

Europe, July to September 2026

August 22, Reykjavik

We are spending three days in Iceland, but it is all one big experience, so one blog entry. But, first, as I always do, there is a final story about Norway. These “oops, I forgot” entries are to be expected. This one is a compliment to Norwegian expertise, humor, clarity, or all three. Many places in the US and many countries have different ways to differentiate men’s from women’s toilets so that people of different languages can understand. I like the one that appears, if not everywhere, then at least in the preponderance of locations in Norway.



That's it for Norway, after a final goodbye from a friend.



On to Iceland. Nothing to say about the flight. We did get one of those talkative taxi drivers from the airport who showed us pictures of his entire family. He was nice, but it made the long drive, well, long. At least the place we selected to stay was at the perfect location. It was somewhere between the Bastard Bar and Food and the Statue to the Unknown Bureaucrat. Too unusual for even me to make up. We did not see the statue yet (as of this writing), but I did have a delicious reindeer burger at the Bastard. Doesn't taste too much different from antelope.

Day 2 and I must say that Iceland, as a country, has the right name. A rainy day in August and I am expecting it to change to sleet any second. It didn't, but it sure was cold. We booked a "Golden Circle" trip, a 6 hour scheduled bus ride (that turned out to be 7½ hours) to the attractions near Reykjavik. 4½ hours of bussing and 2 hours of sightseeing. Three sights.



The first was the tectonic plate divide. Iceland is where the European plate meets the North American plate. This is why there are so many volcanoes on the island, and so many hot springs. Iceland gets 100% of its power from renewable sources, of which about 1/3 is geothermal. Most of the rest is hydroelectric.

At the first park, you can walk in the area between Europe and North America.

There is a place in California where you can walk over the other end of the North American plate. The San Andreas fault separates that from the Pacific plate. Soon, we will travel over the entire North American plate.

So much for that stop. We only walked far enough to take this picture. It is Iceland, after all. The rest was spent in the gift shop because it was heated.

The next stop was a bit more interesting. It was to see the Great Geysir and some of its relatives. The Great Geysir was the first geyser known to western civilization, first seen in 1294. It was the base of the word “geyser” used in the rest of the world. The original Geysir used to erupt every few minutes but is now dormant. There is a geyser nearby that took over tourist entertainment responsibility and still erupts once about every 6 to 7 minutes. We were told by the tour guide that water underneath the geyser slowly heats up from the underground volcanic flow. When it reaches 121 °C, it turns suddenly to steam. Why not at 100 Deg? No idea. 121 is the magic number. When that happens, it geysers (to make up a new word).

Here is a before picture.



And here is one after (or, better said, during).





The last stop was a waterfall. There are many in the country, even though the land is not extremely mountainy. The one we saw is glacier fed. A lot of the country's water is from glaciers and I can really taste the difference in the drinking water. It might be my imagination, but it does taste purer.

The one we were at is two layered. It falls from

the end of the river, then continues a hundred feet, and drops again. The second drop takes it underground. There is no visible river continuing after the second drop. It's all underground for as long as we could see.

That's it for the tour, except for a 2-hour drive back. Then a non-bastard dinner.



The next day is memorable for three other reasons. One is that we ate breakfast around the corner from our apartment at the only cat café in the city. For those of you who never had the privilege of eating in a cat café, it is what you might think from the name. Cats roam freely among the dining customers. They are very well behaved and never jump up to try to get fed. This is the second one we have been at, the prior one being in Paris.

Breakfast was great, sourdough bread and vegan butter. Haven't got the hang of finding the right breakfast place here. Maybe a catateria is not the best choice.

Back to the apartment and the second memorable reason. I picked it because it included a washing machine and I knew we would need that about now in our trip. We had laundry included with our first cruise, but not since then.

As we were leaving Bergen to board the flight to Iceland, I got a text notification from the apartment owners that a washing machine was not going to be available. So, we spent a couple of hours of our second day at a special office where I got to write today's story.

WASHER ÞVOTTAVÉL

- Load washer and close door
Hlaða í þvottavélina og loka hurðina
- Select washing program
Vákk þvottakorti
- Go to payment terminal, select washing machine and pay
Borgir í greiðslutermínal og veitir viðbætur
- Go to machine and press start
Gótt á vélina og pressu start

USEFUL INFO

Ensure that nothing is left inside the drum before loading
Athugið að efnið er ekki innan þvottavélina áður en hún er lokað

Washing program is 30min
Þvottakorti er 30 mín

Ensure that your pockets are empty and the door is closed
Athugið að þvottavélina er tæm og hurðin er lokað

Washing program is 30min
Þvottakorti er 30 mín

Laundry detergent is included
Þvottavélina er með þvottavél

ÞVOTTAVÉL DRYER

- Load dryer and close door
Hlaða í þvottavélina og loka hurðina
- Go to payment terminal, select washing machine and pay
Borgir í greiðslutermínal og veitir viðbætur
- Go to dryer and press start
Gótt á vélina og pressu start

