

Viking Iceland



A pictorial journey



Route Map





Sites & Museums

- AN INCOMPLETE LIST!!!
- Þingvellir
- Bogarnes - Settlement Centre
- Saga Valleys
- Reykholt
- Eiríkstadir
- Museum of Witchcraft and Sorcery
- Sheep Museum
- Textile Museum
- Viðimyri
- Glaumbaer Folk Museum

We didn't hit every museum or place of interest in Iceland



Sites & Museums

- Goðafoss
- Phallogological Musuem
- Glacier Exhibition
- Skogar Folk Museum
- Saga Centre
- Hekla Volcano Centre
- Stong
- Vikingaheimur
- Viking Village
- Saga Museum
- Reykjavik 871±2
- National Museum of Iceland



Þingvellir

- *Alþing* (assembly) met at Þingvellir
 - met once a year for two weeks from 930-1799
 - people camped, talked, bought & sold
- *Lögberg* (Law Rock) was focal point
- Lawspeaker presided
 - elected for three year term
 - recited 1/3 of the law each year
- Settled cases by trial
- Duels also held



Þingvellir



Flag=Lawrock?

Pronunciation of Þingvellir



Þingvellir - booths



- Many wall remains still visible
- Temporary roofs
- Recent ones often identified by plaques
- Very little archaeological research
- 11th c. Tau Crozier

Very little archaeological evidence because very few digs have actually happened here



Þingvellir



- Continental rift
 - left is Europe
 - right is North America
- Continents gradually separating
- Designated UNESCO World Heritage Site

Approx 1 cm/year



Settlement Centre



- Audio tour
- Static stations
- Good background
- No photos
- No artefacts
- Two Exhibits
 - Settlement exhibit
 - Egil's Saga exhibit



Settlement Centre (cont)



- Tied in with a sequence of markers in the local area
- An interesting way to see a saga
- Locate sites of interest
 - Skallagrim's burial mound
 - Borg



Saga Valleys

- Borg (Egil's Saga)
- Hvita River Valley
- Eirik's valley later
- Þingvellir valley
- Laxardalur
- Open, fertile valleys between mountains
- Originally 25% trees

Hvita = Kah-vita (white)



Saga Valley - Borg



Borg marker and church are behind photographer – sea is ahead



Saga Valley - Hvita



Hvita river valley looking down towards Reykholt



Valley between Thingvellir (1/2 day ride right) and the sea (1/2 day ride left)



Saga Valley - Laxadalur



Laxardalar



Reykholt



- Snorri Sturluson's home
 - his hot tub?
- Active archaeology
- Research Centre
- Focus: 1200-1400s
- Saga Writing
- Excellent book choices

Tub in this shape/place only documented to 1800s



Eiriksstaðir

- First house of Eiríkur Rauði (Eric the Red) - after marriage
- Modified during occupancy (landslide)
- Abandoned near the end 10th c.
- Birthplace of Leifr?
- Costumed interpreters
- Errors in materials (axe usage, bellows type)
- 3rd person retelling of saga events
- A good program
- Nearest neighbour over a kilometre away (Dad)
 - Iceland 3 people / km²; Canada 3.3; US 33.7
 - Viking Era 0.5

Shows risk of interpreters – incorrect beads were a gift. But clearly shows value.
TOO MUCH STUFF

City of Waterloo (pop 100000) would have been 32 people



Eiriksstaðir





Eiriksstaðir



Downriver towards sea



Witchcraft & Sorcery

- Very small museum with two locations
 - Sorcerer's cottage
 - Focus on connection between poverty and persecution
 - Museum itself has a more general focus
- All text in Icelandic
- Audio tour available in several languages
- Small number of artefacts and more replicas
 - Possible offering bowl of Viking era
- How was magic done
- Executions (20 men, 1 woman) in 30 years
- Good start - increasing content & number of sites



Witchcraft & Sorcery



Óttastafur

Rístu staf þennan á elkarspjald og kasta því fyrir fætur óvinar síns til að hræða hann.



- Folk museum
- Poster boards
- Many artefacts
 - most very recent
- Lots of breed information
- Multi-language
- Working farm

“Folk Museum” = lots of artefacts, attempt to gather a part of life to prevent it being lost. Not professionally laid out. Often one passionate driver



Textile Museum



- Focused on post-1830
- Not only allows photos
 - works to make them better
 - cabinets can be opened
- Hands on stations
- Semi-folk museum
 - rooms are crowded
- Special focus: Halldóra Bjarnadóttir (1873-1981)

An important part of the museum is named after Halldóra Bjarnadóttir (1873-1981), a well-known lady in Iceland. She was a domestic consultant for the National Farmers Union in Iceland for many years and she published the „Hlín" magazine for 44 years. Moreover, she founded and operated the Wool- and Textile College at Svalbarði in South-Pingeyjarsýsla. Halldóra dedicated herself to the social and educational affairs of women and was an eager representative of their culture. She collected varieties of weaving and knit patterns as well as many types of small objects related to wool- and textile processing.

Halldóra never got married and had no children. She donated her last belongings to the Textile Museum which are now preserved in „Halldórustofa" (Halldóra's Room).



Viðimyri



- Turf Church
- Common type
 - turf and wood
- Built 1834
- Restored 1936
- 6 turf churches remain
- 3 still used including this one
- Note zig-zag pattern of turf



Glaumbaer

- Large farm complex
- Believed to have been settled post 1104
 - New archaeology questions this date
- Preserved as a museum
 - Different rooms left in different times
- Turf and wood construction
 - Similar to Viðimyri
- Many elements unchanged into 1950s
- Some items marked 1800s identical to Viking era



Glaumbaer





Glaumbaer



Fun story – testing ground-penetrating radar, found pre1104 farmhouse. Perhaps abandoned due to eruption, then resettled across the field



Goðafoss



- Lawspeaker Þorgeir Þorkelsson
- 1000 AD
- Christian conversion
- Threw pagan statues into waterfall



Phallological Museum



- Opened 1997
- 272 penises
- Themed art
- 3 whips - bull penis
- Good sense of humour



Glacier Exhibition



- Opened 2002
- Movies, boards
- Computers
- Exhibits
- Still ice from 1200 on glacier
- 5 Rooms
- Glacier walkthrough model
- Lookout on roof

Glacier coverage was smaller during viking age – some farms still to uncover



Skogar Folk Museum



- Outbuildings moved here
 - School, church, turf houses
- Opened 1949
 - Expanded multiple times
- Very crowded
- Little information
- Lots of cool stuff

Could get lost here for a very long time – but so hard to research



Saga Centre



- Opened 1997
- Great effort to make Njala saga accessible
- Major accuracy issues with replicas
- Feast hall for parties
- Modern trade museum



Hekla Volcano Centre



- Opened 2007
- Multimedia Exhibit
- Many tricks
 - Slanted floors
 - Sounds
- Many panels
- Good Overview

Hekla is Iceland's most active volcano – last eruption 2000

Biggest in 950 and 1104 – 1104 earned name “Gateway to Hell”



Stong

- Opened 1974
- Reproduction farmhouse and church
 - Original buried by Hekla in 1104
- Minimal artefacts
- No interpreters
- Feels empty

One resident – Gaukur Trandilsson – name carved in Maeshowe



Vikingaheimar



- Opened 2009
- New home for Íslendingur
 - Gokstad Replica
 - Sailed to NA in 2000
- Small exhibit
- Room to expand
- Great mural
- Good information
- No multi-media



Viking Village



- Pure fun schtick
- Guitar playing, poleaxe bashing, singing vikings
- Costumed servers
- Lots of recreations of dubious provenience
- Potatoes (new world food!) on menu



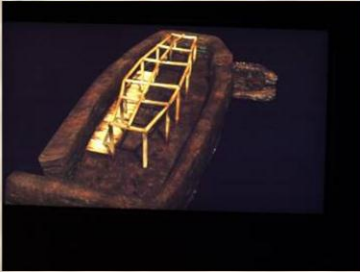
Saga Museum



- Wax figures in static display
- Some accuracy issues
- Audio self-guided tour
- No photos allowed
- Low light
- No artefacts



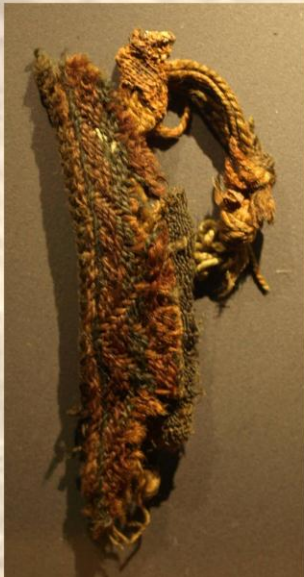
Reykjavik 871±2



- Dwelling remains
- Basement of hotel
- Very high tech
 - Overview touch screens
 - Interactive displays
- Artefacts
- Panels
- Helpful staff (needed)
- Second display
 - How it was preserved
- Photos allowed



National Museum of Iceland



- Photos allowed!
- Very friendly
- Overview text panels
 - No specifics
- Multimedia followup
- Few books in English



NMI - Archives



- Photos allowed!
- Very friendly
- Computer inventory
 - in Icelandic
 - with abbreviations
 - dictionaries available
- Understaffed
 - hard to get appointment



Contact

<http://www.darkcompany.ca>

http://www.treheima.ca/Scotland_Iceland_2008.html

<http://www.treheima.ca/Iceland2009.html>

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Links

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