

Iceland's 2026 Summer Eclipse



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Connect newsletter
welcomes your
submissions!

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photos, and articles to:
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Connect newsletter is
published quarterly.



Kathy Thorbjarnarson joined a group of eclipse viewers in Látrabjarg in the Westfjords. (Photo supplied by K. Thorbjarnarson)

Visitors poured into Iceland for the August 12 total solar eclipse. They were looking for a front-row seat, and Iceland offered one of the best vantage points since the path of totality ran across the country.

But where would viewers find the best spot in Iceland? The eclipse was projected to last about a minute in Reykjavík and up to two minutes thirteen seconds in Látrabjarg in the Westfjords. Weather in Iceland is always fickle and unpredictable. Pick the wrong location, and it's too late to pack up and head somewhere else.

The *Connect* reached out to several eclipse watchers to find out how they fared. Here is a selection of images and thoughts they shared about participating in the first total eclipse in Iceland since 1954, and the first eclipse in Reykjavík since 1593.

Lee Anne Fox traveled from the U.K. to view the eclipse. She wrote: "To quote the *Reykjavík Grapevine* newspaper, 'If the point of an eclipse is (broadly speaking) to stop seeing the sun in the daytime, then we're doing amazing.' We were in Þingeyri in the Westfjords, where we caught our last glimpse of the sun through the clouds just as we set up our chairs and tripods, moments before first contact! Then, thick clouds obscured the whole thing. But we did experience the amazing sudden darkness, and the colour changes on the horizon were so vivid." Despite the clouds sneaking in at the last moment, Lee Anne sent back an amazing sequence of photos showing the eclipse's progression.

(Continued on page 2)

Connect

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Photo sequence by Lee Anne Fox

Lee Anne said her collage encompasses five minutes from 17:43 Iceland time. "A little disappointing after 3.5 days of fabulous weather, but not unexpected with Iceland's capricious nature!"

Verónika Kolomichuk was visiting family in Njarðvík on the Reykjanes Peninsula during the eclipse. She reported, "My Aunt and Uncle said there were many tourists in town; they'd never seen so many. We noticed heavy traffic heading from Reykjavík towards Njarðvík. Unfortunately, it was overcast and rainy here." Her plan to hot-tub during the solar eclipse? "It's a bust in Njarðvík!"



Verónika Kolomichuk
photographed her
surroundings and light
meter from normal light
to eclipse.





**Before the Eclipse
(K. Thorbjarnason photos)**

Kathy Thorbjarnarson described her vantage point this way, "We were the only Americans and surrounded by maybe six other houses in this private area before the famous Látrabjarg cliffs. Traffic was controlled, where people going to the sea cliffs were not allowed to exit until after the eclipse. No big crowds here."



Nearing Totality.



Kathy Thorbjarnarson captured this view at Totality.

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Your paid memberships and donations help the INLUS offer financial scholarships to all U.S. Snorri participants.



The Deuce of August, Mountain, ND



Ambassador of Iceland to the U.S., Svanhildur Hólm Valsdóttir participates in the parade (All photos by Shirley G. Olgeirson)

The 2026 Deuce of August in Mountain, ND, brought all its classic charms and more to the three-day event.

The first day started with Icelandic Roots' Friday Forum, which began with the Ambassador of Iceland to the United States, Svanhildur Hólm Valsdóttir, addressing the audience. More presentations followed on a wide selection of topics: "Sharing Your Story," "Rooted in Belonging," "Icelandic Quakes and Volcanoes," "Reverend Páll Þórlaksson: The Misunderstood Pragmatist," and "148 Years in Dakota on America's 250th Anniversary."

The evening offered a fish fry dinner, a game or two of Icelandic bingo, and a DJ-led music session.

The big day, Saturday, kicked off with a pancake and sausage breakfast to fortify for the "Life in the Fastlane" 5 K run/walk. Then the parade took center stage. The afternoon ran the gamut with activities for kids, a car show, horse show, couch races, the Icelandic Communities Association Heritage Program, and the groundbreaking ceremony for the Icelandic Rootshús. The evening portion included day one of the North Dakota State Tractor and Pickup Pull followed by the Saturday Night Street Dance.

Sunday began with a service in the historic Vikur Church. The afternoon was filled with the second day of the tractor pull competition. The evening ended with live music at Byron's Bar.

Icelandic Roots Breaks Ground

Icelandic Roots has been a longtime participant in The Deuce of August, offering workshops on using the online Icelandic genealogy database. In recent years, the organization added presentations on Icelandic topics with its Friday Forum.

This year, the organization announced plans and began fundraising to build an interpretive and educational center in Mountain, ND. The site is located across the street from the historic Vikur Church.

On Saturday, August 1, volunteers, donors, and friends gathered to celebrate the ground breaking of the Icelandic Rootshús.



Icelandic Roots volunteers break ground. (Linda Nielsen photo)

Icelandic Roots President Sunna Furstenau said, "The Rootshús is a living, interpretive, and educational center designed for discovery, connection, and learning for all ages."

The Icelandic Rootshús will be a home for the shared stories of Icelandic emigrants who left Iceland for new lands. The story will be told through an interactive exhibit and a burgeoning library of Icelandic books and research materials. It is a "home" and gathering place for the descendants of these settlers who wish to know their story. The plan is to dedicate the building at the 2027 Deuce of August celebrations.

Learn more about the project at: <https://www.icelandicroots.com/rootshus>



Icelandic Roots President, Sunna Furstenau speaks at the groundbreaking ceremony (Linda Nielsen photo)



Cathy Josephson working with Laurie Cameron at the Icelandic Roots Genealogy Center (Shirley G. Olgeirson photo)



Visiting Icelandic Choir sings at the groundbreaking. (Kristen Nielsen photo)



Matrimonial Bliss at a reception in Iceland.



More Bliss!

Matur og Minning- Matrimonial Bliss

MATRIMONIAL BLISS

Augusta Austfjord

1 1/2 c. brown sugar 2 c. flour
1 c. butter Cream well 1 tsp. baking powder
2 c. rolled oats Pinch salt

Take 2/3 of this mixture and spread in a well buttered, 9 x 13 cake pan. Make filling of 1 lb. dates and 1 c. sugar. Cook together and cool. Put filling on dough and then put in the remaining third of dough, on top. Bake in a moderate oven for 1 hour at 350°.

By Susan Sigurdson Powers

Growing up near the little and strongly Icelandic community of Mountain, ND in the 1960's and 70s, there was a sweet treat that was served at bridal showers, weddings and birthday celebrations called *Matrimonial Bliss*. It had an oatmeal crust with a date filling, topped by an oatmeal crumb topping. It seemed like a funny name to me, but everyone knew it by name, and it was a regular on the dessert tables and well-liked. When the *Borg Cookbook* came out in 1978, Augusta Austfjord's recipe for the treat was included in it. **

Many years later (~2005), when I purchased *Icelandic Food and Cookery* (2002 edition) by Nanna Rögnvaldardóttir, I learned a little more about the story of this tasty treat with an unusual name. Nanna R. called it *Wedded Bliss* (in Icelandic, *Hjónabandssæla*), and she described it as a distant relative of the Austrian Linzer Torte, which has a lattice top instead of a crumb topping. She said the common explanation for the name was that this recipe was so quick, easy, economical, and basically failure proof that it was a great recipe for a young bride to bake when she wanted to treat her husband to something special. Hence, the name *Wedded Bliss* (I've also seen it called *Happy Marriage Cake*). Her recipe called for jam or prune filling instead of date filling. The dessert is commonly made with jam today.

Fast forward to August/September 2025: I was fortunate to be on the Icelandic Roots tour to Iceland with my sister Kathy; our friend and *frænka*, Jen Nelson, was on the tour too. We stayed at many wonderful places, and all the breakfast buffets were amazing. As I surveyed my choices at the buffet on the second morning of the tour, there was a tray labelled 'oat cake with sweet rhubarb jam'. It looked sort of like *Matrimonial Bliss*, but a little different with a wide lattice top. I asked the staff member what the Icelandic name was for this item. She said she did not speak Icelandic, but she would ask the chef. Within minutes, the chef came out to respond to my question, "What is the Icelandic name for this oat cake?" His reply: *Hjónabandssæla*. This was indeed the familiar sweet treat with the unusual name!!!
(Continue on page 7)



(Continued from page 6) The next day, another variation of Wedded Bliss (or *Bliss*, as I usually call it now) was at the next breakfast buffet. And we saw it almost daily in bakeries, open houses, coffee shops, museums, and gift shops when we traveled around northern and western Iceland. Each looked a little different, but it was always the same name, seemingly the same ingredients. Taking photos of Bliss became my daily goal and routine. Finding Matrimonial Bliss in Iceland was an example of how food traditions connect us through time and distance—in this case, over 100 years and nearly 3000 miles.

When we came back from Iceland, Jen was so inspired by the skyr (Icelandic style yogurt) that she ate daily in Iceland, that she and her husband Chris along with kids Soley and Arlo, opened SoLo's, a soup, sandwich and skyr shop in Fargo, ND. A regular item on her dessert menu: (Matrimonial) Bliss Bars! So, the tradition continues both in Iceland and in the US.



**In the 1978 edition of the *Borg Cookbook*, the recipe is on page 131; the bake time for this recipe is listed as 60 minutes. This may have worked for the date-filled bars, but for those made with jam, it is too long. Instead, bake for 25–35 minutes, until golden brown. (I pat the bottom layer into the pan before spreading the jam filling over this layer, then top with the remaining crumb topping.)

The *Borg Cookbook* is now in its third printing and still available for sale. It contains tried and true home-style recipes and many traditional Icelandic recipes from our immigrant ancestors. Also, an interesting side note: the Wedded Bliss recipe in *Icelandic Food & Cookery* is for a 9-inch pan. The recipe in the *Borg Cookbook* is for a 9x13 pan. The recipe was probably adapted to suit growing families, threshing crews, and community gatherings. Nanna R. now has a new and revised edition of *Icelandic Food and Cookery* published in 2023.

INLUS Icelandic Language Classes

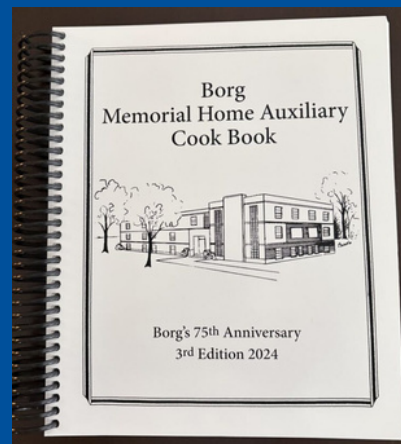
The popular INLUS Icelandic Language classes will be starting their Fall sequence in September, so now is a good time to think about signing up and jumping into the Icelandic language.

David Johnson teaches the introductory 1.0 class and Birna Sigurbjornsdóttir teaches the upper-level courses.

They are now finalizing the dates and times for the courses, but you can find the latest updates and the sign-up forms on the INLUS website at:

<https://inlus.org/travel-culture/icelandic-language/language-classes-sep-2026/>

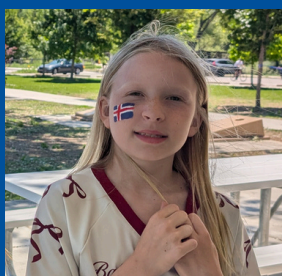
Icelandic Foods:



The INLUS has been given permission to share select Icelandic recipes from the Borg Home Cookbook.

If you would like to purchase a copy, send an email to: borghome@polarcom.com

The price per copy is \$20 plus shipping.



June 17th Face Painting in Colorado

Local Club News

Icelandic Association of Colorado:

We did a Kleina tutorial day on June 6th, where Brynja Schultz showed us how to make them, and we also made some to sell to fundraise for our club. She also made a whole extra batch, as we got quite a few sales :)

We had our June 17th celebration on June 13th. We grilled Pylsa, had face paint, and Iceland-inspired games.

Next up
Knitting club meets for brunch on August 30th.

Sept 12th, our Honorary Consul Inga Maja will host her annual Pylsa party at her house.

Nov 22nd we plan to meet up and make Laufabraud at a members house.

Icelandic Association of Virginia

Greetings from the Icelandic Association of Virginia. Over the summer, we held our annual Icelandic Independence June 17 celebration on June 20th, had over 100 in attendance. This event is held at an American Legion in Norfolk, VA, with direct beach access. We had plenty of Icelandic pylsur and a lot of fixings, all this for a mere \$15.00 membership fee.

We attend the Icelandic Association of Washington, DC annual bazaar. This is where we sell our goods and make a profit for the association to keep costs down.

Mark your calendar for our annual *Thorrablot*. This will be held in Virginia Beach, VA on January 30th. This event has been around ever since our inception in 1985. We always have around 200-225 guests. We have all the Icelandic cuisine along with American food, and lots of great prizes. We have a DJ for music and dancing. All this for \$25.00 for members and \$40.00 for guests. We also have a partnership with the Hyatt hotel that gives us a good discount, which is six minutes from the venue. Anyone needing a membership form or more info can contact us at:

Icelandicassociationvirginia@cox.net.

Icelandic Association of Utah

Save the Date for Iceland Day, Saturday, September 12, 2026 in Spanish Fork!

Mark your calendars for a day of fun and a celebration of Icelandic heritage and culture. Whether you are a descendant of Icelanders, you just love Iceland, or you are curious about this awesome country, you are welcome!

Bring your family and friends. The main event is the Iceland Day celebration from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. in the park. More details to come! Here is the link to our event. <https://www.facebook.com/share/1FVzzwnvAv/>

In December, we will again be having our annual Yule Lad breakfast. Details will be posted on our Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/58628172017/>

Minnesota Nordic Young Adults

Noting that young adults were not usually well represented at ethnic gatherings, Karvel Schram decided to do something about it. With just a couple of weeks' notice, the first *Lille Fredag* ('Little Friday' in Danish) was organized and advertised for late June at the American Swedish Institute (ASI) in Minneapolis.

An Icelandic native and former resident of Denmark, Karvel, along with a group of friends, created the event to connect people from across all the Nordic countries, celebrate shared heritage, and learn from one another's unique traditions and experiences. The goal is that the gathering will also help engage younger generations who may not yet be actively involved in Nordic organizations and create an accessible entry point into the broader community in the Twin Cities.

About fifteen people attended the inaugural gathering, with others showing interest. The group decided to keep meeting through the fall, gathering at the ASI on the first Thursday evening of the month through October. The gathering is open to all adults, but is focused on young adults in their 20's and 30's.

The INLUS provided seed money for this opportunity to keep Nordic groups and traditions alive.

Yule Lad Cards

Jeanne Bowen, the Icelandic Association of Utah, shared an interesting idea she had to raise awareness of Icelandic traditions and also raise some funds for their local club.

She wrote, "Heidi Herman has written a few Yule Lad stories. I reached out to her to ask if we could use her images to create cards similar to flash cards. She was very willing to help. I shared with Heidi my idea of having cards that parents could use to help the children learn about the Yule Lads.

"For example, I would put a card in the shoe along with a small gift so the child would know which Yule Lad visited. Or another might use the cards to have the kids memorize the lads.

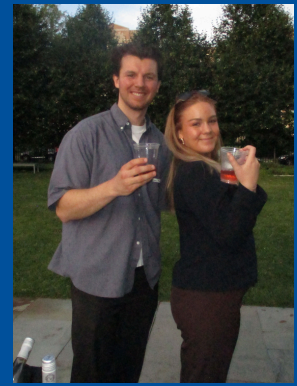
"If you purchased two sets, they could be used to play a matching game for the family. Or even purchase sets to give your friends so they can learn a little about Iceland.

"Heidi ran with the concept and created the cutest cards. On the front is an image of the Yule Lad, and on the back is a little about the lad with the name and pronunciation.

"The Icelandic Association of Utah has ordered 100 sets of cards to sell at their Breakfast with the Yule Lads, which is always lots of fun.

"Has your club developed some unique fundraising activities? We would love to hear some of your creative ideas on what you sell to earn a little bit of funds to keep your Icelandic Associations going."

Editor's note: If you would like to share your club's unique fundraising ideas, drop them in an email to: info@inlus.org



Karvel Schram
and Marta Maria
Hardardóttir at
the first *Lille
Fredag*

Before We Go:



Karítas Hrundar Pálsdóttir reading from her new novel, *Sögu Ríkari*

Check out the INLUS blog post by Jenna Grace Sciuto on the release of Karítas Hrundar Pálsdóttir's new book and first novella, *Sögu Ríkari* (Benedikt, 2026), on the day of its publication.

Jenna Grace Sciuto sends her report from the Penninn Eymundsson bookstore on Skólavörðustígur in Reykjavík.

Karítas Hrundar Pálsdóttir is a favorite writer with the INLUS Sunday Icelandic reading and translating group.

Read the entire post at: <https://inlus.org/karitas-hrundar-palsdottirs-first-novella-is-released/>

Learn about Iceland's Geothermal Energy Program in our latest INLUS Webinar.

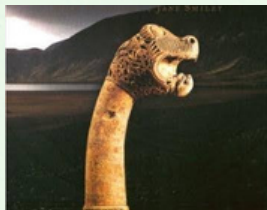
Iceland is a leader in the use of geothermal energy and is rapidly reducing its dependence on fossil fuels. The Hellisheiði Power Station is the eighth-largest geothermal power station in the world and the largest in Iceland.

Kári Valgeirsson shows how Iceland has adapted this energy to a modern society.

Watch here: <https://youtu.be/NWpT43nIGBo?si=ILHNfODy2seY5hms>



Sagas and Archeology-INLUS Webinar



Be sure to catch the next INLUS webinar on September 23, 2026 when Dr. Elisabeth Ida Ward presents on the intersecting relationship between the Sagas and archaeological discoveries.

Ward has worked with archaeologists to look back into the Icelandic Sagas for answers. Details and webinar link will be found on the INLUS website.

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