rather **in** the lake!



At the end of the lake, the piste indeed continues and soon after we reach the gorge. For some journeys it is really better to have two similar vehicles which could pull each other if needed... Don't try this at home and alone ;-)





It is the same way back through the lake again. On many occasions we already realized that the landscape on the return looks totally different than on the way going there. We would have bet, that we had not been driving on this track ever before.



(Not in a boat, but in an Unimog)

Today is certainly the Day of River Crossings and we master one after the other.



On our way we cross the Landmannalaugarvegur, one of the most famous and liked hikes in Iceland. This hike is in total 55km long and is so popular that approximately 100,000 people are walking this trail per year. Fortunately we do not have to take off our shoes nor do we get wet feet!



Is this an Icelandic campervan...?! Well, this was a former highland hut which was sold and subsequently moved by the new owner. With this road condition – will it arrive in one piece or as an assembly kit!?

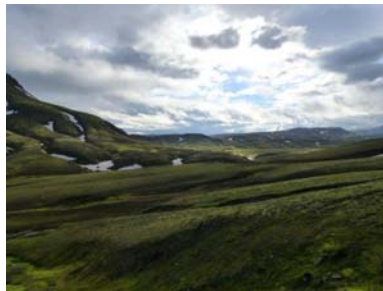
The track leads us further across the Maelifellssandur plains and we get really close to the Myrdalsjökull glacier.





Finally we reach our today's destination which is Mt Strutur (968m); the road is passing the highland hut and ends a few kilometer further at the foot of the mountain.

We finish this exciting day with a 6km hike to a hot spring behind mount Strutur.



Unfortunately the hot spring is so hot, it is impossible to take a dip without being cooked alive! We were disappointed, but the temptation to still have a dip in a nice hot spring made us do this 6 km hike...





In the evening we try to brave the temperatures and have dinner outside, but it is just too cold....

Shortly before dinner is ready, we declare defeat and move inside not taking the risk that our food will be frozen before we can eat it.

After dinner we witnessed our very last highlight of today: We saw our very first Northern Lights in Iceland!

28.8.2015, Kirkjubaejarklaustur, Leidolfssfell

From our camp for the night at mount Strutur we backtrack to the F210 and continue our journey through the highland. We drive very close past the glacier tongue Öldufellsjökull which is part of the Myrdalsjökull glacier.



Turning from the F210 onto the F232 the sun is shining and the landscape is getting even more magnificent.



We take a short break at the Holmsarfoss waterfall.



Finally we hit the ring road No.1 just 30km South of the city of Kirkjubaejarklaustur. We have to drive into the city to restock our supplies and we plan to meet Theresa and Pierre again at the Fjadrargljufur gorge which is enroute to our next destination the „Laki Craters“.

Beginning of July we wanted to drive this track already, but a large snow field covered the track, so it was still closed. At that time the gorge was also covered in dense fog. Today we have the chance to see the Fjadrargljufur gorge in bright sunshine – but on a foggy day it has its own charme.





On our way to the Laki Craters, we first follow F206 North and then turn onto an unmarked track Westbound. After bouncing around for a few hours and crossing a deep river, we reach the hut at mount Leidolfsfell where we camp for the night.



29.8.2015, Tjarnargigur, Laki

In beautiful sunshine we continue our drive to the Laki Craters. The landscape is full of different lava formations and of course there are lots of rivers to cross.





A short hike leads us through the lava field Tjarnargigur with a crater lake ensuite. Seeing the crystal clear water one just wants to jump into the lake. But feeling its temperature brings us back to reality.



After our hike we reward ourselves with a picnic outdoors. We build an Unimog shelter wall with the against the wind. Unfortunately the wind kept changing its direction all the time...



Finally we reach Laki, a string of craters and volcanic fissures which consists of over 100 craters. The Laki Crater itself is 816m high we could hike to the top. In 1783 the Laki was continuously erupting over a period of eight months and discharged millions of tons of ash and sulfur dioxide. Half of the animals and crops in Iceland were destroyed resulting in a large famine. The population of Iceland was reduced by a quarter. The consequences were felt in the whole world and may have even caused droughts in India.





After a long day we decide not to spend too much time searching for a perfect camping spot, but just camp at the parking lot at the national park boundary.

While the three of us climbed the crater, Theresa was toiling in the kitchen and pampered us for dinner with a 5-course-menu, which she had been whipping up in her Unimog kitchen! We had home baked bread rolls! Amuse bouche, fish soup (from Werner's cod), Lamb filets, cheese balls a la Theresa and a berry dessert! Yummy! We have not eaten such a gourmet meal in Iceland, yet. Since this dinner, Werner is dreaming of replacing our microwave with a gas oven. But is there a gas oven which can make bread rolls all by itself?