



GRÍMSEY

THE PEARL ON THE ARCTIC CIRCLE

2015-2016





Grimsey – The unique Arctic island

Grimsey is situated on the Arctic Circle 41 kilometres off the North coast of Iceland. It is 5.3 square kilometers and 5.5 kilometres long. The island is formed by volcanic rock which in places creates beautiful basalt pillars. On the East side the island rises to 105 meters above sea level but is lower on the West side by the island's harbour and village. On a clear day there are spectacular views from the island over to the Icelandic mainland.

Grimsey has been inhabited since the Viking settlement of Iceland. Its abundant resources of fish and birds were widely renowned. A legend ties the name of the island to a settler named "Grimur" who sailed from the "Sogn" district in Norway, but there may be other explanations for the name which also occurs in Scandinavia and the UK. In the past the island was owned by monasteries on the northern mainland and the island's farmer tenants had to pay them the annual rent in dried cod.

***Welcome to Grimsey
– the Pearl on the Arctic Circle***

www.grimsey.is





The Village

The present population is around 80 inhabitants. Subsistence farming, bird hunting and egg gathering were formerly of great importance to the locals. This has greatly changed in recent years as the focus has shifted on to modern style fishing methods and fish processing for international markets.

For Grímsey, tourism is a growing industry, giving locals new opportunities for employment. A shop, guesthouses, campsite, gallery, café, restaurant and a swimming pool are some of the facilities on the island. Regular flights from Akureyri and ferry links from Dalvík, year round, makes visiting easy.



Flora and fauna

Grímsey is covered with vegetation which is sculpted by the arctic climate. The scurvy-grass which grows amongst the coastal rocks is very special as it is rich in vitamin C and is known for its medicinal properties. The birdlife is unique with numerous different species and unusually dense populations. The birdlife is flourishing on the island due to a decrease in hunting of the birds and the collection of their eggs.

There are unique opportunities for photographers. Seabirds nesting on high cliffs to the East side of Grímsey and on the West coast, one of the biggest colonies of puffins in Iceland with thousand of individuals.

The puffins stay out on the open sea during winter but come to their nests after mid April. They fly away to after the first week of August. So the best time to watch them in Grimsey is May, June and July. Note! Be very careful when watching the puffins as the nest burrowing has made the ground loose and hollow in some places making it dangerous to thread along the cliff edges.

There are no rats or mice on the island and the only wild land mammals which occasionally visit the island are polar bears. They are rarely seen but in the winter of 1969 a polar bear swam ashore and met his demise. He can now be seen in the Húsavík Natural Museum. The ocean is rich in nutrients and marine life, attracting seals and whales to the area. The largest salmon caught in Iceland was hauled up from the waters by the island in 1957, measuring 132 cm. and 49 pounds.

Culture

Grimsey is renowned for its cultural activities despite its small population. The islanders were well known for their proficiency in chess. In the 19th century. A wealthy American scholar and chess enthusiast, Mr. Daniel Willard Fiske sailed past the island and was intrigued by the lifestyle of the inhabitants and their love of chess. It prompted him to donate a chess set to every home and he also donated a considerable amount of money to the community to support their future endeavours. The islanders celebrate his memory every year on his birthday on the 11th of November. In the library on the island you can see some of the gifts from Fiske, books, photos and chess set. There is a primary school on the island for children up to 14 years.

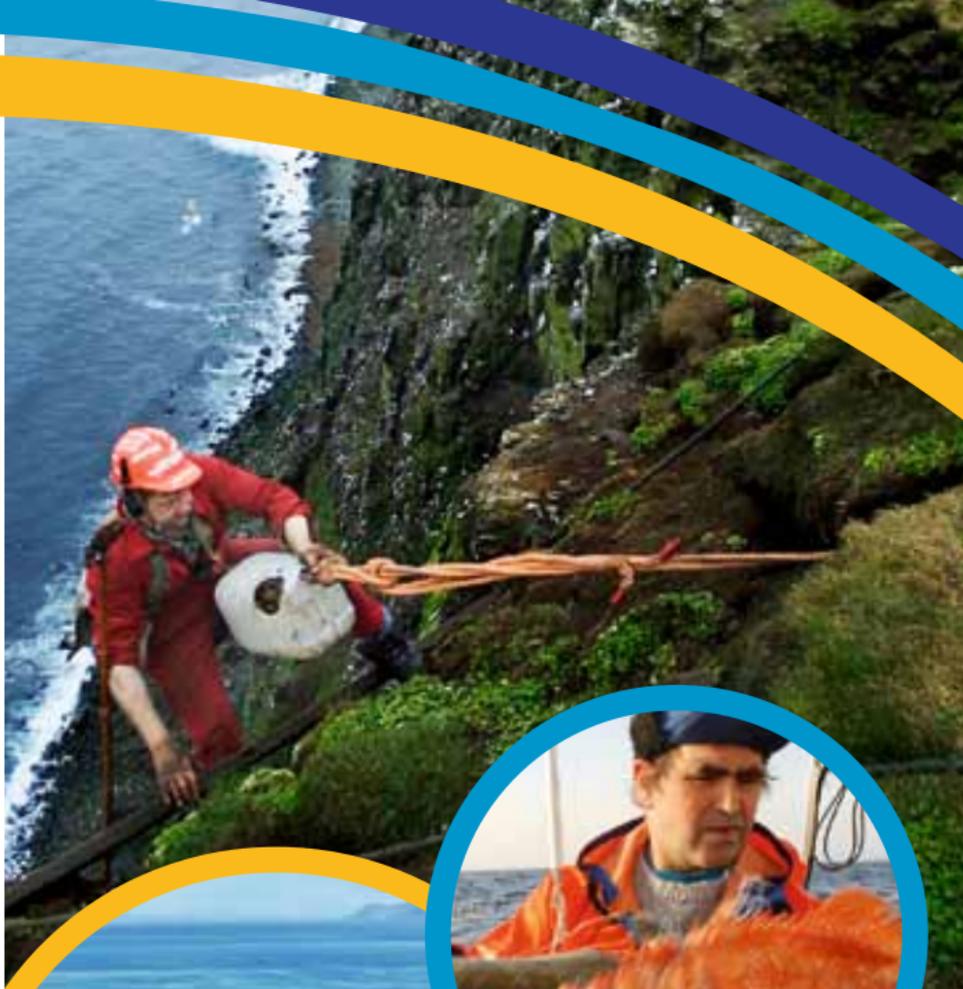
The Church of Grímsey

One of the early Catholic bishops of Iceland, Jón Ögmundsson consecrated a church on Grímsey in the 11th century. It was dedicated to St. Olaf, the patron saint of Norway. It was stated that there should always be two priests at the church who should lead mass daily but twice a day on special occasions. The practice of Christianity is less ardent today but there are records of roughly 50 priests who have served there. The present church was built in 1867. It was extended and renovated in 1932. The altar painting is by a local artist painted in 1878 and it is a copy of a work by Leonardo da Vinci. Pledges and donations made to the church are said to bring good luck.

Walking paths

The sea facing end of the airstrip is a good place to start a walking tour of Grímsey. The path follows the cliffs of Básavík, **walkers should take good care not to go too near the edge as the nest burrowing of the puffins has made the ground loose.** From there the path leads to the northern most point of the island, Eyjarfótur and then on to the eastern high cliffs. This path runs all the way to the lighthouse on the southern end of the island. From the lighthouse one should walk towards the harbour at Sandvík, passing by the church. There is plenty of opportunity for wildlife and landscape photography during this hike.





Akureyri
ÖLL LÍFSINS GÆÐI

Gímsey and Akureyri

In the spring of 2009 the inhabitants of both Gímsey and Akureyri voted to unite their two communities under the town council of Akureyri, won by a great majority. The islands of Hrísey and Gímsey both are now under the council of the town of Akureyri.

The Tourist Information Center of Akureyri, which also serves Gímsey and Hrísey is located in:

*Cultural and Conference Center, Hof
Strandgata 12, IS- 600 Akureyri*

Phone: (+354) 450 1050

E-mail: info@visitakureyri.is

For further information: www.visitakureyri.is og www.grimsey.is



How to get there

Ferry Sæfari All year 3 times a week from Dalvík to Grímsey (Mon/Wed/Fri). The sailing takes about 3 hours and passenger capacity is 108. It is recommended to book in advance in the summer months.

Phone: (+354) 450 1050 or info@visitakureyri.is.

Norlandair Offer scheduled flights all year around. Daily in the summer months and three times a week in the winter. Flying time is 25 minutes. During the summer it is possible to make a short trip to Grímsey with a 1.5 hours stay on the island. A guided walk is available upon request. Phone: (+354) 570 3000 or www.flugfelag.is.

Chartered flights: A few companies offer private sightseeing flights to Grímsey: www.norlandair.is, www.myflug.is, www.flugfelag.is, www.ernir.is.

Events

Annual events that take place in Grímsey:

-**Þorabrát** (Beginning of February). A past heathen celebration where people today enjoy traditional Icelandic food.

-**The Summer Solstice**. 21st. June. This is the longest day of the year. Watch the sunset/sunrise with in a few minutes of each other.

-**Fiske-Celebration** 11th November. A celebration of the birthday of the islands patron, Mr. Daniel Willard Fiske, with an auspicious cake-buffet.

-**The Arctic Run** takes place each year around mid-September in the island Grímsey. For more information visit www.arcticrunning.is.

Service List

Gallerí Sól

By the harbour, a shop that sells handicrafts by local women. Open on Monday, Wednesday, Friday in the summer. Selling souvenirs, maps and books. Also coffee, tea, freshly baked waffles and fruit juices. Phone: (+354) 467 3190.

Gullsóll

Guesthouse situated in the same house, above Gallery Sól. There are 8 rooms. Made up beds or sleeping bag accommodation. Shared kitchen, living room and bathroom. Open all year. Phone: (+354) 467 3190, E-mail: gullsol@visir.is.

Guesthouse Básar

The Guesthouse is located by the Arctic Circle, next to the airport. There are 8 rooms, 16 made up beds or sleeping bag accommodation. Breakfast and dinner available at an extra cost. Shared kitchen, living room and bathroom. Open all year. Phone: (+354) 467 3103, E-mail: basar@gistiheimilidbasar.is

Restaurant Krían

The restaurant is open daily in the summer, otherwise upon request. Light meals from the menu and local specialities according to the season such as fresh fish, salt fish and sea bird meat are available. Situated by the harbour with great views of the Arctic Ocean and the Icelandic northern coast. Phone: (+354) 467 3112 & (+354) 898 2058.

Shop Búðin

Supermarket. Open weekdays 10.30-12.00 & 15.00-17.15, at weekends 11.30-12.30. In the summer always open when the ferry docks. Phone: (+354) 467 3102.

Post Office

Located inside the supermarket with the same opening hours as the shop.

Guided walks

Guided walking tour 1-2 hours around the island. Phone: (+354) 467 3103, E-mail: basar@gistiheimilidbasar.is

Boat-tours

Boat tours around the island, 1-2 hours, with an option for sea fishing. Phone: (+354) 467 3103, E-mail: basar@gistiheimilidbasar.is

Local Woman's Association

The Association offers meals and buffets for groups in the Community Hall. Sleeping bag accommodation for groups can also be requested. Phone: (+354) 865 5110.

Swimming pool

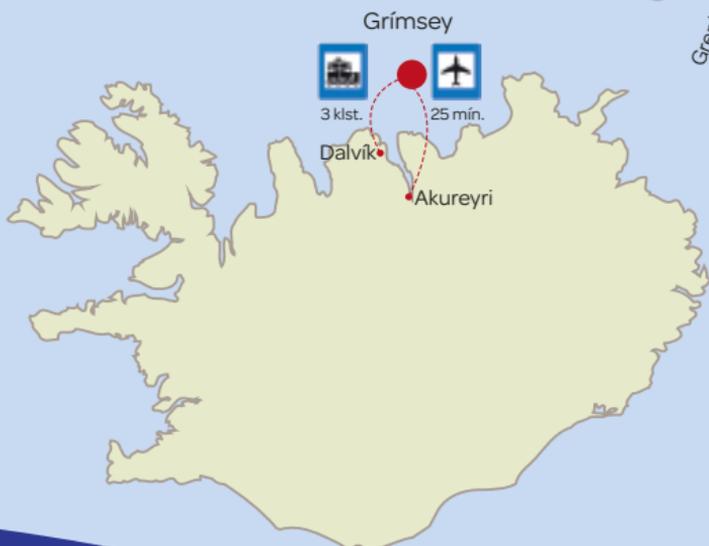
Indoor pool and a hot tub. Open all year Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday at 20.00-21.30 and Saturday at 14.00-16.00. Additional information at the Supermarket. Phone: (+354) 897 3123.

Camping

The camping site is beside the Community Hall. With basic washing facilities (warm and cold water) and toilets. Payment and information at the Supermarket.

Grímsey

-  Hiking trails
-  Road





Sæfari Ferry Schedule

Landflutningar
SAMSKIP

Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays

From	Hour	To	Hour
Dalvík	09:00	Grímsey	12:00
Grímsey	16:00*	Dalvík	19:00*

Tuesdays and Thursdays

From	Hour	To	Hour
Dalvík	13:15	Hrísey	13:45

Departure from Hrísey when ferry has been discharged and loaded

*Summer Schedule valid from 16 May to 31 August

Book your trip at

<http://www.landflutningar.is/saefari/english/>

Sæfari can also be rented for private trips.

Landflutningar-Samskip
Tel. +354 458 8970 | www.saefari.is

