

RANGÁ REVIEW

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SEASONAL MAGAZINE

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S-AMERICAN SUITE

Hotel Rangá's South America Suite is filled with vibrant colors, beautiful carpentry and bold, geometric designs.

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VIKING CAVE FEAST

Indulge in a Viking feast in a unique setting - the mysterious Caves of Hella. Connect with Iceland's past in this great dining adventure.

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ARTWORK HUNT

Did you know that Hotel Rangá is filled with unique art? Go on a scavenger hunt to find some of our favorite pieces.



FUN FACTS ABOUT THE MIDNIGHT SUN

Iceland's midnight sun means that our summer months are filled with endless daylight. We made a list of fun facts about this unique phenomenon—read on to learn what we found.

A TILTING AXIS

When the Earth's axis tilts towards the sun, locations that are closer to the earth's poles experience longer days. Because Iceland is close to the Arctic Circle, we experience the midnight sun during our summer months.

TALKING COWS AND WALKING SEALS

In Iceland, Jónsmessa is celebrated on June 24, right around the brightest night of the year—Iceland's summer solstice or sumarsólstöður. Strange things are said to happen on Jónsmessa: cows talk, seals walk and elves are out and about.

ROLL NAKED IN THE MORNING DEW

Don't be surprised if you see some nudists running around after midnight on Jónsmessa! Folklore says that good health will bless those who roll naked in the dew-covered grass. You should also make a wish while you cover yourself in dew—there is a good chance it will come true.

POWERFUL STONES

While you're rolling in the morning dew, be sure to search for special stones with magical powers. One story says that there is a wish stone in the pond on top of Baula in Borgarfjörður. Anyone who touches the stone will have their wishes fulfilled; however, the stone is only visible on Midsummer's Eve.

LOVE UNDER THE MIDNIGHT SUN

In Iceland, legend says that if a young maiden puts seven flowers under her pillow on Midsummer's Eve she will see her fiancée's face in her dreams.

HERBS THAT CAN HEAL

Midsummer's Eve is also said to be the best time of year to pick healing herbs. In fact, lore says that orchid grass (*Dactylorhiza maculata*) picked on Midsummer's Eve can be used to win someone's love. All you have to do is put one end of the plant under your beloved's pillow and sleep with the other beneath your own.

MUSIC AT MIDNIGHT

Iceland's long summer nights are the perfect excuse for a party. There are many fun music festivals during this time, including Secret Solstice in Reykjavík and the annual Skógar Jazz Festival near the famed Skógafoss waterfall.

Front cover photo by Kristján Pétur Vilhelmsson // Picture by Olivia Synnervik



Picture by Ingibjörg Friðriksdóttir

UNIQUE LOCAL SHOPS

Looking for a souvenir to bring back home? Hotel Rangá is located nearby several unique local shops that we highly recommend you visit. Icelanders are talented craftspeople, and visitors can find many one-of-a-kind products for sale. From lopapeysa sweaters to local artwork and Icelandic delicacies—there is something for everyone.

UPPSPUNNI MINI MILL AND YARN SHOP

As you travel around Iceland, you will probably spot a sheep or two grazing in the open fields beside the road. Icelandic sheep are near and dear to Icelanders hearts, and there is a long tradition of utilizing sheep's wool to create warm lopapeysa sweaters and blankets. Uppspuni Mini Mill and Yarn Shop is the perfect place to learn more about this important part of Icelandic culture.

Hulda Brynjólfssdóttir and Tyrtingur Sveinsson own and operate the mill as well as the nearby farm, Lækjartún. In fact, they use wool from their own sheep to spin new yarn in the mini mill. Visitors can walk through the mill and get a better understanding about the ins and outs of wool processing. What's more, visitors are able to buy newly spun yarn in the Uppspuni Yarn Shop. The shop also has knitting patterns and other woolen products for sale.

UNA LOCAL PRODUCT

Una Local Product is a family-owned and operated shop located in the nearby town of Hvalsöllum. Una specializes in handmade woolen goods and artwork made by over 150 local artisans in the surrounding community. Visitors will find a large variety of products including lopapeysa sweaters, hand-carved vases, handmade jewelry and beautiful artwork.

Una Local Product specializes in sustainable products made with local materials. Visitors will find hats and sweaters made with Icelandic wool, jewelry crafted from lava stones and carvings made with Icelandic wood. Una Local Product even sells food products such as local honey, meat, jams made with wild Icelandic berries and teas flavored with Icelandic herbs.

LITLA LOPASJOPPAN

Just a few minutes from Hotel Rangá in the town of Hella is the family-owned Litla Lopasjoppa. As you walk into the shop, you will see stacks and stacks of handmade lopapeysa sweaters. Every sweater is unique and made by a local knitter. Be sure to browse through the different colors and styles until you find a sweater that suits your style.

Litla Lopasjoppa also sells a large variety of yarn as well as woolen hats, mittens and scarves. If you want to try your hand at knitting, talk to the knowledgeable staff. They can help you pick out a knitting pattern, yarn and knitting needles. Visitors will find a nice variety of other souvenirs in Litla Lopasjoppa such as handmade jewelry and many kids toys.



Picture by Dennis Welsh



Picture by Stefán Pálsson

VOLCANIC ERUPTIONS IN ICELAND

Iceland is known as the land of fire and ice for a good reason—the country is home to over 30 active volcanic systems, many of which are found underneath icy glaciers. Over the last centuries, there have been several particularly intense volcanic eruptions in Iceland. Nowadays, scientists speculate that this volcanic activity affected weather systems across Europe and perhaps even Africa and Asia. In more recent years, Iceland has made global headlines due to volcanic eruptions that have stopped air travel and provided the world with brilliant imagery of epic lava flows. Below, we have created a list of some of the most interesting and destructive eruptions in Iceland's history. Who knows, by the time you read this another volcano could be preparing to blow.

SKAFTÁRELDAR OR LAKI

On June 8th, 1783 a volcanic eruption started in the Icelandic highlands in the Laki fissure. Known as Skaftáreldar or the fires of Skaftár, the eruption expelled huge amounts of poisonous gas and ash which affected Iceland's soil. As a result, crops were destroyed, livestock died and a severe famine persisted for several years.

What's more, the eruption's effects were more widespread than Icelanders could realize. Ash clouds and poisonous gas traveled across the ocean all the way to Europe, affecting crops across the continent. Historians even suggest that the eruption led to France's poor harvests in the late 1780s, thus triggering the French Revolution. Furthermore, scientists speculate that the eruption's effects could be felt as far away as Egypt and India.

HEKLA VOLCANO

If you stand at Hotel Rangá's front door and look to the north, you will spot a majestic conical mountain that is usually covered with snow. This is Hekla—Iceland's most active volcano. Hekla has erupted between twenty to thirty times since Iceland's settlement in 874 AD. The volcano's intense activity has long been linked with legend and myth. In fact, after a par-



Picture by Kristján Pétur Vilhelmsson

ticularly violent eruption in 1104, Hekla began to be referenced as the gateway to Hell.

Despite Hekla's status as Iceland's most active volcano, there is no need to worry. Geologists monitor the volcano very closely in order to know when the next eruption will start. The last eruption took place on February 26, 2000, so we are due for volcanic activity any day now. An eruption is certainly coming—it's not a question of if but when.

KATLA VOLCANO

Katla is an extremely active volcano just north of Vík in south Iceland. Katla has erupted about twenty times since 930 AD, and it is certain that the volcano will erupt again. The volcano itself is located underneath the glacier Mýrdalsjökull; this means that its eruptions often trigger dangerous glacial floods.

Katla's last major eruption started in October 1918 and continued for 24 days. Glacial floods carried so much sand out to sea that Iceland's coast was actually extended by 5 km (3 miles). The 100 year pause since Katla's last eruption means we can expect some volcanic activity in the near future. Scientists are constantly monitoring the area; however, we can never know for certain exactly when Katla will erupt.

SURTSEY

In November 1963, fishermen from Iceland's Westman Islands saw a column of smoke and ash rising from above the waves and went to investigate. Instead of finding a burning boat, the fishermen found a volcanic eruption—lava was erupting deep below the ocean's surface. The cold sea waters made the magma harden very quickly, which resulted in the formation of a new island: Surtsey.

Since the formation of Surtsey, it has been protected as a nature reserve and barred from most visitors. The intent is to prevent human disruption so that scientists can study the island's development. Over time, the island has attracted plant and animal life. However, only very few scientists and geologists are allowed to visit the island to conduct research.

ELDFELL

In January 1973, an eruption began on Heimaey—the largest island in the Vestmannaeyjar archipelago. At the time, this chain of islands was home to about 5000 people. Luckily, the local fishing fleet was in the island's harbor, making it possible for most of the inhabitants to evacuate. Pumps were used to cool down the encroaching lava so that it would not block off the harbor. However, the eruption continued for several months, causing widespread damage to the small fishing community.

When the eruption finally stopped, the island had grown by 2 km (1.2 m) and had a new 220 m (660 ft) volcano—named Eldfell or 'fire mountain' in Icelandic. Over the next years, the islanders worked hard to rebuild their community. Nowadays, Heimaey is again a thriving village and a popular tourist destination. Visitors can even visit Eldheimar Museum to learn about the eruption and read stories from inhabitants who experienced the eruption firsthand.

EYJAFJALLAJÖKULL

Halting air travel across Europe for several days, the eruption of Eyjafjallajökull in 2010 made waves around the world. The eruption's gigantic ash plume sent ash particles high into the air making it unsafe to fly. Millions of travelers were stranded, their eyes suddenly turned toward a volcano in Iceland that they had probably never heard of before.



Picture by Ragnar Th Sigurðsson



Picture by Herman Desmet

Ultimately, the volcano would erupt for several months and deposit large amounts of ash across south Iceland. Clean-up operations would take many months, but luckily, no one was harmed.

Since the settlement of Iceland, Eyjafjallajökull has only erupted four times: in 920, 1612, 1821 and 2010. Similarly to Katla, Eyjafjallajökull is a glacier-volcano—meaning, the volcano itself lies underneath a snow-covered glacier. Now that Eyjafjallajökull is dormant, visitors to Iceland can actually go snowmobiling on the glacier itself. Scientists regularly monitor the glacier-volcano, making it possible to explore the area with an expert guide.

BÁRÐARBUNGA

Bárðarbunga is yet another volcano located underneath a glacier—the Vatnajökull glacier, to be specific. This volcano is far away from any towns or villages, located deep in the Icelandic highlands. In August 2014, a series of earthquakes near the volcano indicated that an eruption was imminent. Sure enough, the Bárðarbunga eruption began in the Holuhraun lava field on August 29, 2014 and continued until February 2015.

Due to Bárðarbunga's remote location, not as many people visited the eruption site. However, photographers were still able to take some incredible photographs including aerial shots from helicopters. At the end of the Bárðarbunga eruption, scientists would record the largest lava flow since the Skaftáreldar eruptions of 1783. What's more, the eruption would create a new lava field about 85 km² (32 m²). For reference, that's the size of about 11,000 football fields!

FAGRADALSFJALL

Iceland's most recent volcanic eruptions took place at Fagradalsfjall volcano on the Reykjanes Peninsula. The first eruption began on the evening of March 19, 2021 and lasted until mid September, 2021. Then just a few months later, another eruption began at Fagradalsfjall on August 3, 2022 and ended on August 21, 2022.

Compared to other volcanic eruptions in Iceland, these eruptions can be considered quite small. Instead of erupting high into the air and emitting lots of ash, lava poured out from a large fissure. What's more, the volcano's location made it quite easy to visit. Travelers from around the globe visited Iceland to get up close to the volcano. Photographers and videographers were able to get some truly amazing shots of this natural wonder.

LAVA CENTRE

Located just minutes from Hotel Rangá, the Lava Centre is an interactive volcano exhibition. This family-friendly educational centre offers visitors the chance to learn all about volcanoes and earthquakes. Listen to stories from Icelanders who experienced volcanic eruptions up close and try out an earthquake simulator.

ELDHEIMAR MUSEUM

The Westman Islands' Eldheimar Museum is actually constructed around the remains of one of the houses that was destroyed in the 1973 eruption. Visitors are able to listen to a helpful audio guide as they walk through the museum. Learn about the fateful day when the eruption began and hear from Icelanders who were there when it happened.

ICELANDIC LAVA SHOW

Visit the Icelandic Lava Show in the village of Vík and see red hot lava up close! Real lava is heated up to incredibly high temperatures so that visitors to Iceland can see the phenomenon at any time. This show is totally unique and a great family-friendly activity.



Pictures by Ingibjörg Friðriksdóttir

VIKING FEAST IN AN ICELANDIC CAVE

Hotel Rangá is offering our guests the chance to have a truly unique dining experience, only available as private dinner. Feast like Vikings in a mysterious Icelandic cave just minutes from Hotel Rangá. Enjoy delicious dishes prepared by Hotel Rangá chefs in a setting from another time.

THE CAVES OF HELLA

The Caves of Hella are a fascinating mystery. What we do know for certain is that the caves were made by humans. What's more, there are signs that indicate the caves were in existence when the Vikings came to Iceland in 850 A.D. These underground spaces were almost certainly used as a dwelling place, but we can only guess at their inhabitants. Walking through the cool underground rooms, it is easy to feel connected to the past. Little signs of human existence can be seen—there are some wall carvings of unknown age, a small altar and what is perhaps an old stove. Yet, the space emanates a particular atmosphere, making it easy to imagine what it might have been like in days of old.

GOURMET FARE AND LIVE MUSIC

For our guests who want to experience something truly unique, we offer a Viking feast inside one of the Caves of Hella. Hotel Rangá chefs will prepare a delicious three course meal inspired by Icelandic cuisine. Enjoy live music as you dine by candlelight. Sip local beers, enjoy handpicked wines and think about those who once made these caves their home.

Because the caves are underground, they are pleasantly cool, we have Icelandic lopapeysa for our guests to borrow while in the caves. Children are welcome to participate in the cave dinner, and we offer their admission at half-price. Whether planning a romantic dinner or a family adventure, you will be sure to remember this unique dining experience inside an Icelandic cave.



To book your Icelandic cave feast, contact the Hotel Rangá reception. We do need at least one-week advance notice to prepare this dining experience. Starting rate from €2000 for private cave experience.

ONLY AVAILABLE AS PRIVATE DINNER.



Pictures by Clarke Joss

WEDDING AT RANGÁ

Annabelle Macpherson and Sean Cowie were married at Hotel Rangá in the summer. Their intimate ceremony was held by the East-Rangá river. We loved hosting this couple and their families and are excited to share a glimpse of their special day. Below, Annabelle and Sean share their story and give good advice for couples planning a wedding in Iceland.

HOW DID YOU MEET?

We had the good fortune of growing up in the same neighbourhood in Scotland and attending the same school. We actually lived just 10 houses apart from each other, and while we didn't officially meet until later, we ended up chatting on Christmas Eve at our local pub.

WHY ICELAND?

We have always been avid travellers, and we've been fortunate enough to visit many incredible destinations over the years. However, there was something special about Iceland that really captured our hearts. It started when my husband Sean expressed a long-standing desire to visit Iceland. So, for his birthday, I surprised him with a trip there. From the moment we arrived, we were completely taken aback by the natural beauty of the country. The stunning landscapes, rugged coastlines and awe-inspiring geothermal features left an indelible impression on us. But it wasn't just the physical beauty of Iceland that drew us in. The warmth and hospitality of the Icelandic people, the vibrant culture, and the sense of adventure all combined to create an experience that was truly unforgettable. We felt an immediate connection to the country and its people, and we knew that we had to come back again someday. While a typical Scottish wedding would consist of a castle, we decided that we wanted an outdoor adventure and we thought where else it better to do it than Iceland.

HOW DID YOU END UP CHOOSING HOTEL RANGÁ?

When we first started looking for wedding venues in Iceland, we knew that we wanted a location that was both beautiful and unique. We also wanted a venue that could accommodate all of our guests and provide a memorable experience for everyone involved.

After doing some research, we came across Hotel Rangá, and we were immediately struck by its stunning natural setting and luxurious amenities.

But what really set Hotel Rangá apart was the exceptional level of service and attention to detail that we experienced. From our initial visit to meeting the wedding coordinator Majken and the rest of the staff, we were always made to feel special. I think by around 30 minutes into visiting Hotel Rangá we were set that this was going to be our venue.

TELL US ABOUT THE BIG DAY!

We decided to get married with our family, groomsmen and bridesmaids. We began the day with the bridal party getting ready first thing in the morning at Hotel Rangá. Majken was unbelievably accommodating and helpful in assisting the bridal party to get ready, and we had the joy of getting our hair and makeup done by professionals. Our afternoon ceremony was located along the beautiful Rangá River, right behind Hotel Rangá. The hotel helpfully set up all of the chairs and decorated our beautiful aisle with white rose petals. We had an amazing Icelandic singer and an incredible humanist who all came together to make the experience unforgettable. Our guests were truly blown away by the setting, and we were so fortunate with the Icelandic weather, as the sun came out at the last minute. After the ceremony, we enjoyed delicious canapés and then set off for an adventure in the three super jeeps with all our guests. We toured the stunning Icelandic landscape including the glacier and of course had a few drinks along the way.

We then returned to Hotel Rangá for a 3-course meal that was out of this world. Next, we enjoyed some music, dancing, speeches and of course, the beautifully decorated cake!

WHO TOOK YOUR WEDDING PHOTOS?

We were fortunate enough to have two incredibly talented photographers capture our wedding day. Clarke Joss, a photographer from Scotland, was our primary photographer. He was assisted by his co-worker, Ryan Harris.



From the moment we met Clarke and Ryan, we knew that they were the perfect team to document our special day. They were both incredibly professional and easy to work with, and they had a keen eye for capturing all of the beautiful and intimate moments that made our wedding day so special.

Throughout the day, Clarke and Ryan worked tirelessly to ensure that every moment was captured, from the first look to the ceremony to the reception. As well as the professionalism, they also got on so well with our guests, and really became a massive part of our day.

DO YOU HAVE ANY GOOD ADVICE FOR COUPLES PLANNING A WEDDING IN ICELAND?

Yes! I'll number them below:

- 1. Plan for the weather:** Iceland's weather can be unpredictable, even in the summer months. Be sure to plan for all kinds of weather and bring appropriate clothing and gear. Consider having a backup plan in case of rain or other inclement weather.
- 2. Wedding coordinator:** If you're booking a hotel as your venue, make sure that they have a wedding coordinator. Majken, wedding coordinator at Hotel Rangá, made our lives SO much easier. I honestly don't think we would have managed it without her. It also made the planning experience great as we discussed ideas with her day to day.
- 3. Embrace the natural beauty:** Iceland's natural beauty is unparalleled, so consider incorporating it into your wedding day. Whether it's by having your ceremony at a waterfall or taking photos on a black sand beach, embracing the natural beauty of Iceland can make for an unforgettable experience. We did this with a few waterfalls and glaciers.
- 4. Be flexible:** Given the unpredictable weather and other factors that can come into play, it's important to be flexible and open to changes. Having a flexible mindset can help you adapt to any unexpected situations and make the most of your wedding day.
- 5. Take time to explore:** Iceland has so much to offer beyond just the wedding day itself. Consider taking some time before or after your wedding to explore the area and experience all that Iceland has to offer. Whether it's by taking a road trip around the country or visiting some of the local hot springs, there's no shortage of adventures to be had in Iceland. Our guests visited the Secret Lagoon, some of Iceland's most famous waterfalls, and the day after the wedding we all enjoyed our recovery hangover in the Blue Lagoon.



Picture by Paige Deasley

INSIDE HOTEL RANGÁ'S SOUTH AMERICA SUITE

Hotel Rangá's South America suite stuns with vibrant colors, beautiful craftsmanship and lots of traditional geometric designs. We recently chatted with hotelier Friðrik Pálsson to learn more about the inspiration behind the room. Keep reading to find out about the history of Hotel Rangá's South America suite.

INFLUENCED BY PERU

"When we first started designing our continental suites, we thought about what country to have as a focus for South America," says hotelier Friðrik Pálsson. After doing some research, they quickly identified a country that stood out.

"The Inca influence in Peru made it quite different from other countries. There is a unique decorative style with many geometric prints. So Peru seemed to be logical to use as our starting point."

COLORFUL CARPENTRY

As you gaze around the South America suite, you will notice colorful wooden panels on many of its walls. These were built from different types of wood sourced directly from Peru.

"To our surprise, it turned out that in Peru there is a lot of very interesting wood," says Friðrik. "Different kinds and colors, strengths and toughnesses. One example is the two trees yellowheart and purpleheart. They are practically sister trees and very beautiful—one lighter and one darker. So we decided to build the room more or less from that wood."

A TEAM EFFORT

"We were so lucky with these wooden decorations. At that time, we had Italian, Canadian and Icelandic carpenters working for us. They worked together to create the wooden decor, which you will find in the room itself, on the walls and around the doors and wardrobe. Gradually, it became a very colorful and beautiful room."

A CEILING MODELED AFTER THE ANDES

If you look up, you'll notice that the room's ceiling isn't flat but angular. This was actually an intentional design choice.

"When we were deciding what the ceiling should look like, we got this idea of having the ceiling to look like the Andes Mountains, the huge mountain range running along South America's left side. This totally changed the look of the room," says Friðrik.

AUTHENTIC FURNITURE AND DECOR

"Most of the decor and furnishings came from South America. In fact, even the wooden lamps came from Uruguay. We ordered the furniture, carpets, artwork and the stone tiles from Peru. We used these stone tiles on one of the walls as a sort of reference to the famous Inca ruins at Machu Picchu. That wall had to be strongly reinforced so it could withstand this very heavy weight from the stones."



AN EVENING HOBBY

"There is a lot of beautiful decoration in the bathroom. In fact, every piece of the wall is made of two or three different types of Peruvian wood," says Friðrik.

"Everything is completely handmade. In fact, the door itself and the decoration around it was more or less the evening hobby of the carpenters. The door is a masterpiece and shows how you can really play with wood if you have the experience and the imagination."

INSPIRED BY THE INCAS: BOLD, GEOMETRIC PATTERNS

Above the bed, you will find a big tapestry from Peru in the Inca style. A colorful geometric wall mural surrounds the tapestry. In fact, there's actually a good story behind these decorations.

"A painter from Reykjavik was painting part of the wall behind the bed," says Friðrik. "He told us that in the Inca world they didn't use many organic shapes, meaning those similar to things found in nature. Instead, their designs were geometric and made up of mostly straight lines. It's quite interesting to wonder why the Incas were drawn to such bold, angular patterns."

THE REAL DEAL

"When we first were considering a continental theme, I was pretty hesitant," says Friðrik. "I thought it would be very difficult to make the concept original. I also worried it could feel inauthentic. But now I can proudly say that we have done a hell of a good job. Those who have visited and lived in these continents always comment that we made these rooms really authentic."



Pictures by Hreinn Magnússon





CHOCOLATE MOUSSE

Picture by Ingibjörg Friðriksdóttir

CHOCOLATE MOUSSE

INGREDIENTS:

- 285 g Milk
- 16 g Gelatine sheets
- 400 g Chocolate 50%
- 665 g lightly whipped cream

METHOD:

Start by soaking the gelatine sheets in a bowl of cold water for 5 to 10 minutes. During this time, place your chocolate in a large bowl. Next, put the milk in a separate pot and bring it to a boil.

When the milk starts to boil, lower the temperature and put the gelatine into the pot. Stir the milk until the gelatine is dissolved. Then, pour the milk and gelatine mixture into the bowl of chocolate. Mix everything together until combined. While the chocolate is cooling, lightly whip the cream in a separate bowl. Once the chocolate reaches room temperature, gently fold the whipped cream into the chocolate mixture with a spatula. Put the chocolate mousse in a container with a lid and let it rest for at least 8 hours before serving.

MERINGUE

INGREDIENTS:

- 4 egg white
- 200 g sugar
- ½ tsp baking powder
- Pinch of salt

METHOD:

Start by heating the oven to 130°C. Next, beat the egg whites on medium speed in a clean mixing bowl. When the mixture starts to become frothy, turn up the speed and slowly add the sugar. It is essential that the sugar is added slowly. Next, add the baking powder and salt. Continue to beat the egg white mixture until it becomes thick and glossy. This should take approximately 10 minutes.

Line 2 baking trays with parchment paper and spread the meringue evenly on the parchment paper. Bake at 130°C for 90 min until the meringue is a pale coffee color.

Let the meringue cool before breaking it into small pieces.

STRAWBERRY GRANITA

INGREDIENTS:

- (Strawberry sorbet may be used instead)
- 450 g strawberry purée
 - 45 g sugar
 - 125 g water

METHOD:

Mix all three ingredients together in a shallow pan. Put the pan directly in the freezer. Once the granita begins to freeze, use the tines of a fork to scrape its surface every 10 to 15 minutes. This will ensure that the granita develops its signature flaky texture.

TO ASSEMBLE

To a plate, add chocolate mousse and strawberry granita. Top with pieces of meringue, fresh local strawberries and roasted pistachios.



SUMMER HIKES IN ICELAND

South Iceland is a hiker's paradise. Guests at Hotel Rangá can choose easy paths perfect for families as well as more advanced treks with elevation gain. As you walk, you'll see fantastic views of cascading waterfalls, tumbling rivers and more. There is also excellent birdlife in the area.

Weather in Iceland is unpredictable, so all hikers should bring warm clothes, rain gear and good shoes. It is also smart to pack a water bottle and some snacks. Stop by the Hotel Rangá reception for directions, and let us know your hiking plans before you start your adventure.

EASY

EAST-RANGÁ RIVER WALK

A beautiful river walk can be found just outside Hotel Rangá's back door. The lovely Rangá River meanders just behind our hotel, and our guests are free to walk beside its peaceful path. This easy walk is a wonderful option for families or guests who want to take a leisurely stroll. What's more, the Rangá River is one of the best salmon rivers in all of Iceland. As you walk, you might even see someone land a catch.

INTERMEDIATE

ÞRÍHYRNINGUR

If you stand in front of Hotel Rangá and look towards the northeast, you will see a mountain in the distance. This is Þríhyrningur, an ancient volcano that has long been extinct. The Icelandic word Þríhyrningur actually means triangle, and the mountain's distinct three points are said to resemble this shape.

There is a well-established trail from the base of Þríhyrningur to its peak. On a clear day, the view from the summit is incredible. You will see excellent views of the south coast all the way to the sea. The hike itself is moderate though quite steep at some points. The trail can be covered in small stones and loose gravel, so be sure to watch your footing.

EASY

TUMASTAÐIR FOREST PATH

If you are looking for a leisurely hike near Hotel Rangá, we highly recommend that you visit Tumastaðir forest. Beautiful paths wind through stately pine trees, many of which were planted in the 1940s. Small streams flow beside the forest paths, which creates a truly relaxing atmosphere. There are even several picnic tables where you can rest and enjoy the natural beauty. Beloved by local families, Tumastaðir is a wonderful place to meander and explore.

INTERMEDIATE

STÓRI DÍMON

Stóri Dímon is a small but mighty mountain which offers incredible views over the valley of Fljótshlíð. The trail up the mountain is very steep but quite short. Depending on your speed, you can reach the top in anywhere from 15 to 30 minutes. The history of this little mountain is rather interesting. In fact, several important battles were fought near Stóri Dímon during the settlement of Iceland. Stories of these ancient conflicts are told in the most famous of Icelandic sagas, Njáls Saga.

EASY

GLUGGAFOSS WATERFALL IN FLJÓTSHLÍÐ

Gluggafoss or "window waterfall" is a beautiful waterfall in the valley of Fljótshlíð. The waterfall gets its name from the way the water pours in between crevices in the rock, almost as if through a window. Gluggafoss has both an upper and lower falls, and visitors are able to walk and see both levels. Visitors are also able to climb higher above the falls on the right side. This path is less established and quite steep, but it offers wonderful views of the valley below.

INTERMEDIATE

PÓRÓLFSFELL IN FLJÓTSHLÍÐ

If you are looking for a strenuous but rewarding hike, try the mountain Þórólfsfell. The elevation gain is very gradual, but it takes about three hours to reach the mountain's summit. From the top of Þórólfsfell you can see stunning views of the Fljótshlíð valley and three glaciers: Fjallajökull, Eyjafjallajökull and Mýrdalsjökull. You will also find a summit marker from Landmælingar Íslands dating back to 1958.



Picture by Rob Leahy



INTERMEDIATE

BEGINNING OF FIMMVÖRÐUHÁLS

The Fimmvörðuháls trail is one of the toughest trails in Iceland. Ever-changing weather conditions can make the trek quite dangerous, and we strongly recommend that you join a guided tour if you want to do the entire 25 km (15 mile) hike. However, it is possible for the novice hiker to get a small taste of this beautiful trail. Simply start the hike from the top of Skógafoss waterfall but turn back after 30 minutes up to two hours. This part of the trail is somewhat strenuous but still safe to experience on your own. You will pass incredible waterfalls and see wonderful views of the south coast.

EASY

YTRI-RANGÁ PATH IN HELLA

For relaxing hiking near Hotel Rangá, try the Ytri-Rangá riverside path. This is an easy walking route that begins in the town of Hella. The path meanders for several kilometers just beside the stunning Ytri-Rangá River. It is easiest to access the path from a public park near the center of town. What's more, if you head south, you can walk all the way to Ægissíðufoss waterfall. This route to the falls is about 3-4 km each way.



ART AT HOTEL RANGÁ: A SCAVENGER HUNT

At Hotel Rangá, we are passionate about showcasing Icelandic artwork. In fact, our property is filled with incredible pieces of art in a multitude of styles and forms. Below, you will find a list of ten unique pieces. Take a walk around the hotel and try to find each artwork—just ask in the reception if you need a hint.

THE HARP CHAIR BY LÁRUS SIGURÐSSON

Look around Hotel Rangá's upstairs lounge to find a special wooden chair that is more than it seems. If you look closely, you will notice that the chair's back is set with piano strings. Take a seat and have your companion strum lightly against the strings. You will feel the resulting vibration, which is intended to make you calm and relaxed. The chair is actually a therapy chair meant to build trust. It was made by Lárus Sigurðsson, the former music director and carpenter at Sólheimar in Grímsnesi. This unique, sustainable community is home to a diverse group of people, many of whom have special needs. Anyone is welcome to visit Sólheimar and enjoy a coffee in the on-site café or purchase artwork and crafts handmade by residents.

THE ICELAND QUILT BY JÓNÍNA HULDA GUNNLAUGSDÓTTIR

Walk around the Rangá Reception and see if you can spot the Iceland Quilt, a handmade piece of fine art that is far too beautiful to decorate a bed. Over 3000 quilt squares are sewn together to create an incredible, almost pixelated image of Iceland. Notice the intricate patchwork of colors including whites and beiges used to indicate Iceland's mighty glaciers. The quilt was purchased by Hotel Rangá at a charity auction to benefit the Save the Children fund.

ROOM NUMBER 13

If you pay close attention as you walk down Hotel Rangá's hallways, you will spot our unique take on room number 13. This woven chair piled with comfortable pillows invites guests to get cozy and relax. And as Hotelier Friðrik Pálsson says, "It's always free and almost always available." Friðrik first spotted the chair in a store window while driving around Reykjavík. However, on his next drive, he noticed that the chair was missing. Friðrik rushed into the store and asked if someone had bought this special chair. Luckily, it had simply been placed in the back for storage and Friðrik was able to negotiate a deal.

POLAR BEARS HAVE BABIES BY INGIBJÖRG ÁGÚSTSDÓTTIR

On one of Hotel Rangá's walls you can find a lovely carving of a polar bear and a little girl. But this piece of art has a secret. If you press just beside the little girl's feet, the carving will flip, revealing a polar bear cub. According to Icelandic folktale, polar bears are actually enchanted humans. The tale says that the female bear gives birth to human babies; however, if she manages to pass her paw over them, they change into bear cubs.

ICELANDIC SCENES BY DEREK KARL MUNDELL

Derek Karl Mundell has enjoyed painting with watercolors since 1985 and features Icelandic scenes in many of his paintings. Several of his works are featured throughout Hotel Rangá including the upstairs lounge and various guest rooms. To see a few of our favorites, head up the staircase toward our second floor suites. There, you will find Mundell's delicate depiction of the mysterious aurora reflected over Kleifarvatn, a lake on the Reykjanes Peninsula. Just beside it hangs another striking painting of the geyser Strokkur as it erupts high into the underneath a sunny sky.

THE WOODEN COMPASS

Walk up the wooden stairs beside the Rangá Bar and see if you can spot the compass inlaid into the wooden floor. The compass is not only beautiful but accurate; however, there is a funny story behind its positioning. In fact, the carpenters who installed the compass all had different ideas about north and south. To have a little bit of fun, hotelier Friðrik Pálsson decided to make a game of it. Everyone placed a mark on the parquet where they believed north should be. Then, a member of the Icelandic rescue team was called in to give his expert opinion about true north. Only one of the carpenters was completely spot on and won the contest.

THE LADIES LEGS

Beside the Rangá Bar are two unique wooden chairs carved like ladies legs. Perch in one of these fabulous seats and pretend you are different person for a moment. Hotelier Friðrik Pálsson spotted these special stools on a trip to Italy and knew they would be perfect for the Rangá Bar. He was bound and determined to transport the chairs back to Iceland in one piece so decided to carry them home in his hand luggage!

HEKLA UNDER THE NORTHERN LIGHTS BY ARNGUNNUR ÝR

Visual artist Arngunnur Ýr creates unique pieces that are inspired by both the delicate beauty and immense power of Icelandic nature. In this piece, Arngunnur Ýr experimented with different materials, using French pigments with Icelandic volcanic ash on very thin silk prepped with emulsions. In an ode to Hekla's unpredictability, Arngunnur Ýr created the artwork without knowing exactly how the materials would react once combined. The result is truly stunning, combining ethereal elements with a dynamic energy.

WATERCOLORS BY ÓLÖF PÉTURSDÓTTIR

As you walk through Hotel Rangá, you are bound to notice detailed watercolors featuring Icelandic nature and village scenes. These lovely paintings were made by Ólöf Pétursdóttir, the late wife of hotelier Friðrik Pálsson. In addition to a long career as a lawyer and judge, Ólöf was a talented artist. Her watercolors highlight the natural beauty of the Icelandic landscape and village life. Many of Ólöf's paintings portray scenes from the Westman Islands, known as Vestmannaeyjar in Icelandic. In fact, there is a bit of a story behind this featured setting. It was Ólöf's friend Gudda who first asked her to create a painting of Vestmannaeyjar. Ólöf was a bit of a perfectionist and wanted to paint something special for her good friend. She decided to paint many different watercolors of Vestmannaeyjar to be sure that Gudda would find a favorite.

THE PLANT PRINTER BY HALLDÓR ELDJÁRN

This interactive piece acts and grows like a hanging plant. Each day several centimeters of algorithmic plants print onto a piece of paper that slowly grows at a slow speed. In fact, the amount of light processed by the printer actually dictates the size and shape of the plants' leaves. This inorganic plant helps viewers to understand time in longer intervals than minutes and hours. During your stay at Hotel Rangá, watch as life progresses on the printed paper and remember to pause and enjoy the moment.



Picture by Paige Deasley



Pictures by Ingibjörg Friðriksdóttir



Picture by Ingibjörg Friðriksdóttir

WESTMAN ISLANDS DAY TRIP

As you drive down Iceland's south coast, you might notice a line of mountains that seem to rise straight out of the sea. These are the Westman Islands or Vestmannaeyjar, a volcanic archipelago that over 4,300 people call home. A short forty-five minute ferry ride will take you from the mainland to the home island, Heimaey. This vibrant village offers visitors many fun activities and adventures. From puffin sightings, to gourmet delicacies and interesting museums—a visit to this little island is a perfect day trip for guests at Hotel Rangá.

HISTORY OF THE ISLANDS

Settlers first made a home on the Westman Islands around the year 900. Since then, there have always been inhabitants on Heimaey. When entering Heimaey's harbor, you will notice a plethora of fishing boats. In fact, the fishing industry plays a prominent role in the islands' economy, and many islanders still work at sea.

In 1973, the Westman Islands grabbed global attention when the volcano Eldfell began erupting, forcing a mass evacuation. Thankfully, the islanders were able to rebuild their community, making it possible for the evacuees to return. Nowadays, travelers can visit the Eldheimar museum to learn more about this fateful eruption. The museum is actually built around the remains from a house that was destroyed in the 1973 eruption. It is fascinating to get up close to the village's history and learn more about volcanic activity in Iceland.

WORLD'S LARGEST PUFFIN COLONY

In the summer, the Westman Islands become the world's largest puffin colony as thousands of puffins gather for their mating season. In fact, over 1 million puffins lay their eggs on the islands during this time. You can even find a puffin lookout on Stórhöfði, Heimaey's most southernmost point.

To access the lookout, you will need to bring your rental car or book a tour with a local company. Drive to the lookout parking area and follow the path until you reach a small wooden cabin. Inside you will find huge windows through which you can watch thousands of puffins as they dive and soar from the nearby cliffs. The birds are hunting for small fish to give to the baby puffins—called pufflings—who hide inside cliffside burrows.

As the pufflings get older, the parents stop bringing them food. This means the pufflings are ready to leave their burrows and go search for food themselves. Once they are hungry enough, the brave pufflings will leave their cliffside homes in the middle of the night. However, instead of going straight out to sea, they often become distracted by the lights of the town and head there instead.

Not to worry—the children of Heimaey stay out late to help the pufflings find their way. Kids walk around the town, gathering any stray pufflings into cardboard boxes. The next morning, the children take the birds to the sea and throw them high in the air. There, the pufflings will swim and learn to hunt for their own food until they grow big enough to fly. If you want to take part in a puffin rescue, you should visit the islands during the month of September.



Picture by Olivia Synnervik



CAN YOU SPOT THE ELEPHANT ?



Picture by Ingibjörg Friðriksdóttir

THE CALL OF THE SEA

The Westman Islands also offer visitors the chance to explore the surrounding ocean and learn more about sealife. Try a Rib Safari tour where you will zoom across the sea and visit interesting rock formations like Elephant Rock—a unique cliff that looks surprisingly like an elephant. Your guide will also take you to see beautiful sea caves and local wildlife like seabirds, seals and perhaps even whales.

Speaking of whales, it is also possible to visit a pair of two beluga whales at the Sea Life Trust Whale Sanctuary. These two belugas named Little Grey and Little White journeyed from China to live in a protected bay in the Westman Islands. Visitors to the exhibit will learn more about beluga whales and might also see some rescued puffins up close.

HIKING ON THE WESTMAN ISLANDS

There are several wonderful hiking paths on the Westman Islands. Visitors can hike up the volcano Eldfell that erupted in 1973. At only 1.7 km (1 mile), this is a good option for families. From the top of Eldfell, you'll see stunning views of the islands and sea. For more adventurous hikers, try the Heimaklettur hike. This steep track takes you to the top of the island's Home Rock. Do be aware that the path includes ladders and rope handholds. However, this adventurous trek is definitely worth the effort—the views from atop Heimaklettur are astounding.

FINE DINING AND LOCAL BREWS

Despite being a small island, there are a number of delicious dining establishments located on Heimaey. The casual eatery Gott is known for serving tasty dishes such as locally caught fish, soups and salads. During the summer months, you can enjoy a gourmet dining experience at Slippurinn. This restaurant is known for its seasonal dishes filled with local products including hand foraged herbs and seaweed.

Heimaey is also home to its own craft brewery, The Brothers Brewery. Visitors can enjoy a glass of locally brewed beer at their tasting room or even tour the brewery itself. Sample a flight of different types of beer and learn how these tasty pours are made.

SUMMER FESTIVAL FUN

During the first weekend of August, the Westman Islands become the party epicenter of Iceland. The islanders throw a huge festival called Þjóðhátíð to celebrate Verslunarmannahelgin or Tradesmen's Weekend. Long summer days are filled with bonfires, fireworks and live music. What's more, the final Sunday night celebration features an incredible hillside sing-along, as over 10,000 festival-goers sing together as the sun sets.

GOLF ON THE WESTMAN ISLANDS

On the Westman Islands you can play a round of golf inside the crater of an extinct volcano. The golf course was founded in 1938 and slowly expanded from 6 holes to 18 holes. It is best to try a game of golf during the middle of summer. Iceland's unique midnight sun makes it possible to play at almost anytime of day or night!



RANGÁ RECOM- MENDS

SUMMER

Ready to go on an incredible Iceland adventure? These are our top summer activities.

GO SNOWMOBILING

Snowmobiling is usually associated with the wintertime, but in Iceland, you can zoom across snow-covered glaciers all year long. Take a guided snowmobiling tour on top of Eyjafjallajökull—the volcano-glacier that erupted in 2010. The fun adrenaline rush is made even better with incredible views of Iceland’s south coast.

TAKE A HIKE

Whether you’re looking for a leisurely stroll or a more adventurous trek, Hotel Rangá is near plenty of beautiful trails. Take a family walk beside the Rangá River or climb Þríhyrningur, an extinct volcano with amazing views at its summit.

CHASE WATERFALLS

Iceland’s south coast is home to many stunning waterfalls. Be sure to visit Seljalandsfoss, where you can get up close and walk behind the falls. Just a bit further is Skógafoss, a mighty waterfall that is often wreathed in rainbows. And of course, don’t forget to stop by Gluggafoss—a lovely waterfall with both an upper and lower falls.

RIDE A HORSE

One of the world’s oldest and purest breeds, the Icelandic horse makes the perfect companion for novices and children. Ride through lava meadows, explore volcanic terrain and enjoy expansive views of the mountains, coast and countryside.

DRIVE A BUGGY

Buggy tours are a unique and exciting way to enjoy Iceland’s natural beauty. Traverse remote parts of the countryside and experience Iceland’s stunning landscape up close. Feel the wind in your hair as you drive across a black sand beach or beside hidden waterfalls.

FLIGHT

There is no better way to see Iceland’s fantastic landscape than from above. A helicopter can pick you up outside Hotel Rangá’s front door and take you on the ride of a lifetime over mighty volcanoes, ancient glaciers and powerful rivers. What’s more, our guests can even book a ride on Iceland’s first electric aircraft.



Picture by Ingibjörg Friðriksdóttir

SOAK IN A HOT SPRING

Don’t forget to bring a bathing suit on your trip to Hotel Rangá—south Iceland is home to amazing natural hot springs like Landmannalaugar and Reykjadalur valley. Or grab a glass of wine and soak in one of our geothermally heated hot tubs overlooking the beautiful Rangá River.

TAKE A SUPER JEEP TOUR

Summer is a wonderful season to visit Iceland’s highland interior on a Super Jeep tour. Visit remarkable locations like the Þórsmörk nature reserve or Landmannalaugar—a stunning geothermal valley bordered by colorful mountains.

VISIT VESTMANNAEYJAR

Vestmannaeyjar is an archipelago of islands located just forty-five minutes from Iceland’s south coast. What’s more, the island Heimaey is home to the world’s largest puffin breeding colony. Visitors to the island can enjoy delicious dining, great hiking and even visit a museum about the 1973 eruption of Eldfell.



Picture by Kalen Emsley



Picture by Paige Deasley

CHECK OUT OUR BLOG

We post regular articles, updates, tips, tricks, offers and recommendations on our blog. Whether you want information on how to photograph the northern lights or inspiration for your dream elopement we got you covered.

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Picture by Ingibjörg Friðriksdóttir

