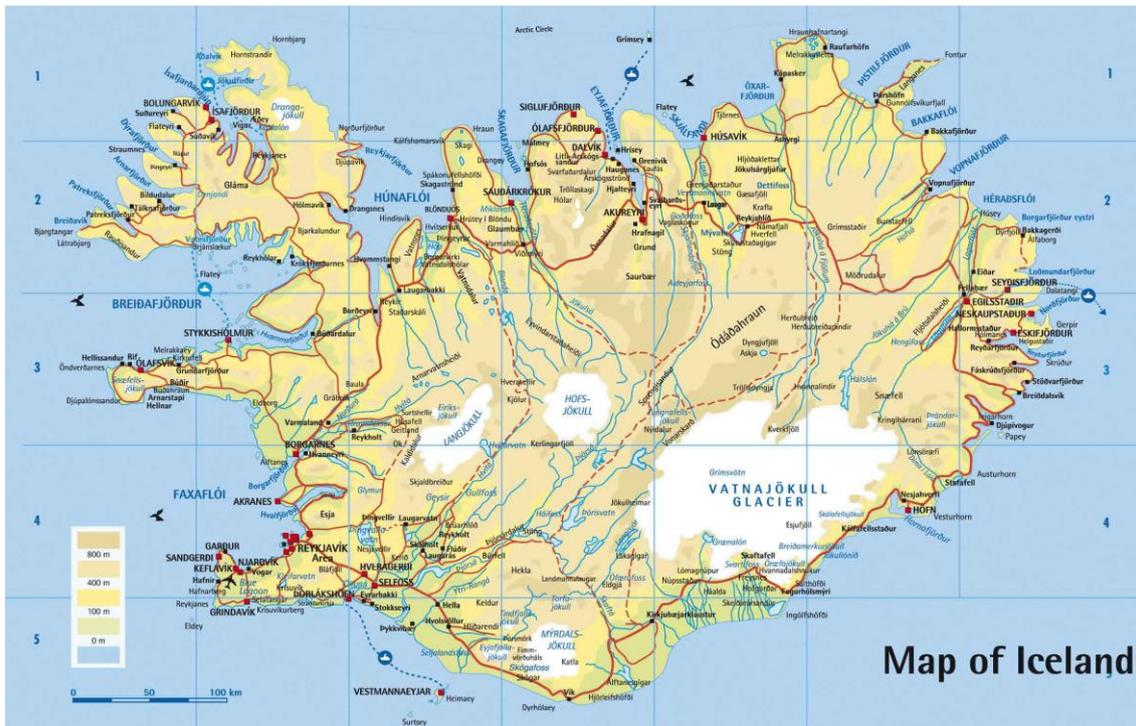


## Iceland July 2013



9. July: 178 km from *Keflavik* to the ferry site at *Heimaey*. Low clouds the first 45 km to *Reykjavik*, but no rain. A few kilometers further and a hill at 377 m, then down and relatively flat. Lunch about half way and last 45 km part in head wind. Arrived at the ferry port 15:30 at schedule, but the 16:00 ferry didn't go that day. The next at 19:00 and had no problem finding accommodation on the island. *Simek Flekkefjord* built the ferry *Herjólfur* in 1992. I talked to the captain who found it nice to meet someone from there. Unfortunately, the cloud cover on *Heimaey* was a bit low and didn't inspire to sightseeing the next day. *Heimaey* is one of the most popular tourist sites on *Iceland* due to the special volcanic nature and an eruption there in 1973 that extended the island a few quadrat kilometres. American soldiers also took part in building a protection wall against the lava so it didn't block the harbour or destroy more of the city.

10 July: 145 km from the ferry site to *Kirkjubæjarklaustur*. A little rain and headwind to *Vik* halfway where I had lunch. Past the corner at *Vik* I got tail wind, the Sun was shining and did about 70 km pace in 30-40 km/h two hours until *Kirkjubæjarklaustur*. Spent the night at *Golf Hotel Loki* 4 km South of the city. Good food and drinks.

11. July: 197 km from *Kirkjubæjarklaustur* to *Höfn*. Some rain until *Skaftafell National park* after about 60 km where I had lunch. Then around the corner and past the glaciers by *Vatnajökul* where the temperature was down to 7 °C. Unfortunately, low clouds so did not see the entire mountain and glacier range in its glory. Some people even rafted in a small fjord within the road. Got an *Icelandic* racing cyclist alongside a few kilometers, but he was without a sack and in a hurry. Then it started raining a few km before *Höfn* and you bet I was happy to check in at *Hotel Glacier* for the night! Good food and drinks.

12. July: 180 km from *Höfn* to *Egilsstaðir*. Some wind and gnarled asphalt 100 km to *Djupivogur* where I had lunch. Then against the wind 15 km into the fjord to a 30 km gravel road over *Özl* mountain pass at 430 m above sea level. Took a good hour climbing a few km up the road and downhill on the other side. The rear wheel got some beating and a spoke broke that day. Perhaps the toughest day physically, but good weather and checked in at *Hotel Icelandair* in *Egilsstaðir* where I got excellent service. And of course, good food, main course a reindeer beef and drinks!

13. July: 160 km from *Egilsstaðir* to *Myvatn*. Nice weather, but as usual alternating wind. Had to walk a bit in some 10% slopes as it is a bit tiring to get up cycling with 7 kg on the back. 601 m above sea level the highest point. A fantastic volcano landscape and saw *Herðubreið* (1682 m) a few hours through the wasteland called *Ódáðahraun*. Unfortunately, there was no "feedzone" on the stretch and missed out on lunch. Three liters of water and fat burning was the fuel, and a good reindeer beef the night before certainly helped. It doesn't harm to burn some fat, better than *liposuction*. Some problems with accommodation in *Myvant*, all the hotels were full, but got a bed in a camping/cabin place. Nice Saturday night at the venue with good food, drinks and music, but I didn't do any dancing that night...

14. July: 100 km from *Myvatn* to *Akureyri*. Downhill and *brönsj* (brunch) in *Laugar* after 40 km. Then up a new hill to about 400 m, down and up a new one and back down before access to *Akureyri*. The last 20 km along *East* side of *Eyaffjörður* was wonderful with strong wind in the back. Checked in at *KEA Hotel* in the city centre and relaxed with a late lunch. Walked around a bit in the city which reminds me about *Tromsø*, the same climate and *North Icelanders*. *Sushi* in *Kung Fu Bar Cafe* in the evening.



15. July: Rest day in *Akureyri*. First fixed the rear wheel in a bike workshop that changed 7 spokes for the sake of safety and the wheel was good as new. Some bike sightseeing *North* of the city and stopped by *Kræklingahlið* where some *Vikings*, *Ásmund* and *Ásgrim* from *Kvin* (now *Kvinesdal*) settled around year 870 when they, like many other got fuzzy with *Nationalist King Harald I* of *Norway* and went to the free *State of Iceland*. They were the sons of *Ondott the Crow*, and were therefore called *Kræklingar*. There were several *kvindøls* that came after them and settled down at *Eyaffjörður*. *Gudmundur Sigvaldason* from *Akureyri*, which was at the *Emigration festival 1998* in *Kvinesdal* said they were descendants from those who came from *Kvin*. He later took the history team in *Kvinesdal* to *Iceland* on a visit to *Kræklingahlið* and *Glerå* where *Ásgrim* and *Ásmund Ondottsønner* settled down. In year 1000 the ousted *Chief Torgeir Torkelsson* threw all his pagan pictures in *Godafoss*. *Iceland* then gradually converted to *Christianity*. It's not him who is my family name's origin. Our stem father when it comes to the surname was *Torkild Ámli* from *Kvås* in *West Agder* who changed his name to *Áne Torkildsen* in order to please the *Danish*. Our real stem father is of course *Tor with the Hammer* who came from *Åsagard* in *Central Asia*. A nice and relaxing day with a *Mexican* hamburger at *Bautinn* for lunch, a walk and dinner at an *Italian* restaurant in the evening.

16. July: 145 km from *Akureyri* to *Blöndos*. Just about 30 km from *Akureyri* I stopped at *Steinstaðir* to greet *Sigurgeir*, a *Facebook* friend who observes the Earth's condition and knows a lot about volcanoes, including those in *Canary Islands*. We had a few hours of chat over a couple of coffees and impressive with professionals who retire to live the hard and simple life on a horse farm. Then up *Öxnadalen* to 555 m above sea level down a valley, up another hill and down again to *Blöndos* with some headwind the last 30 km. Checked into an old classical tourist hotel in *Blöndos* where they also could make food in a friendly atmosphere! Great evening.

17. July: 172 km *Blöndos* to *Borgarnes*. First, a slight warm up hill to about 400 m above sea level where there was no need to get off the bike. Then relatively good wind to the head of the fjord, 90 km from the finish where I had chicken breasts for lunch. Inward the valley and up the last hill at 392 metres above sea level which was also relatively slack and rushed down past *Bifröst* and in headwind the last 50 km like most finishes these days. Kept the schedule today also. Checked into *Hotel Borgarnes*.

18. July: 117 km from *Borgarnes* to *Reykjavik*. As usual some alternating wind and since I could not ride through the *Hvalfjörður* underwater tunnel I had to ride around the bay (61 km), but "lost" only 41 km. Saw no whales that day, but was thinking about them. Right next to where the tunnel came up on the *South* side, it was a terrible weather with heavy rain and headwind and struggled a good hour 15 km to the first gas station where I filled up with *Coca Cola* and a couple of hot dogs. Happened to meet an *Icelander* there who had cycled in *Europe* and thought it was funny that I had cycled around the island. Cycled the last 15 km in to the city centre in tailwind and checked into *Hotel Borg* which has *Hotel Continental Oslo* standard. Right next to *Allting*, the *Parliament*. "*Tiger shrimp*" and steak dinner complemented with coffee and a glass of *Remy Martin XO*. They know *French cuisine* with great quality in *Iceland*.

What a tour, an old wishful dream fulfilled. About 1410 km in ten days in half *Tour de France* pace is not so bad without other support than a sack with change of clothes, sneakers, spare tyres and tubes. Just one puncture and a broken spoke on the road.

One organizer, one participant and one winner! The trip was self-financed, but the bike was sponsored by *Lærdal Sport and Recreation* when we cycled in *Iran* in the summer of 2009. A *Reiko* bike built in *Germany* with aluminum frame and traditional wheels with many spokes, 23 mm tires for rough surroundings with gnarled asphalt and dirt roads. Met some mountain bikers with full loads on the bikes over the island and who sleeps outside in the volcanic landscape. In relation to them I am a clean highball biker.

One must always count on a little wear and tear, but felt fresh and healthy after a good night's sleep and ready for a week of museum tours and viking research in *Reykjavik*. Good wheels in the natural step!



*Allting, Iceland's Parliament*

Not so much to find about *Norse mythology* in the *National Museum of Iceland*, most of it was about how it was *Christianized*, but *Norse* gods still live in people's awareness. A trip to the *Valley of Thor* was recommended where cultivation of the *Norse* gods took place in secret under the *Christian* imperialists. In 2015 *Icelanders* were in fact allowed to erect an *Ásatru Paganism Temple* in *Reykjavik*, the first *Norse Temple* on *Iceland* in 1000 years. Here *Tor* and *Odin* can be invoked in prayers and ceremonies.

It's the same tendency you see in most countries' national museums. The winner is the story narrator and not so much about the bulldozing of the original culture and the ethnic purging to the extent there were any. Sailors from all over *Western Europe* stopped by. It is said that even *Christopher Columbus* went to *Iceland* the year before he went to *Caribia* to find a map of the way over the *Atlantic Ocean* and the rest is history.

*Viking Maritime Museum in Reykjavik* was a bit of an experience that can be recommended. The story of how the fishing industry was building up and the financial support is well described. Then you can understand that the *Icelandic finance acrobatics* in recent times is or was somehow characterized by fishing luck as long as it lasted. *Coast Guard ship "Odin"* which now is a Museum ship was involved in the "*Cod war*" in 1972 and showed that not even the *British* should pick old *Vikings* on the nose in an attempt to take out their livelihoods. A brave and tough people.

The first *Icelander*, *Ingolf Arnasson* came from *Sunndal* in *Norway* and likely some appendages from the *Norwegian West Coast* in the population. *Irish monks* who rolled into the island before him had problems multiplying and was not any real settlement.



*Copy of an old map that hung aboard the retired Coast Guard vessel "Odin". Is a pair of Islands South of Iceland that seems somewhat unknown in our days.*

There is also a story about an *Irish Abbot*, *St. Brendan* who in year 516 along with 14 monks visited an unknown paradise island in the *Atlantic Ocean Northwest of Africa*. It also applies to some islands *South of Iceland* that is plotted on the map above. It may be *Atlantis*. *San Borondon* is the name of a found and lost island, which was seen *West of La Gomera* in the *Canary Islands* in the 1500 's and not found again later.

When I was visiting *Paradise Island* in the *Bahamas* in 2007 there was a map in the *Casino and hotel complex Atlantis* which showed *Atlantis Island* further *South in the Atlantic Ocean*, but it might be a fiction. The funny thing about travelling around on the planet is all the stories and interpretations you hear about old myths so you get to believe that there is some truth in them. Could be some islands that come and go because of volcanic activity. Seamounts that dropped from the surface of the ocean.