

Stuffing the Stuffing

Published December 14, 2009



Words by
[Sari Peltonen](#)

Grapevine's Sari Peltonen tucks into the Icelandic Christmas tradition of Christmas Buffet.

Rule one:

Stuff yourself silly.

Around us, there are families, young couples and a table full of businessmen. The tradition—possibly derived from their Scandinavian ancestors and feasting in Valhalla—is so popular that I hear it is not uncommon for a person to attend three buffets—one with work, one with friends and yet another with the family. The few tourists are easy to pick out in their sweaters—the local dress code is all shirts, ties and small black dresses.

Rule two:

Dress up.

Apart from the Christmas carols, the evening's background is provided by the city lights of Reykjavík. The UFO like pearl of Icelandic architecture, Perlan, was completed in 1991, overlooking the town from the Öskjuhlíð hill. It features six water tanks, which supply the town with geothermal water, a Viking museum, view deck, café and a man made geyser—the last blowing at regular intervals throughout our meal.

The top of the Pearl is the revolving restaurant. The outside ring turns slowly while the centre with the buffet provides the anchor. The movement has confused one older gentleman in a gray suit, who is stood by our table looking lost.

After a delicious bowl of wild goose soup, we hit the buffet. The starters feature various types of salmon, caviar and blinis, roast beef, duck liver pate, ox tongue, seafood salads and herring, apple salad, ham salad in mayonnaise... We fill our plates and notice that we are alone. Indeed, most of our co-diners have arrived a lot earlier than 8.

Rule three:

Come early, so you have time to eat more.

File: 2009 12 14_The Reykjavik Grapevine_From Iceland Stuffing the Stuffing.pdf

URL: <https://grapevine.is/food-main/2009/12/14/stuffing-the-stuffing/>

After emptying our plates with enviable speed, we hit the buffet again, this time for the main courses. On offer are the classic Icelandic dishes of sugared potatoes and manure-smoked lamb hangikjöt, stuffing, meatballs, red cabbage—a combination of local specialities alongside this and that adopted from other countries. Finally there is a mini-carvery of salted pork, venison and pork belly.

“Some people come to Iceland just for our buffet,” says the chef proudly whilst cutting us thick slices of venison.

By the time of dessert, the restaurant has spun around enough to bring the cake tables right to us. And what a selection: English fruitcake, pineapple cheesecake, skyr cake, chocolate cake and mousse, meringue, crème Brule and the dubiously named Pearl Bomber.

Around us, people are getting drowsier, the group of business men louder. The gray suited gentleman is escorted to his table by the waitress. He sits down and toasts with his companion, patting the waitress' back.

Skál for Christmas buffets!

Christmas buffet at Perlan 7.890 ISK per person. Thank you to the restaurant for kindly providing a buffet meal for two for research purposes.

Selected Christmas offerings in Reykjavik

Brauðbær

A Danish inspired buffet. Mon to Wed, lunch and dinner. 3300 ISK/3900 ISK.

Einar Ben

Traditional buffet dishes served separately to each table. Dinner 6490 ISK per person.

Fish Company

A Christmas edition of their famed Around the world in 8400 ISK menu, served for the whole table.

Fishmarket

Fusion Christmas menu, served for the whole table. Christmas Sushi and more. 8900 ISK per person.

Tapasbarinn

Tapas with a Christmas flavour. 4990 ISK.

Fjörukráin

The Viking theme restaurant puts out their Christmas Buffet on Fri and Sat. For 6800 ISK, one gets the traditional food, mulled wine and live music.

Grand Hótel

Traditional buffet and traditional live folk music. Lunch buffet 5100 ISK, dinner 7500 ISK for adults, cheaper for children. Available on weekends.

Grillið

Fine dining Christmas menu with 3/4 courses (7900 ISK/9900 ISK), 16 500 ISK with an accompanying wine menu.

Hótel Holt's Gallery

3900 ISK for a 3-course Christmas lunch; the classy Jólabbal dinner menu for 7900 ISK; On Sun-Wed it comes for the bargain price of 5450 ISK.

Hótel Loftleiðir

The Loftleiðir buffet is overseen by Dane Ida Davidssen to ensure the ultimate in Scandinavian quality—including one of the widest selections of herring around. On Sun-Thu the dinner buffet costs 5950 ISK; On Fri-Sat 6500 ISK with live music. Lunch buffet 3950 ISK.

Silfur

Dinner time Christmas buffet, 6900 ISK per person, 5900 ISK from Sun to Wed. The foods feature the traditional line up with a modern touch.

Vox

Vox does Christmas all the way: Brunch, menu and High tea all dress up in Santa's clothes. In addition there is a lunch buffet for 2850 ISK—reduced from last year to help out in hard times—and a weekend dinner buffet with live music.

Restaurant Dill

New Nordic food goes Christmas, with herring ice cream, langoustine wrapped in Christmas tree and “Kjartan's volcanic Christmas pudding with lava”. An evening at Dill with coffee, champagne, full menu and wines comes with a price tag of 18.000 ISK, Standalone menu for 8400 ISK and wine menu for 7900 ISK.

Broadway

Broadway offers the unexpected collaboration of Christmas Buffet and Michael Jackson tribute concert until mid-December. For more information and bookings, call 533 1100.

Hótel Saga

Hótel Saga's traditional buffet comes with first class entertainment by the Icelandic comedians Laddi, Steinn Ármann and Hjörtur Howser. 8900 ISK/10900 ISK with wine.

Fjalakötturinn

Fjalakötturinn offers a traditional 3-course Christmas menu for 6900 ISK.

Veisluturninn

Kópavogur's gift to the world of Christmas buffets has a New York theme. There's also Christmas Brunch every weekend for 3500 ISK, with Christmas dwarfs to entertain the children.

Restaurant Reykjavík

Restaurant Reykjavík offers a traditional buffet for 4900 ISK per person every day up until Christmas.

Lækjarbrekka

A traditional buffet is served in the evenings, Sun-Wed for 5900 ISK, and Thu-Sat for 6900 ISK. Lunch buffet is served in each table (3900 ISK).

Perlan

A classy buffet on a revolving floor, breathtaking Reykjavík view. 7.890 ISK.

Support The Reykjavík Grapevine!
[Buy subscriptions, t-shirts and more from our shop right here!](#)



Buy Shit: Christmas Edition



The Christmas Sweater: Another Awful Imported "Tradition"



President Recommends Opening Gifts On Christmas Day



Iceland's Last "Oslo Tree" Badly Damaged By Storm



WAR ON CHRISTMAS: Finally, An Icelandic Front



The Encyclopaedia of Icelandic Holidays



The Encyclopaedia of Icelandic Holidays



News In Brief: December



The Bookish Tradition Of Christmas Eve

Next: [Food for Thought](#)

Previous: [Absolutely Fabulous](#)

Subscribe to our newsletter for FREE ! Weekly news + video content from Iceland and some Grapevine Store discounts and give-aways!

File: 2009 12 14_The Reykjavik Grapevine_From Iceland Stuffing the Stuffing.pdf

URL: <https://grapevine.is/food-main/2009/12/14/stuffing-the-stuffing/>

indicates required
Email Address

Subscribe



■ News

Asylum Seekers Evicted In Hafnarfjörður



Articles

Tacos Served With A Side Of Jazz



■ News

Increased Rates Of Homelessness Anticipated Due To Refugee Policy



Cover Features

Bound By All Things Kinky



Articles

Animal Of Iceland: The Midge



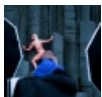
Interview

Being Black In Iceland: An Interview With Jewells Chambers



Music

Grapevine New Music Picks: Una Torfa, Hipsumhaps, Soffía Björg & More



■ News

Icelandic Crossfit Champion Gets Naked

THE GRAPEVINE STORE

BUY AWESOME MERCHANDISE HERE



Food

Food









SHOW ME MORE!

WHAT IS THE REYKJAVIK GRAPEVINE?

Your essential guide to life, travel and entertainment in Iceland.

The Reykjavík Grapevine is Iceland's biggest, best and most widely read English-language publication. Our alternative monthly magazine publishes 18 times per year, delivering original, insightful reporting on Icelandic culture and society.

CONTACT US

The Reykjavík Grapevine

Hafnarstræti 15

101 Reykjavík

Iceland

Copyright © 2003 - 2025 Fröken Ltd. All rights reserved. [ABOUT](#) | [ADVERTISE](#) | [CONTACT](#) | [PRIVACY POLICY](#) | [SUBSCRIPTIONS](#)

This website uses cookies to improve your experience. We'll assume you're ok with this, but you can opt-out if you wish. [Read More](#)