



ICELANDIC FOOD PRODUCE

Quality and creativity

Icelandic food production is centred on quality and fresh materials. Be it freshly-caught fish, free-grazing Icelandic lamb, organically-grown vegetables or sustainably-harvested sea salt, pure Icelandic nature provides healthy foods for local and global markets. Sustainability and safe production are paramount. For centuries Icelanders have relied on their innovation and creativity for producing, storing and preparing food. Today still, this creative mentality generates new, fresh, diverse and delicious products.

SEAFOOD – sustainably sourced

Through history, fishing has been an essential part of Icelandic industry and culture. The nation's lifeline, seafood was – and still is – a vital part of the diet and the country's primary export product. In the clean waters around Iceland, cool and warm ocean currents meet, creating ideal conditions for fertile fishing grounds. The main species caught are cod, haddock, saithe, golden redfish, herring, mackerel and capelin. With optimal treatment of the product, quality is preserved throughout the process, from the moment the fish is caught, until it arrives in markets. The fishing fleet is equipped with advanced technology and the same holds true for the processing facilities on land. Rigorous standards are in place to ensure healthy, sustainable fisheries for the benefit of consumers in Iceland and abroad, and for future generations. Four species, cod, haddock, saithe and golden redfish, hold a special Iceland Responsible Fisheries certification with certifications for further species pending. Iceland's fisheries management is based on extensive research of fish stocks, the marine ecosystem and biodiversity, and decisions on allowable catches are made based on scientific advice from the Icelandic Marine Research Institute. Catches are effectively monitored and enforced by the Directorate of Fisheries.

FARMING – clean environment, quality products

Most Icelandic farm animals are so-called heritage or settlement breeds – including sheep, cattle, horses, hens and goats – which have lived in isolation on the island for centuries without exposure to common diseases. Benefitting from vast expanses of land and a clean environment, livestock is often free-range. Most farms produce either lamb or dairy. Other farm products include beef, pork, poultry, eggs and vegetables.

LAMB – roaming free in the wild

Sheep farming is practiced throughout Iceland and sheep outnumber Icelanders. Purebred in Iceland since first brought over by the Norse settlers in the 9th century AD, the sheep still roam free in the wilderness from late spring until the autumn, grazing on Iceland moss, wild herbs and berries which give the lean meat its unique, almost gamey taste. Fresh lamb is available in September and October and frozen lamb year-round.



DAIRY – the famous skyr

The Icelandic cattle is one of Iceland's heritage breed that benefit from the clean environment. The cattle are primarily used for dairy production, resulting in high-quality products such as Skyr – a thick, cultured Icelandic speciality that has rapidly been gaining fans outside of Iceland thanks to its delicate flavour, high protein and naturally low fat content. At home, the product is as popular as ever – skyr with wild blueberries and full cream remains a favoured dessert.

VEGETABLES AND BERRIES – geothermal greens

Iceland's bountiful geothermal energy has been valuable for farmers since late 19th century. *Ylrækt*, growing vegetables by geothermal heat, proved a success and the first geothermally-heated greenhouse was built in 1924. Much of Iceland's agricultural produce is grown indoors in state-of-the-art, automated greenhouses, heated with geothermal energy and supported with electric lights to supplement the low levels of sunlight in winter. The main greenhouse produce includes tomatoes, cucumbers, bell peppers, mushrooms, cabbage and strawberries. The traditional outdoor crops in Iceland are carrots, rhubarb, rutabaga, cabbage, leeks, potatoes, cauliflower and kale. In recent years production of organic rapeseed and barley has proven increasingly successful. Icelandic vegetable farmers continue to make forays into new and exciting fields adding to the variety of the produce.

Wild plants and herbs found in Iceland, such as Iceland moss, Angelica, sheep sorrel, creeping thyme and birch, as well as dulse from the seashore, are mostly used for food supplements and for seasoning food and drinks.

Berries, such as blueberries, juniper and crowberries, are used in many types of liquors and schnapps. Rhubarb liquor is also available – rhubarb plays an important part in Icelandic culinary culture; it's used in many cakes and rhubarb jam is traditionally served with the Sunday roast.

FARMED FISH – from clean waters

Aquaculture is growing in Iceland, both ocean and on-land farming. The primary species produced are Atlantic salmon and Arctic char. Iceland is the world's largest producer of Arctic char and is leading the way in not using any antibiotics or other medical products in farming. The fish has not been genetically modified in any way. Arctic char is farmed in clean water using sustainable green energy.

SPIRITS AND BEER – special and spicy

Production of spirits, liquor and beer has been booming in Iceland over the last decade. Clean Icelandic water is used for the production, as well as local plants and spices.

There's a variety of Icelandic beer on the market, including many craft beers from more than 20 microbreweries around the island. The breweries offer seasonal beer as well as beer brewed for special holidays, often with unique and interesting flavours.



Icelandic *brennivín*, literally “burnt wine”, is a type of aquavit produced with caraway and angelica seeds. Whiskey, gin and aquavit is produced from Icelandic barley, which gives the drink a unique flavour.

OTHER PRODUCTS – salty and sweet

From coffee and juice to pastry and crackers, there’s a great variety of products in this category. Among the more innovative is hand-harvested sustainable sea salt, produced since 2011. Using a unique

geothermal production method, which was first tried in 1753, clean Arctic seawater is pumped into open pans. There, it is slowly heated with water from natural hot springs. As the water evaporates, crunchy salt flakes are left in the pan. The salt is also blended with different kinds of herbs, berries and kelp, resulting in more variety for gourmets.

Chocolate has been produced in Iceland for nearly 100 years, but recently new producers have entered the market, introducing bean-to-bar chocolate. The chocolate is produced with Icelandic quality raw ingredients and seasonal products increase the selection even more.

ENJOY ICELANDIC FOOD!

Icelandic nature, the people and culture all influence Icelandic food production and cuisine. There’s a great variety of high-quality restaurants in Iceland, many of which specialize in Icelandic produce. Some choose a traditional cuisine while others explore new ways of food preparation. Icelandic chefs, many of whom hold distinguished international awards, intertwine fresh, quality ingredients with their families’ food traditions, innovation and professionalism to offer dinner guests a delicious meal to remember. There are many ways to enjoy Icelandic food, such as dining in Reykjavik’s restaurants, visiting an Icelandic farm to taste and learn about the produce and enjoy it as an imported good in other countries.

Verði þér að góðu – bon appétit!

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