

## Westfjords' Natural Hot Springs - The source of all life

The **Westfjords** are a neck of land extending from the rest of the country in the north-west of Iceland. The region is one of Iceland's most amazingly beautiful regions, untouched nature. Westfjords are the oldest part of Iceland where glaciers have been a major force in shaping the land and deep glacier-eroded valleys.



Tourists are now increasingly discovering the wonders of the

**Westfjords:** dynamic landscapes, beaches, magnificent ocean views, with deep fjords and tall majestic mountains, deserted farms, nesting birds, lush vegetation, awe-inspiring silence and much more. The air is pure, filled with the scents of clean, ocean breezes and wild vegetation.

The Westfjords have received various acknowledgements for professionalism in connection with environmental protection and travel services. The Westfjords has many hidden gems with plenty of natural or semi-man made pools in remote natural locations. The abundance of hot water and rich history of bathing have created a unique outdoor bathing culture in close relation with nature.

Our natural springs are based on geothermal water that flows directly and constantly from the ground. Many visitors stay in the pool around midnight during winter and watch the northern light that are one of a kind, which is an experience people never forget. During the summers we have 24 hours of daylight and our visitors enjoy the romantic of the midnight sun.

## The Spa Project - Wellness Country Iceland



The Westfjords are participants in a new project called the Wellness Country Iceland.

The concept of Wellness Country Iceland is to promote health related, sustainable tourism for the whole of Iceland. The project is in the process of developing concepts for treatment centres dealing with the therapeutic effects of thermal baths and bathing for urban and rural locations in Iceland. The experience of thermal bathing is integrated and enriched with

experience of nature, culture, outdoor activities as well as education and training courses.

The spas are the main attractions but we have several other local tourist attractions such as local food cuisines at our many restaurants, nature and wildlife, fjords and bird cliffs, outdoor adventures, culture and history, northern lights, winter sports, sailing, horse riding, glacier trips, snowmobiling, bird watching, fishing, hiking, seal and whale watching and several museums. More information can be found at [www.westfjords.com](http://www.westfjords.com) and <http://www.vesturferdir.is/index.php?lang=en>.

## More about the natural springs of the Westfjords

### Two Westfjords Spa Centres in the future

We are currently exploring opportunities for larger scale centres in **Reykholar** and **Reykjanes**. These centres will provide a full range of services and facilities ranging from types of accommodation, cuisine, treatments and therapies of offer, bathing experiences, services and facilities. The centres have several smaller natural pools in the same region from where is possible to visit a range of smaller wellness places.

#### Reykholar

Reykholar is a geothermal area that is developing a unique Seaweed Spa. The area is specialised in seaweed since there you will find the only seaweed-factory in Iceland. Reykholar has 25 years experience of harvesting seaweed from the natural resources of Breidafjordur and its products are certified Organic and fulfill the strictest international standards.



Reykholar is currently developing a Seaweed Spa Center where visitors can forget about everyday stresses and worries and truly indulge themselves. Seaweed treatment promotes firmness and strength to body tissues to help clear stored toxins. This treatment is excellent as part of slimming programs, alleviates tension and physical exhaustion, heals aches and pains, improves immune function and leaves the skin in an improved condition.

#### Reykjanes

At **Reykjanes** there is abundant geothermal heat. In fact the Hotel in Reykjanes is built on top of three hot springs. The pool there is one of a kind with as it is a 50 m long with unusually hot water and a natural steam bath. Both exploit the abundant, naturally flowing hot spring water.



You must stay in the pool around midnight during winter and enjoy Northern lights dancing over the sky. During the summertime you must experience the spectacular sunny nights in Iceland to understand how amazing the nature is. Then you can watch the sun go behind mountains and come up again few minutes later.

### Smaller Wellness Gems

A large number of smaller natural pools are scattered throughout the whole Westfjords region. Each pool is very unique and offers a new experience in addition to other local tourist attractions.

#### Area 1: Strandir

Two main natural pools are in Strandir Area, **Krossneslaug** and **Gvendarlaug**. Both pools are at perfect bathing temperature and located in beautiful spots.



**Krossneslaug** is located where the road ends in Iceland or on the edge of the North Atlantic Sea with the roar of the waves and the mountains towering it. Here, natural springs provide a continuous source of hot water to feed the open-air pool down on the pebble beach, whose walls are



barely a couple of meters from the icy waters of the Atlantic; a swim here is one of the most memorable experiences Iceland has to offer.



**Gvendarlaug** by Hotel Laugarhol consists of two natural springs that are said to have healing powers. One is medieval and a protected archeological site. It is one of many pools said to have been blessed by bishop [Guðmundur the good](#) (1160-1237). These sites are believed to have



miraculous powers, as Guðmundur was a popular saint. Right below it is another natural spring and a modern public swimming pool. Next to the pools is the [Museum of Icelandic Sorcery & Witchcraft](#).

## [Area 2: Ísafjarðardjúp](#)

**Heydalur** is tucked away in a birch-covered valley with a tiny little hot spring. A country hotel with its atmospheric restaurant housed in a beautifully converted barn.



The hotel manager, Stella, prepares superb cuisine using locally sourced ingredients such as salmon, fresh from nearby rivers. As your meal is cooking, take a dip in the hotel's natural geothermal hot pool overlooking the valley.

[Heydalur](#) also offers horseback riding tours in the silent overgrown valley. Also try the unique experience of rowing the fjord with the view of Drangajökull Glacier amongst the seals and seabirds.



**Laugarland** offers a chance to leave the civilization behind and gives you an opportunity to experience the breathtaking wilderness of the Westfjords and to feel the power of nature for yourself – geothermal water vs. glacial water.

Laugarland offers nature-lovers the opportunity to discover this landscape, which



was abandoned by the last settlers 50 years ago, in the most special way - on horseback alongside a free running herd. We follow ancient routes over mountain passes and through abandoned farmland, cross rivers and fjords, soak in hot springs and trek across the Drangajokull glacier!

### Area 3: Vesturbyggð

Flokalundur is a small, family-run summer-hotel, on the south coast of the West fjords. The area was legally declared a nature reserve in 1975. The hotel is located within a walking distance from one of the greatest geothermal pools on the beach. The natural surrounding



with its unspoiled wildlife is breathtakingly unique. The hot spring is loaded from rocks and is very pleasant to relax in while enjoying the wonderful view of Breiðafjörður Bay. Nearby are some of Iceland's most beautiful natural sites, such as Latrabjarg, Raudisandur, the waterfall Dynjandi and the island Flatey.



### Visit the Wild Westfjords

In recent years considerable emphasis has been placed on developing self-sustaining tourism in the Westfjords. Preserving nature always takes precedence over short-term economic gains, as it is nature that will continue to draw tourists for years to come. This policy has attracted attention both in Iceland and abroad, and in recent years awards have been received for work relating to environmental matters.

In 1999 the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) presented the Westfjords with an award titled, "Linking Tourism and Conservation in the Arctic." Last year German publishing company NORDIS selected the Westfjords as Scandinavia's Best Destination. NORDIS specializes in publishing material concerning travel services in Scandinavia, such as a comprehensive handbook about the region. Later the Westfjords travel services received an award from UMFÍ (Icelandic Youth Association) and the Commerce Environmental Fund for successfully disseminating information about sustainable tourism, with emphasis on outdoor life and environmental protection, in its marketing of the region.

There have been many innovations in Westfjord travel services in recent years. As tourism in the region has gradually increased new leisure activities have been successfully developed – something for most everyone. The spa project - [Wellness Country Iceland](#) is the Westfjords' newest project that aims to develop services and treatments consisting of natural remedies based on water, nature and fresh air.

### Travel to Iceland by air

Our guests travel to Iceland by air and the approximate flight times from London and Copenhagen is approximately 3 hours. [Icelandair](#) offers direct flights from Helsinki that begins on April 24, 2009.

The flight duration from Helsinki to Iceland is 3 hours and 20 minutes. Icelandair maintains regular scheduled flights to Iceland from the following cities all year around: London, Glasgow, Copenhagen, Manchester, Oslo, Paris, Stockholm, Amsterdam, Frankfurt, Boston, Minneapolis, New York and Orlando.

In addition [Iceland Express](#) is Iceland's low-fare airline and connects the Icelandic capital of Reykjavík with 14 airports in Scandinavia, Germany, France, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Spain and Poland.

## Travel to the Westfjords

Upon arrival in Iceland, you have the beautiful West fjords within your reach. This hidden jewel of Iceland is easily accessible from Reykjavik by [flight](#), [bus](#) or you can reach the gateway to Westfjords by 2 hours drive in a rental car.

Travelling to the Westfjords you will journey through the whole range of Icelandic flora from the shore and meadows, through birch and willow, to mossy moors. On a stroll amidst the driftwood on the shore one can see birds and seals and then an occasional arctic fox around the deserted farmsteads. Along your way there are numerous travel services and activities to enjoy.

The Westfjords in all its diversity has plenty to offer nature lovers, where it is truly possible to get away from the usual and relax in a most peacefully exciting environment.

We look forward to see you!

Best regards,

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