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Best Of Reykjavík

**Best Spiritual Experience**

**The Sweat Lodge**



# That Post-Christianity Gay Hippie Astronomy Vibe



© Nanna Dís

Even just trying to put the sensation of visiting the sweat lodge in Elliðaárdalur down on paper seems an exercise in futility; I don't think words could ever quite mediate the scale of physical and mental effects experienced during a session.

At least, let me tell you this: Heiðar and Nonni—an on-or-off couple according to whose gossip you're paying attention to—'imported' a native American some twenty years ago who served as their mentor in the traditions, songs and preparations of native tribes when it comes to cleansing the spirit through elongated periods of sweating and chanting in total darkness. They then built a mud-igloo of sorts in their backyard, which luckily happens to be the best green area in Reykjavík—Elliðaárdalur—and now they regularly welcome groups of people there for extended seven hour sweat sessions. Think red hot glowing rocks, aromatic oils and chanting. Also, rabbits constantly roam their property and shit all over the place.

For people steeped in Christianity, even just the prayer at the outset of each session, where we address the East and the West and the North and the South and thank Mother Earth and Father Sky, is pretty awesome. Did I mention that you're already wearing coloured sunglasses at this point because Heiðar and Nonni know that gazing into the fire with tinted shades on is miles beyond cool? The colours! That pink!

The sunglasses are only one of the post-Christianity gay hippie astronomy twists that Heiðar and Nonni put on the whole thing—their sweat lodge is definitely a frontrunner for most postmodern phenomenon in Reykjavík whatever way you look at it. Disclosing exactly what that means or describing it in detail would ruin the surprise (don't worry, there's no nudity nor butt-banging nor drugs involved, not on a regular basis anyway) but I'll just say that no one from my group has ever left unsatisfied and I've been three times.

They claim that they have had babies as young as a few months (why would they need to cleanse their spirit though?) and people on the brink of ninety in sessions. Somebody told me that sweating is really popular on New Year's Eve. I know some people go for a session almost every week. Others come from weird families and grow up on this stuff. I went for my birthday with a bunch of my friends and it was great. But all I really know is that a session is never the same but then again it's always the same because every time is awesome. **Atli Bollason**

# Things They Like

by Tómas Gabríel Benjamín



**Sölvi Tryggvason**  
Host of TV show 'Málið'

My favourite swimming pool is Laugardalslaug. I grew up in the neighbourhood and have a lot of good memories from the pool.

I have a lot of favourite cafés, but I've always liked Mokka on Skólavörðustígur the most. My mother took me there as an infant, so I was taking in the atmosphere whilst being breastfed.

And on those sunny days, Laugardalur and Gróttá are my favourite places for a walk.



**Dóri DNA**  
Rapper

I'm not the same party animal as I used to be back in the day, and I really don't give a shit about the downtown nightlife scene. Having just moved to the city centre though, I do love City Hall, the whole of Tjarnargata and Suðurgata streets, and the Hljómskálagarður public park with its view over the Vatnsmýri swamp. All of these places really form the heart of Reykjavík for me.



**Teitur Magnússon**  
Singer of Ojba Rasta

Hólavallargarður cemetery is a great place to go and relax, look around, connect with the past and the old spirits. It's also a good place to have a nap after a night out.

Hemmi og Valdi and Faktóry by Hljómalind square and Nasa by the parliamentary square were great places to go, but now they are being torn down to build hotels. They were all very aesthetically pleasing and played a big part of the musical history of the nation. There was something exquisite and beautiful about enjoying live music in these old houses.

The Einar Jónsson Museum is a wonderful sculpture park in the centre of town. It's a haven filled with majestic statues, offering peace of mind. Einar, this idol, built himself an epic house in a great location. It is just by Hallgrímskirkja, and it's got a very phallic vibe.



**Kjartan Yngvi Björnsson**  
Author

Despite the prevalent Icelandic distrust of culture and the much too common anti-cultural snobbery, I have to say that my favourite thing about Reykjavík is the creative scene. So many people here are doing so many exciting things, and sometimes the city buzzes so vibrantly that it almost hums. There is always something new going on either in literature, music, theatre or other disciplines of art. It really is quite invigorating and inspiring, so keep an eye out for exhibits, publications and concerts—chances are you'll discover something new and exciting. For example, a new and exciting publishing house called Tunglið forlag just started up in Reykjavík and the regular art festival, Lókal, is back in August. Check them out.



**Svavar Knútur**  
Folk singer

Víkin Maritime Museum and its attached café is one of my very favourite places in Reykjavík. In today's debate about music venues being shut down, we often neglect to talk about new places opening up. It's a really fun place to host a concert, and it's got the best view in the whole of Reykjavík. The coffee is really good, too.

Hemmi og Valdi was also a great place to watch a new amateur artist take his or her first steps into the live music scene, and I always got more kicks out of seeing them than somebody famous. It was also a great place to meet up with friends.



**Ágústa Eva**  
Actress

I really enjoy the sports club Mjöllnir. The atmosphere is great, you are surrounded by fun people and it's the perfect place to train both body and soul. Just being there takes the pressure off everything else and gives you a lot of energy. Then there are always social events and parties happening.



**Benedikt Erlingsson**  
Actor and director

I believe Reykjavík is an incredibly ugly city! The breath-taking view of Laugarnes is blocked by concrete walls, which is an absolute architectural disaster. It's so bad that I spent a lot of my younger years looking for places of beauty, and the closest I came to it was the streets of the Þingholt district in downtown Reykjavík. Walking down Laufásvegur there allows you to pretend for just a second that you are in a European city with a rich cultural history.

Otherwise, I like to start my mornings at the Kaffifélag by Skólavörðustígur. It's like a Greek men's club—the men sip coffee in the morning whilst their women are working. We like staring at tourists passing by, and occasionally we let them take pictures of us artists sitting there.

The Hljómskálagarðurinn public park is a great place to go fencing with sticks from the birch trees, pretending to be a Viking. On warm days it's the perfect place to be, and occasionally you'll run into lovers tumbling in the grass by the "Lovers" statue.

As rental stores disappear in Iceland and all over the world, the video rental Aðalvídeóleigan on Klapparstígur remains a real treasure of a place where you can find just about everything.



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Best Of Reykjavík

**Institution**

**Brynja**



As you walk up Laugavegur, weaving through all-weather clad tourists as they meander past souvenir shops, artsy cafés and hip boutiques, a hardware store is probably the last thing you would expect to encounter. However, Brynja, a Reykjavík institution, holds its own in the thoroughfare amongst these crowd pleasers.

# A Hardware Store Holds Its Own On Fleece Street

The distinctive red building is impossible to miss with its crisp paint job and sign that spells out “Brynja.” The store’s owner, Brynjólfur H. Björnsson, whose name is derived from the same word, told us that the store’s name invokes Viking armour.

Open since 1919, Brynja is most likely the oldest hardware store in Iceland that is still open for business—and a busy one at that, crowded with both locals and a steady stream of tourists.

For locals, bath equipment, keys and locks are the most popular sales at Brynja, but tourists perusing the store gravitate towards “vintage” items like modest aluminium water pitchers and basins, enamelled and painted with flowers or ogle the “exotic” knives hand-crafted by local artisan, Palli Kristjánsson from such materials as whale tooth and reindeer antler.

For tourists, coat hooks with Viking faces, shelf paper in primary colours, varnish cans with antique labels, a classic shower head, boxes of individual screws, washers and nails, wicker rug beaters, skeins of twine and rough wool work gloves are all examples of Iceland’s charming character, yet unlike novelty souvenirs, each of these items has their own distinct purpose for locals.

When I asked Brynjólfur whether Brynja had any plans to sell puffin stuffed-animals in the future, he said, “No. We don’t want to be a tourist shop. There are already plenty of them.” The only item, Brynjólfur keeps in stock specifically for tourists are electrical adaptors. However, tourists would find reasons to visit his shop even if Brynja didn’t stock them.

Brynjólfur suspects American tourists, in particular, find the shop fascinating because most of them are used to buying their tools from large warehouses in strip malls. Yet, small hardware stores like Brynja are becoming just as rare in Iceland.

Although the recent decision to close Laugavegur to auto-traffic has been largely well received, Brynjólfur laments that local customers can no longer load heavy equipment or supplies into their vehicles from the store.

As city planning favours tourist accommodations and attractions, closing down bars and cafes to make way for hotels, for instance, some local institutions like Brynja will just have to work harder to serve the needs of locals while welcoming tourists from all over the world. **Adrienne Blaine**

Best Of Reykjavík

**Best Place to Treat Yo Self**

**Geysir**

Even from the outside, Geysir is a barrel full of eye-candy for the window shopper with a sweet tooth for clean Nordic fashion and indulgently soft fur accessories. Though it sits a mere block up from Lundinn on Skólavorðustígur, Geysir feels a long ways away in terms of quality and aesthetics from its tourist trapping counterpart with no bloated display of stuffed puffins or offensively cheap plastic Iceland flags in sight.

The interior is equally pleasing, designed by the same creative mind behind other aesthetically applaudable Reykjavík establishments like KEX Hostel and Snaps Restaurant. Its large windows let in the summer light, punctuated by colourful blankets made of pure Icelandic wool. A moose stands in the corner draped with scarves and mittens that can make even the most warm-blooded wish it were winter. A wooden staircase lined with shining Hunter brand boots leads shoppers into its depths, where a basement of beautiful bags, beanies, blouses and more await.

It may have begun with an emphasis on sending the tasteful tourist home with their new staple article of Icelandic wool, but Geysir

has broadened its focus. Since a minor reworking of their concept in 2010, Geysir now aims to send, well, everybody home with their new staple article of Icelandic wool. During the summer months the shop is brimming with happy foreign Skólavorðustígur shoppers, and during the off-season, especially around Christmas time, it’s locals. This must be the mark of a well-rounded shop.

The fine designs and hip interior go down easier than a cool spoonful of skyr, but the price tags can give a jolt similar to finding a lump of dark hair in that skyr. But the prices are worth it, Silja Elvarsdóttir assures us from behind the counter, as they reflect the durability of the items. “It’s timeless,” she says, “think of it as an investment. You pay now for something that you will use over and over again for many years to come.” So we say: suck it up and treat yo self.

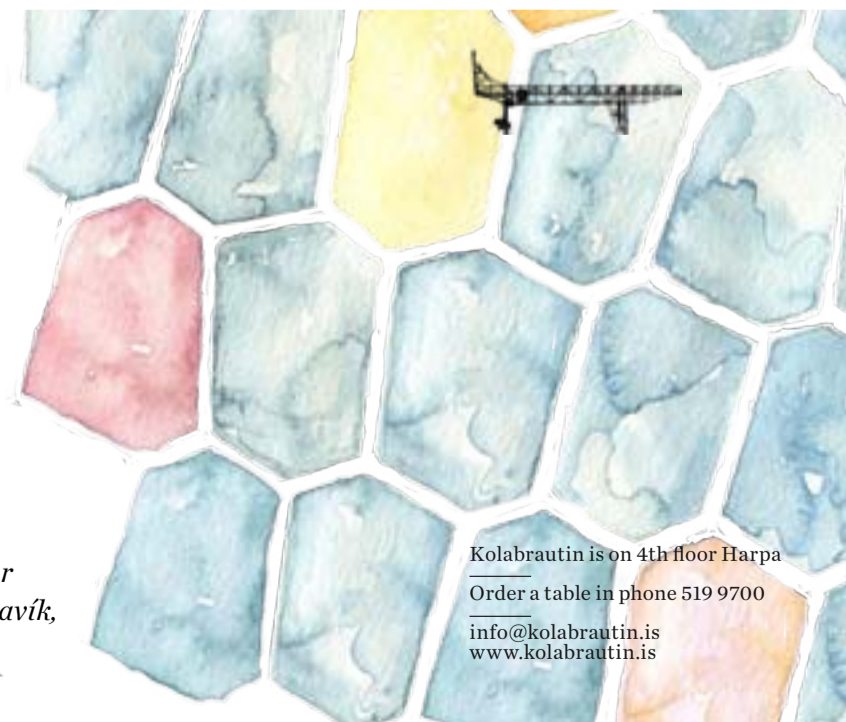
Never again should a zipper burst trying to fit the smashed beak of a stuffed puffin into a suitcase. **Parker Yamasaki**



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# The Best Of Reykjavík!

Grapevine readers, friends, enemies and staff do the choosin'!

By: the usual gang of idiots

Photos by Magnús Andersen, Nanna Dís, Alísa Kalyanova & Yara Polana

Our BEST OF REYKJAVÍK LIST is here! Again we've spent countless hours compiling the thing [via your suggestions, e-mails, Facebook comments and bar-talk], and as always we are sure you are more than ready to contest and challenge every single entry.

And this is the point. We should strive to spend our time having conversations about stuff in our environment that contributes to our quality of life. We need to care about our surroundings and show love for the things we are thankful for.

As we like lazily copy/paste on this occasion: "We love the great city of Reykjavík. We really do. In fact, we love it so much, we named our magazine after it—and most of us choose to live here for extended periods at a time. It really is an excellent

little city, all things considered. Of course it's lacking in many things a city will need. Decent public transport, actual neighbourhoods, a variety of ethnic eateries, clubs for late night partying on weekdays and about a million people, to name but a few. But we still swear by it, and if you're reading this, chances are you do too."

What follows are some nice tips on some of what makes Reykjavík-life worthwhile, some good entries into a hopefully never-ending discussion. The primary purpose of this BEST OF REYKJAVÍK thing is celebration! It's about big-upping stuff, giving mad props to it and patting it on the shoulder.

Our list is of course by no means a scientific one, and it is certainly contestable. It should be used as a starting point

for a conversation; something for you to read, verify, distrust, totally disagree with, argue over, send us angry rants about and enjoy.

Here's how we do it: Ever since spring 2009 we've been accepting readers thoughts on what's BEST at bestof@grapevine.is, as well as conducting random polls on our Facebook, on the street and at the bar. Using your suggestions and arguments for guidance, we then assembled a couple of panels of tasteful folks that represent most genders, income brackets and political affiliations. Below are the results. Enjoy, and remember to send your suggestions to bestof@grapevine.is for consideration in our 2014 edition.

## DINING AND GRUBBING

### Best Burger: VITABAR



It was only a matter of time until Vitabar would take our 'BEST BURGER' prize. After all, those guys have been serving up their cheap, delicious, no-fuss burgers to the praise of Reykjavík's most hardcore burger lovers for decades without ever faltering in quality, raising their prices beyond what's appropriate to pay for a burger or becoming hopelessly hyped and crowded. They are a constant; all good, all the time.

Now, most people will know them for their Forget-me-not specialty bleu cheese burger, and that certainly is one goddamn great burger. However, the regular one is just as good (if not better, if you're one of those weird bleu cheese haters): a juicy no-fuss, quality burger served in a comfortable bar setting. It comes with all the trimmings, and goes wonderfully with either the first or last of your weekend's beers. Respect.

**Runners-up:** Hamborgarabúlla Tómasar ("They always still kick ass—sweaty, greasy, meaty"), Grillmarket (last year's winners lose points for raising the price and limited availability, "but they're still damn good"), Roadhouse ("The kind of place that puts the extra effort into making it good), 73 ("300 grams of meat—NOT DRY. An accomplishment").

- 2012: Grillmarket
- 2011: Hamborgarabúlla Tómasar
- 2010: Hamborgarabúlla Tómasar
- 2009: Hamborgarabúlla Tómasar

📍 Bergþórugata 21

### Best Veggie Burger: HAMBORGARABÚLLA TÓMASAR (BÚLLAN)

In this meat lovin' city, a really good veggie burger can be hard to find. Luckily, the burger-grilling stalwarts at Búllan have provided the vegetarian community with a tasty and satisfying option that never leaves one questioning the authenticity of the "veggie" label, and is still greasy enough to feel like you're eating a proper murderburger. Not some old dried out chickpea patty that crumbles as soon as you put ketchup on it. Because vegetarians like junk food too!

- 2012: Hamborgarabúllan Tómasar
- 2011: Hamborgarafabrikkann
- 2010: Saffran
- 2009: Drekkinn

📍 Geirsgata 1

### Best 'Specialty Burger': SEASONAL BURGERS AT HAMBORGARAFABRIKKAN

While Hamborgarafabrikkann is a bit too fancy (pricey) to take the 'Best burger' category, we think it's the place to get something special. If you're looking for something that you'd be hard-pressed to eat with your hands, this sit-down restaurant has loads of them to choose from—the whale burger, the goose burger, the lamb burger, the reindeer burger... Need we say more?

- 2012: Vitabar's 'Forget-me-not'
- 2011: Vitabar
- 2010: Hamborgarafabrikkann
- 2009: Vitabar

📍 Katrínartún 2

### Best Slice DELI



Lo and behold! Deli reclaim the title of 'BEST SLICE', and it's no wonder. Getting pizza by the slice in Reykjavík can be a scary affair—you might just



Best Ice Cream: Valdís

wind up chewing on something dry and cardboard-y that has been sitting in a heater box all day—but such concerns do not apply at the mighty Deli on Laugavegur. The slices are ever-fresh, the toppings are novel and delicious and the prices are well acceptable. We only wish they'd stay open for longer—pizza by the slice is meant to be enjoyed in a state of certain inebriation.

**Runners-up:** Devitos ("Never change, Devitos")

- 2012: Devitos
- 2011: Deli
- 2010: Deli
- 2010: Deli

📍 Bankastræti 14

### Best Pizza GAMLJA SMÍÐJAN

Although our panel (and a lot of our readers, judging by mail-ins) have been dedicated Gamla Smiðjan eaters for years, the little pizzeria on Lækjargata took a bit of a dip last year, falling off their throne of pizza swords. That must have given them a real wake up call, because those guys quickly came back like gangbusters, conjuring up some of the best pizzas they've ever made! Good to have you back on top, GS!

**Runners-up:** Devitos Pizza ("A unique experience, one of a kind. And tasty.")

- 2012: La Luna trattoria-pizzeria
- 2011: Gamla Smiðjan
- 2010: Gamla Smiðjan
- 2009: Devitos Pizza

📍 Lækjargata 8

### Best Ice Cream VALDÍS

This little Italian-style gelato shop in Grandi has been open for just over a month but it already has locals frothing at the mouth and standing in long

lines for a couple of scoops. That's no coincidence: The menu is an ever-changing smorgasbord of crowd-sourced flavours picked by Facebook fans. They serve freshly baked waffle cones. And the staff outfits are charming. Yup, Valdís is just the ticket to bringing a bit of sunshine to the cold and grey summer we've been not enjoying lately. We look forward to seeing Valdís thrive and prosper; thank you, Valdís.

- 2012: YoYo
- 2011: Ísbúðin Ísland
- 2010: Ísbúðin Ísland
- 2009: Ísbúð Vesturbæjar

📍 Grandagarður 21

### Best Bakery SANDHOLT

For the third time Sandholt wins this category, which should not really come as surprise. It is a little bit more expensive than the big bakery chains, but you'll be hard pressed to get better value for your money. They offer all sorts of pastries, chocolates, cakes, breads, and sandwiches that the other bakeries in town don't and—as our resident Frenchie notes—they use real butter in their pastries. "This is the only bakery in town that is consistently on point with their baked goods," our former food critic says. "Their products also stand out and have a richer flavour than anything else I've tried."

- 2012: Mosfellsbakari in Reykjavík
- 2011: Sandholt
- 2010: Sandholt
- 2009: Mosfellsbakari

📍 Laugavegur 36

### Best Indian food AUSTURLANDA-HRAÐLESTIN

The local institution Austur-Indíafjelagið has been boasted to be one of the all-around best restaurants in

the country, but it's also rather on the pricey side! Luckily, the owners opened this much more affordable sister-restaurant that cuts back on cost, but not the taste. Their onion pakodas are addictive, the aloo gobi is plentiful and the chicken tandoori melts in your mouth – and those are just the standards! It's still not what you'd call cheap, but it's the best in the biz for your average budget.

- 2012: Ghandi
- 2011: Austurlandahraðlestin
- 2010: Shalimar
- 2009: Austur-Indíafjelagið

📍 Hverfisgata 64a

### Best Thai Food BAN THAI

Ban Thai has been a constant winner since we started this BEST OF thing—actually this Thai operated place has gone decades without ever failing to provide Icelanders with the best, tastiest, most authentic Thai food that can be found outside Thailand. Ban Thai is a fancy, sit down kind of Thai place (with prices to match), where every single dish off the huge menu is made to order with great care, shaped by years of experience. The service can get flaky, so bring your patience and good humour to the party (and never go if you're in a hurry), but the yummy food makes it all worth it. A true Reykjavík treasure.

**Runner-up:** Yummi Yummi—Ban Thai's owner went into competition with himself a few years back, founding a cheap, fast food alternative to Ban Thai that's way easier on the wallet (every course is 1,000 ISK!).

- 2012: Ban Thai
- 2011: Ban Thai
- 2010: Ban Thai
- 2009: Ban Thai

📍 Laugavegi 130

### Best Kebab HABIBI

You can't find a kebab in Reykjavík that quite compares to what you would find in almost any major European city (and whatever you'll find is going to cost you more than you would expect), but the Icelandic ones still make for a pretty fast food option—and they keep getting better. By now Reykjavík has a handful of kebab places with the latest one, Mandi, opening last year right next door to another one called Ali Baba. Last year's winner, Kebab Grill, is still pretty good, but we thought the title should return to Habibi, which took the award in 2011. "Habibi is the only kebab place that does proper spicy. If you ask for spicy, you'll get spicy," one of our writers explains. Furthermore: "they offer generous portions

of meat, and the bread is always perfectly warmed so that is slightly crispy on the outside.”

**Runner-up:** In close second is the new kebab place, Mandi. The ingredients are fresh and the owner, Halil, is always there with a smile on his face.

- 2012: Kebab Grill
- 2011: Habibi

📍 Hafnarstræti 18

### Best coffeehouse KAFFISMIÐJAN

Maybe it's no surprise at this point (also, why would you be reading this BEST OF list for surprises? Some things don't change)—Kaffismiðjan remains our 'BEST COFFEEHOUSE' for the FIFTH YEAR IN A ROW! That's every goddamn year we've had these awards! We've explained this to you four times already, but in case you're new in town, we should reiterate: Kaffismiðjan make the best coffee you will drink in Reykjavík. They take that stuff super seriously, roasting their beans on-site and employing folks who know just how to churn out a good cup of whatever type coffee it is you thirst for. Furthermore, the atmosphere is unique, of the kind you will only find (and grow to love) in Reykjavík. It's "comfortable, but not falling-asleep comfortable, welcoming, warm and wonderful." And did we mention they have a stack of vinyl records you can play at your delight?

**Runners-up:** Stofan ("a great place to sit in a corner and enjoy a cup with a friend."), Café Haiti ("perfect in so many ways...")

- 2012: Kaffismiðjan
- 2011: Kaffismiðjan
- 2010: Kaffismiðjan
- 2009: Kaffismiðjan

📍 Kárástígur 1

### Best Coffee To-Go LITLI BÓNDABÆRINN

This take-away joint on Laugavegur is really one of the most delightful places to pop into on any daily stroll. They brew up some real mean coffees, making a point to use only the highest quality beans, and if you go there a few times they remember your order. It also helps that their former barista-champ owner, David, is one of the most charming individuals who changes the experience of grabbing your morning java into a complete laugh-riot. David has also singlehandedly introduced savoury pastries into the snacking landscape, so make sure to grab a veggie-sausage roll or lamb pasties if you can—they are in a league of their own!

- 2012: Kaffifélagið
- 2011: Kaffifélagið
- 2012: Café Haiti
- 2009: Kaffifélagið

📍 Laugavegur 41

### Best Tea IÐA ZIMSEN HÚSIÐ

Icelanders aren't big tea drinkers. While most, if not all, coffeehouses around town have tea, it seems far from their focus. The new Iða coffeehouse in Zimsen húsið, however, seems to be putting a lot of effort into not only having good coffee and, but also their tea. They offer a nice selection of loose dry leaf including both premium foreign brands and popular mainstays in abundance, and the atmosphere is nice and calm, which is what we look for when we want tea.

- 2012: Litli Bóndabærinn
- 2011: Te og kaffi

📍 Vesturgata 2a



Best Vegetarian: Gló

### Best Sushi SAKEBARINN

This relatively new addition to the downtown restaurant scene has quickly become our favourite place to get sushi. If you're alone or in a hurry, Sushibarinn (Best sushi, 2010) is a good option, but otherwise you should walk upstairs to Sakebarinn, which serves the same items and more, plus it's in a nicer restaurant setting. The sushi is fresh and it's not a bad place to try some unique pieces—tender whale sashimi, if you're not morally opposed, and shark sashimi, which tastes a whole lot better than the fermented kind that comes in cubes and reeks of ammonia. Plus, washing it down with a tasty sake-cocktail also beats the brennivín.

**Runners-up:** SuZushii ("The Japanese embassy's go-to place for sushi, apparently"), Sushibarinn ("Great for take-away")

- 2012: SuZushii
- 2011: SuZushii
- 2010: Sushibarinn
- 2009: Sushismiðjan

📍 Laugavegur 2

### Best vegetarian GLÓ

Iceland is not the most vegetarian-friendly of countries, but Reykjavík does have a couple of exclusively vegetarian restaurants and some others that feature great vegetarian options. Not exclusively vegetarian, Gló falls into the latter category. Its chef, Sólveig Eiríksdóttir, better known as Solla, was voted "Favourite Raw Gourmet Chef" and "Favourite Raw Simple Chef" in the annual Best of Raw contest two years in a row as well as Grapevine's 'Best vegetarian,' now three years in a row. With fresh ingredients and a menu that changes daily, you're always in for something tasty and you can feel good about it being healthy too.

**Runner-up:** Grænn kostur is serves filling vegetarian and vegan dishes at an affordable price and although it's not the 'Best vegetarian,' we're thankful that it exists.

- 2012: Gló
- 2011: Gló
- 2010: Á Næstu Grösum
- 2009: Á Næstu Grösum

📍 Laugavegur 20b

### Best hangover meal THE HANGOVER COMBO AT PRIKIÐ

Our panel of hard-drinking, hard-partying 101 rats fervently voted in Prikið to come back as the monarchs of hangover country. When you wake up feeling rough, slurp down a Bruce Willis shake (it's got Jack Daniels, Treo painkillers and yummy ice cream!) and scarf up an American breakfast. You'll quickly find yourself invigorated and inspired to hunt down your next hangover.

**Runners-up:** Trucks at Grái Kötturinn and Laundromat.

- 2012: Vitabar
- 2011: The Truck at Grái Kötturinn
- 2010: The Truck at Prikið
- 2009: The Truck at Grái kötturinn

📍 Bankastræti 12

### Best Soup KRYDDLEGIN HJÖRTU

It's kind of surprising, but Reykjavík is quite the soup town, what with so many places offering their own take on the classic meat soup, lobster soup and other crazy blends. Only Kryddlegin Hjörtu ("the spicy heart") really specialises in soup though, and the soup-lovers on our panel were all pretty adamant of its top-dog status. The buffet-style restaurant offers four different soups a day alongside a colourful, healthy and fresh salad bar. We admit that not ALL their broths are Soup Nazi-great, but most of them are so fucking delicious. Plus, the owner washes all the vegetables in crystals. CRYSTALS.

- 2012: Höfnin
- 2011: Kryddlegin Hjörtu
- 2010: Most soups at Súpubarinn
- 2009: Lobster soup at Sægreifinn

📍 Skúlagata 17

### Best place for a fancy meal GALLERY RESTAURANT AT HÓTEL HOLT



This was a really tough call—we were

orn between last year's winner, Grill Market, and 2009's winner, Gallery Restaurant at Hótel Holt. After much debate, we decided that, although they both serve some fancy meals, Gallery should take the title. If you're looking for a fancy restaurant where everyone looks really fancy and you yourself feel really fancy, you're going to find exactly that at Gallery. From the food--post-nouvelle French--to the '70s classy interiors, to the walls, adorned with paintings by Iceland's foremost artists, this is Fancy. We highly recommend getting a pre-drink at the bar and enjoying it from their big leather couches.

**Runners-up:** Grill Market ("Meaty and wonderful").

- 2012: Grill Market
- 2011: Dill
- 2010: Dill
- 2009: Gallery Restaurant at Hótel Holt

📍 Bergstaðastræti 37

### Best place to go on a date TAPAS BARINN

There are many great places to go on a date, and some of them aren't food-related, but let's face it, dinner is a pretty good way to go. And if you're going that way, Tapas Barinn won't disappoint, especially if it's a first date. The dimly lit basement makes for an intimate setting to share some delicious tapas. What's more, if there's ever a lull in conversation, the continuous flow of dishes will fill any gaps and give you something to talk about. By the time you've finished a pitcher of sangria and a bunch of tapas, you'll stumble out, look down at your cell phone and be surprised to find that you've been there for three-hours. Time flies when you're having fun...

- 2012: Sushi Samba
- 2011: Ítalía
- 2010: Pisa
- 2009: Ítalía

📍 Vesturgata 3b

### Best Newcomer Restaurant BERGSSON MATHÚS

An adorable and cosy new neighbour to the long-time dining classic Við Tjörnnina, Bergsson's emphasis on local produce and seasonal cooking gave it a huge lead to take this prize. Our panel wholeheartedly agreed that their menu is a unique and welcome addition to the restaurant scene and their dishes are really very tasty. Our only comment is that their portions are on the smallish side, so you're always really sad to eat your last bite. But that's what they call one of those "good" problems.

- 2012: Forréttabarrinn
- 2011: Sjávargrillið
- 2010: Noodle Station
- 2009: Saffran

📍 Templarasund 3

### Best goddamn restaurant SNAPS

Holy moly. This is a first. Yup, SNAPS has earned BEST GODDAMN RESTAURANT for two years in a row. How did they do it? Well, according to our definition, a 'best goddamn restaurant' needs to be 'on the cheaper side,' 'consistent,' 'tasty' and 'available'. And SNAPS managed this during its first year, and it is managing it right now. Offering the perfect balance between good food, great atmosphere and affordable pricing, SNAPS remains the best choice for everyday dining—preferably with friends in tow—when you want to feel a little fancier than you do when stuffing your face with a slice of pizza or a sub of the month. Always "tasty," "fairly priced" and "done with care," their French and Spanish inspired fare is guaranteed to hit the spot whether you're there for lunch or dinner (or lunch that eventually turns into dinner, as frequently happens at SNAPS). HOORAY FOR SNAPS!

**Runners-up:** Grillið ("Steakhouse-fancy, and quite French"), Grillmarket ("Never disappoints, but you pay for it"),

- 2012: SNAPS
- 2011: Ban Thai
- 2010: Saffran
- 2009: Segurmo at Boston

📍 Þórsgrata 1

### Best Family Restaurant LAUNDROMAT CAFÉ

If you have loud and obnoxious kids or a screaming baby, you can bring them to Laundromat worry-free. It has a casual diner feel to it with a family-friendly menu, including special kid's items. The place is always bustling with life—coffee drinkers sit next to beer drinkers who sit next to board game players who sit next to writers typing away on their laptops who sit next to you, breast feeding your baby. The constant chatter of conversation will drown certainly drown your kids out if they get noisy, and if they get really noisy or squirmy, you can send them to that downstairs play area. It's hard to beat that. Plus, while your kids play, you can look at that wall of Grapevines, ten year's worth of them.

- 2012: Laundromat
- 2011: Laundromat
- 2010: Piri-Piri
- 2009: Hornið

📍 Austurstræti 9



Best Goddamn Restaurant: SNAPS

**Best cheap meal  
'SUB OF THE MONTH'  
AT SUBWAY**

Subway left 101 Reykjavík a couple of years ago and we had no idea where to go for a cheap lunch. And then they came BACK! And we are thrilled. Now, listen: As almost any working man or woman in Reykjavík will attest, Subway's 'sub of the month' sandwich is a real lifesaver for when you need to a quick, satisfying lunch. OK, it's Subway. But still—450 ISK will get you a sandwich featuring some meatstuffs (that can be easily foregone) fresh veggies and a sauce of your choice. The price can't be beat, and if you figure out a nice combination for the sub, it's pretty damn tasty.

**Runner-up:** Noodle Station ("damn tasty, and filling.")

- 2012: Íslenski barinn
- 2011: Noodle Station
- 2010: 'Sub of the month' at Subway

📍 Bankastræti 14

**Best Seafood  
FISKIFÉLAGIÐ**

It can be hard to keep them straight—Fish Company, Fish Market, and Seafood Grill—they all have fairly similar names, some of them are located very near to each other, and they all serve, yes, fish and more generally seafood. It was a tough choice, as they are all pretty good too, but once again we think The Fish Company, also known as Fiskifélagið, takes the cake. "They are consistently good," our food critic said this year, just like last year. "The food is exceptionally good, the dimly lit basement is cosy and romantic, and the service is excellent."

- 2012: Fiskifélagið
- 2011: Við Tjörnina
- 2010: Fiskifélagið

📍 Vesturgötu 2a

**Best Brunch  
VOX**

If you're willing to spend north of 3,000 ISK, VOX has the best weekend brunch in town. But you're getting your money's worth. It has an expansive buffet with all kinds of must-try Icelandic foods. And, as our former food critic notes, it comes with a free reminder that Icelanders have very poor buffet etiquette, so if you're looking for some aggression with your smoked salmon you're in luck. You'll get a lot of Iceland stuff, all of your classic brunch stuff – eggs, bacon. If you're hungover, you might feel more comfortable at Prikið or Grái kötturinn though.

**Runners-up:** For something more affordable, Bergsson is a great option. It serves your classic American brunch items with an Icelandic twist—skyr of course.

- 2012: Vox
- 2011: Vox
- 2010: Nitjándi
- 2009: Vox

📍 Suðurlandsbraut 2

**Best Place to go With a Group of Friends  
KEX HOSTEL**

Since opening a couple of years ago, KEX has firmly planted itself as one of the coolest places for casual evening beers and easy-going concerts. But most impressively, it's one of the few places in town with really, really big tables. Like, many of them, that you don't need to reserve. It's a huge, comfy, stylish space with a super social atmosphere too, so our panel had no trouble agreeing that this is ideal for a big group of people.

- 2012: Tapas Bar
- 2011: Tapas Bar
- 2010: Tapas Bar

📍 Skúlagata 28

**Best Must-Try Dining Experience  
ICELANDIC FOOD AT  
KAFFI LOKI**

Nestled on top of the hill, next to Hallgrímskirkja church, Kaffi Loki offers a rare treat for travellers and locals alike. Specialising in nice tasting Icelandic food, they make the kind of homemade rye bread and meat soup that your mother wishes she could. If you order the 'Icelandic treats' set dish, you'll get a taste of everything. Top it off with Icelandic pancakes and you'll have a royal meal. Or if you are feeling adventurous, try the rye bread ice cream—it's something else entirely!

- 2012: Home-Style Food at Mamma Steina
- 2011: The svið at Fljótt og Gott, BSI
- 2010: Moby Dick on a Stick at Sægreifinn
- 2009: Bæjarins Beztu

📍 Lokastígur 28

**Best Kept Secret  
LUNCH BEAT**

Having emerged during the last edition of the Reykjavík Dance Festival, this secret sensation has been roving around our fair city for almost a year and still remains a near mystery! What started as an eat-and-dance-your-ass-off lunchtime party in Sweden a few years back has gone all over the world, and our local chapter has held parties at Hemmi & Valdi (RIP!), Bravó (formerly Litla Gula Hænan) and Harpa. There's a healthy smorgasbord for 500 ISK to sustain you through the beats and DJs to get you shaking. But we don't know where the next one will be! Maybe that's why it's such a secret.

- 2012: Icelandic Home-Style Food at Mamma Steina
- 2011: The svið at Fljótt og Gott, BSI
- 2010: Moby Dick on a Stick at Sægreifinn
- 2009: Bæjarins Beztu

📍 All over town

**NEW: Best Lunch  
OSTABÚÐIN**

This cheese and deli shop on Skólavörðustígur offers a daily lunch that is certainly no secret at all. Although some of our people had only just been converted to their quick and plentiful dishes, including a catch of the day and fresh bruschetta, others were afraid that giving it this award would make the place even more crowded in the two short hours it serves the mid-day meal. Hopefully our devoted Ostabúðin-lunching readers won't lose their spots, but damn, this place is deeeelish!

📍 Skólavörðustígur 8

**NEW: Best Late Night Bite  
NONNABITI**

A Nonni boat (or sub, hoagie or grinder for non-local readers) is one of those incredible late-night foods that inspired impassioned responses from our respondents—some enamoured, some disgusted, and others wallowing in self-loathing. Still, it was unanimous that shoving one of these in your food-hole at 2am is basically unbeatable. By the time you get to the end of one, you're just drinking down all those delicious sauces. Plus, several folks also pointed out that Nonni himself is a total hunk and super nice to chat with. Now that's a late night treat!

📍 Hafnarstræti 9

**DRINKING AND NIGHTLIFE**

**Best Mainstream Bar  
THE ENGLISH PUB**

If you're wondering what we mean by 'mainstream,' a lot of us did as well! We agreed that this is neither a positive or negative qualifier, but a neutral catch-all; a place where you could pop in for a single beer or a long rowdy night whether you are a Kenzo clad fashion maven or a Goretex layered stopover tourist. The English Pub fits this to a T, as we all learned by holding a booze-soaked Best Of meeting there, with a panel comprised of hipsters, dads, clean-cut professionals, goths, football fans and slobbs. Thanks, English Pub!

- 2012: The English Pub
- 2011: The English Pub
- 2010: Austur

📍 Austurstræti 12

**Best Place to Start the Night  
SLIPPBARINN**

We judge a good place to start the night as a place to be able to chat with your companions, drink something that tastes good and maybe be able to get something to eat. Kind of like KEX's west-side counterpart, Slippbarinn in the Hotel Marina, which swept this category with their gorgeous, central harbour location, comfortable and spacious atmosphere and a superb selection of well-priced cocktails and pub grub. We have started many a night there, with great success, and it sort of makes losing Hemmi & Valdi a little less painful.

- 2012: KEX Hostel
- 2011: Nýlenduörverzlun Hemma & Valda
- 2010: Nýlenduörverzlun Hemma & Valda

📍 Mýrargata 2

**NEW: Best Place To End The Night  
HARLEM**

At the end of the night, we're talking the very end of a very long night, you're usually looking for something special, an extra dose of magic to help you reach previously unattained peaks. Something for the books. Lately, that special something can often be found at Harlem. As closing time draws near, you can expect the patrons to go all in, dancing on any flat surface, smashing glasses, and getting sloppy. The music is the kind that everyone can shake to, and even if your dancing sucks, you don't have to worry, what you'll be doing is neither technically nor legally dancing anyway! Take our hint: go shake, pivot and pulsate your way into the morning at Harlem!

📍 Tryggvagata 22

**Best Cheap Bar  
ÖLSMIÐJAN**

When it comes to the best cheap bar, we're of course considering the price of beer, but that cheap beer has to taste decent and you have to be not especially afraid while consuming that cheap beer. Thus, Ölsmiðjan wins best cheap bar. It doesn't have the cheapest beer in town (we think this is Glaubar, for 390 ISK), but it has pretty cheap beer (450 ISK), and the atmosphere is nicer than you'd maybe expect for the price.

- 2012: Ölsmiðjan
- 2011: Den Danske Kro
- 2010: Kaffi Zimsen
- 2009: Nýlenduörverzlun Hemma & Valda

📍 Lækjargata 10

**Best All Around Bar  
DOLLY**

Dolly is a great bar to have some post-work beers when the place is still mellow and quiet enough to have conversation. As the night goes on, it becomes far more upbeat. You'll find it's a great place to go dancing or get in that one last round on your way home, that is if you're not too late, as the queue gets pretty long as the hour grows late.

- 2012: Faktory

📍 Hafnarstræti 4

**Best Bar To Go Dancing  
HARLEM**

Harlem has Reykjavík's busiest dance floor, and it attracts the very cool and fly young artsy crowd that loves to—you guessed it—get down and boogie! In between showing off dance moves they learned from YouTube, you can admire the beautiful interior art decorating the venue, fight your way to the bar and enjoy being ignored until someone takes pity on you and serves you a beer. The music is cool and the dance floor usually ends up taking over the tables and booths, too.

- 2012: Bakkus

📍 Tryggvagata 22

**Best Newcomer Bar  
KALDI**

Kaldi serves excellent beer (...Kaldi) and their happy hour lasts until 20:00. And guess what: they have an actual, tuned piano that people can play, which is really nice. Oh, and not only do they have Kaldi, but they also have unfiltered Kaldi on tap, which you're probably not going to find elsewhere.

- 2012: Slippbarinn, Hótel Marína
- 2011: Faktory
- 2010: Sódóma

📍 Laugavegur 20b

**Best Place To Watch Sports Over Beer  
BJARNI FEL**

Sports bars in Reykjavík seem to come and go, but one in particular is always there. That's Bjarni Fel. If it's sports on big TVs that you're after, you can count on this bar, which won this category back in 2009, to provide you with exactly that. They've got the burgers, the beer, the all sorts of weird sports from all over the world on TV--and they're conveniently right downtown, should you be in the mood to engage in further recreational drinking once the vuvuzelas die down.

- 2012: Úrilla Górrillan
- 2011: Hvíta Perlan
- 2010: Hvíta Perlan
- 2009: Bjarni Fel

📍 Austurstræti 20

**Best Beer Selection  
MICRO BAR**

If it's variety you're looking for, then look no further--as far as sheer number of different beers available, Micro Bar is simply unbeatable. They always have eight beers on tap (no Viking or Gull, either!) and dozens of bottled selections, constantly getting new and more exciting kinds from all over the world. The staff is also knowledgeable, and can tell you all about it should you wish to turn your getting sloshed into an educational experience. This place is all about the variety, not the volume.

- 2012: Micro Bar

📍 Austurstræti 6

**Best Place To Get Cocktails  
BORG, HOTEL BORG**

When it came time to pick this year's best place to get cocktails, our choices came down to Hótel Marína's Slippbarinn and Hotel Borg's Borg (last year's winner Kolabrautin sadly having lost its mojo for some reason). While Borg is perhaps slightly less inventive than Slippbarinn, it is extremely solid in the classics. They go the extra mile, burning that strip of orange peel and dropping it onto the egg white foam of your cocktail to give the slightest flavour... The Borg room itself is beautiful and has a sense of occasion, which is important for cocktails. Plus, the service is just incredible.

Runner-up: Slippbarinn. They are super inventive and that's definitely part of the reason we've voted it best place to start the night.

- 2012: Kolabrautin

📍 Pósthússtræti 9-11

**NEW: Best Bar For Smokers  
REYKJAVÍK BEATS**

In the smoker's world, a bar has to meet certain criteria that the rest of us probably couldn't care less about (although it should be said that the smoking area of a bar is a great way to meet people). Reykjavík Beats takes the cake with the only "indoor" smoking area. There's nice seating there where you can drink your beer, which is essential, the smokers say, as they quite enjoy drinking their beer while they smoke. Be warned though, Reykjavík Beats kind of makes you want to stay in the smoking area all night long, which will wreak havoc on your clothes and lungs.

📍 Hverfisgata 46



Best Late Night Bite: Nonnabiti



Best Place To Spend A Rainy Day: Reykjavík Art Museum – Hafnarhúsið

## ACTIVITIES AND FUN-TIMES

### Best Pool LAUGARDALSLAUG

Oh, we know, we know! Everyone has such strong opinions about their local pool and fights for their sundlaug to the death, so people generally furious and defensive about this category. Through all the myriad opinions and local favouritisms, Laugardalslaug still manages to shine through like a beacon of watery pool goodness, especially since their extensive revamp that's still in process. This pool literally has it all – fun and games, relaxation and leisure, exercise pools, therapeutic hot tubs and sports facilities. This place is so iconic, too; a must-go for any visitor.

2012: Laugardalslaug  
2011: Neslaug  
2010: Laugardalslaug  
2009: Laugardalslaug

📍 Sundlaugavegur 30

### Best Museum THE NATIONAL MUSEUM

There are so many curiosities about Icelandic culture, art and history that have been focused on in other museums around town, but this one has neatly condensed it all into one awesome building. We were totally on board to give it this honour as it's one of those places that kind of blends into the landscape, but when you go for a visit, you remember how fucking cool this country is. The permanent collection is impeccably displayed and is full of hidden gems (look up, look down) and their temporary exhibits are state of the art. Plus, they turned 150 this year! Top THAT!

2012: The National Museum  
2011: The National Museum  
2010: Þjóðmenningarhúsið

📍 Suðurgata 41

### Best Gallery I8 GALLERY

In terms of the sheer level of success and popularity of a gallery's artists, i8 is unquestionably leagues beyond the rest. They represent people like Ólafur Elíasson, Ragnar Kjartansson, Elín Hansdóttir and Sigurður Guðmundsson and consistently display work from top-notch international artists as well. Their space alone is great, being simple, stark and

spacious, allowing the exhibitions to be unimpeded by structural bells and whistles. Plus, going to an opening there makes you feel so fucking fancy!

2012: i8 Gallery  
2011: i8 Gallery  
2010: i8 Gallery  
2009: Gallery Kling og Bang

📍 Tryggvagata 16

### Best Place to Spend Time with Kids FJÖLSKYLDU-GARÐURINN (THE FAMILY PARK)

Nestled right in the same spot as our Best Place to Cheer Up (The Zoo), is another super uplifting, fun place that is pretty much unbeatable for entertaining the kiddies. Whether with your own or babysitting someone else's, this activity park in Laugardalur is chock full of fun shit to do: a mega-huge trampoline to bounce on, little go-kart deals for kids to speed around in, a small rollercoaster for thrills and a generally awesome playground. If your kids aren't smiling when they leave here, you need to take them to the doctor.

2012: Lynghagarólf Playground

📍 Múlavegur 2

### Best Place to Spend A Rainy Day REYKJAVÍK ART MUSEUM – HAFNARHÚSIÐ

This was hard to settle on because, obviously, there are a fuckload of rainy days here and "on my couch watching movies!" wasn't a valid contender (although that is one of our favourites). We had to agree that if you had to be out of a rainy day, you'd want to be dry, have lots to do and maybe be able to get some refreshments, all under one roof. Our winner is one of those places that you basically want a minimum of three hours in to take in the vast exhibits and permanent collection by Erró. Meanwhile, you can also sit and read about art in their little library or go upstairs for a coffee and light lunch. Bring on the rain!

2012: Bíó Paradís  
2011: Bíó Paradís  
2010: A hot tub  
2009: Borgarbókasafnið

📍 Tryggvagata 17

### Best Place To Spend A Sunny Day NAUTHÓLSVÍK

You probably didn't come to Iceland to hang out at the beach. You prob-

ably would have picked a tropical island if that's what you were after. That said, Nauthólvík is a pretty awesome beach and it's probably the best place to spend a sunny day. The water is warm thanks to the hot geothermal water that gets pumped into the ocean and the sand was apparently imported from Morocco. There's also a great beachfront hot tub there if it's getting chilly.

2012: Hjartagarðurinn

📍 Nauthólvík

### Best Biking Tour NAUTHÓLSVÍK – ÁRBÆR

The City of Reykjavík is about pour money into maintenance that includes sprucing up streets, bike routes, and public spaces before the year is out. This promises good things for those of who like to get around by bike, as Reykjavík isn't the most bike-friendly of towns. Still, there are some nice places to go for a ride and one of these is a ride that starts at Nauthólvík and takes you into Fossvogsdalur and up to Árbær. It's basically the same Best Biking Tour as last year, but this one goes even further, up to the swimming pool. It's a good one. Bring your bathing suit. Even if you don't top it off with that swim, it's a pleasant ride mostly along the coast and you hardly ever have to cross any streets.

2012: Nauthólvík - Fossvogsdalur

📍 Nauthólvík – Árbær

### NEW: Best Place to go to a Movie BÍÓ PARADÍS

Bíó Paradís is hands down the best place to go to a movie. This art house theatre always seems to have something exciting going on with regular festivals all year round. During the summer they have a series called 'Cool Cuts,' featuring six Icelandic films show with English subtitles. This summer they are showing 'White Night Wedding,' Sigur Rós' 'Heima,' 'Children of Nature,' 'Either Way,' 'Backyard,' and 'Noi the Albino' (read a review of this one elsewhere in the issue). The theatre also has a huge room with tables where you can drink coffee or beer and play games or catch the occasional concert.

📍 Hverfisgata 54

### Best Romantic Walk GRÓTTA

There are really few walks as romantic as the one to Grótta. An island at the end of Seltjarnarnes, Grótta is easily reachable by foot. As you get further away from downtown Reykjavík, you won't have anything to distract you from appreciating each

other's company (save for other romantic couples maybe). DO NOTE: The island is only reachable when the tide is low, so watch your step lest you get trapped by the lighthouse (and wouldn't that be inconvenient? Being trapped on a beautiful remote island with your lover... hmm...).

2012: Grótta  
2011: Grasagarðurinn  
2010: Sæbraut  
2009: Öskjuhlíð

📍 Grótta

### Best Place To Go For A Jog ÆGISSÍÐA

Once again we've voted Ægissíða best place to go for a jog. With the ocean on one side and beautiful houses on the other, this coastal path in 107 Reykjavík is hard to beat. If you're not super hardcore about your workout, you can stop along the way to admire the old fishing station there and read the information placards about the area and its history. And, like we said last year, if you're feeling really good, you can run all the way to Nauthólvík and take a dip in the hot tub. See: "Best Place To Spend A Sunny Day."

Runner-up: Laugardalur, with its tree-lined paths and footbridges, is also a good option, especially if it's a windy day and you don't like the wind.

2012: Ægissíða  
2011: Laugardalur  
2010: Laugardalur  
2009: Elliðaárdalur

📍 Ægissíða

### Best Place To Enjoy A Zen Moment TJÖRNIN

It's a common saying in zen practice to "keep your mind like calm water." Since that is exactly what Tjörnin ("The pond") is (except on some of the most astonishingly windy days), it's the perfect spot to accept what is and feel relaxed and at peace. Those ducks know what we're talking about.

2012: Öskjuhlíð  
2011: Húsdýragarðurinn  
2010: Alþingi  
2009: Reykjavík Botanical Gardens

📍 Tjörnin

### NEW: Best Shock-Walk 5:00 IN THE MORNING ON LAUGAVEGUR

If you're looking to be dragged into the throes of both utter disgust and complete amazement, try to stay lucid enough on a weekend night out to catch the revelry of the post-closing time parade on the main drag. A few things we've witnessed: people vomiting over their shoulder as they stumble-walk, girls hiking their skirts up and literally pissing in the middle of the sidewalk, two obvious strangers approaching and making out within 20 seconds, the list goes on. Maybe this is a bit of a no-brainer, but we still think Laugavegur at 5 AM is a sight to behold.

📍 Laugavegur

### Best Place To Cheer Up HÚSDÝRAGARÐURINN

Another third time winner, Reykjavík's petting zoo is just perfect if you've got a terminal case of the blues. There are few things as uplifting as watching the baby seal cubs swimming around in their massive pool, or watching those adorable lambs take their first shaky steps on the green meadows. If you've got a dark sense of humour, you can also cheer up over the fact that at the end of summer the seal cubs get fed to the foxes, and members of the staff eat the oh-so tender lambs.

2012: Reykjavík's pond "Tjörnin"  
2011: Nauthólvík  
2010: Húsdýragarðurinn  
2009: Húsdýragarðurinn

📍 Múlavegur 2

### Best Place To Read A Book STOFAN

If your living room isn't good enough, Stofan is really the next best thing with its vintage parlour décor, antique furniture that cradles you like a hug, mix-and-match wall hangings and unobtrusive music picked by the warm and lovely staff. It's the ideal spot to really plow through those last chapters of that novel you can't put down, whether its by day with their great coffee or by night with their even better whisky selection. Our book-reading, whisky sipping contingent gave this one out hands-down.

2012: Stofan

📍 Aðalstræti 7

### NEW: Best Day Trip from Reykjavík REYKJADALUR

Less than an hour's drive away, the road takes a massive curve down to the southern lowlands and into the geothermal area of Hveragerði. Here is one the closest and easiest places to escape to for a beautiful hike and a swim in a natural hot spring when you reach the end. This incited us to wholeheartedly declare this the best day (or night!) trip, given its proximity, ease and enjoyability. Plus, a bunch of bus companies organise tours now, so it's as easy to go on your own or by public transport.

📍 Reykjadalur

### NEW: Best People-Watching Spot THE BOOTHS AT HRESSÓ

Okay, okay we admit it – we've given Hressó a lot of flak over the years! It was mostly about how much Nick-elback they played, but we can't deny that we kind of love that place. It's charming and entertaining, and has the unquestionable best spot to spy on passersby in the form of the booths in the window that skirts Austurstræti. Get there early to watch your acquaintances and enemies drag their asses to work (or do the walk of shame), or head there after work to feast on the evening's brewing debauchery.

📍 Austurstræti 20

### NEW: Best Graveyard to Hangout In HÓLAVALLAGARÐUR CEMETERY



Hanging out in cemeteries isn't just for goths anymore! On a tangent discussion from another best of category, we suddenly realised that, holy shit, we LOVE hanging out in graveyards! Especially this one, which is actually full of vitality: plants grow abundantly from the graves creating one of the few places in town with a full canopy. It's also crawling with neighbourhood cats, who accost people for cuddles and sit on headstones to lick their butts. Insert some platitude about life and death here!

📍 Suðurgata

**NEW: Best Cheap Thrill**  
**THE CITY LIBRARY**

This was a really strong winner as the library is not only a thrilling adventure of knowledge, but it's also as cheap as you can get—free (lateness fees not included)! You can only take items out if you are a registered resident of the city, but everyone is welcome to browse, dawdle, skim, analyse and delve deeply into their vast collection of books of all types, in several different languages. There's also a great AV collection, particularly for Icelandophiles, and the Reykjavík Museum of Photography is on the top floor. We told you so.

Tryggvagata 15

**NEW: Best Walking Tour**  
**REYKJAVÍK HAUNTED WALK**

With tourism booming, we've noticed a bunch of new walking tours in town. While most of them focus on a city's notable sights, the Haunted Walk is more concerned with Reykjavík's notable frights. Combining historical research, supernatural hearsay and a healthy dose of scepticism, this tour cannot guarantee you will see a ghost, but you will certainly walk away from it knowing more about dark Icelandic humour and Reykjavík's unofficial history.

Reykjavík Haunted Walk

**SHOPPING AND COMMERCE**

**Best Place to Shop for Touristy Stuff**  
**GEYSIR**

There are polar bears and puffins in every other store window in Reykjavík, but is that what you want? Stuffed polar bears and puffins? What are you going to do with them when you get home? THINK ABOUT IT. Instead, why not get something useful? If we were tourists in Iceland, we'd definitely go to Geysir to treat ourselves. In fact, their high-end, durable wares cater almost as much to locals as they do to tourists. So go there to pick up top-notch brands of outdoor-wear and functionally fashionable things that you'll actually use when you get back home.

2012: Geysir  
2011: Geysir  
2010: Handprjónasambandið  
2009: Handprjónasambandið

Skólavörðustígur 16

**Best Place To Stock Up On Local Design**  
**KRAUM**

Kraum is THE place to stock up on local design. It represents more than 200 Icelandic artists, with a range of products and prices that are sure to satisfy any shoppers' cravings. We threw around some contenders to take the title this year, but it ultimately came down to the undisputed variety at Kraum, and the professionalism and dedication that the folks there have in curating their excellent variety of products. Naturally, they took this category for their fourth straight year. Keep up the good work, Kraum!

2012: Kraum  
2011: Kraum  
2010: Kraum

Aðalstræti 10

**Best Place To Stock Up On Local Fashion Design**  
**KIOSK**

When talent meets talent, beautiful things happen. Throw in five more blossoming young talents, and something like Kiosk is born. The seven local designers that make up this collective create all of the merchandise and run the shop themselves, guaranteeing one-of-a-kind local designs that you won't find anywhere else on Laugavegur. At least not all in the same place.

2012: Kiosk  
2011: Kiosk

Laugavegur 65

**Best Bookstore**  
**MÁL OG MENNING**

Mál og Menning isn't just a place to buy your next recreational read. It's a place to buy your schoolbooks, literary tomes, get a caffeine fix, pick up the latest Sunday Times, grab a DVD for the weekend, get your kid some crayons, and stock up on stationary to write home about it all. Even though the four storeys of Mál og Menning have more than you even thought you needed, it is very well-organised and easily navigable. The staff know their books and are happy to help you out. They also do writers' events and sometimes host concerts too.

2012: Mál og Menning  
2011: Eymundsson, Austurstræti  
2010: Eymundsson, Skólavörðustígur

Laugavegur 18

**Best Place To Get A Trendy Haircut**  
**SJOPPAN**

Not only will you come out of Sjop-

pan with a trendy haircut, but you'll have had a trendy experience too. Seriously, how many places can you play Nintendo and drink a beer while getting your hair cut in Iceland? Probably just one. Sjoppán.

**Runner-up:** Rauðhetta Og Úlfurinn came in a close second: 90% of the hairdressers are guys, the price seems to go down the more of a regular you become, and those of us who go there think our haircuts are perfect.

**Honourable mention:** We really should mention Hár Expó on Frakkastígur. The majority of Grapevine staff these days gets their hair cut there. Sometimes we even all go together. It may not be as trendy, but they offer you coffee, a super nice massage when they wash your hair and, well, we think our hair is pretty nice too.

2012: Rauðhetta og úlfurinn  
2011: Barber Theater  
2010: Rauðhetta og úlfurinn

Bankastræti 14

**Best Second-Hand Shop**  
**RED CROSS**

We had some arguments about what exactly counted as a "second-hand" shop, but it ultimately came down to a vintage store with no curating—as in, no hand-picked collections or price mark-ups for various styles or labels. We ultimately boiled this down to the Red Cross stores on Laugavegur—one near Hlemmur and the other more centrally located—for their treasure trove-like atmospheres. Here you can get the best of a second-hand shopping experience, sifting and sorting and finally finding that dream item you never even knew needed. Plus, they are really damn cheap so it's a total win-win.

2012: Fatamarkaðurinn

Laugavegur 12

**Best Shop For High Fashion**  
**KRONKRON**

Anyone who has fallen under the impression that "high fashion" is synonymous with minimalistic designs for major prices needs to stroll over to KronKron. This high-end shop is refreshingly colourful and pattern-happy. The stockings that hang on the centre display could easily double as art pieces, the same goes for most of the clothes in there. KronKron was opened in 2004 by Huguína Árnadóttir and Magni Þorsteinsson, who double as mastermind designers behind their own store brand. The couple's high-end homemade brand mingles with established imports like Marc Jacobs, Vivienne Westwood, and Bernhard Wilhelm. For their third straight year, we give this fancy fash-



Best Haberdashery: JÖR

ion shop our highest honour!

2012: KronKron  
2011: KronKron

Laugavegur 63b

**Best Haberdashery**  
**JÖR**

It takes a certain level of slick to pull off naming a clothing line after yourself. JÖR by Guðmundur Jörundsson has that and more. Whether you're looking for clean, classic styles or some flashier pinstripes and pastels, they will deck you out. The company's Laugavegur location has head-to-toe supplies for the Reykjavík gentleman: hats, coats, ties, watches, everything down to the soles of the shoes. JÖR has the fresh cuts that can take you from a Friday night out straight to your best bud's wedding day.

2012: Herrafataverzlun Kormáks & Skjaldar  
2011: Herrafataverzlun Kormáks & Skjaldar  
2010: Herrafataverzlun Kormáks & Skjaldar

Laugavegur 89

**NEW: Best Place To Buy A Wool Sweater**  
**HANDPRJÓNA-SAMBANDIÐ**

You might be able to beat city hall, but you can't beat the Icelandic Knitting Association when it comes to getting yourself a super-nice, authentic lopapeysa. Their main headquarters on Skólavörðustígur offer a gorgeous selection of ready-made handknit sweaters, or if you are the more ambitious type, you can get all the supplies and advice you'll need to make your own.

Skólavörðustígur 19

**Best Organic Food**  
**FRÚ LAUGA**

At Frú Lauga, no one can keep a secret. We mean this in a good way.

No slimy pesticides or corner-cutting shipping practices tainting the path between producer and consumer. Frú Lauga prides itself on conspicuous labels that let consumers know exactly where their food is from. Two locations (one at Laugalækur 6 and another at Öðingsgata 1) stock only the freshest seasonal produce and highest quality goods. Eat well and know your grower.

2012: Frú Lauga  
2011: Frú Lauga

Laugalækur 6

**Best Record Store**  
**LUCKY RECORDS**

Now in its huge new digs on Rauðarástígur, Lucky Records is likely to win BEST RECORD STORE for all perpetuity. It's not just the great selection of records that makes Lucky the best, it's also the store's personality, which has only gotten better since the move. Many of us are devoted customers and we are so proud to see them doing great things. Luck really is on their side.


2012: Lucky Records

Rauðarástígur 10

**NEW: Best Liquor Store**  
**HEIÐRÚN**

Okay, liquor stores in Iceland are all pretty similar. They are all owned by the state. They are all marked by the same "Vínbúðin" sign, and the ones in Reykjavík all have more or less the same opening hours—mostly closing at 18:00 or 19:00, with three of them—Dalvegur, Skeifan, and Skútuvogur—closing at 20:00. A store called Heiðrún doesn't have the longest opening hours and isn't particularly conveniently located either, but it is superior to the rest for another reason: It is the store where they test new brands of beer, alcohol and wine before rolling them out to the rest of the stores. So go there to help push that new obscure brand onto the other shelves.


Stuðlaháls 2



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# Reykjavík Institutions Aka 'The Untouchables'

Through compiling our second annual best of list back when, we reached the conclusion that some of these places are so firmly established as local favourites that naming them "best of" anything is sort of redundant.

Furthermore, we thought having to compete with local favourites was almost unfair to all the new places trying to make their name. There will only ever be one Ísbúð Vesturbæjar, and it will probably remain Reykjavík's favourite ice cream joint for as long as they don't mess up horribly. That shouldn't mean we can't get excited and dish out props to other ice cream vendors.

We came up with a solution that would give us a chance to honour some of the perennial local favourites while still giving props to new and exciting places. We simply made a category that we call REYKJAVÍK INSTITUTIONS.

What makes a 'REYKJAVÍK INSTITUTION'? By our definition, a 'REYKJAVÍK INSTITUTION' is a place or entity that's time and time again proven itself as one of the best of its kind, and has remained a must-visit through the years. When achieving INSTITUTION status, an establishment is automatically disqualified from winning any 'best of' categories, because you're beyond being 'best,' having been all consistently awesome for a long, long time.

A REYKJAVÍK INSTITUTION is a must-visit for tourists to Reykjavík.

A REYKJAVÍK INSTITUTION will retain its status as such until it starts sucking, in which case we will ceremoniously remove them from our list next year.

Without further ado, here are our REYKJAVÍK INSTITUTIONS, along with some choice reader and specialist quotes that argue their status:

## KAFFIBARINN

"Despite some ups and downs, Kaffibarinn has remained the undisputed reigning champion of Reykjavík nightlife and drinking for well over a decade. They are a true nightlife institution."

## BÆJARINS BESTU

"Everyone goes there. All the time. For over 70 years now. Not exactly gourmet dining, but a really freaking great snack nonetheless."

## ÍSBUÐ VESTURBÆJAR

"It's hard to explain the charm to outsiders, just tell them to go there. The ever-present queue speaks for itself."

## HORNID

"For a restaurant to remain so consistently on top of its game for over thirty years is one huge achievement. They are cosy, dependable and ever-tasty."

## MOKKA

"They brought 'coffee' to Iceland, pretty much".

## TÍU DROPAR

"Quintessentially Icelandic in every way. The coffee, the cake, the vibe. If I were to point a visiting friend to 'the essence of Iceland,' this is where I would send him."

## KOLAPORTID

"If Kolaportid weren't around, we'd need to establish it immediately, lest we vanish back to the dark ages of commerce."

## BÓKIN – BÓKABÚÐ BRAGA

"It's hard to imagine Reykjavík without it. So let's not."

## BRYNJA

"This neighbourhood hardware store almost predates

Laugavegur, and they always serve you with a smile (and don't mind throwing in some good advice when needed)."

## AUSTUR-INDÍA FÉLAGIÐ

"Probably your safest bet for fine dining in Iceland, period."

## JÓMFRÚIN

"This Danish 'smørrebrød' house provides a unique atmosphere and taste you won't find elsewhere in town... or in the world for that matter."

## PRIKIÐ

"Serving old men their morning coffee since way back, and somehow combining that with serving beer and hip hop to young folks since the late '90s. And burgers. And milkshakes. A one of a kind place with spirit and soul."

## SUNDHÖLL REYKJAVÍKUR

"The Guðjón Samúelsson designed Sundhöll Reykjavíkur with its maze of locker rooms is a beautiful building, and the nude sunbathing facilities, soothing hot pots and an atmosphere that has remained relatively unchanged since the 1930s all add to its appeal. While some of Reykjavík's other pools might offer more diversity, Sundhöll Reykjavíkur remains a unique and enduring local favourite."

Feel like we missed one? Drop us a line at [bestof@grapevine.is](mailto:bestof@grapevine.is) explaining why a given place should be merited INSTITUTION status, and we shall consider it for our 2014 edition!

# Things They Like

by Tómas Gabríel Benjamin



**Thomas Brorsen**  
activist

Naree Thai on Frakkastígur is my favourite place. Considering that it is so affordable, the food is amazingly good. It's authentic Thai with wonderful surroundings and the best service in Reykjavík, ever! This is a place I go with family, groups of friend or on romantic dates (that don't have to cost 20,000 ISK).



**Parker Yamasaki**  
Californian

I like the tastes of Reykjavík. Not necessarily the cuisine, but particular tastes. Like black liquorice, for instance. Back home people turn their mouths downward and crinkle their nose at its mention, here not only do the markets carry it, but they dedicate entire sections to it in all of its glorious forms.

Then there's the cream. You get cream on the side of, well, nearly everything. I've been served ice cream with a side of cream, and it wasn't redundant at all. And I can't overlook the kókomjólk (chocolate milk) phenomenon. I've never seen so many grown men sucking on juice boxes of chocolate milk, and making it look so good.



**Vigdís Hauksdóttir**  
MP for the Progressive Party

The Austurvöllur parliamentary square is a place I hold dear to heart, as it really improves Reykjavík as a whole. It's a great place for outdoor activities and you know spring has arrived when Austurvöllur gets packed. It is a dignified and charming place that's been preserved for many decades, and it becomes the heart of Reykjavík on June 17, Iceland's national day. The policy is of course to maintain the square and safeguard the houses surrounding it.



**Auður**  
Student

I loved sitting down at Hemmi og Valdi and enjoying a beer with friends. Now that place has shut down, but the Bunk bar is also great, especially if you get a seat out back.



**Dóra Kolka**  
Teaching assistant

I often go to the Blue Lagoon, especially during the winter months. It's a fantastic place to chill out and just melt away.



**Jón Gnarr**  
Mayor of Reykjavík

Reykjavík is a very cosmopolitan city where everything is within walking distance. I love walking through the city, looking at houses and enjoying society.



**Halla Helgadóttir**  
Executive director of the Icelandic Design Centre

For the greatest part of my life, I've lived on Ásvallagata in the old west end of Reykjavík, and it has left a strong impression on me. The location is great, and it has just the right variety of single houses and block flats there. The gardens on the street are great, too.

I also love the centre of Reykjavík as it is constantly evolving. Just look at the Laugavegur shopping street and how it keeps renewing and reinventing itself. It has become more beautiful and greener, and you run into a lot of fun people. There are also a lot of great restaurants downtown. I walk a lot through the city, and it is always a treat, reminding me how great it is to live here.



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# Paying Tribute To Mokka

by Ingibjörg Rósa Björnsdóttir

Photographer Ari Sigvaldason has managed to capture some extraordinary everyday-life moments around the city through the years. Always working with old fashioned, black and white film, Ari has published a book with his Reykjavík photos and at his gallery, Fótógrafi, he sells a wide range of prints as well as the odd painting by local artists. Ari recently joined the distinguished posse of artists who have held exhibitions at Mokka coffeehouse, portraying the atmosphere of Mokka.

**Why did you decide to pay tribute to Mokka?**

I've been a regular at Mokka for 25 years and know the owners quite well. When it was nearing its 55th anniversary I came up with the idea of putting together an exhibition with the photos I've taken of the customers there through the years. So I browsed through my collection and selected a few. It was then that I noticed how you can't really tell when the photos were taken; nothing's changed at Mokka, the crockery, the interiors, even the carpet has always been the same.

**So your photos have been taken over many years?**

Yes, the oldest ones are from 1988, when I was around 20-years-old. I take my camera with me everywhere and click whenever a good moment pops up, although I try to be subtle about it and not disturb people. But it's incredibly hard to take photos inside Mokka, as it's so dim. I thought I would have more photos to show for my Mokka years, but many of them were hopeless because of the bad lighting.

**Why are you a regular at Mokka?**

There are so many reasons. It's quiet there; there's no jukebox or radio making noise. The atmosphere there is calm and relaxed. You can also read all the newspapers there, including the foreign ones. That's the key to a good coffee house, to provide all the major newspapers. Then there's the coffee and pastries, and all the little things. And of course, the people there!

**But is the coffee at Mokka good?**

That's...debateable.



Mokka imported the first Italian espresso machine to Iceland.



Photo: Daniel Magnússon

**Bárður R. Jónsson**

Translator and regular at Mokka on and off for the last 40 years, first coming in as a customer in 1971, when he was 17-years-old.

"I come here to nurture my soul, and to see my friends and other, like-minded people. They're people who don't take anything for granted, perceive the world with a critical eye and ask themselves questions that most people can't be bothered asking themselves. This is a place with much forbearance, as long as you don't bother anyone—much—you're welcome at Mokka."



The 55-year-old establishment still has its original décor designed by sculptor Jón Gunnar Árnason (who made that Sólfar/Sun Voyager sculpture by Sæbraut).



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Best Of Reykjavik  
 Ice Cream

## Ísbúðin Valdís

### Taste The Happy!

Iceland meets Italy in Ísbúðin Valdís' kickass ice cream



Alisa Kalyanova

It had only been open for three weeks when Ísbúðin Valdís was making 800 litres of ice cream every three days, 1,400 waffle cones a day, and had a line of customers spilling into the street for twelve hours straight. That fateful June 23rd (yes, just this past one), owner Gylfi Þór Valdimarsson knew his little dream was a big success.

"My plan was to have four employees and for me to be here from 8:00 to 16:00 and then go home," Gylfi says, grinning ear to ear under the iconic Boater hat that he and his employees sport. "I'm working sixteen hours a day and I have twenty employees, ten of them working during the day."

Gylfi, who is a trained chef, had been living in Denmark for the past twelve years when, a year and a half ago, he became interested in making Italian-style gelato and sorbet. "Everyone in Iceland eats this soft-serve ice cream from a machine but they've opened a lot of gelato shops in Denmark and it's just much better," he says. With this in mind, he began writing down his concept to open a gelato shop with a twist—let the customers see behind the scenes to watch the ice cream making in process. He came home and opened his shop on June 1.

His gelatos are made with a combination of Icelandic dairy and Italian binding agents to help the ice cream hold and keep an authentic consistency, but the flavours are distinctly local. "Icelanders love the Reese's, Oreo and cookie ice creams so I make those for them," Gylfi says. The other spin is the waffle cones are baked freshly every day. "Italians would never eat

their gelato or sorbet from a cone, only from a cup."

He collaborates with his Facebook fans to get new flavour ideas to keep the fridge in constant rotation. "We take requests on our page all the time, then we make it and post that their ice cream is now in the store," Gylfi says. Prior to my visit, I had been tipped off about a crazy rhubarb ice cream, but that was all run out. The lovely server who indulged my desire to sample every flavour even began tipping me off about secret flavours they had stocked up in the back—tiramisu, white chocolate, and liquorice. I told her to bring them on.

Facebook has been really good to the shop in terms of promotion as well, as he has not put out a single advertisement. When reminded that he has only been open twenty-four days, he pauses and then bursts out into giddy laughter. "When I hired my staff I told them I had no clue if it would be a fiasco and I'd lose all my money, or if it would just be a job for me to live on, or if it would be a success," Gylfi says. "Right now it's a big success. This space is already getting too small for me."

As lines began to form out of the shop, Gylfi's staff hurriedly called him back to the floor and I left with a classic single scoop of vanilla. And with vanilla that good, Gylfi could make every flavour under the moon and sun. **Rebecca Louder**

<p>Best Of Reykjavik</p> <p><b>Best Place To Take A Date</b></p>	<p><b>Tapas Barinn</b></p> 
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## A Place For Souls



Magnús Andersen

Reykjavik has a lot of places for bodies, but it has fewer places for souls. Tapas Barinn is a place for souls. The restaurant has been around for 13 years of Reykjavik's ever-changing restaurant topography and has achieved the difficult balance of good service, good ambiance, good goddamn food, and something else akin to a special romance and charm.

The atmosphere—salsa tunes, orange and blue tile floor, exposed walls, and tiny red lights—is like the sultry backdrop of a scene from classic Spanish cinema. And the eats—a huge menu of tapas (appetizer-style dishes), larger plates, and specialty drinks (by glass or pitcher) and dessert—match the quality of the festive space.

"With tapas you can share, and the food comes plate by plate so there is always something happening. You're never bored," explains Bento, one of the owners. At its heart, the concept of a tapas bar is to inspire connection and conversation. "And," Bento wagged his eyebrows and motioned toward an area at the back of the restaurant with multiple two top tables, "it's a good place for a first date. You're never sitting around with nothing to talk about, waiting for your food to come out."

Tapas Barinn is unique because it offers a fusion of Spanish and Icelandic cuisine. One of their most

popular dishes is the smoked puffin with blueberry "brennivín" sauce, which is part of a seven-plate meal called Icelandic Gourmet. The highlights of the Icelandic Gourmet are the puffin and minke whale tapas, white chocolate Skyr mousse, and Iceland's infamous schnapps, brennivín, to start. If you aren't hungry enough for a full line-up of tapas, or if you want something a little more traditionally Spanish, you can also get individual plates for around 1,000 ISK.

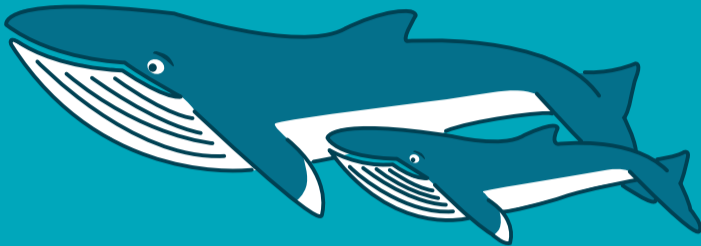
The secret to Tapas Barinn's goodness? "Quality ingredients," said Mundi, an employee. "Most ingredients are local, but if we can't get something here, we import the best quality from somewhere else. Nothing cheap."

Tapas Barinn remains a Reykjavik favourite because the prices stay reasonable even with unbeatable quality and atmosphere. Food for the soul.

Shea Sweeney

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Best Of Reykjavík

Best Late Night Bite

# Nonnabiti



## A Hero that Lives Up to His Name



Magnús Andersen

I still remember my first journey to Nonnabiti (“Nonni’s Bite”). ‘Twas a voyage that turned my life around and upside-down forever.

I was sixteen. I sat in the back of a tan Mercury Topaz with my good friend Orri. In the front: two guys I didn’t know quite as well. They were Orri’s friends. We had no class that session and the boys were feeling hungry so we tore up the streets. “We’re going to Nonnabiti,” the driver said without even glancing at the rear-view mirror. I inconspicuously shrugged my shoulders. These guys had grown up in 101; I had grown up in 108. What did I know?

Before long, I was holding a sub in my hand—a hero that lived up to his name. The bread was lightly toasted yet soft, not primarily made out of air but grain, it was bursting with bacon and melted cheese and fried ham and lettuce and green peppers and onions, slathered with sauce and graciously topped with aromat. So much aromat!

Not only was this one of the tastiest fast foods to have graced my oral cavity, it was also served by what looked like DJ Margeir’s long lost, slightly older, twin. Cross my heart and swear... to this day, I have never come upon a handsomer devil professionally flipping burgers. And who was He but Nonni himself, the charmed prince of hoagies!

Many a day onwards would we trek downtown—in the tan Topaz, in a 4x4 Fiat Panda, in a sky blue Volvo station wagon, whatever we could muster. I was young

and adventurous and eager to try other offerings from the menu. I tried the Chili Sub, the Pepperoni Sub; I even tried Nonni’s hamburgers. They were all good, but nothing could match the immaculate perfection of the Bacon Sub. It didn’t exactly hurt that at this time, in 2001, Nonnabiti was one of the few places in town where you could buy a can of Dr. Pepper. Just what the doctor ordered.

Nonni—who founded the place in 1993—still mans the pan from time to time. His demeanour towards extremely drunk people, admittedly a large portion of his clientele (it’s open until 5:30 AM on the weekends), is admirable if not outright worthy of Dorrit knighting him. The soothing sounds of his voice, his shrewd yet kind smile.

And why shouldn’t he adorn his foxy smile? He has beheld divine chambers. He has kneeled and accepted a gift from the gods: the secret recipe of the Nonni sauce. Many have tried to copy it; they have spent tireless months mixing ingredients at home, taking notes, probing the deep web—but they have all failed miserably. And they will continue to do so as long as there is order in this world. 🍷 Atli Bollason



# SNAPS

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There are not many things that make us happier than giving life to old traditions and forgotten ingredients with modern technique and our creative mind as a weapon.



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