



Hallormsstaður National Forest

Hallormsstaður National Forest is one of the larger forests in Iceland, covering 740 hectares (ha), and includes the only village in Iceland that is located in a forest. The forest is a popular recreation area in a varied landscape. There are over 40 km of marked trails and footpaths. There is also an arboretum, two popular campsites, picnic areas and a hotel.

A total of 85 tree species can be found in the Hallormsstaður National Forest from over 600 places around the world.

HISTORY

The birchwood remnants at Hallormsstaður farm were protected in 1905 and thereby became Iceland's first national forest. Birch forest and woodland now covers about 350 ha within the original fenced area and a variety of tree species have been planted on another 200 ha. Large areas have been annexed to the forest more recently, both to the north and south, and either planted or allowed to regenerate naturally with birch. A total of 85 tree species can be found in the forest from over 600 places around the world.

NATURAL DELIGHTS

The forest provides food, nest sites and protection from predators for several bird species. Year round residents include redpoll, wren, goldcrest, ptarmigan and raven. In summer the forest fills with redwings, snipes and meadow pipits along with woodcocks and wagtails. Besides birding, the forest offers opportunities for botanizing and picking berries and mushrooms. Edible mushrooms include larch bolete, birch bolete and slippery jack. Stone bramble is common and raspberries and redcurrants can be found in parts of the forest. Clear streams form a characteristic part of the forest and the water in all of them is drinkable.

Forest bathe

Shinrin-yoku is the name given to the Japanese art of "forest bathing," contemplative walks through the woods that reconnect the individual with nature and can lead to decreased stress, natural mood elevation and even a stronger immune system. This means of mobile meditation has been recognized by the Japanese government since 1982 and has been endorsed by the Forest Agency of Japan as a means of improving quality of life. The practice can be a natural way to combat the toll of stress and anxiety.

To give shinrin-yoku a try, choose a spot based on physical ability and convenience. Do not choose a route that is too strenuous: It is recommended that in four hours, you should walk no more than three miles. This is not an endurance hike. Rest when necessary and find a spot where it is pleasant to sit and read for a while or simply look out into the trees. It is OK to bring water or green tea. It is also recommended that, if possible, a forest bath is followed up with a hot spring bath.

Los Angeles Times, www.latimes.com

The National Forests

Lands managed by the Icelandic Forest Service are called National Forests. They are open to everyone, year round, and are located in all parts of Iceland. Many are easy to reach and have a variety of facilities for outdoor recreation. Others require a 4 wheel drive vehicle or hiking up steep hillsides in order to enjoy them.

Read about forestry in Iceland on our website: skogur.is/english



The Icelandic Forest Service carries out research and development, provides forestry advice and extension services, protects forests in general and manages the National Forests. The head office is located in Egilsstaðir, the research station, Icelandic Forest Research, is at Mógilsá near Reykjavík and there are regional offices in all parts of the country.



Arctic starflower *Trientalis europaea*

Trientalis europaea can be found in the forest by the red trail. The solitary white flowers (1–2 cm diameter, usually with 6–8 petals) appear in midsummer. The leaves take on a copper hue in late summer.

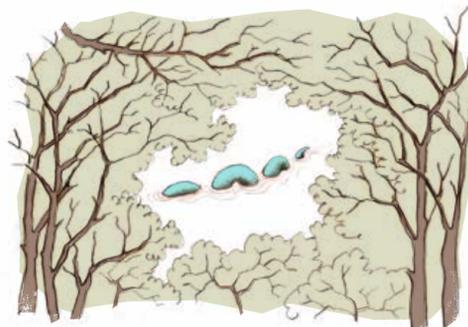


The legend of the Lagarfljót-worm

The legend of the worm is first mentioned in the Icelandic Annals of 1345. Sightings were considered to portend a great event such as a natural disaster. The serpentine creature is said to live in Lagarfljót, a freshwater, below-sea-level, glacial-fed lake which has very poor visibility as a result of siltation. It is described as longer than a bus, or 39 feet (12 m), and has also been reported outside the water, lying coiled up or slithering into the trees.

It is a 'many humps' type of lake monster, rather than the simply serpentine type of, for example, the Loch Ness Monster.

According to the folk tradition recorded by Jón Árnason, the great serpent in Lagarfljót grew out of a small "lingworm" or heath-dragon. A girl was given a gold ring by her mother and asked how she might best derive profit from the gold, she was told to place it under a lingworm. She did so, and put it in the top of her linen chest for a few days, but then found that the little dragon had grown so large, it had broken open the chest. Frightened, she threw both it and the gold into the lake, where the serpent continued to grow and terrorized the countryside, spitting poison and killing people and animals.



Enjoy your visit
Welcome to Hallormsstaður
National Forest!



HALLORMS STAÐUR NATIONAL FOREST



Hiking map



Hiking map

HALLORMS STAÐUR NATIONAL FOREST



www.skogur.is

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Hallormsstaður National Forest

• Hiking map •



1 cm on the map equals 130 m



HALLORMSSTAÐUR FARM
An old church-farm. The current farm house was built in 1884 and deeded to the Forest Service along with the farm in 1905. It is the residence of the forest manager for East Iceland.

GUTTORMSLUNDUR
A larch stand planted in 1938. The oldest larch stand of appreciable area in Iceland and well over 20 m in height.

STEEKJARVÍK
About one kilometer north of where the main road crosses the stream Hafursá is the picnic area Stekkjarvík, complete with BBQs and a playground.

- Forest manager, bunkhouse, office
- Scenic vista
- Arboretum
- Car park
- Campground
- Caravans, trailers
- Hotel/guest house
- Shop
- Restaurant
- Roads, trails
- Forest path

Hiking trails



THE PART

Yellow trail – 3 km
The trail starts at the car park by the road at Hafursá stream and leads up a gravel road, then under and along a power line. Turn left through a larch stand to a crossroads and there left again to stops with good vistas over the forest, down along the Hafursá stream and over Lagarfljót (the big lake). From there, into the forest and downhill to the gravel road where the trail began.



THE KNOLLS

Blue trail – 5 km
The trail leads up from the old home economics school, past a rock outcrop called the Old Woman and north through the forest. It goes through the Flat Forest, which is a tall (by Icelandic standards) birch forest and thence to Falcon Cliff, which provides an excellent view over the forest. Then, down through a spruce forest to an open area that was once the farm Ormsstaðir, from where the trail leads back to the start.



HALLORMSSTAÐUR MOORS

Orange trail – 7 km
An easily followed and relatively easily hiked trail between Hallormsstaður Forest and the farm Geirólfstaðir in the next valley to the east. The trail is the same as the blue trail to begin with, then along the old horse trails under the cliffs above the forest and up onto the moors. The trail provides good mountain vistas on a clear day.



ROAD FOREST

Brown trail – 2 km
The trail starts at the north end of the campground Höfðavík, below the main road and along Lagarfljót (the big lake) through a forest of old birches. This is the forest that was here in 1905. Cross the road at the pond Klifjörn, up through a spruce forest and more birch forest to the blue trail.



ATLAVÍK CAMPGROUND - ARBORETUM - SHOP

Light blue trail – 1,5 km
The trail leads up a steep slope from the campground at Atlavík and along a footpath to the arboretum. From the arboretum, a footpath leads to the shop by the road. You can also walk across the Höfðavík campground to the brown trail.



HALLORMSSTAÐUR CLIFFS

Light green trail – 4 km
The trail is the same as the orange trail up to the cliffs but then turns right instead of left and passes under the cliffs and back. The trail traverses the big rock slide that much of the forest grows on.



THE STRAIN

White trail – 1,8 km
Remba, or the Strain, is an old trail over the mountain to the next valley and was considered rather difficult. The trail starts at the gymnasium and is fairly steep to begin with. It leads up to the Chest Cliffs and then to the 21 m high Lamb waterfall. A little farther up the stream, you come to a dam that provided water to a 27 Kw power plant that was operated from 1936 to 1955. Caution is required as the trail passes along the edge of a small canyon. The trail then leads back the same way.



ATLAVÍK CORAL

Red trail – 1,5 km
The trail starts at the main road, leads through a larch stand planted in 1937 with 20 m tall trees and past the ruins of a Viking-age horse corral. The trail passes through more older stands of trees, including lodgepole pine and Douglas-fir planted in 1940 and exceptionally straight larch from 1957. The trail winds on through the forest and finally down to the road across from the arboretum.



THE PART GLACIER STREAM

Purple trail – 200 m
A short footpath from the main road up to a mini arboretum that includes Norway spruce and mountain pine planted in 1908 and a variety of species planted in 1963, including: subalpine fir, Engelmann spruce, western hemlock, white spruce, Douglas-fir, dragon spruce, lodgepole pine and western red cedar. Unusually good (for Iceland) Scots pine grows along the path.



LIGHT RIVER SLOPE

Yellow trail – 850 m
The trail leads up a forest road, through stands of Siberian stone pine, lodgepole pine and white spruce to the 16 m high Light river waterfall. On the north side of the trail is some of the straightest growing larch in the forest.



SELLÆKUR WATERFALLS

Orange trail – 2 km
Parking above Gutormslundur, start of route about 200 m away to the southeast. Upward walk from the road along the creek Sellækur with several picturesque waterfalls. At the highest point you arrive at the ruins of the croft Títlingsel. Descent is through larch forests towards the road and parking.