

INTERNATIONAL PHOTOGRAPHER

←—————| *The world through your viewfinder* |—————→

FAROE ISLANDS

eROADBOOK

English Version



WHERE TO GO
WHAT TO PHOTOGRAPH

THE FAROE ISLANDS

THE FAROE ISLANDS



Føroyar

—

“Sheep Islands”

FOREWORD

THE FAROE ISLANDS



I am a lover of all things Nordic: the landscapes, the light, the culture. During one of my many trips to **Iceland**, the **Faroe Islands** were mentioned quite a lot, and not in very positive terms; quite the opposite!

People spoke of “having to stop” at the Faroe Islands aboard the Smyril Line ferry **MS NORRÖNA** as it made its way from **Denmark** to **the Faroes** to **Iceland**.

Here were all these tourists taking their car to go explore Iceland without devoting any time to discovering this forgotten treasure en route.

But for the past few months, there’s been a kind of murmur in the air. The first landscape photographs have been popping up on social media: that surreal lake seemingly hanging in midair; those pretty houses with disheveled roofs.

Gold !!! Gold !!

Like the gold rush of old, word has been spreading that there’s something happening in the Faroe Islands.

It was high time I went to see for myself.
So pack your bag, you’re coming along for the trip!

CONTENTS I / III

THE FAROE ISLANDS



03	FOREWORD
04	CONTENTS
07	EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE FAROE ISLANDS
15	HISTORY OF THE FAROE ISLANDS
18	THE MERKID
19	THE FAROESE
23	PLANNING YOUR TRIP
24	GETTING TO THE FAROE ISLANDS BY PLANE
29	GETTING TO THE FAROE ISLANDS BY FERRY
31	COST OF LIVING
32	WHERE TO STAY
34	CAMPING
36	GETTING AROUND
37	MAP OF BUS AND FERRY ROUTES
38	HIRING A CAR
39	DRIVING IN THE FAROES
44	THE TUNNELS
46	MAP OF TÓRSHAVN
48	TAKING A FERRY
51	TAKING A HELICOPTER
56	TAKING A TAXI

CONTENTS II / III

THE FAROE ISLANDS

57	INTERNET AND TELEPHONE
58	LOGISTICS: FOOD
59	LOGISTICS: ELECTRICITY/LAUNDRY/ALCOHOL
61	LOGISTICS: MONEY/PHOTOGRAPHIC EQUIPMENT
62	THE PHOTOGRAPHIC ROAD TRIP
64	LIGHT, CLIMATE, SEASONS
68	LANDSCAPES
70	FAUNA
76	FLORA
77	BUILDINGS
81	SURPRISES
85	THE NORTHERN LIGHTS
86	HOW LONG SHOULD I GO FOR?
87	HOW LONG FOR EACH ISLAND?
88	THE DETAIL, ISLAND BY ISLAND
89	STREYMOY
98	EYSTUROY
103	VÁGAR
112	MYKINES
119	BORÐOY
122	KALSOY



CONTENTS III / III

THE FAROE ISLANDS

128	KUNOY
131	VIÐOY
134	SVÍNOY AND FUGLOY
136	NOLSOY
138	HESTUR AND KOLTUR
141	SANDOY
144	SKÚVOY
146	STÓRA AND LÍTLA DÍMUN
149	SUÐUROY
156	PROFILES OF THE ISLANDS
157	SIX EASY ESSENTIAL HIKES
165	BOAT TRIPS
167	SUGGESTED ITINERARY
170	PHOTOGRAPHIC EQUIPMENT
171	ARCHIVING
172	STATISTICS
174	ANALYSIS
175	DRONE LEGISLATION
176	GLOSSARY
177	APPENDICES
178	USE OF THIS GUIDE





EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE FAROE ISLANDS

THE FAROE ISLANDS

POLITICAL SITUATION

The Faroe Islands have been an autonomous province of Denmark since 1948.

The **Kingdom of Denmark** comprises three countries:

Denmark
Faroe Islands
Greenland

The Faroe Islands are run by their own government, who are responsible for everything except defense, which is managed by Denmark.

Population

50,000 inhabitants

Capital

Tórshavn ("Thor's Harbor").

Language

Faroese. English is widely spoken by the younger generation.

Currency

The Faroese króna. It has the same value as the Danish krone. If you pay with a credit or debit card, you'll pay in Danish krone (DKK), but if you use cash you'll notice that the banknotes are illustrated with images and geographical features unique to the Faroe Islands. They are really quite beautiful. Choose your favorite!

Economy

- Fishing: 97%!
- Tourism (growing)
- Wool and manufactured goods



194

THE FAROE ISLANDS IN FIGURES

THE FAROE ISLANDS



500 km (310 miles) from the Arctic Circle

62nd parallel

1,400 km² (540 sq mi) - 73 times smaller than Iceland

1,300 km (800 miles) from Denmark

430 km (265 miles) from Iceland

300 km (185 miles) from Scotland

256 km (159 miles) from the next nearest land, the Scottish island of North Rona

300 m (985 feet) average altitude

1,289 km (800 miles) of coastline

110 km (68 miles) from north to south

70 km (44 miles) from east to west

18 islands, 17 of which are inhabited

880 m (2,890 feet) is the highest summit: Slættaratindur

10 mountains in the Faroe Islands are higher than 800 m

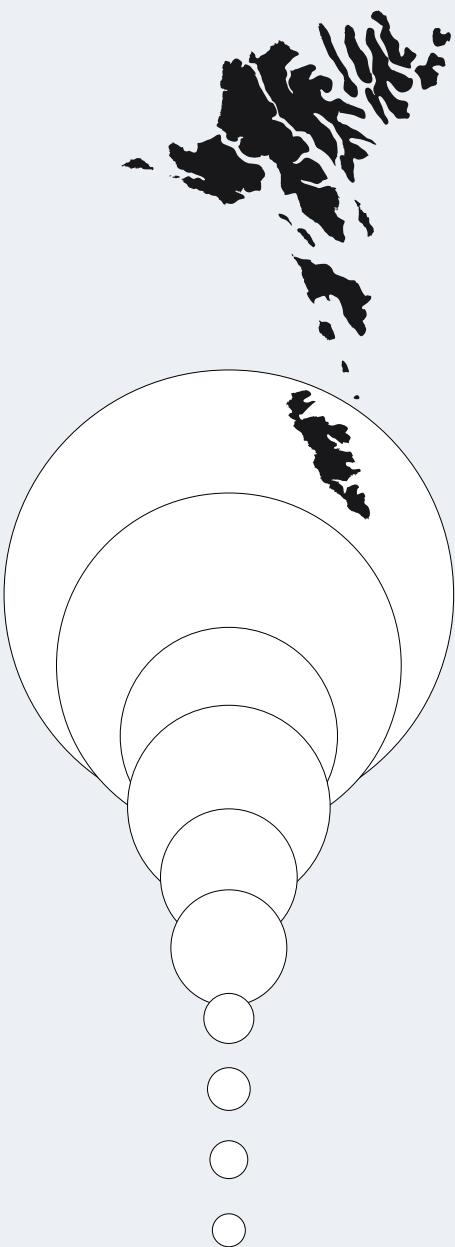
5 km (3 miles) is the maximum distance from the sea!

THE FAROE ISLANDS

LIST OF THE ISLANDS

These are the Faroe Islands ranked in order of size.
There are eighteen islands, of which only Lítla Dímun is uninhabited.

	SURFACE AREA IN KM ² (SQ MI)	POPULATION IN 2017
1. Streymoy	373 (232)	22,450
2. Eysturoy	286 (178)	10,726
3. Vágar	178 (111)	3,064
4. Suðuroy	166 (103)	4,680
5. Sandoy	112 (70)	1,283
6. Borðoy	95 (59)	4,940
7. Viðoy	41 (25)	596
8. Kunoy	35 (22)	129
9. Kalsoy	31 (19)	94
10. Svínoy	27 (17)	32
11. Fugloy	11 (7)	38
12. Nólsoy	10 (6)	235
13. Mykines	10 (6)	14
14. Skúvoy	10 (6)	36
15. Hestur	6 (4)	25
16. Stóra Dímun	3 (2)	8
17. Koltur	2 (1)	1
18. Lítla Dímun	1 (0.6)	0
Total	1,396	48,351



THE ISLETS

THE FAROE ISLANDS

The Faroe Islands comprise 779 islands, islets, and reefs.

The islets are small and are geographically part of the larger islands.

Suðuroy alone has 263.

Tindhólmur is the most famous, with its distinctive jagged shape.

These islets are measured in hectares, the largest being of comparable size to the smallest island, **Lítla Dímun**.

The twelve largest islets:

- | | |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1. Tindhólmur | 65 ha (160 acres) @ Vágar |
| 2. Mykineshólmur | 45 ha (111 acres) @ Mykines |
| 3. Trøllhøvd | 19 ha (47 acres) @ Sandoy |
| 4. Gáshólmur | 10 ha (25 acres) @ Vágar |
| 5. Tjaldavíkshólmur | 7.5 ha (18,5 acres) @ Suðuroy |
| 6. Sumbiarhólmur | 7 ha (17 acres) @ Suðuroy |
| 7. Lopranshólmur | 3.4 ha (8,5 acres) @ Suðuroy |
| 8. Kirkjubøhólmur | 2 ha (5 acres) @ Streymoy |
| 9. Hovshólmur | 1.7 ha (4 acres) @ Suðuroy |
| 10. Hoyvíkshólmur | 0.8 ha (2 acres) @ Streymoy |
| 11. Baglhólmur | 0.8 ha (2 acres) @ Suðuroy |
| 12. Grønhólmur | 0.4 ha (1 acre) @ Streymoy |

In addition to these islets, there are also numerous rocks and sea stacks scattered around the coast of the Faroe Islands. They all have a nickname. The most famous is probably **Munkurin** south of **Suðuroy**, meaning “monk” owing to its isolated location. Munkurin is the southernmost point of the Faroes.

GEOLOGICAL STRUCTURE

THE FAROE ISLANDS

MOUNTAINS PLANTED IN THE SEA

What strikes you first upon discovering this country are the huge cliffs of basalt (volcanic rock), often referred to as “mega-cliffs,” since some of them are over 600 m (1.965 ft) high.

The Faroe Islands can therefore pride themselves on having some of the **highest cliffs in the world**. They are located on **Viðoy**, at a place named **Cape Enniberg**, not far from the northernmost village in the Faroes: **Viðareiði**. These cliffs are **754 m (2.473 ft)** high.

Lovers of Iceland, particularly the **Westfjords**, will feel quite at home in the Faroes. The shape of **Latrabjarg** promontory can be seen everywhere here, sometimes accompanied by basalt sea stacks similar to the **Reynisdrangar** at **Vík í Mýrdal**.

If, like me, you suffer from vertigo, be warned: you'll just have to keep your cool, particularly since the wind here can move mountains, increasing the fear of being blown over the edge...

GEOLOGICAL STRUCTURE

THE FAROE ISLANDS



SO THE FAROE ISLANDS LOOK LIKE ICELAND? INDEED THEY DO! IT WAS ICELAND 65 MILLION YEARS AGO

The Faroe Islands are a geological layer-cake comprised mainly of basalt, the same rock as **Greenland** is made of, which **originated from the Iceland hotspot**, an area of intense volcanic activity where magma constantly rises to the surface to form a crust.

This vast basalt plateau lies on the Eurasian plate, which is slowly moving eastwards. Indeed, if you consider the morphology of the islands, they seem to almost form a wave heading in that direction.

These basalt stacks of successive striated layers (you can see a lovely one from the **Gjógv** promontory) undergo erosion at varying speeds depending upon their resistance.

This is how one ends up with such monuments of verticality as **Trøllkonunfingur (Vágar)**, and those dizzying rifts and abysses found in the softer layers.

The pyramidal shape of the mountains (also seen in **Iceland**) is an inheritance from the previous glacial period 10,000 years ago. The glaciers eroded wide valleys (*-dallur*), producing a soft, rounded shape. The melting waters flooded the lower slopes, creating straits and countless fjords.

TRØLLKONUFINGUR

THE FAROE ISLANDS



🕒 1:22 pm

📷 f/15

⌚ 1/800

📏 241 mm

ISO 250

HISTORY OF THE FAROE ISLANDS

THE FAROE ISLANDS

A LITTLE HISTORY

to understand Faroese culture and identity

800 → 1900

There are few historical sources regarding the ancient history of the Faroe Islands, but we know that **the first explorers discovered it in the eighth century**. At that time, some Irish monks were seeking a very isolated place where they could serve God in austerity and solitude. They traveled northwest in search of the unknown.

Dicuil was one of their disciples. **This Irish monk was born around 755 and died sometime after 825. He spent much of his time reading and collecting information and accounts of these (and other) expeditions.** In 814, he produced a work of astronomy, and in 825 a treatise on world geography written in Latin: *De mensura orbis terrae* (Concerning the Measurement of the World).

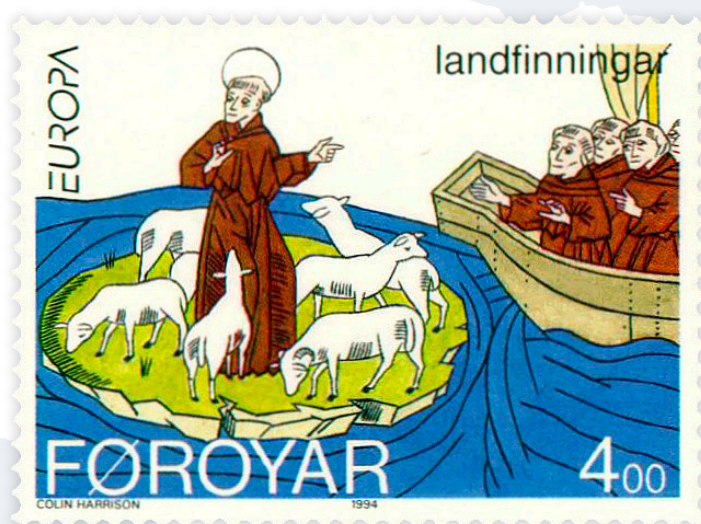
He presents **Europe, Asia, Africa, Egypt**, and **Ethiopia** in turn, as well as the dimensions of the Earth, the five major rivers, and the six highest mountains.

Dicuil describes the voyage of the Irish monks who, in 795, spent six months in Iceland where they discovered sea ice and perpetual day, before continuing onward to the Faroe Islands.

Here's what he says:

"To the north of Britannia, numerous islands may be reached in three days straight sailing with favorable winds. Upon these isles, separated by narrow channels, there live hermits come from Ireland a hundred years ago. These islands, deserted since the creation of the world, are again inhabited, by Viking pirates who have, however, left in peace the many sheep and seabirds."

The probability of habitation by Irish monks is given credence by some of the village names. For example, the bay of **Brandarsvík**, in southern **Streymoy**, is supposedly named after **Saint Brendan of Clonfert**, the navigator monk. And the town of **Vestmanna** refers to the "men of the west" (the Irish monks), as do the **Vestmannaeyjar islands** in **Iceland**, so it is thought.



HISTORY OF THE FAROE ISLANDS

THE FAROE ISLANDS

800 → 1900 *(continued)*

The Vikings reached these islands around the year 800 and colonized them. An Alping (a council and parliamentary/judicial court similar to that held at Þingvellir in Iceland) was established on the **Tinganes** promontory in **Tórshavn**. It is said to be the oldest European assembly.

The inhabitants converted to Christianity around the year 1000, and a church was constructed in the south of the island of **Streymoy**. The bishopric was based at **Kirkjubøur**; at one point there were up to thirty-three bishops in the Faroe Islands.

In 1035, the archipelago became part of the Kingdom of Norway. This Norwegian supremacy lasted until 1380, when the islands became part of the dual monarchy of Denmark-Norway.



In 1535, the king of Denmark-Norway introduced Lutheran Protestantism to the Faroe Islands to replace Catholicism. Five years was all it took for Latin to be replaced by Danish in churches, and the bishopric of **Kirkjubøur** to be abolished.

In 1814, the union of Denmark-Norway came to an end. The Faroe Islands became a possession of Denmark; Danish became the authorized language.

The economy and the standard of living improved, but the Faroese did not appreciate this Danish domination and voiced their desire for independence. In the early twentieth century, the inhabitants demanded the establishment of an autonomous government. An independence party was founded in 1906. **In 1912, authorization was given for the local language, Faroese, to be taught in schools on an equal footing with Danish.**

HISTORY OF THE FAROE ISLANDS

THE FAROE ISLANDS



1900 → NOW

During the Second World War, Denmark was invaded and occupied by Germany.

Given their strategic position, the Faroe Islands could have been extremely useful to the Germans in the Battle of the Atlantic. **The British** sent 40,000 soldiers to stop Hitler's advance west. They **built an airbase at Vágar**; this would later become the current airport.

Faroese fishing boats supplied the United Kingdom with a large quantity of fish. For this reason, the Luftwaffe made occasional attacks in an attempt to strangle this supply line, but the Germans never attempted a full-scale invasion.

You can still see the traces of some defensive infrastructure from World War Two, notably an impressive British coastal defense gun at **Nes** (in the southwest of **Eysturoy**).

Iceland became an independent republic in 1944, while Denmark was still under German occupation. **In the Faroe Islands, the Løgting (local government) took on full legislative powers.**

At the end of the war, a referendum on independence was held, resulting in the Faroe Islands gaining autonomy within the Kingdom of Denmark in 1948.

This referendum allowed the Faroe Islands to officially use its own flag: **the Merkid**.

THE MERKID

THE FAROE ISLANDS

The flag was designed in 1919 by three young Faroese from **Vágur** studying in **Copenhagen**: **Jens Oliver Lisberg, Janus Øssursson** and **Paul Dahl**.

The flag of the Faroe Islands carries the heritage of the Nordic Cross, **but it is closest to the flags of Norway and Iceland.**



THE FAROESE

THE FAROE ISLANDS

THE FAROESE

The Faroese are a close-knit bunch, like all “remote” peoples rooted in nature who have a harsh climate to contend with. But what is striking about the Faroese is their **authenticity, their simplicity, and their kindness**. It’s a real pleasure to have a conversation with any of them; they will always make you feel most welcome.

Softly-spoken and cheery by nature, you’ll never hear a Faroese raise their voice or get annoyed. In fact, there is no such thing as delinquency here. Houses are left open, and if the door is locked, you will find the key under the mat.

The Faroese are all about good living and the pleasure of sharing.

No doubt such an attitude is encouraged by the fact that everyone knows each other, more or less. If you consider the Faroese to be one big family, you won’t be far from the truth!

This explains the active encouragement of mixing with outsiders over the course of the centuries. Fishermen and traders freshly disembarked from **France, Spain**, and elsewhere have been given the warmest of welcomes. Many soon fell under the spell of a beautiful Faroese girl and stayed to raise a family, thus introducing “new blood” to the islands and avoiding excessive inbreeding.

Indeed, I was told one evening (during the **Ólavsøka** summer festival) that every island had developed affinities with such or such a country. For example, it would appear that the more southern islands have naturally encouraged mixing with Mediterranean blood—you meet more dark-haired/skinned people there, particularly on the island of **Suðuroy**.



LIFE ON MYKINES

THE FAROE ISLANDS



iPhone shot

THE FAROESE

THE FAROE ISLANDS

FESTIVALS AND TRADITIONS

Ólavsøka “Saint Olaf’s wake”

29 July

ÓLAVSØKA is effectively Faroese national day. **It is celebrated every 29 July, but the festival lasts several days.** The Faroese commemorate **the death of Saint Olaf** (King of Norway between 1015 and 1028) from the evening of **28 July to 31 July**. They gather in **Tórshavn** to celebrate the event, wearing their traditional dress (children and babies too).

The official ceremony starts on 28 July with the opening of the Faroese Parliament (Løgting), a custom that is 900 years old. There follows a procession to **Tórshavn Cathedral**, where a sermon is given, before the procession returns to the Parliament for some classical music and a choral recital.

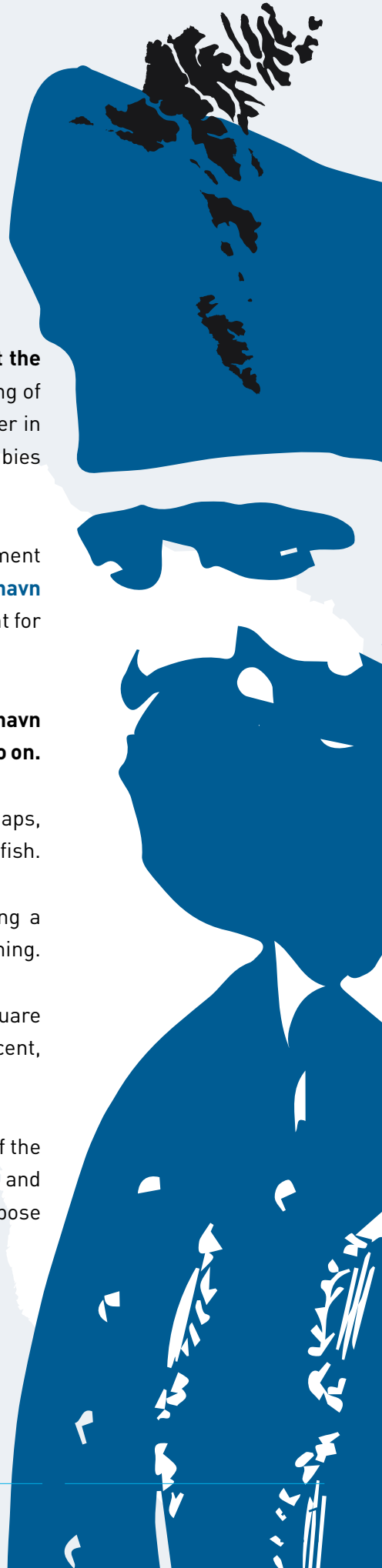
There are numerous associated events, such as sports meets, boat races in Tórshavn harbor, concerts, demonstrations of Faroese chain dancing, art exhibitions, and so on.

On the evening of 28 July, people open their houses and invite passersby to drink snaps, aquavit, and beer while sampling such Faroese specialties as whale meat and dried fish.

The morning of 29 July is probably the quietest of the year: everyone is nursing a hangover and downing a hearty brunch to gather their strength for the coming evening.

The evening of 29 July is not to be missed: at least 10,000 Faroese gather on the square in front of the parliament to sing traditional songs and to dance. It’s a magnificent, moving spectacle.

Having taken part in this festival in 2017, I can testify to the boundless conviviality of the Faroese. Late into the night, you’ll stumble across groups of young people looking and acting like drunken sailors; they’ll sing you a song, all smiles, and spontaneously pose for a picture.



THE FAROESE

THE FAROE ISLANDS



THE GRIND

(June/July)

The hunting and killing of pilot whales is a sensitive and emotional subject.

This ancestral Faroese tradition endures even though whale hunting has been banned by the European Union, of which Denmark is a member but not the Faroe Islands—owing to their autonomous status.

Let us simply say this: humans on every continent have always hunted for subsistence.

Dwelling in the middle of the ocean for centuries, with little other source of food than the fish one can catch and a few bird's eggs gathered from the cliffs (and those only in summer), daily survival becomes one's foremost thought.

Dried whale meat is a means to get through the long winter months, when it's impossible to go out to sea.

Even if it is no longer a question of survival these days, perpetuating this tradition is very important to the Faroese.

It should also be noted that this whale hunt is not for commercial gain: the whale meat is shared out fairly between inhabitants at community level, and the quantities involved are not huge.

PLANNING YOUR TRIP

THE FAROE ISLANDS

THE NECESSARY DOCUMENTS

The Faroe Islands are covered by the same international regulations as Denmark.

In short, if you are a citizen of one of the following countries, you only need an ID card to enter the Faroe Islands:

Austria

Belgium

Bulgaria

Croatia

Cyprus

Czech Republic

Estonia

Finland

France

Germany

Great Britain

Greece

Hungary

Iceland

Italy

Latvia

Lichtenstein

Lithuania

Luxembourg

Malta

Norway

Netherlands

Poland

Portugal

Romania

Slovakia

Slovenia

Spain

Sweden

Switzerland



For all other countries, a passport is required, even a visa.
Contact your country's Danish Embassy or Consulate for more details.

PLANNING YOUR TRIP

THE FAROE ISLANDS

HOW TO GET TO THE FAROE ISLANDS

By Plane

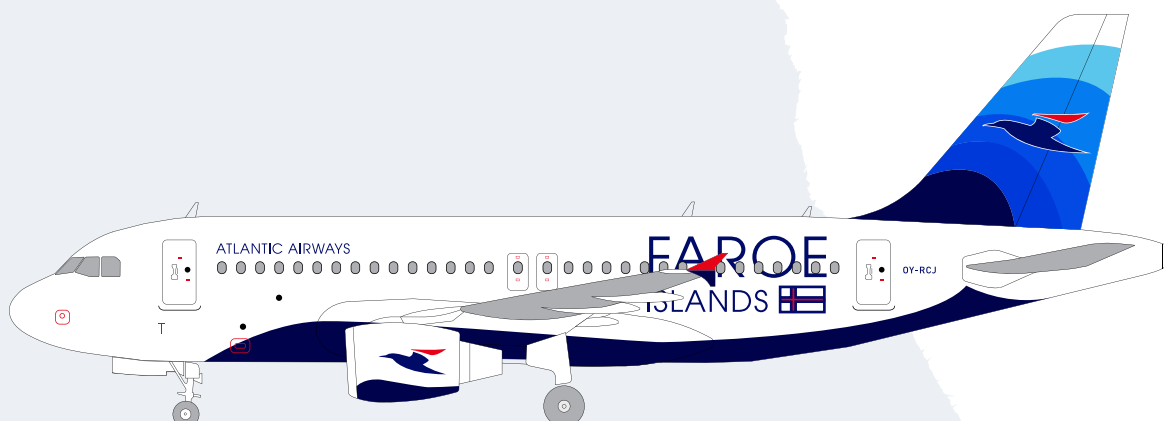
Vágar Airport (FAE) is located on the island of the same name, around 50 km (30 miles) from the capital (an hour's drive). It is laid out along the shore of **Leitisvatn**, the largest lake in the Faroes. The very short runway and the often difficult weather conditions make this airport inaccessible to many types of planes. Faroese pilots receive special training, as must any foreign pilots wishing to land at Vágur.

The biggest airplanes landing at Vágur are the **Airbus A320** and the **Boeing 737**, both of which carry a maximum of 150 passengers.

The regular direct connections are:

Bergen (Norway)
Billund (Denmark)
Copenhaguen (Denmark)
Reykjavik (Iceland)

The reason there are so few direct flights is that, up until now, the Faroe Islands have not been a major tourist destination. The air routes are those that are most useful to the Faroese themselves, who have strong connections to Denmark, Norway, and Iceland.



PLANNING YOUR TRIP

THE FAROE ISLANDS

Tip 1

If you're traveling from most European countries, you will almost certainly change planes in **Copenhagen**. This first leg of the journey can be with any airline you like; however, I would advise you to book the whole trip through the website of **Atlantic Airways**, which offers the best departure/arrival times for a price that is similar to other airlines. Atlantic Airways is a partner of **SAS**, which covers the leg of the journey to Copenhagen from other countries (and back again).

→ atlantic.fo/en/

This four-to-five-hour layover in Copenhagen is in fact a blessing, since you can head into this magnificent city for lunch!

To do so, simply exit the airport while your luggage is switched to the next plane. You have every right to do this, you'll just have to go through security again when you return. Follow the signs to the metro at the very end of the building.

Take line **M2 toward Vanlose** - the airport is at one end of the line, so you can't go in the wrong direction. Get off at **Kongens Nytorv**, and you're there! It's just a short walk to the canals, with colorful buildings and pretty outside seating where you can sample fish and Danish specialties, washed down with a nice beer.

Tip 2

If you want to see the Little Mermaid, take one of the avenues perpendicular to the canal, continue along the quays northward, and you'll easily locate her thanks to the ever-present swarm of tourists. Allow an hour to walk there from the metro station and back again.

Tip 3

Don't forget to set your watch to Danish time so as not to miss your second flight!



THE LITTLE MERMAID

THE FAROE ISLANDS



iPhone shot

GÁSADALUR FROM THE PLANE

THE FAROE ISLANDS



Tip 4

If you're traveling from mainland Europe, **take a seat on the left of the plane**. If you're lucky enough to have clear weather, you'll see **Suðuroy**, **Sandoy**, and **Mykines** in succession, and enjoy a stunning view of **Gásadalur** just before landing.

🕒 7:34 pm

📷 f/8

🕒 1/100

📷 47 mm

ISO 160

PLANNING YOUR TRIP

THE FAROE ISLANDS



HOW TO GET TO THE FAROE ISLANDS?

By ferry

It's possible to travel to the Faroe Islands aboard the ferry **MS NORRÖNA**, which sails from **Hirtshals** (Denmark), to **Tórshavn** then **Seyðisfjörður**.

In high season (13 June – 28 August) there are two sailings a week from Denmark to the Faroe Islands, on Sunday morning and Tuesday morning.

In low and mid season (2 January – 11 June, and 29 August – 19 December), the ferry sails from Denmark on Saturday.

The voyage takes around 36 hours.

For more information:

→ smyrilline.com/prices/prices-2018/denmark-faroe-islands/ferry-prices



FERRY NORRÖNA IN TÓRSHAVN

THE FAROE ISLANDS



9:05 am

f/5.6

1/500

312 mm

ISO 6400

PLANNING YOUR TRIP

THE FAROE ISLANDS

COST OF LIVING

2018 rates: 100 DKK = €13.5/\$17

The cost of living is high in the Faroe Islands.
The average monthly salary is **€2,200 (\$2,725)**.

A few examples of prices:

Night in Hotel Føroyar: **€175 (\$217)**

Night in a hostel: **€70 (\$87)**

Night in a 60 m² (645 sq ft) Airbnb in Tórshavn in winter: **€50-100 (\$60-120)**

Night in a 60 m² (645 sq ft) Airbnb in Tórshavn in summer: **€100-200 (\$120-240)**

-

Koks restaurant tasting menu: **€200 (\$240) + €150 (\$185)** for the wine

Restaurant in Tórshavn: **€40 (\$50)** per person

McDonald's meal: **€11 (\$14)**

Bottle of wine: **€15 (\$18.5)**

Can of beer **0.5 cl (11.2 fl oz): €6.5 (\$8)**

-

Taxi from the airport to Tórshavn: **€90 (\$112)**

Rental (small car): **€50 (\$60)** a day

Rental (4x4): **€100 (\$120)** a day

-

Sightseeing at Vestmanna Bird Cliffs: **€40 (\$50)** for an adult; **€20 (\$25)** for a child

Boat to Mykines: **€16 (\$20)**

Ferry between nearby islands with a car: **€20 (\$25)**

Ferry to Suðuroy with a car: **€30 (\$37)**

Helicopter from Tórshavn to Mykines and back: **€60 (\$74)** - subsidized by the local government



PLANNING YOUR TRIP

THE FAROE ISLANDS



WHERE TO STAY

Hotels and Airbnb

Unlike much vaster territories that require an itinerary and advance planning of where to stay, in the Faroe Islands you select your base camp and make trips in various directions according to the weather.

How nice it is not to have to pack your bag every morning and stress about remembering your battery charger under the bed!

Tórshavn seems the best choice to me, for several reasons: it's a very pleasant city, in a strategic geographical location, where you can get to know the locals, and buy food and supplies easily.

Don't forget that you have to pay to take the tunnels between the islands, and that they're not cheap! From **Tórshavn**, you can reach the two largest islands without paying a toll, and you will only pay for one tunnel if you want to go further, whatever your destination.

When I stayed on Vágar I had to pay €15 (\$18.5) to leave the island, which is quite limiting.

There's a lot of choice on **Airbnb** to suit all budgets. I think it's a good option.

I was fortunate enough to stay at the **Hotel Føroyar** for nearly a month (as a guest of Visit Faroe Islands). The **Føroyar** is the lovely four-star hotel overlooking the town. It has hosted visiting presidents, such as Bill Clinton, who gave his name to the suite in which he stayed. The really great thing about this hotel is that you can eat breakfast watching the sun rise over the bay. But it does come at a price: **€175 (\$215)** a night.

Right next to the Føroyar, and sharing the same car park, is a less luxurious though much cheaper place, the **Hostel Kerjalon**. It may lack the charm of its four-star neighbour, but it will do just fine for travelers on a tighter budget.

SUNRISE FROM HOTEL FØROYAR

THE FAROE ISLANDS



🕒 8:41 am

📷 *f/ 2.8*

🕒 1/200

📷 57 mm

ISO 1000

PLANNING YOUR TRIP

THE FAROE ISLANDS



CAMPING

Even though the weather in the Faroe Islands is not the most suitable for camping, it is not only possible to sleep in a tent in summer, but quite pleasant (I strongly advise not attempting it in winter unless your tent is made of concrete). Camping brings you closer to nature, not to mention being economical. Just remember that if you opt to camp, you will have to do so in one of the official campgrounds, since wild camping is forbidden—much of the land is private and belongs to farmers.

I made an exception on Mykines, where camping is tolerated above the village, beside the river: heaven!

Allow **100-200 DKK (€13-26/\$17-33)** per night. The list of official campgrounds, as well as all the prices, can be found here:

→ visitfaroeislands.com/

→ camping.fo/locations

You can buy fuel for your camping stove near to the airport, as well as in **Tórshavn** and **Klaksvík**.

The addresses are here:

→ visitfaroeislands.com/plan-your-stay/accommodation/camping/

CAMPING ON MYKINES

THE FAROE ISLANDS



1:11 pm

f/2

1/3200

24 mm

ISO 100

GETTING AROUND

THE FAROE ISLANDS



GETTING AROUND THE FAROE ISLANDS

You should know that the transport network is without a doubt one of the country's strong points. Indeed, it is one of the best in the world, thanks to the efforts of the government, who are intent on doing as much as they can to prevent people deserting the remoter villages and islands of this fragmented country.

Car, bus, taxi, ferry, helicopter: all the modes of transport work in perfect synergy, each complementing the other in its own specific way.

Bus

You'll meet those blue buses all the time across the archipelago. I often thought to myself that if I had to become a bus driver one day, I would do so in the Faroe Islands! The routes to **Tjørnuvík** and **Klaksvík** are spectacular!

Even if you hire a car, buses can still be very useful if you're walking from point A to point B without making a loop, since they can take you back to where you started.

Details of all the bus routes can be found here:

→ ssl.fo/en/timetable/bus/100300-Tórshavn-vestmanna/

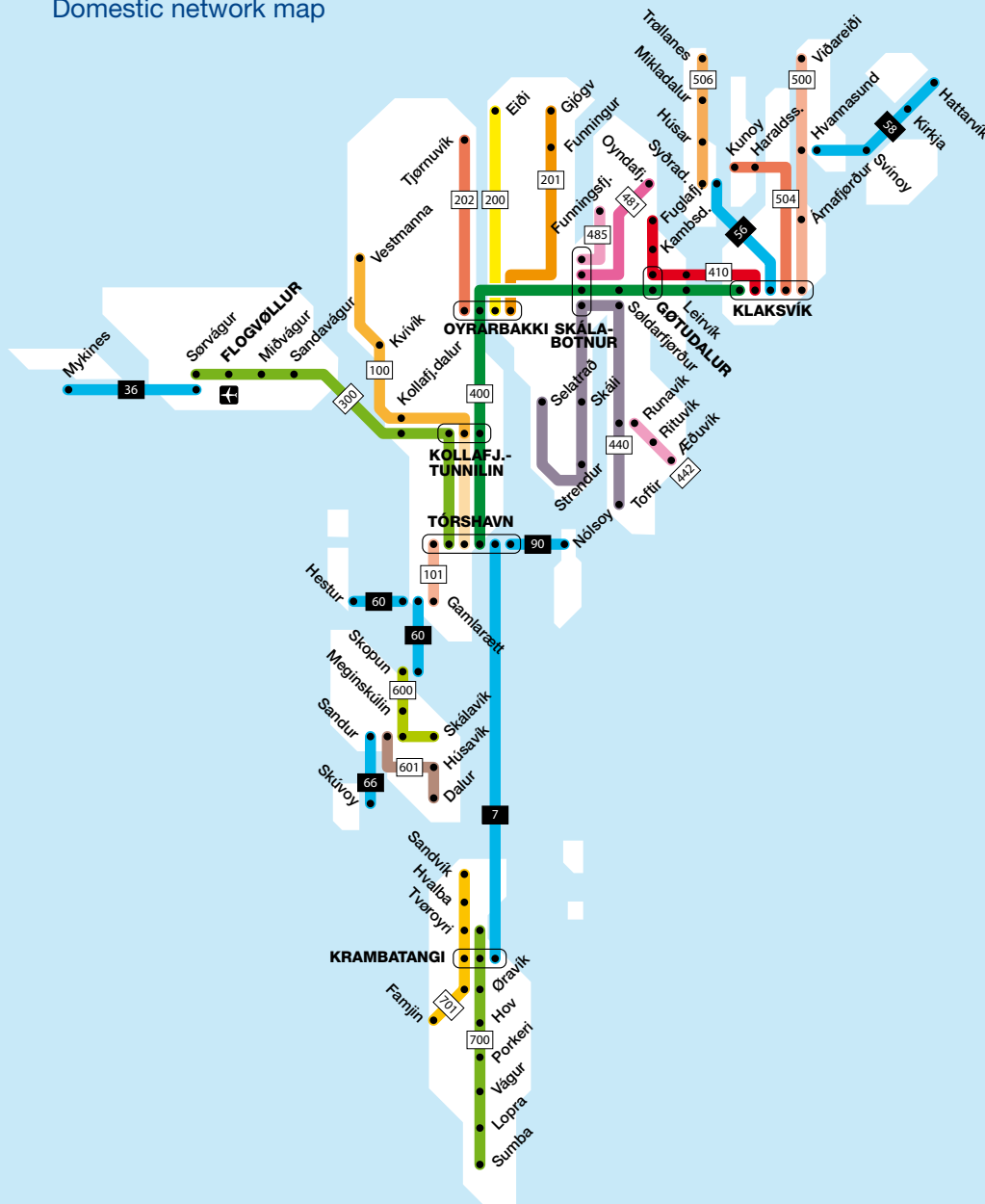
GETTING AROUND

THE FAROE ISLANDS

MAP OF BUS AND FERRY ROUTES

Ferðslukort

Domestic network map



Lesið meira á www.ssl.fo

STRANDFARASKIP
LANDSINS

GETTING AROUND

THE FAROE ISLANDS

GETTING AROUND THE FAROE ISLANDS

Rent a car

What kind of car?

The Faroe Islands road network is modern and well-maintained. During my first stay, I was lent a Toyota station wagon with stick shift. But allow me to make a couple of recommendations:

1 → Even though I got used to the stick shift quite quickly, I do prefer automatics, since they leave your hands free, which is useful when you need to grab your camera (once you have stopped, obviously).

2 → On several occasions, I scraped the underside of the car on the edges of potholes or on tracks. So rent an SUV if you have the budget. It will be higher, removing the fear of damaging the underside or puncturing, and will give you a better view of the landscape as you drive. An SUV is also larger, giving you plenty of room for your photographic gear. It's really much nicer.

Everything comes at a price, of course. A Qashqai will cost you around **€100 (\$125)** a day.

Here is a list of the car rental firms at the airport:

62°N

→ 62n.fo/en/car-rental/

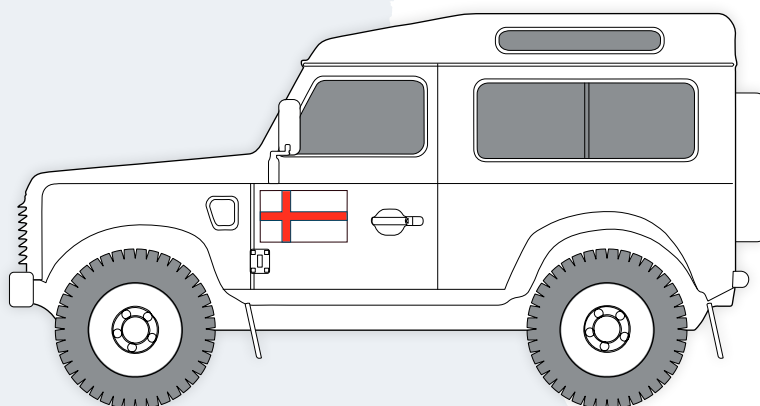
UNICAR

→ unicar.fo/carrental.html

AVIS

→ avis.com/en/locations/fo/Tórshavn

Note that if you generally hire from HERTZ, 62°N is the local representative.



GETTING AROUND

THE FAROE ISLANDS



GETTING AROUND THE FAROE ISLANDS

Driving

Not content with providing a very effective road network, the Faroese are very competent and courteous drivers. That said, some do drive fast even when the weather conditions are bad (violent wind, torrential rain, etc.). They are accustomed to the climate and know the roads like the back of their hand.

Personally, I slow down as the visibility diminishes; there's no need to take risks, and the danger is all too real: during my winter trip, I saw several cars that had recently crashed off the side of the road.

Good driving tips and the rules of the road

Let's begin at the beginning: in the Faroes, they drive on the right.

1 - The speed limit is **80 km/h** (50 mph) on the highway and **50 km/h** (30 mph) in town.

2 - By law, you must drive with your **headlights on, even in the middle of the day**. Don't forget!

3 - Most roads are surfaced, but there are a few gravel roads, mainly those leading to the remoter villages. Take care on these gravel roads: an excess of speed can damage your vehicle, cause a puncture, or, more seriously, make you lose control.

4 - Although some roads are very narrow, barely more than a car's width (for example, the 53 to Saksun), they remain two-way. Cars pass each other using turnouts ("passing places" in British English), so you need to pay attention to oncoming traffic and bear in mind where the nearest turnout is.

- **Regarding the right of way, the rule is very simple**: it's the car driving on the side of the road where the turnout lies that must stop.

- **Exception to the rule** : if you're on a steep slope, it's the descending car that must let the ascending car pass.

5 - One can't say this too often: **PAY ATTENTION TO SHEEP AND OTHER ANIMALS CROSSING THE ROAD!**

GETTING AROUND

THE FAROE ISLANDS



6 – There are twenty tunnels in the Faroe Islands. Some pass beneath mountains, others beneath the ocean. Some are wide, with two lanes (one in each direction); others are very narrow, with a single lane (yet two-way), and no lighting! In the latter, you will find turnouts spaced approximately every hundred meters.

It can certainly be rather nerve-racking to venture into the belly of a mountain, with wet rock jutting out on either side, and very bad visibility. But don't panic; just drive normally and stay attentive and concentrated.

Before entering a tunnel, make sure you check the sign at the entrance: it will indicate if you have the right of way (**black arrow**) or if you must give way to oncoming vehicles (**red arrow**). The turnouts inside tunnels are always located on the side of the traffic that does not have the right of way.

- **Exception to the rule:** if you meet a truck coming toward you in a tunnel, you must give way to them in all cases.

Anecdote

You might well find yourself stuck opposite a car of inattentive or ill-informed tourists. It happened to me: there I was, caught between two turnouts, even though I had the right of way, while in front of me sat this car, the driver petrified no doubt, blasting me with its headlights and waiting for me to move. Seeing that the road behind me was apparently clear, and wishing to deal with the situation as safely as possible, I reversed to let them pass. But it was not at pleasant to have to reverse in a narrow tunnel, with no visibility, particularly since I had the right of way! So pay attention and respect the right of way.

7 – Exceeding the speed limit, using a mobile phone while driving, and having a blood alcohol level higher than 0.05% are severely punished. And the police are very efficient. You have been warned!

GETTING AROUND

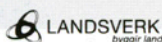
THE FAROE ISLANDS

Full information about distances and the state of the roads in real time:

→ landsverk.fo/en-gb/home



DRIVING IN THE FAROE ISLANDS



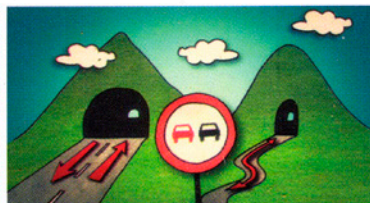
SPEED LIMITS ON PUBLIC AND MUNICIPAL ROADS.



ALWAYS KEEP THE LIGHTS ON AND SEAT BELT BUCKLED.



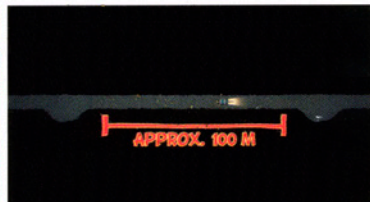
BEWARE OF SHEEP ON THE ROAD.



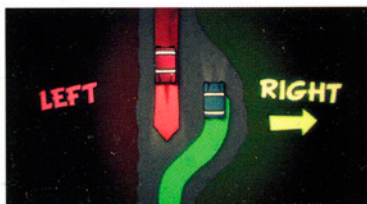
MODERN TUNNELS HAVE TWO LANES WHILE THE OLD TUNNELS HAVE ONLY ONE LANE. CHECK THE LIST OF TUNNELS IN THE FAROES.



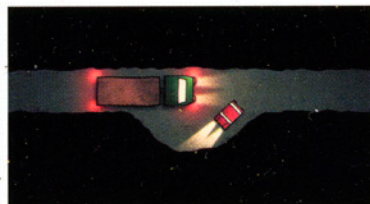
PAY ATTENTION TO VARIOUS HEIGHTS AND WIDTHS IN THE OLDER NON-STANDARD TUNNELS.



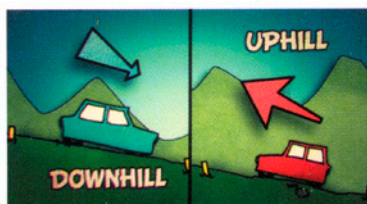
THERE ARE APPROXIMATELY 100M BETWEEN THE TURNOUTS IN THE OLD TUNNELS.



WHEN THE TURNOUTS ARE ON YOUR RIGHT HAND, IT IS YOUR DUTY TO GIVE WAY TO ONCOMING TRAFFIC.



WHEN MEETING A TRUCK IN A ONE-LANE-TUNNEL, YOU HAVE TO DRIVE INTO THE TURNOUT ON YOUR RIGHT OR LEFT



IT IS ALWAYS EASIER FOR THE ONE DRIVING DOWN THE HILL TO PULL INTO A TURNOUT THAN FOR THE ONE DRIVING UP THE HILL.



www.lv.fo

IN CASE OF EMERGENCY CALL 112

GETTING AROUND

THE FAROE ISLANDS

SUMMARY OF THE MAIN HAZARDS

- RAIN

Strongly reduces your visibility and increases the braking distance. Slow down in heavy rain.

- WIND

Some gusts of wind can blow you off your driving line, so you must always keep a firm hand on the wheel! Again, it's a good idea to slow down when there are strong winds. The award for "windiest road in the Faroe Islands" goes to the one between **Fámjin** and **Ørðavík** on **Suðuroy**.

- FOG

There is a lot of fog in the Faroes, particularly around the peaks, and on mountain roads such as the 50. Do take care.

- TUNNELS

There are twenty tunnels in the Faroe Islands, some of which are very narrow. Take care and respect the right of way.

- SHEEP AND OTHER ANIMALS

It's a beautiful thing to see animals roaming free, is it not? There are sheep everywhere in the Faroes. They can cross the road anywhere and at any moment. Apart from sheep, there are also geese. Keep a good lookout, particularly when it is foggy.



SANDVÍKARTUNNILIN ON SUÐUROY

THE FAROE ISLANDS



3:47 pm

$f/2.8$

$1/50$

24 mm

ISO 6400

THE TUNNELS

THE FAROE ISLANDS

The most famous!

Gásadalstunnilin

2006

1,445 m

4,741 ft

Norðoyatunnilin

2006

6,186 m

20,295 ft

Toll tunnel

100 DKK

Vágatunnilin

2002

4,940 m

16,210 ft

Toll tunnel

100 DKK

The Faroese road network comprises twenty tunnels.

The longest and widest tunnels (two-lanes) run under the sea and are tolled.

Allow 100 DKK (around **€15/\$18.5**) per tunnel for a return trip. In other words, a return trip from **Vágar** to **Viðoy**, requiring you to take two tunnels, will cost around **€30 (\$37)**.

Cameras read your license plate and charge your car rental firm, who will then charge you. So don't be surprised when you get your car rental bill!

The Oldest!

Hvalbiartunnilin

1963

1,450 m

4,760 ft

GETTING AROUND

THE FAROE ISLANDS



GETTING AROUND THE FAROE ISLANDS

Driving in Tórshavn

Tórshavn is relatively easy to navigate. The town is built around its harbor and enclosed by a wide ring-road that starts near the lighthouse. You just need to figure out the several traffic circles along its route, and choose the point at which you want to enter the town. The soccer stadium is a good reference point, as is the Nordic House opposite.

On the following page you will find a map showing my own key locations; it's better than a long description.



← Route 50
Scenic road

SMS
shopping mall
(food)

Føroyar
Hotel
Hostel
Kerjalon

Nordic House

Main
street

Vágar
Eysturoy

Bónus Miðlon
(alcohol)

Nice area for a
gentle walk

Heliport

Visit Tórshavn
Guðrun&Guðrun
Woolen clothing

Fotobúðin
Photographic store

H. N. Jacobsens Bókhandil
Oldest bookshop in Tórshavn

Visit Faroe Islands

Tinganes

Sirkus bar

City Center

P/F Jógván Weihe
Camping gear
weihe.fo

TINGANES

THE FAROE ISLANDS



13:11 pm

f/5

1/400

114 mm

ISO 200

Tilt & shift filter test in photoshop

GETTING AROUND

THE FAROE ISLANDS

Taking a ferry

It's simple, cheap, and always a pleasure to sniff the sea air on the way to new adventures.

Here are a few rules for taking a ferry:

1 – You can't reserve a spot for your car on a ferry; it's first come, first served. Just park in the boarding zone and await instructions. On some routes, the boat is relatively small, so you should get there at least 40 minutes before departure (particularly in summer).

The same goes for the return trip. If there are several sailings the same day, it is probable that most visitors will want to return in the late afternoon. I once took a half-full ferry to **Kalsoy** in the morning, only to find myself queuing behind an incredibly long line of cars on the way back. I must admit that I was worried I'd have to spend the night there in my car. But there's no need to panic: in such cases, the ferry will make several return trips to transport everyone; you just have to be patient. And it is worth remembering that locals have priority over tourists, which is quite understandable.

2 – You pay on board the ferry, and the price is for a return trip. You might be asked to pay when you board, during the crossing, or even on the return trip; it depends. On the **M/F Smyril** to Suðuroy, you pay during the return journey.

3 – You can't take your car on some ferries (and so much the better!). This is the case for the boat going to the island of **Mykines**.

4 – All timetables can be found on the website of SSL, which runs the network:

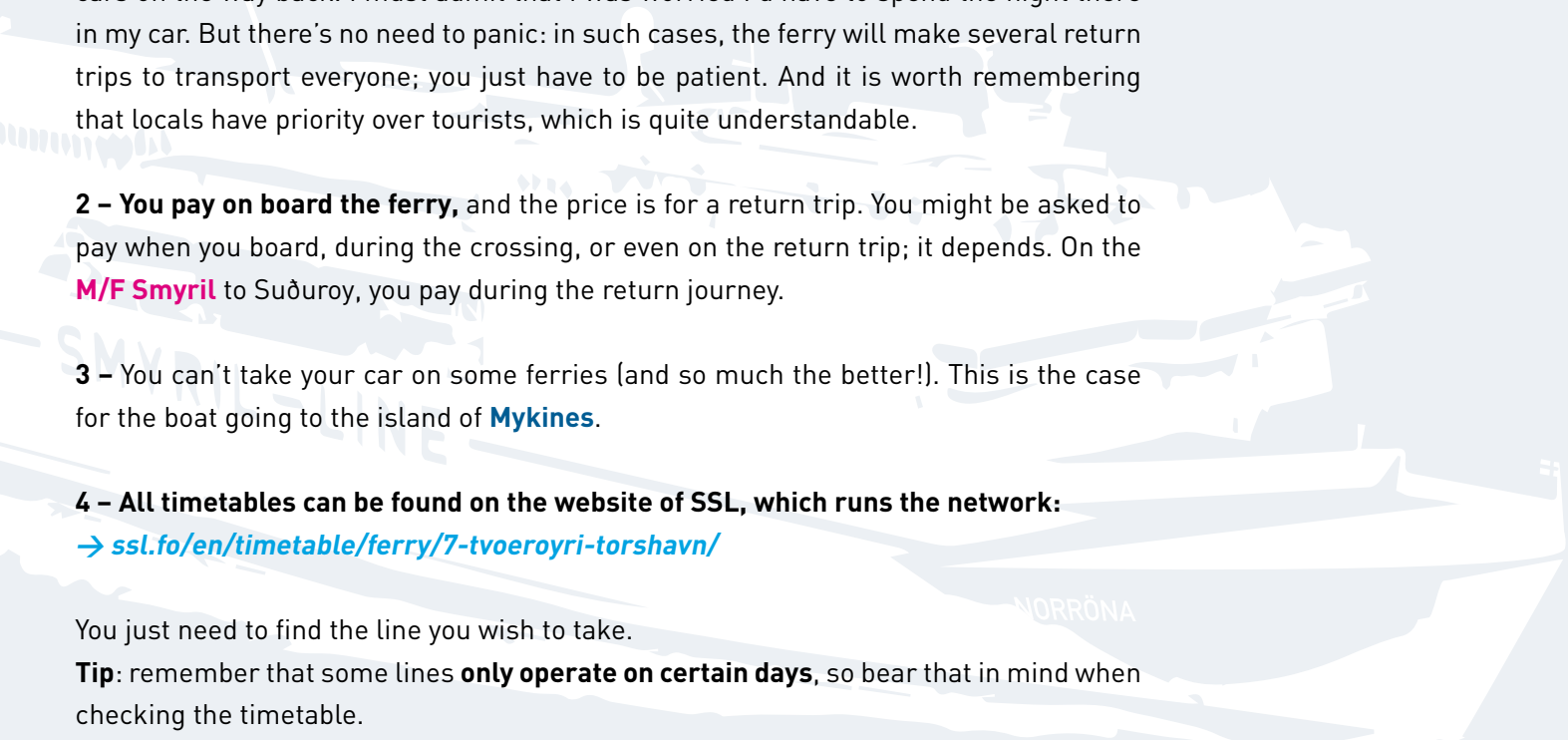
→ ssl.fo/en/timetable/ferry/7-tvoeroyri-torshavn/

You just need to find the line you wish to take.

Tip: remember that some lines **only operate on certain days**, so bear that in mind when checking the timetable.

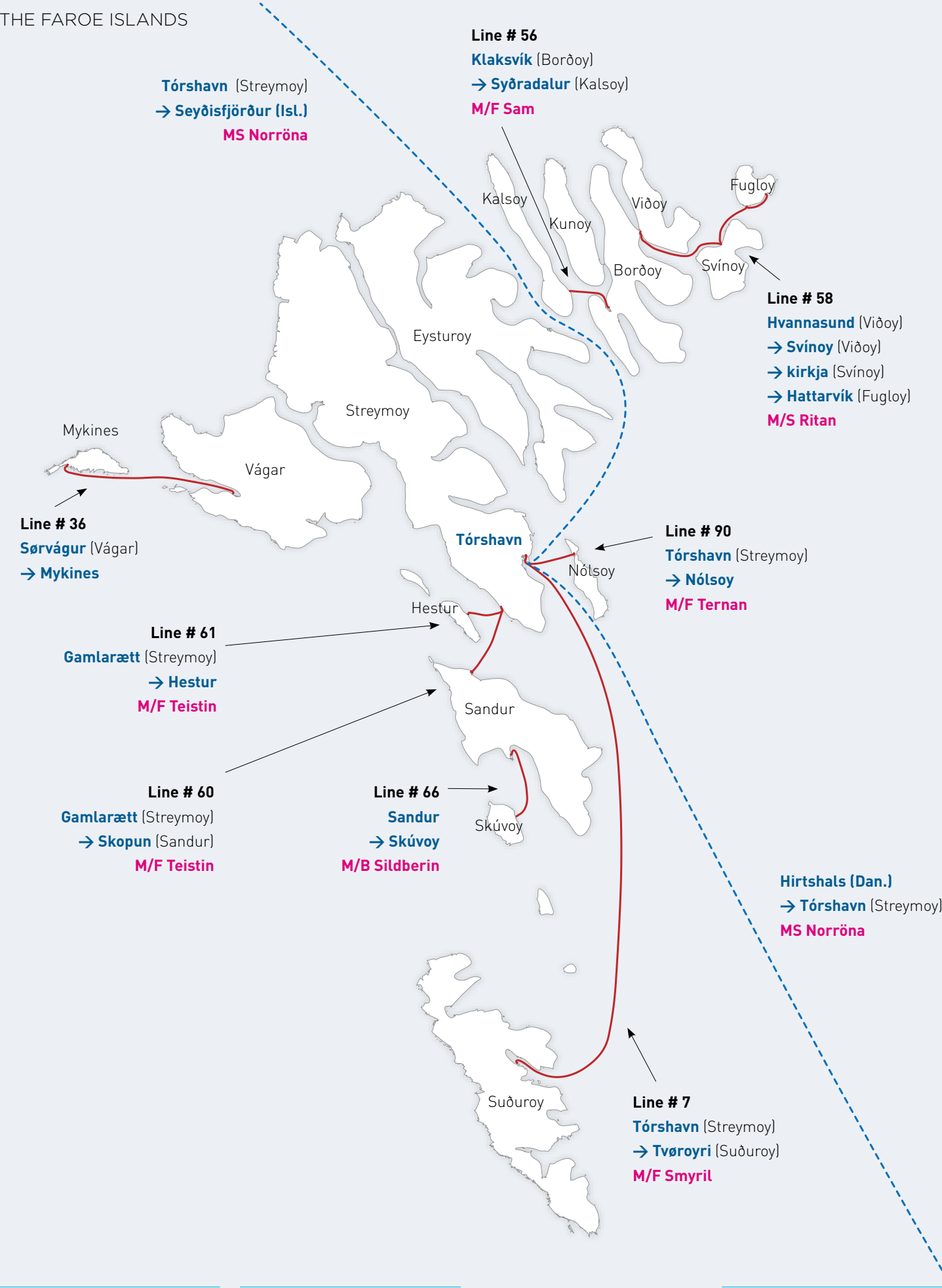
ATTENTION! Sometimes the times are listed in the direction of travel from the larger island to the smaller island, and sometimes the reverse. It is easy to make mistakes when you don't know the names of the ports (as happened to me when traveling to Sandoy). For example, if you wanted to go to the island of **Sandoy**, you would look up the times for route 60. But on the website, the first times shown are those for **Skopun** → **Gamlarætt**. Effectively, those are the "return" times if you're traveling from **Streymoy**. For your outward journey, you would need to look at the times for **Gamlarætt** → **Skopun**.

Of course it all makes sense to the Faroese, but it's not always very clear to visitors, so here is a map showing all of the ferry routes and ports.



MAP OF THE FERRY ROUTES

THE FAROE ISLANDS



THE FERRY TO KALSOY

THE FAROE ISLANDS



🕒 10:05 am

📷 $f/3.2$

⌚ 1/60

📏 24 mm

ISO 640

GETTING AROUND

THE FAROE ISLANDS

Taking a helicopter

As if the beautiful roads and the wonderful landscapes weren't enough, the Faroe Islands are one of the few countries in the world (probably the only one) where the helicopter is a means of public transit—almost as banal as a bus. What's more, the price is simply unbeatable, since most of the cost of your ticket is covered by the local government.

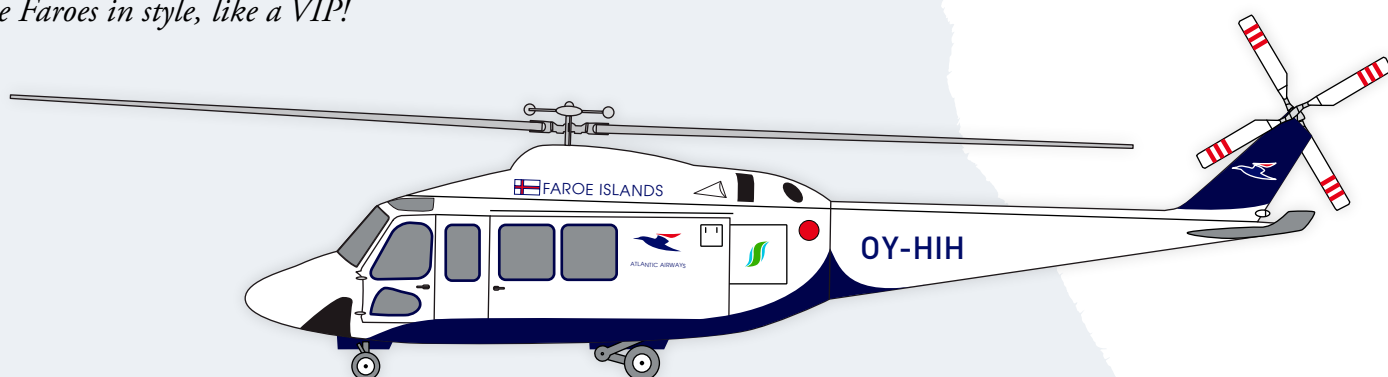
The reason for this subsidy is simple: the geography of the territory. Some islands are not served by a ferry line, while others are inaccessible by boat in winter. The helicopter is a vital means of transport for some. Fortunately, there is not one price for locals and another for tourists, as is the case in some countries. At least not yet!

This is a golden opportunity to take your first helicopter ride, although I admit that I do have some concerns: I can imagine hordes of tourists taking helicopter rides just for fun, leading to much greater restrictions on their use by non-locals.

There is, however, a rule in place to prevent such abuse of the system: you cannot make **a return trip by helicopter on the same day**. You are allowed to make one trip a day, no more, meaning you're obliged to either spend the night at your destination or else return by other means.

I myself took a helicopter in January 2017, from **Thorshavn** → **Mykines**. **It took around one hour (including stops) and cost ... €30 (\$37)!** Yes, you read that right: €60 (\$75) for two hours of flight and an unforgettable experience. There were only three of us in the helicopter on the way out; more on the way back. The model used is the impressive **Bell 212**, which has room for twelve passengers, in addition to the two pilots.

See the Faroes in style, like a VIP!



ON MY WAY TO MYKINES

THE FAROE ISLANDS



3:19 pm

f/4.5

1/60

26 mm

ISO 800

GETTING AROUND

THE FAROE ISLANDS



It is absolutely magical to fly over such fabulous landscapes. The helicopter makes several stops, either to pick up or drop off passengers, or to collect/deliver packages.

→ The best position to sit, in my view, is with your back to the cockpit, next to the window. From there, you'll be able to photograph the pilots in action (no separation panel!) as well as the landscape through the Perspex (which does affect the image quality a little).

LENSES USED DURING MY FLIGHTS:

- **BODY 1: 17-40 mm** to capture the atmosphere inside the cabin and the cockpit, as well as closer landscapes.

- **BODY 2: 100-400 mm** to capture more distant landscapes during the flight.

Little anecdote: on our way back from **Mykines**, we stopped at **Vágar**. There, the pilots told us we were turning back. A technical issue? Not at all! We were heading back to Mykines to pick up two delayed tourists. Isn't that incredible?!

It is also worth remembering that it is much easier to take a helicopter in winter than in summer, when demand is much higher. So I would advise you to take boats in summer, not only for that reason, but also because sailing between the islands and fjords is a sure way to experience something wonderful and bring back beautiful images, their quality unaffected by a Perspex window!

Helicopters can be booked here:

→ tyrla.atlantic.fo

(*Tyrla* means "helicopter" in Faroese)

HELICOPTER ROUTES

THE FAROE ISLANDS



TAKEOFF FROM TÓRSHAVN

THE FAROE ISLANDS



🕒 1:18 pm

📷 f/9

⌚ 1/160

📏 40 mm

ISO 100

GETTING AROUND

THE FAROE ISLANDS



Taxis

When you land at the airport on [Vágar](#), don't be as naive as me and grab the first taxi to the capital, it's prohibitively expensive!

I paid **600 DKK (€80/\$100)** for a taxi to [Tórshavn](#)! Not the nicest welcome for my first visit. But it was entirely my fault: having left [Reykjavik](#) in a hurry, I hadn't taken the time to check the distance to Tórshavn (50 km/30 miles). Neither was I aware of the high price of Faroese taxis. You have been warned!

The simplest way of avoiding such a misadventure is to rent your car directly at the airport, which is what I did on my second trip. The rental office is located just next to the [Visit Vágar](#) office. There you will find [AVIS](#) and [66° North](#), among others. Their cars are just outside, on the airport car park.

Final tip, given the high fares, the Faroese use collective taxis to go to the airport. I didn't know this when I arrived, but I was well prepared when it was time to leave! All the hotels have their phone numbers; the only thing you must do is book at least twenty-four hours in advance. These taxis operate 24/7 and they know all of the flight departure times. When you book, they will tell you what time they'll pick you up at your hotel (according to who else they are picking up before/after), then they'll take you to the airport for one-third of the usual price, that is to say **200 DKK (€27/\$33)** per person.



COMMUNICATION

Internet and telephone

The Faroe Islands are part of Europe, so if you are also European then you should be able to use your mobile phone in “roaming”* mode for the same price as in your country of residence. But it is wise to check with your operator beforehand regarding the conditions of your contract when you visit the Faroes.

If your phone use is not covered by your usual package, I recommend you put a local SIM card in your smartphone. For a few euros, you will be properly connected, with no fear of exceeding your allowance. It’s the best solution in my view, unless you absolutely need to receive phone calls at your usual number, since you can still check your email and use messaging apps.

You can get a local SIM card even before exiting the airport. Just go to the counter of **Visit Vágur** (the local branch of **Visit Faroe Islands**), which is on the left just before the exit. In fact, you should drop by the Visit Vágur counter anyway, since they can be helpful for a whole range of things, and can assist you in planning your trips to **Vágur** and **Mykines**. And if you feel like you need a bit of advice anytime during your stay, simply pop in and see friendly Sölvi and his team.

*On 15 June 2017, new European legislation was introduced to limit the historically very high roaming rates applied by mobile network operators. This means that if you are based in a European country, all calls made or received while roaming, as well as all text messages and data use, are charged at the same rate as if you were at home, although there are some restrictions on volume in the event of extended stays abroad.





FOOD

If you love Iceland, you'll feel quite at home in the Faroes, for there are several Bonus supermarkets here. You know, the yellow stores with the pink pig logo!

In fact, there are supermarkets across the Faroes. If you're in a hurry, you'll find **FK Super Market** just three kilometers (two miles) from the airport (at the first traffic circle on the left).

Tórshavn's one and only shopping mall, **SMS**, is located on one of the main roads. You can't miss its large facade and advertising signs. In addition to a supermarket, SMS also has a drugstore, a bookstore, and clothes stores; everything you need, in fact, except for one thing: alcoholic drinks. I'll come back to that.

In the supermarkets, you'll find all of the "standard" food you need. As for "traditional" food, it comprises the country's two local foodstuffs: fish and sheep.

I must also mention dried whale meat, the traditional Faroese food, which is usually served for festive occasions. It is eaten in very thin slices, accompanied by blubber (whale fat), dried fish, and of course a few glasses of snaps to awaken the inner ocean fisherman inside of you.



ELECTRICITY

220 volts AC (50 Hz), the same as most European countries with the exception of the United Kingdom. The sockets are two-pin, similar to those found in France.

LAUNDRY

I don't think there are many launderettes in the Faroes. Fortunately, the **Hostel Kerjalon** has coin-operated washing machines on the ground floor. That's where I went to do my laundry when I stayed at the **Hotel Føroyar**.

ALCOHOL

I had great difficulty finding any, so if you appreciate a refreshing beer or a glass of wine after a day's exploration, this tip alone is worth the price of this guide!

Alcohol is highly controlled in the Faroe Islands, and there is strict legislation concerning its sale. The situation is similar to that found in other Nordic countries, including Iceland, where the winter months are long and cold.

If you wish to buy a beer, you will have to do so either in airport duty free upon arrival, or else in the one and only alcohol store in Tórshavn. Called **Bónus Milon**, it is located above a traditional supermarket—a Bonus, hence the name.

Bónus Milon is very similar to the Icelandic Vinbudin. It is vast and offers a huge range of beers (including the local brands, **Føroya Bjór**—distilled in **Klaksvík**—and **Okkara**) as well as wine and hard liquor. Regarding wine, I would advise you to buy it in a box. There are some very decent wines in boxes (a Chilean, for example), and they are easier to transport, and much cheaper, than glass bottles.

HAVING A (LOCAL) BEER ON MYKINES

THE FAROE ISLANDS



iPhone shot

LOGISTICS

THE FAROE ISLANDS



MONEY

The Faroe Islands uses two currencies which have the same value: the Faroese króna and the Danish krone (DKK). The coins are Danish but the notes are Faroese. You will find an ATM at the airport, as well as in banks and most shopping malls.

Otherwise you can pay with a debit or credit card almost anywhere.

PHOTOGRAPHIC STORE

It is always a good idea to have the address of one or two local photographic stores. You never know, you might not have brought enough memory cards with you!

Here's one, right in the center of Tórshavn:

Fotobúðin

7 Sverrisgøta, Tórshavn 100, Faroe Islands



THE PHOTO- GRAPHIC ROAD TRIP

THE PHOTOGRAPHIC ROAD TRIP

THE FAROE ISLANDS

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

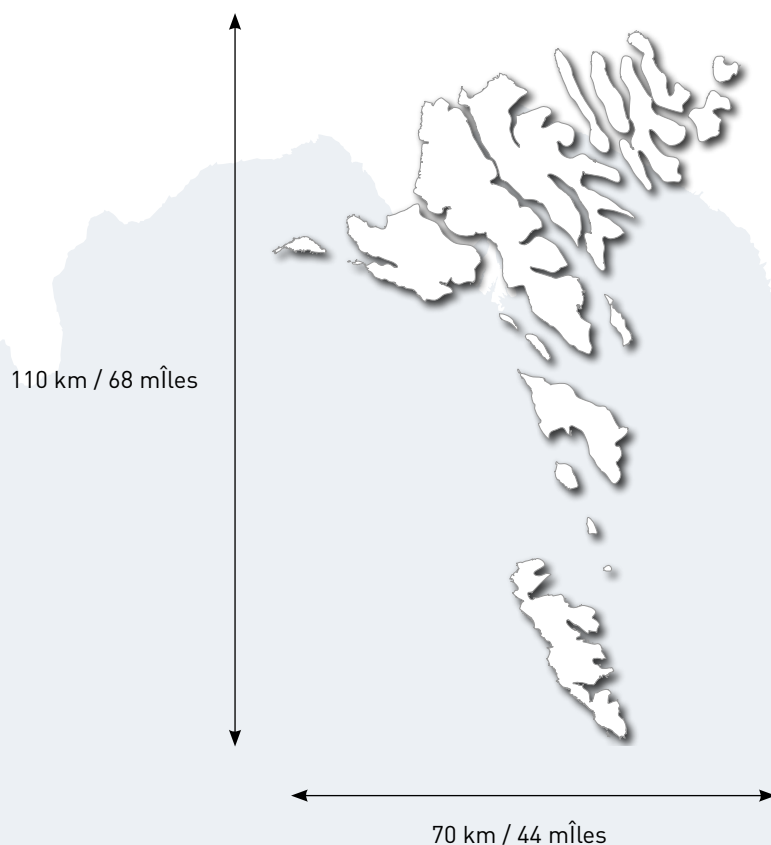
The territory of the Faroe Islands is 110 km (68 miles) long by 70 km (44 miles) wide, and 73 times smaller than Iceland. This doesn't sound very big, but in my view, the Faroe Islands are the perfect size: large enough to never get bored; sufficiently contained to be able to return home each night.

As I write these lines, I have just returned from my second month spent in the territory, and I've only explored nine islands out of eighteen!

It's true that I spent the most time on the main ones, but I am a long way from finishing exploring them. The Faroes do not disclose themselves easily.

You see, the Faroe Islands are like a box of chocolates: they are all alike, yet different, and you never know what you're going to find.

You have to take the time to discover them, explore them, and savor them.



THE PHOTOGRAPHIC ROAD TRIP

THE FAROE ISLANDS

LIGHT, CLIMATE, SEASONS

LIGHT

The light is sublime: crystal clear air gives perfect skies; rays of sunlight pierce the clouds; the ocean glitters with a thousand points of light. In a similar way to Iceland, you get four seasons in one day in the Faroe Islands.

CLIMATE

If one were being witty, one would call the Faroese climate “versatile.”

Storms and gales are interspersed with lulls. Luckily, the blue sky is there to save us, most of the time.

The **Köppen climate classification** is “**subpolar oceanic**.” Here’s my own description in a few keywords.

Mild

The climate is mild, owing to the regulating role played by the ocean, with very little temperature variation. I observed a difference of barely 5°C (41°F) between winter (7°C/44.5°F) and summer (12°C/53.5°F).

Rain

An average of 1,300 mm (51 inches) of rain falls on the capital, **Tórshavn**, each year. By comparison, **London** receives an average of 560 mm (22 inches) per year. Rain is part of the landscape. It fuels the waterfalls, hydrates the meadows, and strengthens the grass on the roofs of houses.

Rain gives the photographer that mineral luster, those silvery streams, those dark clouds, and those rainbows. Rain is magic!

Wind

If you’ve never been to the Faroe Islands, you don’t know what wind is. When I was there in July, it was quite gentle, but in winter it is omnipresent and often very violent, easily throwing you off balance.

Fog

A key character, both in summer and in winter. You will often see it hugging the slopes at the start and end of the day. Watch out hikers: the fog will make you lose your bearings, even on easy terrain (as I experienced myself on several occasions).



FAROESE LIGHT (JULY)

THE FAROE ISLANDS



THE PHOTOGRAPHIC ROAD TRIP

THE FAROE ISLANDS

THE SEASONS

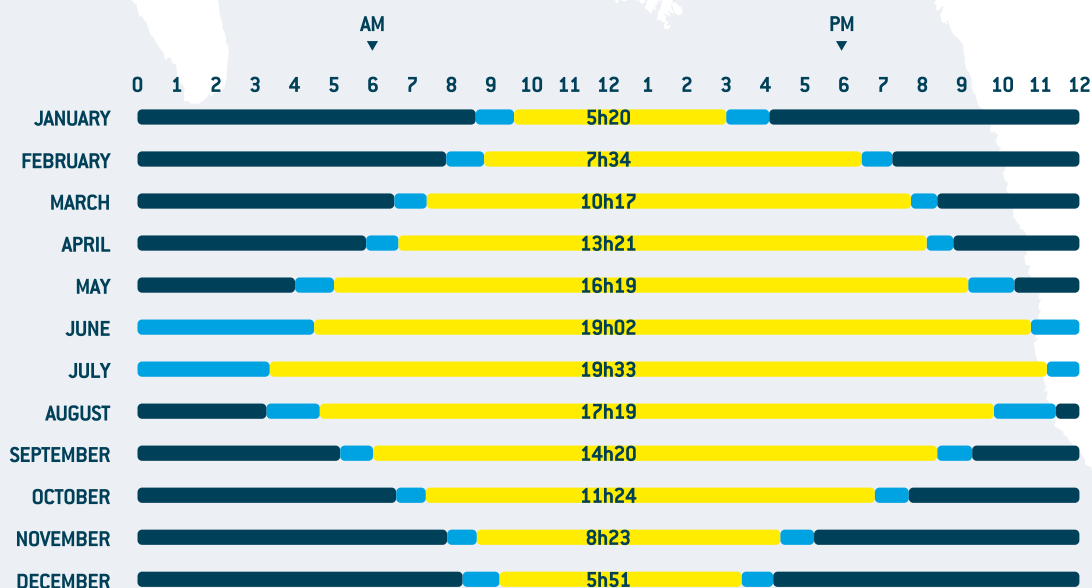
→ Like all countries situated above the 60th parallel, the days are four times longer in summer than in winter. A short day is not necessarily crippling, since in summer you will have to stay up all night to capture sunrise and sunset—in July, you don't really get darkness. And although the temperature varies little between **winter and summer**, with just a few degrees difference, **the light changes radically**.

Winter

In winter, the sky is low, the atmosphere somber. Days last only a few hours. The wind never stops blowing, and violently so. The light is beautiful, unruly, brooding, and romantic. **The waterlogged vegetation takes on a tawny color** and the mountains are crowned with icy white. Unfortunately, you won't always find much snow. **A mantle of snow will often cover the archipelago**, but the mild temperatures and the wind will soon get rid of it. You just have to be there at the right moment!

Spring/summer

Come June, it's a whole different atmosphere that reigns over the Faroe Islands. The slopes are bright green, the thick grass a delight for the sheep. Buttercups brighten up the valleys. The midday sun shines in a clear blue sky. The days become endless. The wind quiets down. The returning birds are everywhere. It's summer! It's beautiful.



Night
Blue Hour
Daylight

THE PHOTOGRAPHIC ROAD TRIP

THE FAROE ISLANDS

THE SEASONS

What's the best period to go?


Well, dear friends, that all depends on what you like.

My first trip to the Faroe Islands was in the month of January.

My second was in the month of July the same year.

The vast majority of visitors prefer summer. That in itself is a good reason to go there in winter!

Perhaps this comparative table will help you make your choice:



WINTER	SUMMER
Feeling of solitude +++	Tourist season
3 - 7°C (37.5 - 44.5°F), violent wind	13°C (55.5°F), changeable but pleasant weather
Wild, brooding nature	Flamboyant nature
Snow and ice on the peaks	No snow
Tawny vegetation	Bright green vegetation + flowers
Challenging driving (night, wind, fog)	Easy driving
Few birds	Lots of birds to see +++
Limited boat trips	Lots of boat trips +++
Plenty of room in the helicopters +++	Little room in the helicopters

WHAT TO PHOTOGRAPH

THE FAROE ISLANDS

LANDSCAPES



Waterfalls

There is an infinity of waterfalls, streams, and torrents everywhere you go in the Faroe Islands. But there are three waterfalls that undoubtedly stand out in this mineral landscape and are accessible to the photographer:

- **Mulafossar**: the iconic waterfall at **Gásadalur**
- **Bosdalafossur**: the waterfall at the end of Lake **Sørvágsvatn**
- **Fossa**: the most impressive, which falls off the edge of a mountain beside **Road 594** in the direction of **Tjørnuvík**. The best viewpoint to photograph it from is on **Road 62** opposite, toward **Eiði**. Note: it's not easy to park in this area.

Fjords: Fjords are the very essence of the Faroe Islands. In my view, the most photogenic are:

- **Kalbakfjordur** (from Road 50, sunrise ++)
- **Funingsfordur** (from Road 6, sunset ++)



Mountains

There are mountains everywhere, but the ones in the north of the archipelago are more imposing.

Some are more tabular in shape, others more pyramidal—like those one finds in Iceland—while a few are stepped (Mayan temple style). On my own visits, not a day passed, particularly in winter, without me driving down **Road 61** on **Eysturoy**, to immerse myself in the “Faroe Alps” and photograph their peaks.

This is where Her Majesty Queen **Slættaratindur** reigns—all 880 meters (2,890 feet) of her.

Cliffs

Cliffs are everywhere, and they are gut-wrenchingly beautiful, whether you view them from up high or down at sea level (see “Boat trips”).

Some bear names that send shivers down your spine. One such is **Trælanípa** on **Vágar**. It means “Slave Mountain” and the story goes that in the Middle Ages, slaves were flung off its edge when they were too old or too sick and were no longer “useful.”



VIEW FROM ROUTE 61

THE FAROE ISLANDS



12:09 pm

f/5

1/500

158 mm

ISO 250

WHAT TO PHOTOGRAPH

THE FAROE ISLANDS

FAUNA

Sheep

There are 70,000 of them, more than one per inhabitant!

Etymologically, “Føroyar” (Faroe Islands) means **“Sheep Islands”**. It should therefore be no surprise to see so many everywhere, roaming in complete freedom. The rams, with their coiled horns, are quite photogenic (indeed they are depicted on a Faroese postage stamp). Several times a year, the farmers herd them up—a complicated task. When you see those sheep in hard-to-reach areas or halfway up the side of a cliff, you wonder how the farmers manage. **I put the question to Jóhannes Joensen, a young farmer (23 years old) in Trollanes on Kalsoy:**

“How on earth do you manage to recognize your sheep?”

“The sheep may roam freely, but there are still enclosures, fences, and gates to restrict how much they mix. The sheep are also tagged with a label in their ear, though sometimes it can become detached. So we cut little nicks in one of the ears, a kind of indelible tattoo that guarantees the provenance of the sheep—unless the sheep loses its ear! There are losses of course: some sheep get sick, others fall off cliffs, or get run over—particularly when it is foggy. The danger is such that some farmers put reflective strips on their sheep!”

When it's time to herd up the sheep, **Jóhannes** gathers a dozen men. His land near the Kallur lighthouse is vast and very craggy. This is where the **Border Collies** are of precious help. These dogs do a man's work in rounding up the sheep. Jóhannes's first dog is a cunning strategist. She knows how to herd the sheep, but subtly (she has such kind eyes) and sometimes hesitantly—she is scared of the big rams when they disobey. But Jóhannes has a second Border Collie, a male, who is tougher and more obedient—his enforcer, so to speak. It is interesting to note that all sheep in the Faroe Islands are sold “from hand to hand.” Each family reserves their sheep for the farmer for the coming year, so all of the lambs you come across have already been sold. There aren't even enough sheep to satisfy demand: farmers have waiting lists as long as their arms. It's a closed economy, with no loss, no waste.

“So where does the mutton in your supermarkets come from?”

“Iceland!”



JÓHANNES AND HIS RAM

THE FAROE ISLANDS



🕒 2:20 pm

📷 $f/2.8$

⌚ 1/60

📏 24 mm

ISO 2000

WHAT TO PHOTOGRAPH

THE FAROE ISLANDS

Cows

You also come across cows here and there. There are two breeds, one for milk, the other for meat. The latter are superb: russet colored with long hair, similar to those one finds in Scotland. You mainly see them on the heights of **Kirkjubøur** in summer. A herd of cows and their adorable calves under the placid gaze of a huge bull—weighing more than a ton—is an impressive sight.

Horses

You sometimes see horses, but few. They often just stand there grazing calmly in a garden or a meadow not far from the house.

Dogs

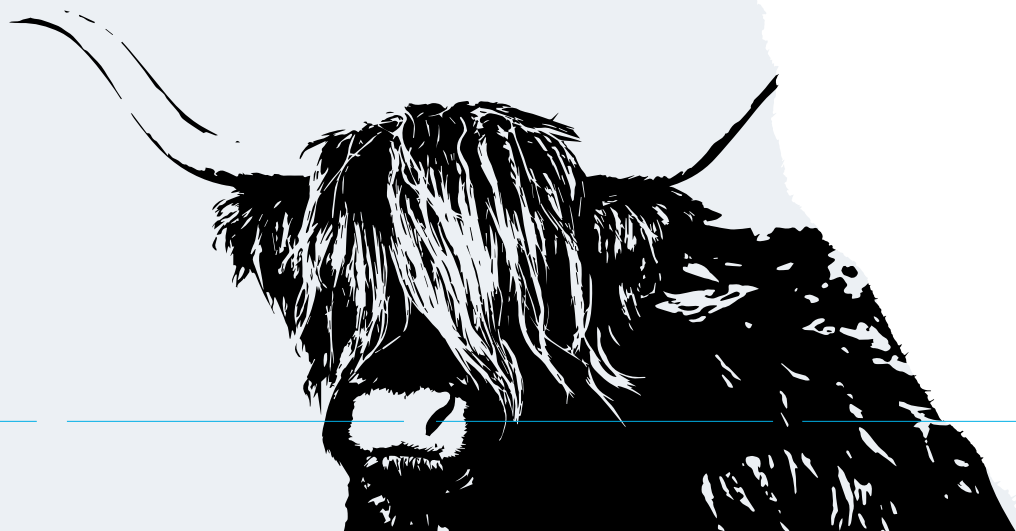
The Faroe Islands are the kingdom of the most adorable and most intelligent of dogs: the **Border Collie**. You see them everywhere, particularly in the little villages. The young ones will greet you with a stick to play with; the older ones will be snoozing peacefully on the doormat outside the house. Never aggressive, always happy to receive a hug, these dogs are absolutely irresistible and make you want to become a farmer.

Geese

I mention them here because it's a pleasure to watch them wandering around the valleys, always as a family. They are iconic residents of the Faroes, and very photogenic. Indeed, **Gásadalur** means "Goose Valley."

Birds

Seabirds are an integral part of the Faroese landscape, history, and culture. The location and morphology of the Faroe Islands are key to their presence in such numbers: very craggy terrain, numerous cliffs, and a loose, lush soil that is well suited to digging out a nest. Moreover, just as in Iceland, it's the **Gulf Stream**—that warm sea current from Mexico—which makes the archipelago so mild, bringing plankton to the surface and thus an abundance of fish, which the seabirds catch.



BORDER COLLIE IN TJØRNUVÍK

THE FAROE ISLANDS



🕒 2:39 pm

📷 f/2.8

⌚ 1/60

📏 31 mm

ISO 200

WHAT TO PHOTOGRAPH

THE FAROE ISLANDS

Birds *(continued)*

Ornithologists have counted 275 species of birds in the Faroe Islands.

These are the main ones:

- **Puffins**
- **Black-legged kittiwakes**
- **Guillemots**
- **Northern gannets** (present only on **Mykinesholmur**)
- **Fulmars**
- **Terns**
- **European shags** (a species of **cormorant**)
- **Great skuas**
- **Oystercatchers**

The **tjaldur** (oystercatcher: recognizable by its red beak), with its beautiful plumage and piercing cries, is the national emblem of the Faroe Islands.

Puffins catch small fish to feed their young waiting back at the nest.

Worth knowing:

- They can carry up to 70 fish in a single beakful. How do they manage to bring back so much? It's a mystery.
- Even if their beak is full to overflowing, other puffins looking for food will never try to grab some from them.
- Puffins only eat those fish they catch themselves. If a fish inadvertently falls from their beak, they won't eat it, even if it's right at the entrance to their nest.

Finally, know that the puffin is monogamous and faithful, with a single goal: start a family and take care of it.

IMPORTANT

Tourism is growing hugely, especially on the island of **Mykines**, a sanctuary for birds. The island already has more than 10,000 visitors a year, mainly over the three summer months, making an average of 100 visitors a day. That's a lot; too much perhaps.

Even if you remain as discreet as possible, you cannot ignore the fact that you are disturbing them during this crucial period of nesting. If they fly away at your approach, it means you have disturbed them. This has a harmful effect on their lives and their reproduction. Equip yourself with a telephoto lens, and, above all, stick to the path.

You should know that there has been a noticeable drop in the number of puffins on Mykines over the last ten years, and that measures will be taken to limit access.



PAULI, ANDY AND A FRIENDLY TJALDUR

THE FAROE ISLANDS



12:33 pm

$f/7.1$

$1/160$

24 mm

ISO 500

WHAT TO PHOTOGRAPH

THE FAROE ISLANDS

FLORA

Trees and vegetation

The most striking thing about the Faroe Islands is probably the absence of trees, even if archaeological digs have found traces of birch dating from over two thousand years ago. The territory is therefore mainly moorland covered with grass, lichen, and bushes. The only trees you'll find are ornamental ones, close to homes.

People here plant trees for future generations, and also simply to embellish their surroundings, home, or village.

The Faroese tend their trees with great care. They plant them in sheltered spots in their gardens, protected from gusts of wind. Patience is key, since it can take thirty years for a tree to reach a mature size.

In winter, the moorland is waterlogged, the grass is bowed by the force of the wind, the meadows are less green, and the colors veer to ochre and autumnal hues.

When spring arrives, the grass turns bright green as it dries in the wind and the mild temperatures; you'd think you were looking at Alpine pastures.



Flowers

- The **buttercup**, that little yellow flower, brightens up the meadows come springtime. It's the national flower of the Faroe Islands.

- **Norwegian angelica** (*Angelica archangelica*), also known as wild celery, is a species of plant in the Apiaceae family that is very popular across the Nordic lands. Its highly aromatic and stimulating stalks and seeds, as well as its root, are used in herbal medicine.



WHAT TO PHOTOGRAPH

THE FAROE ISLANDS

BUILDINGS

Houses

Unlike Iceland, where the modern houses are of relatively little photographic interest, Faroese houses, which are closer to the Scandinavian style, are iconic and make for a choice photographic subject.

“Why do Faroese houses have grass on their roofs?”

This is a common question. To answer it, at least in part, let us briefly consider the evolution of Faroese houses through the ages:

These “sod roofs” were typical of Scandinavian houses until the late nineteenth century. They are found mainly in [Norway](#), [Sweden](#), and [Finland](#), although there are still a few very old ones in Iceland. The reason for these grassy roofs is simple: the layers of birch bark and turf make for excellent insulation, particularly in winter when the snow doubles the roof’s weight to as much as 500 kilos (1,100 pounds) per square meter.

These natural elements are readily available everywhere in [Scandinavia](#)—you just have to go out and collect them—so it is understandable why they were used this much.

The traditional houses of the Faroe Islands had to contend with an extremely harsh climate and violent winds. They were therefore buried in the ground (as in Iceland). The lower floor was used to keep animals (their body heat serving as central heating), while the turf roof was merely an extension of the ground onto the house’s roof.

In the nineteenth century, as fishing became an increasingly significant part of the economy, with a consequential rise in people’s incomes, the houses grew larger and were extended upward. But people kept the traditional sod roofs, while the facades were covered with wood to protect them. Residents painted the wooden facades in different colors to make them stand out. Little by little, these colored houses became typical of Scandinavia. They bring prettiness to villages once spring returns.



Churches

The old wooden churches are a feast for the eyes. Mostly built in the mid-nineteenth century, they are of modest size and are strategically located in the villages. The interiors are well worth a visit—if open—since there is some very fine wood paneling.



INGUN Í SKRIVARASTOVU

THE FAROE ISLANDS



5:45 pm

f/2,8

1/125

24 mm

ISO 125

WHAT TO PHOTOGRAPH

THE FAROE ISLANDS



Lighthouses

I simply adore lighthouses. I love their shape and what they represent. Lighthouses always tell a story. What's more, their location beside the sea often makes them very photogenic. A lighthouse is also the pretext for a walk, a quest, the start of an adventure.

The four iconic lighthouses of the Faroe Islands:

- Mykines

I believe this might be among the top ten lighthouses in the world, since its location, and the route you must take to see it at its best, are extraordinary. The lighthouse was erected in **1909**, and the keeper's house (inhabited since 1964) was built just beside it. The four-hour walk to get there is quite amazing, a once-in-a-lifetime experience. Do it in winter if you can. Lighthouses are often more beautiful in a storm, as well as at nightfall.

- Kallur

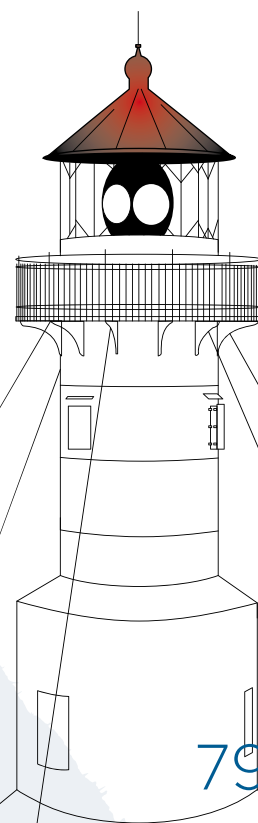
Kallur lighthouse, on the northern tip of Kalsoy, is absolutely iconic and not to be missed. That said, it is not so much the lighthouse itself that is exceptional, but the surrounding landscape, which is absolutely fabulous. **Thank you Jóhannes**, the young farmer who owns this land, for letting us walk around it so freely.

- Nólsoyar Viti

Built on the island of Nolsoy in **1893**, this is probably the oldest lighthouse in the Faroe Islands. It is also incredibly beautiful! A pleasant five-hour walk will take you straight to it.

- Akraberg

This lighthouse was built in **1909**, the same year as Mykines lighthouse, and by the same engineers. It is therefore no surprise that it resembles Mykines lighthouse a lot. Its location on private land makes it less accessible, but you can still get a fantastic view, and its strategic position on the southern tip of Suðuroy is well worth the trip.



MYKINES LIGHTHOUSE

THE FAROE ISLANDS



🕒 10:39 am

📷 f/7.1

⌚ 1/200

📏 17 mm

ISO 100

WHAT TO PHOTOGRAPH

THE FAROE ISLANDS



SURPRISES



Scenic roads

Green signs decorated with a buttercup (the national flower of the Faroes) indicate that you're on a "Scenic Road". You should absolutely explore them

all, if you have the time! In fact, these are the oldest roads, winding up to mountain passes, before more modern ones were laid—hewn from the rock or running along the coast, and therefore less affected by the fog.

What all these Scenic Roads share is a magnificent natural environment. They are a photographic subject in themselves, to be driven at any hour of the day.

The ones you really shouldn't miss are those close to the capital: **the 55** to **Norðradalur** ("Northern Valley") and **the 58** to **Syðradalur** ("Southern Valley"). They are a photographer's dream.

Boat huts

These little shacks by the sea connected to a landing stage are part of the landscape, and a reminder—if one were needed—of the Faroese's proximity to the sea. After all, wherever you go in these islands, you are never more than 5 km (3 miles) from the coast.

These little colorful houses, some of which have been converted into cabins, can be found scattered along the moor beside **Lake Sørvágsvatn** (you can see them from the road), or by the shores of the fjords. They make for interesting photographic subjects.

NORÐRADALUR

THE FAROE ISLANDS



🕒 12:10 am

📷 $f/5.6$

⌚ 1/125

📏 40 mm

ISO 200

WHAT TO PHOTOGRAPH

THE FAROE ISLANDS



SURPRISES *(continued)*

The ruins of St. Magnus Cathedral

Built in 1137, this Catholic cathedral is unique, owing to its Gothic architecture and its history. And since it also lies opposite the most beautiful farm in the Faroe Islands (dating from the eleventh century), a detour via [Kirkjubøur](#) is a must. If you come across the farmer or his wife (I met her chasing after her young Border Collie who had run off with a slipper) please tell them “Hello” from me.

Haldarsvík church

This church has the particularity of being hexagonal shaped. You’ll see it on the way to [Tjørnuvík](#).

Photograph Ólavsøka 28 – 31 July

If you’re planning a summer trip, this festival is really worth catching. It’s sort of the equivalent of a Spanish *fiesta*, but Nordic style! A festival atmosphere reigns over the town, and everywhere you go in [Tórshavn](#) you’ll see Faroese wearing traditional dress.

The days are filled with numerous events, such as boat races and concerts. There are carousels set up on the main square, and the town center buzzes with the happy townsfolk and children’s joyful cries.

It’s really worth seeing, experiencing, and photographing, but do bear in mind that it’s hard to find accommodations during this period, and also that prices skyrocket, since many Faroese return home from abroad to spend time with family and friends.

ÓLAVSØKA LADY

THE FAROE ISLANDS



🕒 22:28 pm

📷 f/1.4

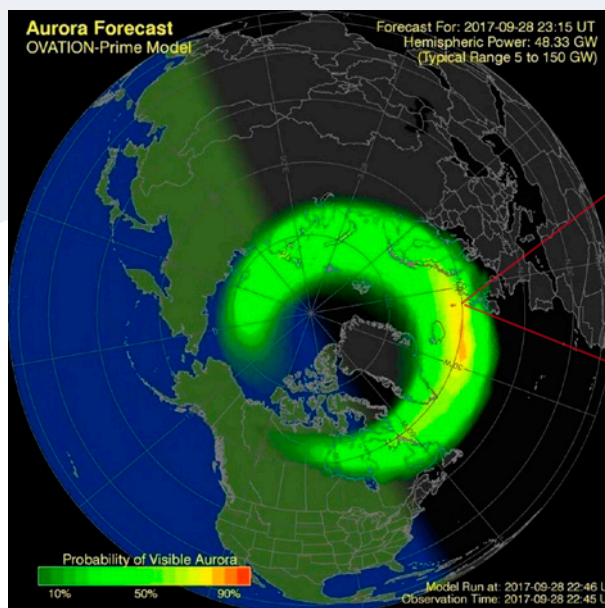
⌚ 1/125

📏 24 mm

ISO 1600

WHAT TO PHOTOGRAPH

THE FAROE ISLANDS



THE NORTHERN LIGHTS

The northern lights, those colored layers of light caused by interaction between the charged particles of the solar wind and the high atmosphere, are mainly visible in a circular area around the poles situated between the 65th and the 75th parallels.

The Faroe Islands, situated on the 62nd parallel, are therefore very close to this zone, meaning the northern lights can be observed and photographed. I didn't see them myself when I was there, but according to what some of the inhabitants told me, they do appear regularly. However, there are four conditions which must be met:

- **Total darkness** (avoid the full moon)
- **A very cold night** (conducive to their appearance)
- **A clear sky** (perhaps the most difficult to find in the Faroe Islands)
- **Heavy solar activity** (check the Kp index*)

Although most of us will have been able to see the northern lights in **Iceland**, **Norway**, or in **Lapland**, photographs of them taken from the Faroe Islands are rarer. It's therefore quite a big deal if you manage to bring one back on your memory card. So do write to us (and show us!) if you are fortunate enough to observe one.

* The Kp index (Planetary K-Index) is used to express the magnitude of geomagnetic activity, from 0 (calm) to 9 (extreme magnetic storm). The Kp index is an excellent indicator of disturbances in the earth's magnetic field, and by extension the potential apparition of the northern (and southern) lights. If the index is between 6 and 9, and the sky is clear, put on your gloves, pour a warm drink into a vacuum flask, and grab your tripod!

→ aurora-service.eu/aurora-forecast/

WHAT TO PHOTOGRAPH

THE FAROE ISLANDS

HOW LONG SHOULD I GO FOR?

Most visitors only stay on the Faroes for three or four days, which is much too short, in my view, although of course we all have to make do according to our available time and budget.

I advise you to book accommodations in **Tórshavn** for the reasons I mentioned in the “Where to Stay” section. From Tórshavn, you can explore a very wide area by car. Without even taking a ferry, you will be able to reach:

STREYMOY (the island you're on!)

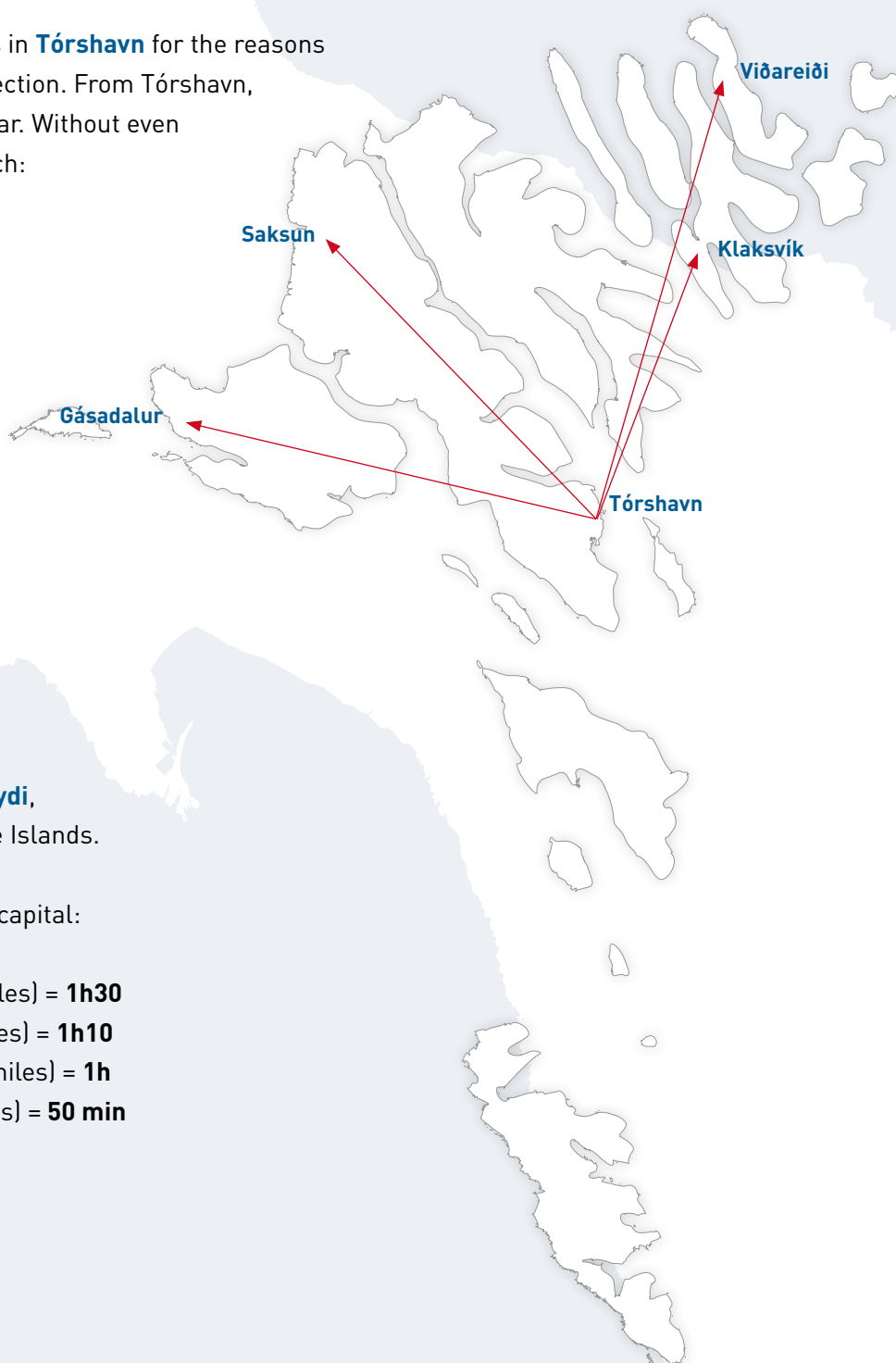
VÁGAR

EYSTURØY

BORÐØY

VIÐØY

KUNØY



The furthest point is probably **Vidareyði**, the northernmost village in the Faroe Islands.

Here are a few travel times from the capital:

Tórshavn → Viðareiði : 94 km (58 miles) = **1h30**

Tórshavn → Klaksvík : 75 km (46miles) = **1h10**

Tórshavn → Gásadalur : 57 km (35 miles) = **1h**

Tórshavn → Saksun : 50 km (30 miles) = **50 min**

WHAT TO PHOTOGRAPH

THE FAROE ISLANDS



HOW LONG FOR EACH ISLAND?

It is very difficult to provide an idea of the time required to visit each island, since that depends enormously on how long you wish to spend hiking.

But I can make a suggestion based on my own experience. This applies to **a first visit**, assuming that you wish to **see the essentials** without hanging around anywhere for too long.

Tórshavn = 1 DAY

Vágar = 2 DAYS

Mykines = 1 DAY

Eysturoy = 2 DAYS

Kalsoy = ½ DAY

Borðoy + Viðoy = 1 DAY

Sandoy = ½ DAY

Suðuroy = 1 DAY

TOTAL = 9 DAYS

This is the minimum time. I myself spent forty days covering the same ground, and I am a long way from having seen everything!



THE DETAILS ISLAND BY ISLAND

THE FAROE ISLANDS

“Island of currents”



AREA

373 km²

COMPARATIVE SIZE

1/18

GPS

62° 08' 00" N
7° 01' 00" W

POPULATION

24,000

DENSITY

64 inhab./km²

MAX. ALTITUDE

789 meters

HIGHEST POINT

KOPSENNI

ACCESS

ROUTE

FERRY NAME

—

TERMINAL

—

LENGTH OF CROSSING

—

DISTANCE TÓRSHAVN

—

TUNNELS

1 (VÁGAR →)

SCENIC ROADS

3

CAMPGROUNDS

3

IMPORTANT BIRD AREA

NORTHERN
FULMARS
75,000 PAIRSPUFFINS
20,000 PAIRSBLACK-LEGGED
KITTIWAKES
9,000 PAIRSEUROPEAN
STORM PETRELS
2,500 PAIRSBLACK
GUILLEMOTS
300 PAIRSEUROPEAN
SHAG
150 PAIRSGREAT SKUAS
120 PAIRS



THE CITY OF TÓRSHAVN

It's lovely to stroll around this attractive city, with its colorful facades. I suggest you park opposite the harbor and go for a walk along the **Tinganes** peninsula. This rocky promontory houses the parliament and numerous consulates. Lose yourself in the maze of side streets and little parks. There's a feeling of calm, contentment, and serenity.

The old town is full of private houses, each more adorable and welcoming than the last. These homes are among the oldest in Tórshavn—some date from the fourteenth century. You might see Inga's house, the one with strings of colored light bulbs hung in a tree. I met Inga while out strolling with my son Andy. Intrigued by her house, I began to photograph it; she invited us in for coffee and told me about the history of the neighborhood. She keeps a few chickens, in an enclosure opposite, which give her fresh eggs.

Not far from there you'll find **Tórshavn Cathedral (Dómkirkjan)**, which was rebuilt in the nineteenth century.

When you reach the harbor, have a drink at one of the café terraces—weather permitting—or sample the dish of the day at **Sirkus Bar**. Your beer might be served by my friend Anthony, one of the few Frenchmen living in the Faroe Islands.

If you head up Torsgota street you'll find numerous restaurants, and the Tórshavn Tourist Information Center (**#visitTórshavn**) next to the store **Guðrun&Guðrun**, the national clothing brand, which uses only wool from Faroese sheep.

There's an old Faroese proverb that goes *“Ull er Føroya gull,”* meaning:

“Wool is the gold of the Faroe Islands”

If you like boats, continue along the quay to the boatyard, where you'll probably find a vessel in dry dock with workers repainting it.

THE FAROE ISLANDS



17:40 pm

f/4

1/60

24 mm

ISO 160

On the other side of **Tinganes** is the office of **Visit Faroe Islands**, a pretty white building opposite the quay from which the **M/F Smyril** ferry departs for **Suðuroy**. At the end of the quay is the **Skansin** fortress (1580), with its lighthouse, and its canons pointing out to sea to protect the city from raiders.

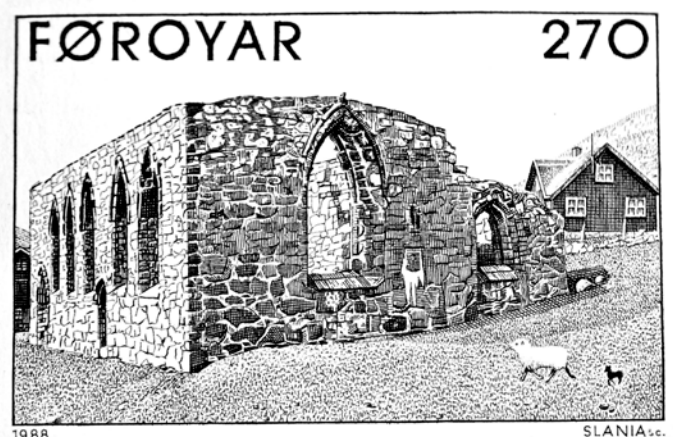
If you continue northward up the coast road, you'll come to the heliport (wonderful photographic opportunities of takeoffs and landings). Just beyond there is an area of parkland where the inhabitants of Tórshavn like to walk.

To the northwest of the city, you'll find the **Nordic House**, a cultural center that holds art and photography exhibitions, theater, dance, and music events, in a contemporary space. They also do food: simple, natural dishes (including a soup of the day) at decent prices in a very pleasant setting.

KIRKJUBØUR

In the south of the island of **Streymoy** is the village of **Kirkjubøur**.

In the Middle Ages, this village was the seat of the old diocese. Vestiges of that past include **St. Magnus Cathedral** and **St. Olaf's church**. Construction of St. Magnus cathedral was started by Bishop Erlendur around 1300, but it was never completed. It is the only surviving mediaeval Gothic building in the Faroe Islands. The cathedral appeared on a series of Faroese postage stamps produced in 1988.



St. Olaf's church was built in 1111—that's fifty years before Notre-Dame in Paris! It's the only mediaeval Faroese church still in use. It is open every day from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Kirkjubøargarur farmhouse is the oldest house in the Faroe Islands, dating from the eleventh century. Half of the building is occupied by the Patursson family, who have been living here since 1550. Johaness and his wife are farmers—you can admire their russet colored cows on the slopes opposite the village. Their historic farm is the ideal venue for celebrations and banquets.

And since we're talking banquets, I must mention that one of the best restaurants in the world is to be found in this very village. I am speaking of **KOKS**. Their food, which is heavily influenced by the sea, was recently rewarded with a Michelin star, the islands' first!

SAINT MAGNUS KIRKJUBØUR

→ STREYMOYAR DISTRICT

THE FAROE ISLANDS



4:18 pm

f/8

1/250

24 mm

ISO 100

[→ koks.fo/en/](https://koks.fo/en/)

SAKSUN

Saksun contains everything you'd like to see in the Faroe Islands, starting with **Road 53**, which snakes through a deserted valley: ten kilometers (six miles) of solitude, in winter that is, before reaching this unreal place.

This village of fourteen inhabitants comprises a few sod-roofed farmhouses and a solitary church lit by a single streetlamp.

What makes this place so unique, so spectacular, is undoubtedly its location above a tidal lagoon. This vast sandy basin fills (and empties) twice a day. The view is therefore ever changing and mysterious.

As if all that wasn't enough, just to complete the tableau, a waterfall tumbles into the lagoon. It's such a beautiful place! A word of advice, though: you will have to find your own “photographic route” if you don't want to bring back the same “postcard” image as everyone else.

TJØRNUVÍK

One of my favorite villages.

Tjørnuvík is situated on the other side of the mountain that overlooks **Saksun**. A good walker could reach the village via the mountain in three hours. But I also recommend going by car, since **Road 54** is staggeringly beautiful. There are a few spots along the road where you can park up and take some amazing photographs.

This little village nestling at the end of a fjord, proudly facing into the icy North Atlantic winds, is quite simply magnificent. From the beach you can admire the sea stacks of



SAKSUN

THE FAROE ISLANDS



🕒 12:46 pm

📷 $f/8$

🕒 $1/80$

📏 24 mm

ISO 160

THE FAROE ISLANDS

“East Island”

Risin og Kellingin (the giant and the witch) off the northern tip of **Eysturoy**.

MOUNTAIN ROADS

50 OYGGJARVEGUR (Islands Road)

Road 50 (from **Tórshavn**) to **Road 11** is a marvel, easily within reach. I explored it in depth, morning, noon, and night, never tiring of driving it (even if that was often through the fog, particularly at the end of the day).

Leaving Tórshavn, you'll soon see **Kaidbaksfjordur** on your right. This fjord is magnificent at sunrise, as the first rays play hide-and-seek with the hilly terrain. That large building with a superb view down the fjord is the Faroe Islands's one and only prison—just twelve cells. Probably the most comfortable prison in the world: I'm told the food they serve is worthy of the finest restaurants.

There are some really lovely hikes starting from **Road 50**, notably one to a former military base and its weather station on the **Sornfelli** mountain plateau (see map).

55 NORDRADALUR (Northern Valley)

You will find **the 55** on your left as you leave Tórshavn. It offers a superb view over the series of hairpins that descend to the valley (the subject of many an Instagram pic), with the island of **Koltur** (The Colt) placed squarely on the horizon line.

58 SYDRADALUR (Southern Valley)

I recommend you drive **the 58**, which runs a similar route to the 55, but on the other side of the mountains, **in the south of Streymoy**. It offers superb views all along its route. Right at the end is a huge valley, the only dwelling a single farm by a stream. Families of geese proudly strut about cackling, cows gather on the road, stopping you proceeding. It's a simply beautiful, remote, natural, peaceful place. A little piece of paradise.

THE CLIFFS OF VESTMANNA BY BOAT

puffin.fo

From 1 May to 30 September

I cannot recommend highly enough this two-hour boat trip along the cliffs of **Vestmanna**, in northwest **Streymoy**. It's only from the sea that you truly appreciate the size of these giants. I don't want to say too much in order not to spoil the surprise, but know that the boat weaves between the basalt fangs with unbelievable dexterity. It demands millimeter precision. I asked the captain if the boat's movement was controlled by a computer. He laughed and replied: "Of course not!" It's all steered by eye, apparently. How they manage it, I simply can't figure out!

Photographer's tip: don't forget your wide-angle, since you're often quite close to the rock.



KALDBAKFJORDUR

THE FAROE ISLANDS



🕒 9:52 am

📷 *f/5*

🕒 *1/640*

📷 *164 mm*

ISO 1600

THE FAROE ISLANDS “East Island”



AREA	MAX. ALTITUDE	LENGTH OF CROSSING	IMPORTANT BIRD AREA
286 km ²	880 meters	—	
COMPARATIVE SIZE	HIGHEST POINT	DISTANCE TÓRSHAVN	MANX SHEARWATERS 2,500 PAIRS
2/18	SLÆTTARATINDUR	38 min	
GPS	ACCESS	TUNNELS	EUROPEAN STORM PETRELS 500 PAIRS
62° 13' 00" N 6° 53' 00" W	ROUTE	1	
POPULATION	FERRY NAME	SCENIC ROADS	BLACK GUILLEMOTS 400 PAIRS
11,000	—	5	
DENSITY	TERMINAL	CAMPGROUNDS	
37 inhab./km ²	—	5	

EIÐI

Once you’ve driven over the bridge separating **Streymoy** from **Eysturoy**, take a left in the direction of **Eiði**. There you’ll find a very pretty village and harbor on the left, and the obligatory football pitch on the right. If you walk up to the top of the village and take the last street on the right all the way to its end, you will find a gate opening onto a path. Follow this path and you will reach the cliff top, with a dizzying drop and spectacular views over the two sea stacks of **Risin og Kellingin**.

SLÆTTARATINDUR

“The Faroese Alps”

As you leave **Eiði**, turn left onto the mountain road to **Gjógv**. Once you pass the artificial lake, you’ll soon find yourself between two giants, **Vadhorn** on your right (727 m/2,385 ft) and Her Majesty Queen **Slættaratindur** on your left, the highest mountain in the Faroe Islands, at 880 m (2,890 ft). These two mountains are the first to get icy peaks come winter. Stop wherever you can to admire the surrounding summits, and that oh-so graphic road of hairpins descending toward **Funningur** —it’s one of the photographic signatures of the Faroe Islands.

GJÓGV

Before descending toward **Funningur**, turn left in the direction of **Gjógv**, a must-see village in the archipelago. Gjógv means “gorge;” you’ll soon see why.

Gjógv has numerous attractions:

- pretty, colorful houses grouped around a stream in which children paddle in summer;
- its location in a rocky crater offering a very beautiful opening to the sea;
- its singular, sea-filled gorge that serves as a landing stage;
- the promontory from which you can contemplate the sea (there is even a bench) and a rocky plateau below, upon which breakers crash when the tide is high;
- the basalt columns running the length of the gorge.

A little path leads up to the heights above the village, from where you can admire the bay. The hardest among you might like to do a four-hour hike (on unmarked trails) from Gjógv west through **Ambadalur** valley to the highest sea stack in the Faroes: **Búgvín**, at 188 m (616 ft).



KIDS IN GJÓGV

THE FAROE ISLANDS



🕒 2:20 pm

📷 f/8

🕒 1/200

📏 81 mm

ISO 500

100

THE FAROE ISLANDS

“East Island”

FUNNINGUR

Don't forget to visit the beautiful village church facing the sea, with its sod roof.

ROADS 60, 61, 62, 63

“Toward the villages at the edge of the world.”

I have driven these roads a hundred times, chasing the light through the fjords: the 60 and the 62 dance with photons from the setting sun. At the end of these roads you will find the remote villages of **Elduvik** and **Oyndarjofrdur**, which are worth the trip in themselves.



ROAD 60

THE FAROE ISLANDS



🕒 2:21 pm

📷 $f/6.3$

⌚ $1/160$

📏 35 mm

ISO 100

THE FAROE ISLANDS



IMPORTANT BIRD AREA

NORTHERN
FULMARS
100,000 PAIRS



PUFFINS
40,000 PAIRS



BLACK-LEGGED
KITTIWAKES
8,400 PAIRS



EUROPEAN
STORM PETRELS
5,000 PAIRS



COMMON
GUILLEMOTS
2,700 PAIRS



BLACK
GUILLEMOTS
400 PAIRS



EUROPEAN
SHAGS
500 PAIRS



GREAT SKUAS
20 PAIRS



AREA

176 km²

MAX. ALTITUDE

722 meters

LENGTH OF CROSSING

—

COMPARATIVE SIZE

3/18

HIGHEST POINT

ÁRNAFJALL

DISTANCE TÓRSHAVN

35 min

GPS

62° 05' 00" N
7° 16' 00" W

ACCESS

ROUTE
(TUNNEL)

TUNNELS

1

POPULATION

3,140

FERRY NAME

—

SCENIC ROADS

1

DENSITY

17 inhab./km²

TERMINAL

—

CAMPGROUNDS

4



This is probably the first island you will set foot on, since it's where the airport is — except if you come by ferry!

My friends who live on Vágur consider it to be the most beautiful island of all. But perhaps they aren't very objective? I'll let you be the judge. One thing is for sure, the two "highlights" of the Faroe Islands are located here, namely **Sørvágsvatn** lake and **Gásadalur** waterfall. But there is so much more!

SØRVÁGSVATN / LEITISVATN

"The Hanging Lake"

Yes, it has two names! To simplify things, the Faroese call it "The Lake." If you do a Google image search, you'll see it immediately—a mirror surface seemingly overhanging the ocean. As you examine the surreal images, the effect is quite disorientating: surely they must be photomontages?! It's an easy two-hour hike to the far end of the lake, and that famous viewpoint from the edge of the cliffs. No photomontage, it's all quite real!

Once you've taken your photographs of the lake, don't forget to go see:

- **Bøsdalafossur** waterfall, which flows from the lake over the edge of the cliff and into the Atlantic Ocean;
- **Eituskorardrangur**, that impressive vertical basalt rock on the west slope.

THE FAROE ISLANDS



GÁSADALUR

“Goose Valley”

Gásadalur is a small village of sixteen inhabitants surrounded by the highest mountains on the island—**Árnafjall** (722 m/2,368 ft) in the north and **Eysturtindur** (715 m/2,345 ft) in the west. The place is full of history, since it was isolated for a very long time. In fact, it was only in 2003 that a tunnel made Gásadalur much more accessible. For decades, the village’s inhabitants had to hike over the mountain to reach the outside world. The postman took this route three times a week (there and back!) to make his deliveries and pick up mail.

If you have the will (I know you do) and if you resist the temptation to drive there, I encourage you to discover Gásadalur by the postman’s path. It takes two and a half hours—you can find more information in this guide’s section on “Six Easy Essential Hikes.” It’s quite steep, but you will be rewarded with stunning views over **Tindhólmur**, the island of **Mykines**, and the village of **Gásadalur** with its famous waterfall.

Anecdote

Hitchhiking back to my car after completing this walk across the mountain, I was picked up by two very nice policemen who drove me through the tunnel to where I had parked. They were amazed when I told them what I had just done. I should add that we were in early January, night was falling, and it was my first full day in the country. No doubt I was too impatient to walk in the footsteps of that legendary postman.

MULAFOSSUR

This is one of the most popular tourist attractions in the Faroe Islands, so you’ll rarely find yourself alone there, except in winter. It’s certainly a very beautiful waterfall, what with **Mykines** just across the water, and the village in the background. There are tons of great spots from which to photograph it! But I recommend going to see it at nightfall. You will avoid the crowds of tourists and enjoy a much more atmospheric moment. Since it faces west, the waterfall catches the last glimmers of daylight. Soon the village windows will light up and you’ll have a magical background to that naturally illuminated thread of water. No filter required!



MULAFOSSUR AT DUSK (NO FILTER)

THE FAROE ISLANDS



🕒 4:57 pm

📷 f/8

⌚ 30 sec

📏 20 mm

ISO 100

THE FAROE ISLANDS

BØUR

Probably the most beautiful village in the Faroe Islands: a few pretty houses bunched around a church, all nestling at the end of a fjord, opposite **Tindhólmur**. It's a miracle of loveliness. After taking a walk around the village, stroll along the landing stage, where you're sure to come across some little details to tickle your inspiration.

TRØLLKONUFINGUR

"The Troll's Finger"

Another emblem of the Faroe Islands is to be found on **Vágar**. This 313-meter (1,026-foot) rocky needle was climbed for the first time only in 2012!

Head for the pretty village of **Sandavagur**, with its beautiful white and red church. A path leads uphill to a viewpoint from where you can capture some lovely images. Aim for sunrise, when the first rays backlight the islands of **Hestur** and **Koltur** before illuminating **Trøllkonufingur**. It's sublime.

See a video of the climb from 2015:

youtube.com/watch?v=wTLTwb-Sb1E

THE FAROE ISLANDS



SLÆTTANES

Slættanes is a “ghost” village: the last inhabitants left in 1965. There are numerous trails leading here, including from **Sandavágur** in the east, **Sørvágur** in the south, and **Gásadalur** in the west.

I was fortunate enough to go there with some local friends during the month of January. It took us no less than eight hours to make the return trip. It was dark by the time we returned, with no light except that from a feeble half-moon. Fortunately, the sky was clear that night!

Slættanes is located on the **northern tip of Vágur**. This remote area is one of the most beautiful in the whole of the Faroes. There are majestic cliffs and a remote beach—not easy to access—where one finds driftwood carried all the way from Siberia on the currents of the Arctic Ocean. Could there be anything more poetic?

I cannot recommend strongly enough that you visit this area of breathtaking wild beauty. It may be a little hard to reach, but the reward is well worth the effort!

SLÆTTANES

→ VÁGA DISTRICT

THE FAROE ISLANDS



2:24 pm

$f/13$

$1/80$

24 mm

ISO 320

THE FAROE ISLANDS



AREA

10 km²

MAX. ALTITUDE

560 meters

LENGTH OF CROSSING

45 min

COMPARATIVE SIZE

13/18

HIGHEST POINT

KNÚKUR

DISTANCE TÓRSHAVN

45 min + 45 min

GPS

62° 06' 00" N
7° 36' 00" W

ACCESS

BOAT

TUNNELS

0

POPULATION

14

FERRY NAME

—

SCENIC ROADS

0

DENSITY

1.4 inhab./km²

TERMINAL

MYKINES

CAMPGROUNDS

0

IMPORTANT BIRD AREA

ATLANTIC
PUFFINS
500,000 PAIRS



EUROPEAN
STORM PETRELS
50,000 PAIRS



NORTHERN
FULMARS
50,000 PAIRS



BLACK-LEGGED
KITTIWAKES
23,000 PAIRS



COMMON
GUILLEMOTS
9,500 PAIRS



MANX
SHEARWATER
2,500 PAIRS



EUROPEAN
SHAGS
250 PAIRS



NORTHERN
GANNETS
200 PAIRS



BLACK
GUILLEMOTS
200 PAIRS





MYKINES

“The prow of the Faroe Islands”

MYKINES gave me one of the most emotional experiences I have ever had as a traveler.

This scrap of land west of **Vágar**—just ten kilometers (six miles) long by three kilometers (two miles) wide—is a real treasure trove.

First inhabited in the seventh century by Irish monks who grew oats, the history of Mykines is worthy of the greatest adventure novels, filled as it is with tragic events, such as the numerous instances of ships that have capsized in the island’s turbulent waters. The biggest of these disasters occurred in the sixteenth century, when fifty ships caught by a surprise storm capsized, taking the lives of 300 men. There are many monuments to the dead on Mykines, both in the church and on the slopes around the village, honoring the memories of all those lost at sea.

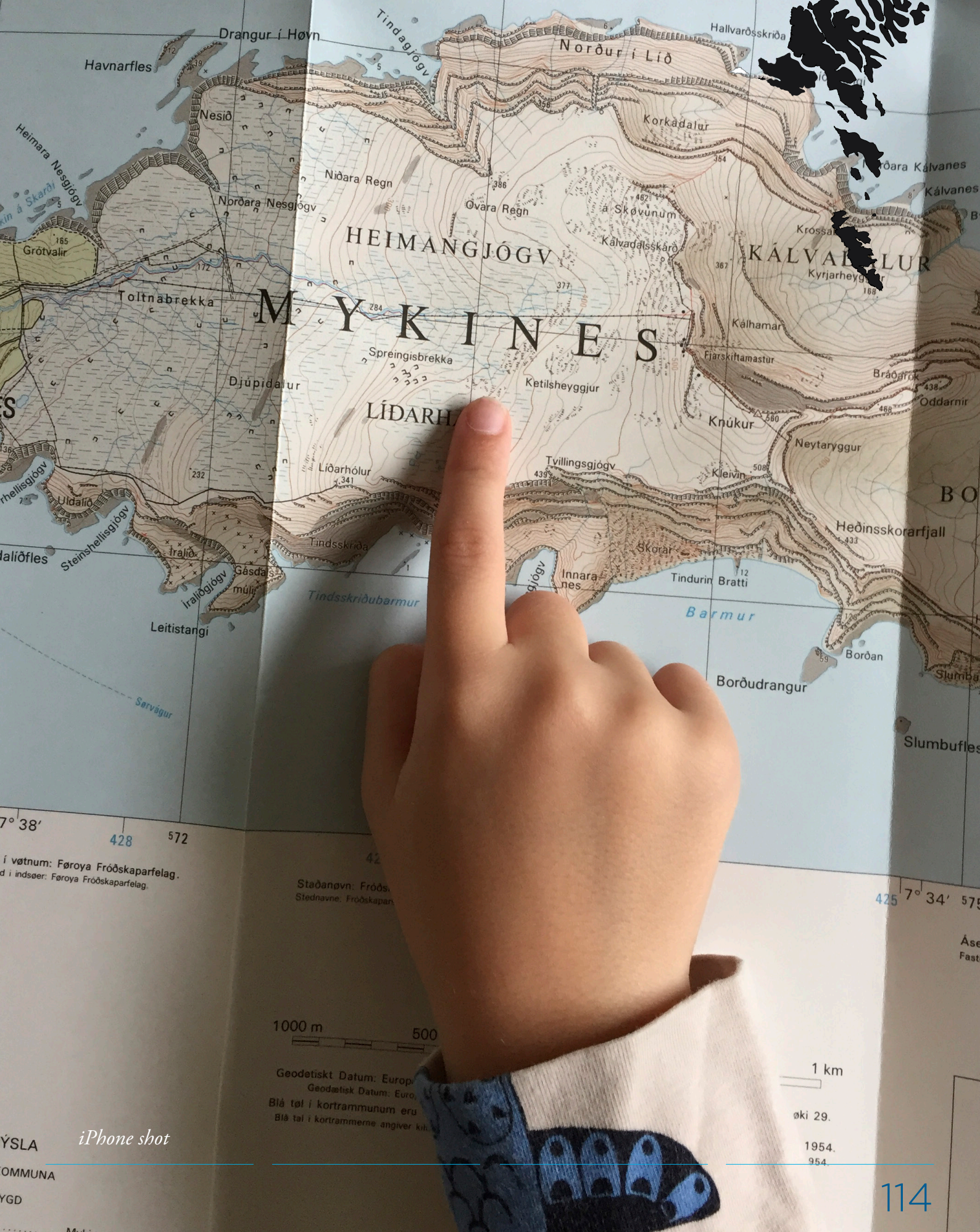
If you’re thinking of visiting Mykines, I should point out that this island presents a completely different face and atmosphere depending on the period you visit.

A winter trip is a plunge into a tempestuous world, with sublime sea light and an unparalleled feeling of adventure and solitude, but access is complicated and accommodation almost non-existent.

A summer trip will serve up a heavenly island: good living in a little village surrounded by bright green meadows and a unique opportunity to watch puffins. Of course, the price you pay in summer is the large quantity of tourists, which somewhat spoils the luxurious feeling of sitting alone in the front row of one of the best shows in the natural world.

MYKINES

THE FAROE ISLANDS



í vøtum: Føroya Fróðskaparfelag.
d i indseer: Føroya Fróðskaparfelag.

Staðangv: Fróðs.
Stednavne: Fróðskapar

1000 m 500

Geodetisk Datum: Europ.
Geodetisk Datum: Euro.
Blá töl i korttrammunum eru
Blá töl i korttrammerne angiver kil

1 km

øki 29.

1954.
954.

ÝSLA

iPhone shot

OMMUNA

YGD



Hike to the lighthouse

Allow four hours there and back from the village. **This hike is an absolute must!** There are so many amazing views all along the route. You'll walk along the side of a cliff, climb a vertiginous stairway, and cross a bridge worthy of *Indiana Jones*. Yet it's an easy hike for all that; I did it with my six-year-old son Andy.

The lighthouse itself is absolutely marvelous, highly photogenic, with the lighthouse keeper's house (uninhabited since 1964) just a little way down the slope, and the village all the way back behind you. This is truly a first-rate photographic subject, although much will depend on the light.

Hike to the eastern tip

For reasons of time, I did both hikes the same day, and in January too—which made for a very short day! The total distance is around 15 km (9 miles), and the terrain is pretty steep. So it is certainly possible to do both in one day, but you need to be in good physical shape, since there's the wind to contend with too. I was completely exhausted when I finished.

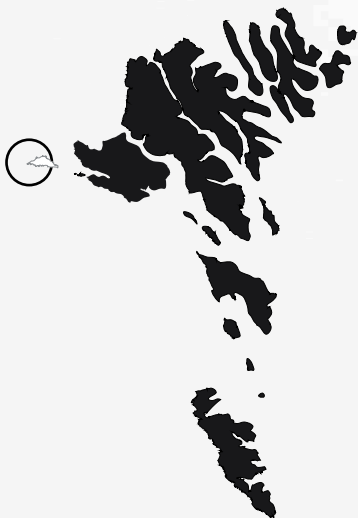
This hike across the island may not be the most spectacular, but it is very pleasant all the same. Legend has it that there's a forest of petrified trees. And it really exists! Although it is in fact a series of basalt columns, visible on the side of the cliff in the northern part of the island.

The real reward is to be found at the eastern tip of the island, with a magnificent, spectacular view over the cliffs, the island of **Vágar**, and the islet of **Tindhólmur**.

You'll come across a few stone ruins along the way. They will serve well as a foreground, with the lighthouse in the distance.

MYKINES

THE FAROE ISLANDS





!

LAST-MINUTE INFORMATION NEW GUIDELINES FOR MYKINES

Between 1 May and 31 August, each person traveling to Mykines **must pay DKK 100** if they wish to travel beyond the small village area (this includes the hike out to the lighthouse at the end of the island, Mykineshólmur). The money collected is earmarked for maintenance of the birdlife and nature on the island. The fee can be paid by visiting hiking.fo.

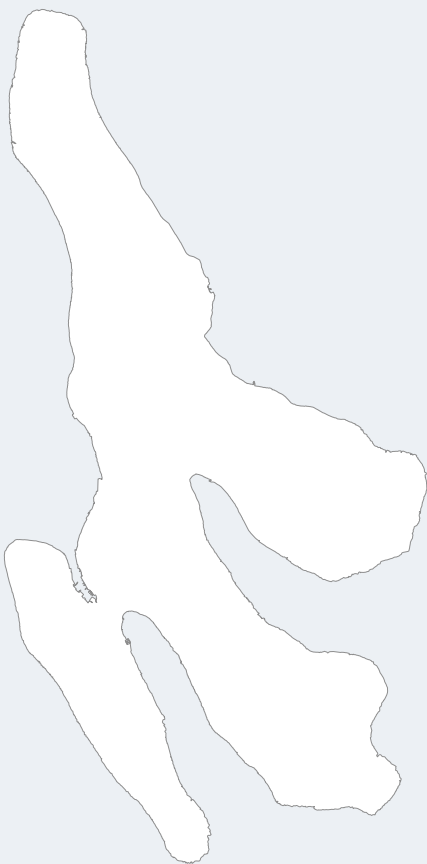
MYKINES

THE FAROE ISLANDS



THE FAROE ISLANDS

“Headland Island”



AREA	MAX. ALTITUDE	LENGTH OF CROSSING	IMPORTANT BIRD AREA
95 _{km²}	755 _{meters}	—	EUROPEAN STORM PETRELS 250 PAIRS
COMPARATIVE SIZE	HIGHEST POINT	DISTANCE TÓRSHAVN	
6/18	LOKKI	1 _h 10	BLACK GUILLEMOTS 200 PAIRS
GPS	ACCESS	TUNNELS	
62° 14' 00" N 6° 33' 00" W	ROAD	3	
POPULATION	FERRY NAME	SCENIC ROADS	
5,100	—	1	
DENSITY	TERMINAL	CAMPGROUNDS	
52 _{inhab./km²}	—	1	



The second largest town in the Faroe Islands, **Klaksvík** (population 4,700), is on **BORÐOY**.

The town of Klaksvík is not without interest. From there, it's just a short boat trip to **Kalsoy**, with lovely views of the harbor and the surrounding mountains. Of particular note is **Suður á Nakki**. This impressive pyramid, 703 meters (2,306 feet) high, overlooks the town. It is in fact the tip of the island of **Kunoy**, which is so close to **Borðoy** that the two are linked by a narrow causeway.

On Borðoy, there are three abandoned villages: **Skálatoftir**, **Múli**, and **Fossá**. **Múli**, in the far north of the island, was one of the remotest villages in the Faroes until the construction of a road in 1989. But despite that new transport link, the last inhabitants left in 1994.

ROAD 75

“The Giant’s Causeway”

This road will take you to the farthest reaches. It is asphalted, but in a bad state. The huge mountains (between 600 and 840 meters/1,970 and 2,800 feet) that line the route are quite intimidating and will really make you feel like a tiny human. It will do you a power of good! Drive this road at nightfall for maximum effect.

ROAD 75

THE FAROE ISLANDS



🕒 3:26 pm

📷 f/3.2

⌚ 1/60

📏 24 mm

ISO 320

THE FAROE ISLANDS

“Man Island”



AREA

31_{km²}

MAX. ALTITUDE

788_{meters}

LENGTH OF CROSSING

20_{min}

IMPORTANT BIRD AREA

ATLANTIC
PUFFINS
40.000 PAIRS

COMPARATIVE SIZE

9/18

HIGHEST POINT

NESTINDAR

DISTANCE TÓRSHAVN

1_h10+20_{min}EUROPEAN
STORM PETRELS
5.000 PAIRS

GPS

62° 17' 00" N
6° 44' 00" W

ACCESS

FERRY

TUNNELS

4

BLACK
GUILLEMOTS
200 PAIRS

POPULATION

76

FERRY NAME

M/F SAM

SCENIC ROADS

0

DENSITY

3_{inhab./km²}

TERMINAL

SYÐRADALUR

CAMPGROUNDS

1

Nicknamed “The Flute” by the Faroese, this island, which is 18 km (11 miles) long by 2 km (1¼ miles) wide, looks like a fossilized crocodile from the Cretaceous period, 100 million years ago.

But why a flute, I hear you ask? Well, in addition to its shape, Kalsoy is pierced by four tunnels. You see, as slender as Kalsoy is, the island is also very high, with no fewer than thirteen summits between 200 and 800 meters (656 and 2,600 feet) overlooking the sea. Four villages nestle in the lee of the valleys: **Syðradalur** (where the ferry berths), **Húsar**, **Mikladalur**, and **Trøllanes** (Troll Peninsula), where two farmers live with their families.

To reach Trøllanes, you have to enter the bowels of the earth on four occasions, and drive through these long, damp, dark, intimidating tunnels.

Kalsoy offers so much that is grandiose, so many vistas we dreamed of as children, that any photographer simply cannot give this island a miss. It is not a place made for human habitation: there is hardly any flat ground, and everything is very exposed, with not a single fjord. So why did a few souls choose to live here, braving the fury of the elements with no refuge? The reason is that the island itself is a refuge! Isolated from the world's torments (and diseases), the few plucky farmers who originally chose to make their home on Kalsoy were rewarded with a rich, fertile soil that has nourished the finest sheep in the Faroe Islands.

TRØLLANES AND THE KALLUR LIGHTHOUSE

As you exit the last tunnel, you'll be impressed by the huge mountain that is **Nestindar**, the thirteenth highest peak in the Faroes, at 788 m (2,585 ft). I find it beautifully magisterial.

To get to the lighthouse, just go through the little red gate and follow the path. It will take you less than half an hour, and what you'll find there is something really quite special: **Kallur lighthouse**, and in the background that vast vertical mass rising to 530 m (1,740 ft). There is simply no way you can mess up the photograph! That said, if you really want to get a lovely image of the lighthouse itself, close-up, you will need to cross a vertiginous ridge, which, unfortunately, has so far been denied to me: the first time, in January, I found myself alone in the wind and the rain, and it was just too risky; the second time, in July, I was determined to reach it, but thick fog made it impossible. I hope you will have better luck (and perhaps courage) than me!



VIEW FROM KALLUR

THE FAROE ISLANDS



🕒 12:06 am

📷 $f/6.3$

🕒 $1/1250$

📷 400 mm

ISO 1000



I should point out that all the land around the lighthouse belongs to a young farmer, Jóhannes, who I have mentioned previously. I had the opportunity to chat with him on several occasions, and found him fascinating and so kind. I was really impressed by his maturity, considering that he was only twenty-three years old when I met him, yet he already had so much responsibility: all those animals he took such great care of on this steep, hilly terrain, not to mention the solitude and the remoteness that requires a particular mindset. Jóhannes exudes strength, wisdom, and serenity. He is a worthy heir to his family who came here five hundred years ago.

MIKLADALUR

As you drive back, I suggest stopping in the preceding village, Mikladalur, to view that strange, mysterious statue standing by the sea. Holding a sealskin in her hand, she looks out over the rocks where, according to legend, seals come to dance once a year.

This statue is a selkie. Let me explain:

Selkies are mythological creatures found in Scottish, Irish, Faroese, and Icelandic folklore. They are described as beings who live as seals in the sea but shed their sealskin once on land. The stories frequently involve female selkies. If a man takes a selkie's skin, then she must obey him until she finds it again. Often a female selkie and a male human will grow fond of each other, marry, and have children. But if the skin is not destroyed by fire, and the selkie finds it, she will return to the sea, leaving behind her husband and her children. There are many variations on the mythology: sometimes the selkie returns to visit her human children; sometimes a human woman will try and lure a male selkie by shedding seven tears into the sea.

Legend of the selkie of Mikladalur

One night, a young farmer from Mikladalur comes down to the rocks to watch the selkie dance. As he watches, he sees a pretty selkie girl lose her sealskin. Fascinated, he is filled with a burning desire for her. He hides the skin so she cannot return to the sea, placing it in a locked box, the key to which he keeps with him day and night. The selkie has no other choice but to stay with him; they marry and their union produces several children.

THE SELKIE OF MIKLADALUR

THE FAROE ISLANDS



🕒 3:02 pm

📷 f/5

⌚ 1/100

📏 31 mm

ISO 100



But one day, the young farmer forgets to take the key to the box with him when he goes out fishing. When he returns that evening, his wife is no longer there! She has returned to the sea, after putting out the fire and hiding any sharp objects so that her children, who she is abandoning, won't hurt themselves before their father returns home.

One year later, the men of Mikladalur plan to hunt for seals deep in one of the caverns some way along the coast. But the night preceding their departure, the female seal appears in the dream of the farmer she had left behind, warning him that if he joins the seal hunt in the cavern, he must not kill the large bull seal guarding the entrance under any circumstances, for he's her husband in her new life. She adds that neither should he harm the two baby seals at the far end of the cave, for those are her two young sons; she describes their skins to him so that he will recognize them.

But the farmer pays the dream no mind. He joins the hunt and the men kill all the seals they can get their hands on. When they return home, the catch is shared out and the farmer is given the muzzle of the large bull seal, as well as the front and rear flippers of the two babies.

That evening, as the head of the big seal and the flippers of the little ones hang in the smokehouse, there is a sudden commotion and the farmer's selkie wife appears in the form of a terrifying troll; facing him, she screams this curse:

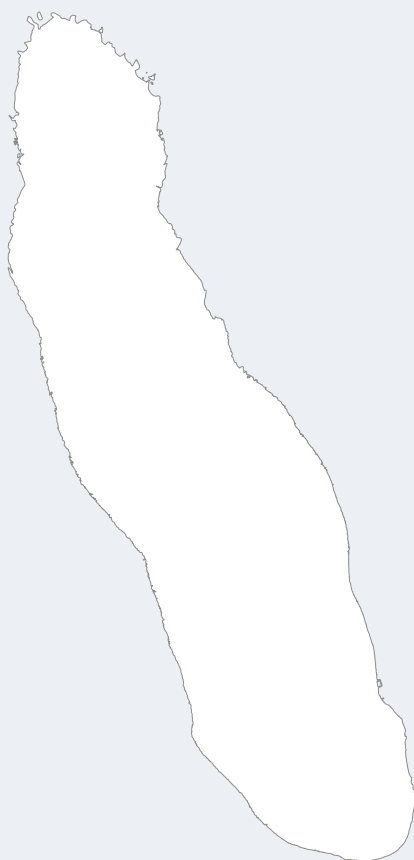
“UPON THE HEAD OF MY HUSBAND WITH HIS LONG MUZZLE, THE HAND OF MY HÁREK AND THE FOOT OF MY FREDRIK, THERE WILL BE VENGEANCE UPON THE MEN OF MIKLADALUR! SOME WILL DIE AT SEA AND OTHERS WILL FALL FROM THE CLIFFS UNTIL THERE ARE ENOUGH DEAD TO LINK HANDS AROUND THE ISLAND OF KALSOY!”

When she has pronounced these words, she disappears with a clap of thunder, never to be seen again.

Ever since then, and still today, alas, men from Mikladalur have drowned at sea or fallen from the top of the cliffs. I fear that many more will have to perish before all of the dead can link hands around the island of Kalsoy.

THE FAROE ISLANDS

“Woman Island”



AREA

35 km²

MAX. ALTITUDE

830 meters

LENGTH OF CROSSING

—

IMPORTANT BIRD AREA

EUROPEAN
STORM PETRELS
250 PAIRS

COMPARATIVE SIZE

8/18

HIGHEST POINT

KÚVINGAFJALL

DISTANCE TÓRSHAVN

1 hour

BLACK
GUILLEMOTS
200 PAIRS

GPS

62° 18' 16" N
6° 39' 12" W

ACCESS

ROAD

TUNNELS

1

POPULATION

138

FERRY NAME

—

SCENIC ROADS

0

DENSITY

4 inhab./km²

TERMINAL

—

CAMPGROUNDS

0



There are two villages here: the eponymous **KUNOY** (64 inhabitants) on the west coast and **Haraldssund** (70 inhabitants) on the east coast—at the end of the causeway linking it to **Klaksvík** on **Borðoy**.

This is an interesting island for several reasons.

It's one of the most mysterious and remote inhabited islands, owing to its highly inhospitable morphology: it has no fewer than eleven peaks between 450 and 830 meters (1,480 and 2,725 feet) over an area of barely 35 km² (13½ sq mi). It resembles its little sister Kalsoy opposite, but is even more impressive.

SKARÐ

This little fishing village saw a tragic end. On 23 December 1913, all the men perished at sea. The widows and orphans had no choice but to abandon it and move to Haraldssund.

If you feel you have the soul of an adventurer (or an archeologist!), you can follow the path northward along the coast from Haraldssund. After seven kilometers (four miles), you'll reach the ruins of the village and its monument to the memory of the dead. It's an emotional moment.

You can proceed further and walk in the footsteps of the inhabitants of Skar, who crossed the mountain every Sunday to attend the religious service in Kunoy. It's a particularly tricky route, so you are advised to use a local guide.

THE FAROE ISLANDS

“Woman Island”

VIÐARLUNDIN

On the slopes above the village of Kunoy you will find a little wood, almost a forest. Yes, you’ve read that right: a forest, in the Faroe Islands! These trees were planted in 1914, and there are several varieties: beech, birch, spruce, and a few cypresses.

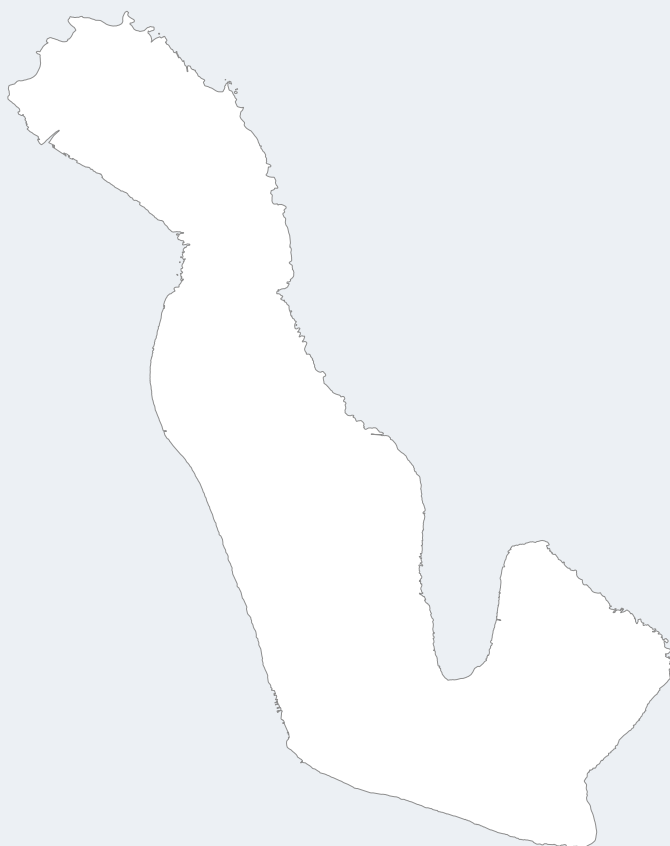
It may not be a very large forest, but the trees stand tall and strong. You can stroll among them, lulled by the babbling of a brook, and enjoying what is a rather curious sensation in this country: being shorter than the surrounding vegetation.

You can even picnic on a bench in the shade of a giant tree. It’s simply bliss.



THE FAROE ISLANDS

“Wood Island”



AREA

41 km²

MAX. ALTITUDE

841 meters

LENGTH OF CROSSING

—

IMPORTANT BIRD AREA

ATLANTIC
PUFFINS
25,000 PAIRS


COMPARATIVE SIZE

7/18

HIGHEST POINT

VILLINGADALSFJALL

DISTANCE TÓRSHAVN

1h30

COMMON
GUILLEMOTS
6,700 PAIRS


GPS

62° 20' 00" N
6° 31' 00" W

ACCESS

ROAD

TUNNELS

1

BLACK-LEGGED
KITTIWAKES
5,300 PAIRS


POPULATION

588

FERRY NAME

—

SCENIC ROADS

0

EUROPEAN
STORM PETRELS
500 PAIRS


DENSITY

14 inhab./km²

TERMINAL

—

CAMPGROUNDS

0

BLACK
GUILLEMOTS
200 PAIRS




It might seem quite curious to give the name “Island of Wood” to an island on which not a single tree grows. And yet there is a good reason: driftwood from Siberia is brought to this island, the northernmost in the archipelago, by the currents of the Arctic Ocean. One notices the same phenomenon in the [Wesftfords of Iceland](#), particularly along the east coast around [Nordufjordur](#), where the wood first makes landfall.

Viðoy is a beautiful island. It carries the honor of having the third highest mountain in the Faroes—[Villingadalsfjall](#), at 841 meters (2,760 feet)—as well as one of the highest cliffs in the world: [Cape Enniberg](#), with its 750 meters (2,460 feet) plunging into the ocean. What’s more, **Viðoy’s northern location means that it offers some of the most beautiful light and sunsets in the Faroe Islands.**

How to tackle this island

[Road 70](#) makes a loop around the pyramidal mountain [Malinsfjall](#). Behind it lies a valley, more precisely an isthmus (a narrow strip of land with sea on either side), on which stands the pretty village of [Viðareiði](#).

The village’s location, between the two giants [Villingadalsfjall](#) and Malinsfjall, makes it highly photogenic. Don’t forget to pay attention to the church facing the ocean. It’s extremely beautiful at sunset.

HIKE VILLINGADALSFJALL + CAP ENNIBERG

I recommend you climb the slopes of Villingadalsfjall. As you climb, you will discover, beyond the lines of stones, a wonderful view over the village of [Viðareiði](#) below. It’s even more beautiful when the peak of the pyramid is covered with snow.

You can continue your climb as far as the cliff of [Cape Enniberg](#), but take note: this hike requires an experienced guide; don’t proceed if you’re not familiar with the terrain, for it’s very easy to get lost and the route is difficult and extremely steep.

VIEW FROM VILLINGADALSFJALL

THE FAROE ISLANDS



12:52 am

f/5

1/100

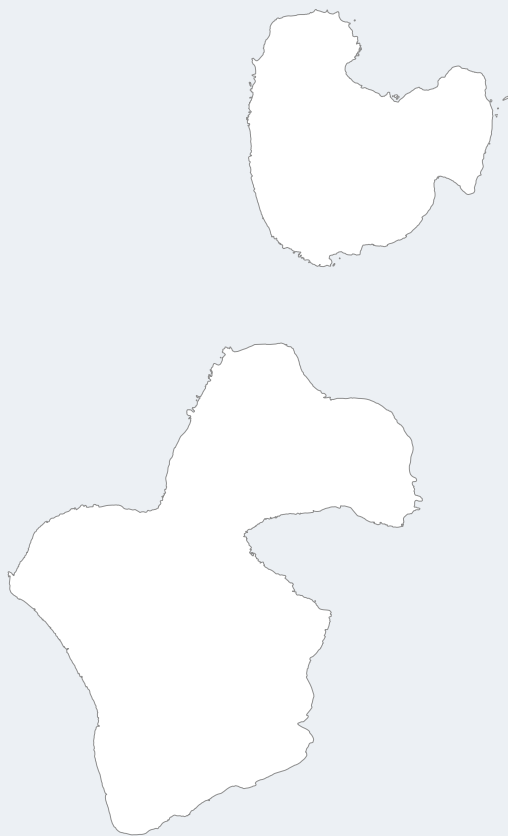
24 mm

ISO 100

SVÍNOY & FUGLOY

→ NORÐOYAR DISTRICT

THE FAROE ISLANDS



AREA

27_{&11} km²

MAX. ALTITUDE

621 meters

LENGTH OF CROSSING

30 mn - 15 mn - 10 mn

IMPORTANT BIRD AREA

EUROPEAN
STORM PETRELS
50,000 PAIRS



COMPARATIVE SIZE

10_{&11}/18

HIGHEST POINT

KLUBBIN

DISTANCE TÓRSHAVN

1_h30 +

ATLANTIC
PUFFINS
25,000 PAIRS



GPS

62° 16' 00" N
6° 22' 00" W

ACCESS

FERRY

TUNNELS

0

BLACK
GUILLEMOTS
200 PAIRS



POPULATION

52₊₄₄

FERRY NAME

M/S RITAN

SCENIC ROADS

0

WHIMBREL
50 PAIRS



DENSITY

2_{&4} inhab./km²

TERMINAL

HVANNASUND
> SVÍNOY
> KIRKJA
> HATTARVÍK

CAMPGROUNDS

0

THE FAROE ISLANDS



For those who appreciate the edge of the world. You do? That's fine then!

SVÍNOY and **FUGLOY** are those two isolated islands at the northeastern end of the Faroes. They are only accessible by ferry from [Hvannasund](#) on [Viðoy](#).

Svínoy has a single, eponymous village of 52 inhabitants. There is a vast, vertical basalt wall, 340 meters (1,115 feet) high, that is a refuge for seabirds. This is [Eysturhøvdi](#), which is located on the northeast side.

It is always an adventure getting from Svínoy to Fugloy, even when the weather is fine. The strait separating them is where the Norwegian Sea and the Atlantic Ocean meet. There is a fierce current here; the sea is always rough, and it's a dangerous crossing.

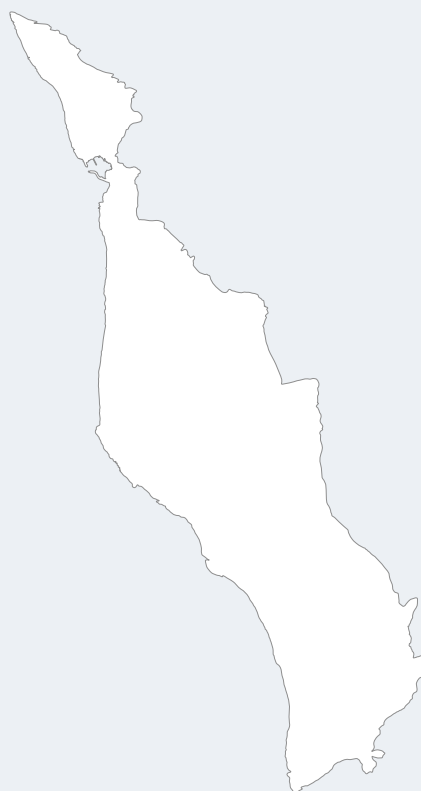
Despite its heart shape, Fugloy, to the north, has seen an inexorable depopulation, although birds have made their home here in large numbers.

Fugloy may only cover 11 km² (4 sq mi), but it is extremely craggy, with three peaks between 420 and 620 meters (1,377 and 2,035 feet)!

Hikers will be delighted to discover a fragile natural arch. From the sea, you can also see the incredible [Stapin lighthouse](#), which is perched on a ledge on the side of [Eystfelli](#) cliff and only accessible by a series of ladders!

THE FAROE ISLANDS

“Needle Island”



AREA

10 km²

MAX. ALTITUDE

372 meters

LENGTH OF CROSSING

20 min

IMPORTANT BIRD AREA

WORLD
LARGEST
COLONY OF
EUROPEAN
STORM PETRELS
50,000 PAIRS



COMPARATIVE SIZE

12/18

HIGHEST POINT

EGGJARKLETTUR

DISTANCE TÓRSHAVN

20 min

ATLANTIC
PUFFINS
30,000 PAIRS



GPS

61° 59' 04" N
6° 39' 02" W

ACCESS

FERRY

TUNNELS

0

BLACK
GUILLEMOTS
100 PAIRS



POPULATION

218

FERRY NAME

M/F TERNAN

SCENIC ROADS

0

DENSITY

22 inhab./km²

TERMINAL

NÓLSOY

CAMPGROUNDS

1

THE FAROE ISLANDS

“Needle Island”



NOLSOY lies across the water from the capital Tórshavn, just five kilometers (three miles) away. The ferry crossing takes twenty minutes.

Despite a high point of 372 m (1,220 ft), it's the flattest island in the archipelago.

The walk to the lighthouse

I highly recommend the five-hour hike to **Nólsoyar Viti** lighthouse and back. Lovers of lighthouses—such as me—will be pleased to know that it's the oldest in the Faroe Islands. Built in 1893, using rock from the local area, it boasted the largest lens in the world at the time! It stands 2.8 m (9 ft) tall and weighs 4 tons.

A word of warning

Despite its low-lying profile, Nolsoy often becomes wreathed in fog. Don't let it sneak up on you.

HESTUR & KOLTUR

→ STREYMOYAR DISTRICT

THE FAROE ISLANDS

“The Horse & The Colt”



AREA

6&2.5 km²

MAX. ALTITUDE

477 meters

LENGTH OF CROSSING

20 min

IMPORTANT BIRD AREA

ATLANTIC
PUFFINS
45,000 PAIRS



COMPARATIVE SIZE

15&17/18

HIGHEST POINT

UPPI Á OYGGJ

DISTANCE TÓRSHAVN

1 hour

EUROPEAN
STORM PETRELS
10,000 PAIRS



GPS

61° 57' 27" N
6° 53' 13" W

ACCESS

FERRY
HELICO

TUNNELS

0

BLACK
GUILLEMOTS
100 PAIRS



POPULATION

21₊

FERRY NAME

M/F TEISTIN

SCENIC ROADS

0

DENSITY

4&1 inhab./km²

TERMINAL

GAMLURÆTT
HESTUR

CAMPGROUNDS

0

THE FAROE ISLANDS

“The Horse & The Colt”



HESTUR is dominated by a 300 m (985 ft) ridge running the length of the island. If you hike to the other side of it, you'll find a wild and beautiful landscape dotted with small lakes, as well as **Álvagjógv**, a gorge with towering sides leading to the sea. It is such a dramatic sight, that when I first saw it, I wondered whether it might have been created by a blow from Sumarbrandr, the sword of the Norse god Freyr!”

KOLTUR has just one farm, but some of the very old stone-walled farms have been repaired or rebuilt to preserve them. They are quite beautiful.

The lovely profiles of these islands make for choice photographic subjects as you wander the southern coasts of **Streymoy** and **Vágar**. Their shapes on the horizon provide a perfect backdrop for seascapes.

You can photograph Hestur and Koltur from **Kirkjubøur** and the magnificent **Road 58** to **Syðradalur** (Southern Valley).

Koltur will be your starring actor when shot from the winding and thoroughly photogenic **Road 55** through **Norðradalur** (Northern Valley).

Both islands look lovely photographed at daybreak from the southern tip of **Vágar**, if you're going there to shoot **Trøllkonufingur**.

Interesting note

Faithful to family tradition, the farmer living on Koltur is none other than the uncle of Johaness Patursson, who lives opposite him at Kirkjubøur farm.

KOLTUR FROM STREYMOY

THE FAROE ISLANDS



THE FAROE ISLANDS

“Sand Island”



IMPORTANT BIRD AREA

ATLANTIC
PUFFINS
70,000 PAIRSNORTHERN
FULMARS
50,000 PAIRSEUROPEAN
STORM PETRELS
50,000 PAIRSMANX
SHEARWATERS
5,000 PAIRSBLACK
GUILLEMOTS
400 PAIRSEUROPEAN
SHAGS
150 PAIRSGREAT SKUAS
15 PAIRS

AREA

125 km²

MAX. ALTITUDE

479 meters

LENGTH OF CROSSING

30 min

COMPARATIVE SIZE

5/18

HIGHEST POINT

TINDUR

DISTANCE TÓRSHAVN

15 min + 30 min

GPS

61° 51' 00" N
6° 47' 00" W

ACCESS

FERRY

TUNNELS

0

POPULATION

1,500

FERRY NAME

M/F TEISTIN

SCENIC ROADS

0

DENSITY

12 inhab./km²

TERMINAL

GAMLURÆTT
SKOPUN

CAMPGROUNDS

4



SANDOY is an island where they grow vegetables and the living is good. The landscape isn't too hilly; it's a nice place to stroll and cycle.

Sandoy has some interesting specificities, such as a number of lakes and pools, which make for good subjects, since there aren't too many of them in the Faroe Islands. They provide beautiful reflections of light, as well as wildlife activity (birds).

Both Sandoy and the village of Sandur are named after the island's sandy soil. Indeed, this is the only island on which one finds sand dunes.

The soil is also quite fertile. When you arrive, you're struck by the fields of crops and the greenhouses. Not surprisingly, Sandoy has the largest arable farm in the country.

I recommend strolling along the roads and paths, particularly the one from Sandur to deserted **Soltuvik** beach (see map) on the west coast. But as surprisingly calm, even idyllic, as the beach appears under a beautiful summer sky, its waters are dangerous: in 1895, the British cargo ship **Principia** struck a rock and sank after fire broke out aboard. You will find a memorial to the tragedy, alongside the ship's two beautiful anchors placed in the shape of a cross. Only one man survived the sinking; he clung to a piece of wood and was plucked from the water in the bay of **Kirkjubøur**. That piece of wood survives today: it serves as a table in the oldest farmhouse in the country!

Further south, take **Road 41** all the way to the village of **Skarvanes**. From there, you will have a view over the southern islands, first **Skuvoy**, then the two sisters: **Stóra** and **Lítla Dímun**.

Last, but not least, on Sandoy you will find the most photogenic house in the Faroe Islands. Minuscule, almost a doll's house, and with a grassy roof, it sits on the bank of a lake; a gift from the gods of photography! The house was built by the Faroese artist Sigmund Petersen, who specialized in painting landscapes (what else?!). I was fortunate to meet his granddaughter and great-great-grandchildren, who played with my six-year-old son Andy. They invited us inside the house for tea, thus proving the usefulness of traveling with a child.

I won't give you the precise location of this house, in order to preserve an element of surprise; but you can't miss it from **Road 12**, so keep your eyes peeled between **Skopun** and **Sandur**!

THE LITTLE HOUSE ON SANDOY

THE FAROE ISLANDS



🕒 4:32 pm

📷 f/9

🔍 1/250

📏 59 mm

ISO 320

THE FAROE ISLANDS

“Skua Island”



AREA

10_{km²}

COMPARATIVE SIZE

14/18

GPS

61° 46' 00" N
6° 49' 00" W

POPULATION

32

DENSITY

3_{inhab./km²}

MAX. ALTITUDE

392_{meters}

HIGHEST POINT

KNÚKUR

ACCESS

FERRY #66

FERRY NAME

M/B SILDBERIN

TERMINAL

SANDUR
SKÚVOY

LENGTH OF CROSSING

35_{min}

DISTANCE TÓRSHAVN

15 mn - 45 mn - 35 mn

TUNNELS

0

SCENIC ROADS

0

CAMPGROUNDS

0

IMPORTANT BIRD AREA

COMMON
GUILLEMOTS
135,000 PAIRSNORTHERN
FULMARS
50,000 PAIRSATLANTIC
PUFFINS
40,000 PAIRSEUROPEAN
STORM PETRELS
20,000 PAIRSMANX
SHEARWATERS
10,000 PAIRSBLACK
GUILLEMOTS
150 PAIRSGREAT SKUAS
25 PAIRSWHIMBRELS
50 PAIRS



SKÚVOY gets its name from the large numbers of skuas who have made the island their home (although there are currently only twenty-five pairs). If you have had the opportunity to observe them before (there are many in Iceland), you will know what an impressive predator this bird is (my nickname for it is “Jaws of the sky”). Skuas can attain a wingspan of two meters (six and a half feet) and will attack a human if you get too close to its nest.

Skúvoy has one village with a few houses and a church.

History

In the fourteenth century, a plague killed all of the inhabitants, except for one woman. According to legend, she had been banished from the village, which is surely what saved her! You can still see her house. It stands on its own in the north of the island.

STÓRA & LÍTLA DÍMUN

→ SANDOYAR & SUÐUROYAR DISTRICT

THE FAROE ISLANDS



AREA

2.5&1 km²

MAX. ALTITUDE

414 meters

LENGTH OF CROSSING

—

IMPORTANT BIRD AREA

ATLANTIC
PUFFINS
50,000 PAIRS



COMPARATIVE SIZE

16&18/18

HIGHEST POINT

RÁVAN

DISTANCE TÓRSHAVN

—

EUROPEAN
STORM PETRELS
20,000 PAIRS



GPS

61° 38' 00" N
6° 42' 00" W

ACCESS

HELICO

TUNNELS

0

BLACK
GUILLEMOTS
50 PAIRS



POPULATION

10+0

FERRY NAME

—

SCENIC ROADS

0

DENSITY

2&0 inhab./km²

TERMINAL

—

CAMPGROUNDS

0

THE FAROE ISLANDS

STÓRA DÍMUN

Access by helicopter only

STÓRA DÍMUN covers an area of 2 km² (¾ sq mi)! It is inhabited by two couples from the same family.

Eva úr Dímun (named after the island) and Jógvan Jón live here with their two children. You can visit (by appointment) and meet this family, who will tell you about the island and its history. There is a lovely hike to the lighthouse, where you can see many birds, including a colony of puffins. Despite being so isolated, Stóra Dímun is a little patch of heaven. It's easy to understand why this family's ancestors decided to set up home here, and stay, eight generations ago.

If you need convincing, just watch this film:

vimeo.com/194690189

You will find more information and contact details here:

storadimun.fo

It is also possible to reach Stóra Dímun by boat, weather permitting.

More information here:

nordlysid.com

visitsandoy.fo

LÍTLA DÍMUN

LÍTLA DÍMUN has never been inhabited, for obvious reasons: it's essentially one craggy rock, covering an area of 800 m² (8,611 sq ft), 414 m (1,358 ft) high. Its extremely steep sides prevent any human settlement, even if there is a small plateau at its summit.

But although humans have never lived on the island, it is home to numerous sheep and a large colony of puffins.

Anecdote

In 1918, the Danish schooner **Caspe**, carrying a cargo of salt, was driven onto Lítla Dímun by a gale and wrecked. The six members of the crew were able to reach a narrow ledge just above the waves, but they had no food and the captain was badly injured. They managed to find a small cabin further up the island; inside, they found matches, fuel, and a lamp. They caught two sheep and were able to survive for seventeen days before being spotted and rescued by a fishing boat. One of the shipwrecked sailors eventually settled in the Faroe Islands. Ever since, the cabin has been left stocked with fuel, matches, tinned food, and drinking water, in case anyone else is shipwrecked here!



THE FAROE ISLANDS



THE FAROE ISLANDS “South Island”



AREA

164 km²

COMPARATIVE SIZE

4/18

GPS

61° 32' 00" N
6° 51' 00" W

POPULATION

4,600

DENSITY

28 inhab./km²

MAX. ALTITUDE

610 meters

HIGHEST POINT

GLUGGARNIR

ACCESS

FERRY #7

FERRY NAME

M/F SMYRIL

TERMINAL

TÓRSHAVN
TVØROYRI

LENGTH OF CROSSING

2 hours

DISTANCE TÓRSHAVN

2 hours

TUNNELS

4

SCENIC ROADS

2

CAMPGROUNDS

5

IMPORTANT BIRD AREA

NORTHERN
FULMARS
100,000 PAIRS



ATLANTIC
PUFFINS
70,000 PAIRS



BLACK-LEGGED
KITTIWAKES
39,000 PAIRS



COMMON
GUILLEMOTS
30,000 PAIRS



BLACK-LEGGED
KITTIWAKES
2,500 PAIRS



BLACK
GUILLEMOTS
400 PAIRS



EUROPEAN
SHAGS
200 PAIRS



Suðuroy is a little far, it's true. But it's really worth making the trip across the water.

It was with much excitement that I woke at dawn to catch the ferry **M/F SMYRIL**, which sails between **Tórshavn** and **Tvøroyri**. Departure: 7 a.m.

The two-hour crossing took us past **Stóra** and **Litla Dímun**. The light was phenomenal and would stay with me all morning.

Although I would suggest that two days are necessary to fully explore the island, you can, however, spend just one day here, given that the ferry makes two return trips a day. This was what I chose to do, being short on time.

I naturally headed straight for the south as soon as I arrived, too curious to discover **Sumba**, the only village on Suðuroy that faces the sea—the others shelter at the ends of fjords down the east coast. Sumba enjoys a quite exceptional position, but you have to get up high to realize this; so that's what we are going to do. Hold onto your hat!

ROUTE 91 + BEINISVØRÐ

Take the winding **Road 91** to the south of **Sumba**, heading north toward **Lopra**. This route will carry you effortlessly upward (by car, not bicycle!) to the highest cliff on Suðuroy: **Beinisdvørd**, at 470 m (1,540 ft). The view over the sumptuous landscape is simply amazing. Vertiginously impressive.

Park at the top and walk along the cliff in order to get different views of the western ridge of **Suðuroy**. Do take care at every step: this is a really dangerous place, and there are signs everywhere to remind you of that. Many people have lost their lives here, particularly those looking for eggs—a major food source up until the last century.



VIEW FROM BEINISVØRÐ

THE FAROE ISLANDS



🕒 10:47 am

📷 f/15

🔄 1/250

📏 200 mm

ISO 250

AKRABERG LIGHTHOUSE

Built in 1909, it stands 14 meters (46 feet) high and is one of the most important lighthouses in the Faroe Islands, since it is situated at the territory's southern tip, warning any seafarers coming from Europe of the archipelago's dangerous coasts.

It's an interesting lighthouse to photograph, even if the possible views are somewhat restricted, owing to a number of sheep pens blocking access. But if you have a drone, you'll be the big winner here.

THE EGGJARNAR CLIFFS

Continue north and stop in the village of **Vagur**, where a little road will take you to another unmissable viewpoint: **Eggjarnar**. From here, you get the reverse view across to the **Beinisvørð** cliffs I just told you about. And notice the numerous rocks (over 200) sticking out of the sea along the coast.

The Loran-A Station

The curious among you will spot the remains of a radio station. It was built by the Americans in 1943 as part of a wider network to assist Allied military planes and ships with navigation in the region. It remained in service until 1977.

THE FRODBA BASALT COLUMNS

If you stop in **Frodþa** and walk east along the coast a bit, you will see these beautiful basalt columns.



AKRABERG LIGHTHOUSE

THE FAROE ISLANDS



🕒 12:35 am

📷 f/7.1

⌚ 1/200

📏 33 mm

ISO 100



THE HVANNHAGI HIKE

Not to be missed under any circumstances!!!

Stop at the **Visit Suðuroy** office in **Tvøroyri** for further details about this relatively easy three-hour hike to one of the loveliest viewpoints in the Faroe Islands: the **Hvannhagi** cirque, with its lake nestling amid green pastures. It is an incredibly beautiful site, and what's more, you have Lítla Dímun as a backdrop.

But that's not all! Geologists refer to this region as a “geological Eldorado,” owing to the interesting geological phenomena found here, such as the giant boulders, which rolled down into the valley thousands of years ago.

This unique natural site will probably form one of the first protected nature parks in the Faroe Islands, along with **Mykines**. Indeed, this particular hike is a favorite of the Faroese.

SANDVIK + LES FALAISES DE ASMUNDARSTAKKUR

I found the village of **Sandvik**—isolated in a vast valley in the north of the island, beside a beach of black sand—to be discreet yet interesting. If you take the little road west, you will reach some lovely views over the cliffs of **Suðuroy's** northern tip.

On the left is another gorge, called **Láturgjogv**.

Further left, you have another opportunity to test your courage: a rudimentary wooden bridge links **Suðuroy** to **Rituskor** rock, with 200 meters (656 feet) of thin air beneath your feet. Do you dare?

Opposite you is the island's northernmost rock, **Ásmundarstakur**.

HVALBA

THE FAROE ISLANDS



PROFILES OF THE ISLANDS

THE FAROE ISLANDS

North
West

South
East





SIX EASY ESSENTIAL HIKES

VÁGAR



Northern fulmars
European storm petrels
European shags
Great skuas
Black-legged kittiwakes
Atlantic puffins
Common guillemots
Black guillemots

Fantastic hike area
Beautiful views over
Vestamna Cliffs
Sunset ++

Stunning landscape
Driftwood from Siberia
on the beach
Sunset ++

Slættanes
ghost town

Vestmanna

Heart shape lake

Sørvágur

Vatnsoyrar

Drangarnir
Arch Islet

★★★★
Bøur

One of the most
beautiful village in FO

Amazing landscape
Beautiful
Sea stacks

Geituskorardrangur
sea stack

Miðvágur

★★★★

Leitisva

Traelanipa Cliffs
Fantastic views over the
Bøsdalafossur waterfall

SIX EASY ESSENTIAL HIKES

THE FAROE ISLANDS



1 THE LAKE HIKE (Vágur)

2h30 there and back

This hike is a loop, starting at a little parking lot off a road, not far from **Miðvágur** church.

Photo spots

- Incredible view over the lake from the cliffs of **Trælanípa** (Slave Mountain)
- **Bøsdalafossur** waterfall
- View over the **Geituskorardrangur** sea stacks
- Fishermen's huts at the edge of the lake, **beside Road 40**

Best time

Sunrise ++

2 THE HIKE TO DRANGARNIR ROCK (Vágur)

5h there and back

This hike begins at the harbor in **Sørvágur** and will take you to the western tip of **Vágur**, which offers a magnificent view.

Photo spots:

Like a perfect alignment of stars, the Faroe Islands serves up an unusually ideal composition in this place. Lined up on the same axis, and presenting their best profiles, you will see:

- **Drangarnir** rock, which has an arch eroded through it
- **Tindohlmur** very close behind it
- **Mykines** in the background

It would really be a pity to miss this! It's not a difficult hike; you simply have to follow the path beside the sea. Don't venture up onto the slopes, just stay by the waterside. It will take around two hours to reach the viewpoint.

Best time

Sunset ++

1

THE FAROE ISLANDS



📷 10:38 am

🔍 7.1

⌚ 1/400

📏 61 mm

ISO 100

SIX EASY ESSENTIAL HIKES

THE FAROE ISLANDS



③ THE GASADALUR POSTMAN'S HIKE (Vágar)

2h30 → Gásadalur

Take the little road on the left, about a kilometer before the tunnel entrance, and park. You will see the path climbing up the southern flank of the mountain.

It's pretty steep, but not too difficult. At the top of the pass, you can add a stone to the giant cairn.

Photo spots:

- Magnificent views over [Tindhólmur](#), [Mykines](#), and [Gásadalur](#)

Aim for sunset (west-facing)

Best time

Sunset ++

④ THE SAKSUN LAGOON (Streymoy)

1h there and back

A short, very easy hike on the flat, that's perfect for families.

Drive to the little village of [Saksun](#). A sign indicates the start of the hike. Take the road that heads down toward the lagoon, and when it reaches the sand, just carry on walking. I advise going as far as the sea, where there is a beach. Last summer, I found a family of tourists swimming there, completely naked!

Photo spots:

- Numerous views over the lagoon, the waterfall, the mountains, the scattering of colorful houses, and sometimes a few fishermen.

Pay attention to the tide, which completely changes the appearance of the basin.

I did this hike several times, in both winter and summer. My favorite photographs were those I took in winter, at nightfall, with a high tide. There was something unreal that I can't explain.

Best time

Sunset ++



SIX EASY ESSENTIAL HIKES

THE FAROE ISLANDS



5 THE EIÐI HIKE (Eysturoy)

1h30 there and back

A short hike that gives you a lot for little effort. Park at the end of the last street at the top of **Eiði**. Go through the gate and follow the path; it will take you up to the **Eiðiskollur** promontory at 338 m (1,108 ft).

Photo spots:

- Many views over **Risin and Kellingin**, **Tjørnuvík** etc.

Best time

Sunset ++

6 THE KALLUR LIGHTHOUSE HIKE (Kalsoy)

1h30 there and back

Drive to **Trøllanes**. Park in the small parking lot then take the road heading north. Go through a red gate then climb the hill while skirting to the right; continue past the ruin and you'll soon see the little lighthouse.

Photo spots:

- Supernatural environment

You'll take the best photographs if you go right to the edge, but take care: it's dangerous and should never be attempted with a child, or on your own. Take no risks!

Best time

Sunset ++



BOAT TRIPS

THE FAROE ISLANDS

Boat trips are a must for photographers wanting to make the most of the Faroe Islands. The unique views you get from the sea show the cliffs in all their majesty.

Ferry routes, such as that to **Mykines**, provide these views at very reasonable cost. But I cannot recommend strongly enough going on a dedicated boat trip, which will take you to the best spots—weather permitting.

✧ Vestmanna bird cliffs

Between May and September, this two-hour boat trip is not to be missed. You'll cruise through the natural slits and channels of **Vestmannabjörgini** and will assuredly bring back some beautiful images.

puffin.fo/en/

✧ Norðlýsið

Cruise aboard a very beautiful sailboat and enjoy magnificent views of the islands.

nordlysid.com

✧ Dragin

Explore the northern islands aboard the sailboat **Dragin**, which departs **Klaksvík** between May and September. You can even bring your fishing rod with you! Trips last four hours.

There's no website, but details are available from **Visit Nordoy**

✧ MS Thorshavn

Explore the southern islands aboard a pretty sailboat departing **Tórshavn**. There's no website, but they can be contacted via their Facebook page:

facebook.com/Thorshavn/

✧ RIB62

Sigmund and Mortan will take you out in their powerful Zodiacs around **Streymoy**, with trips to **Hestur** and **Koltur** especially recommended.

rib62.com

VESTAMANNA CLIFFS

THE FAROE ISLANDS



SUGGESTED ITINERARY

THE FAROE ISLANDS

THREE-DAY TRIP

If you're taking the ferry to Iceland, you have the possibility of spending three days in the Faroes.

Assuming an arrival on Sunday evening at 10:30 p.m. and a departure on Wednesday at 6 p.m., I propose the following program.

ACCOMMODATION: Tórshavn

TRANSPORT: Car or bus

Day 1

VÁGAR

THE LAKE HIKE (2h)

Picnic

THE POSTMAN'S HIKE (3h)

Return to Tórshavn

Stroll, dinner

Day 2

STREYMOY & EYSTUROY

SAKSUN + LAGOON HIKE

Picnic

TJØRNUVÍK → EYSTUROY → EIÐI (optional hike lasting 1h30)

Return to Tórshavn

Stroll, dinner

Jour 3

EYSTUROY & STREYMOY

GJÓGV

Picnic

THE MOUNTAIN ROADS: 61, 60, 62, 63

Then return to STREYMOY

Optional Roads: 50, 55, 12, 58 (as you wish, they're not far from the capital).

Return to Tórshavn by 3:30 p.m. at the latest to be sure of making the ferry.



SUGGESTED ITINERARY

THE FAROE ISLANDS

ONE-WEEK TRIP

If you're staying for at least a week, it's wise to plan one "day off" in case of bad weather. You can spend the time making backups, looking through your images, and going shopping. Plan your program according to your priorities, and make sure you do the most important things first.

Day 1

VÁGAR

LAKE HIKE, BØUR + GÁSADALUR

Day 2

STREYMOY

SAKSUN + TJØRNUVÍK

Day 3

EYSTUROY EXPLORATION

EIÐI, GJÓGV, FUNINGUR, ELDUVIK, OYNDARFJØRÐUR, HELLURNAR, FUGLAFJØRÐUR, RITUVIK, RUNAVIK

Day 4

KALSOY + KUNOY

KALLUR LIGHTHOUSE

Day 5

Viðoy

VIÐAREIÐI HIKE

Day 6

MYKINES

DAY TRIP

Day 7

TÓRSHAVN



SUGGESTED ITINERARY

THE FAROE ISLANDS

TWO-WEEK TRIP

You have plenty of time!

Use the extra time to explore in depth. Once again, plan your trips according to what you want to see most. Don't keep the best till last, the weather may be against you!

WEEK 1

Day 1

VÁGAR

BØUR + GÁSADALUR

Day 2

STREYMOY

SAKSUN + TJØRNUVÍK

Day 3

EYSTUROY EXPLORATION

EIÐI, GJÓGV, FUNINGUR, ELDUVIK, OYNDARFJØRÐUR, HELLURNAR, FUGLAFJØRÐUR, RITUVIK, RUNAVIK

Day 4

KALSOY + KUNOY

KALLUR LIGHTHOUSE

Day 5

Viðoy

VIÐAREIÐI HIKE

Day 6

MYKINES

Day 7

TÓRSHAVN (Take a day off)

WEEK 2

Day 8

VÁGAR

DRANGARNIR ROCK

Day 9

SUÐUROY (SOUTH)

Day 10

SUÐUROY (NORTH)

Day 11

SANDØY

Day 12

SVINØY + FUGLOY

Day 13

NOLSOY

HIKE TO THE LIGHTHOUSE

Day 14

VESTMANNA CLIFFS

BOAT TRIP

PHOTOGRAPHIC EQUIPMENT

THE FAROE ISLANDS

The Faroe Islands don't require any special photographic gear, but do take the following protective measures, which will not be unfamiliar if you have experienced the Icelandic weather conditions, which are similar.

The most important

Make sure that you and your gear are well protected from rain and wind. Your tripod should be heavy enough to withstand strong gusts. Above all, don't forget rain sleeves to protect your camera bodies if you're hiking. I had the bitter experience of killing one of my two Canon 5DS R bodies (€3,800/\$4,500!) following a violent squall on [Vágar](#). I was overconfident, never having had a problem in the course of nine expeditions to Iceland. Spread the word: the rain in the Faroe Islands is wetter than anywhere else.

Equipment I used for my first two trips

- 2 Canon 5DS R bodies
- Canon **100 - 400 II**
- Canon **24-70 F2,8 II**
- Canon **70 - 200 F4**
- Canon **50 mm f1.4** (summer trip)
- Canon **24 mm f1.2** (summer trip)
- Rain sleeve
- Batteries (four)
- **LEXAR 128 GB** memory cards (six)
- 13-inch **MacBook Pro**
- 2 TB **WD my Passport** Ultra hard drive

TAKEN BUT NOT USED

- **RRS panoramic system** (rail + head)
- **GITZO** tripod
- **RRS** mini tripod
- **Lee** filters
- Canon Remote control

ARCHIVING

THE FAROE ISLANDS

ARCHIVING AND DOUBLE BACKUP SYSTEM

I use a 128 GB card in each body.

Every evening, I copy the day's photographs onto a **2 TB WD my Passport Ultra** external hard drive via my 13-inch **MacBook Pro**. The photographs are backed up in a dated folder (YEAR-MONTH-DAY) for each day. I then import them into **Adobe LIGHTROOM**.

I never wipe my memory cards. That way I avoid any handling errors and I have a double backup: external HD + memory cards.

When I return to Paris, I check everything then make a second hard-drive backup. Only then do I format my memory cards.

Finally, I create an “**iPhone**” folder in which I copy all the photographs and videos taken with my smartphone. I then import that folder into Lightroom in order to have all of my DSLR/smartphone media in one big folder, which I name “**2018 – FAROE ISLANDS – SUMMER**,” for example.



STATISTICS

THE FAROE ISLANDS



PHOTOGRAPHIC STATISTICS

I take a lot of scouting and illustration photographs to produce the guide.
So the number of photographs taken is therefore quite important.

SUMMER TRIP 2017 (22 DAYS)

Number of photographs taken: 10,324

17-40 mm: 2,217 (21%)

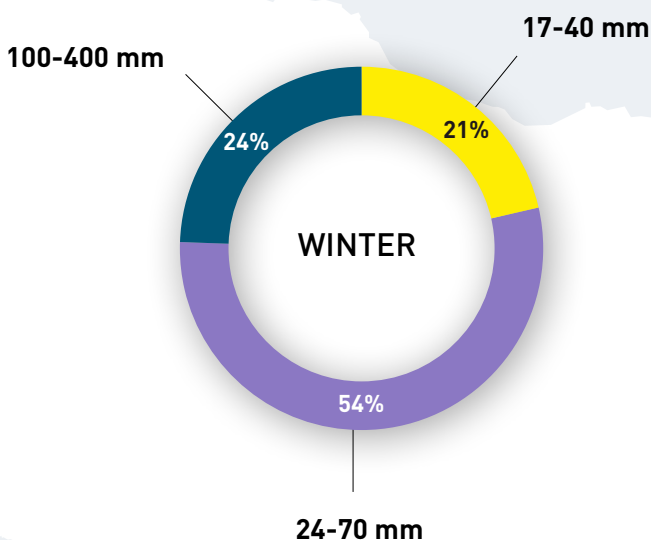
24-70 mm: 5,608 (54%)

70-200 mm: 2 (0,01% autofocus motor broke)

100-400 mm: 2,496 (24%)

Tripods not used

Filters not used



SUMMER TRIP 2017 (16 DAYS)

Number of photographs taken: 8,605

17-40 mm : 659 (8%)

24-70 mm : 3014 (35%)

24 mm f1.2 : 950 (11%)

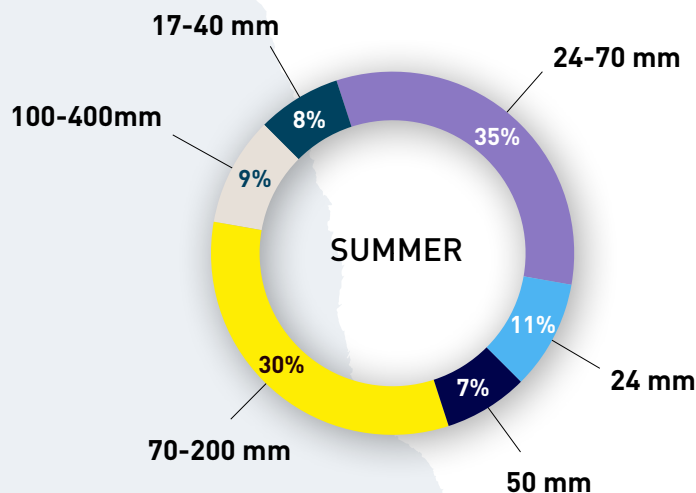
50 mm f1.4 : 635 (7%)

70-200 mm : 253 (30% after repair by Canon)

100-400 mm : 814 (9%)

Tripods not used

Filters not used





As you can see, I also took the **24 mm f1.4** and the **50 mm f1.4** with me for my summer trip, since I had planned to take some portraits and “reportage” style photographs, having been lucky enough to have been invited to a wedding on **Mykines**. I used them a lot.

You will also notice that I didn’t use my filters. Over time, I have developed a taste for more natural photographs with no artifice; a desire to get back to the essentials, which simplifies my life considerably.

I have come to realize something quite obvious: the lighter a photographer travels, the more instinctive they are.

What’s more, taking “pretty” or “decorative” photographs doesn’t interest me. I of course understand that one tries to do that at the beginning, in order to prove one is capable of it, but these days I prefer to focus on sensations, feelings, emotions, and, if possible, poetry.

When you’re in the Faroe Islands, you must accept that you’re going to be playing hide-and-seek with the light. So be as free as the wind in your hair. Don’t weigh yourself down. Capture the magic of the moment.

Get up early: the fjords are a foundry of pure gold in the first rays of sunlight. **Go to bed late** to capture the last stirrings of day. Night can also hold plenty of surprises, particularly those cold winter nights when the northern lights might just make an appearance!

If I could only take two lenses with me?

The **24-70 mm** around my neck and the **100-400 mm** in my bag to capture detail far away. You might find the size of the latter a little off-putting, but it is an excellent lens to travel with, since it has so many uses and provides superb image quality. Note that a 70-200 mm is more than sufficient for photographing birds.

I use my wide-angle less and less, since it deforms and flattens the verticals. Instead, I use a more natural lens, the 24-70 mm. That said, my **17-40 mm** was quite useful in the cramped helicopter cabin or on the boat tour of the **Vestamanna cliffs**, when we were very close to the rock.

Final tip: NEVER put your camera away in rain or fog. Simply protect it. Difficult conditions are often the most fertile for beautiful images.

JOHAN

THE FAROE ISLANDS



🕒 9:52 pm

📷 *f/1.6*

⌚ *1/640*

📏 *24 mm*

ISO 100

DRONE LEGISLATION

THE FAROE ISLANDS

FOR FLYING PHOTOGRAPHERS

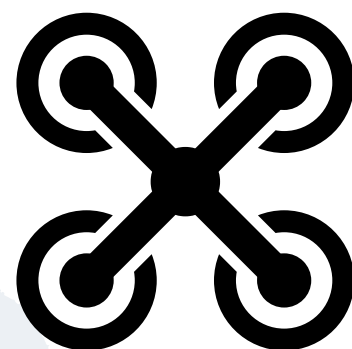
Drone enthusiasts rejoice: there are currently few restrictions on their use in the Faroe Islands, since there is relatively little of that activity in the country—at least for the moment.

But the increasing numbers of tourists and photographers make me think that new regulations will be introduced, particularly since the Faroe Islands are—lest we forget—a sanctuary for birds.

There are some regulations, though, and I encourage you to respect them to the letter:

- Drones must not exceed 25 kg (most are much lighter than that).
- Do not fly within 150 meters (500 feet) of a village or town, or within 150 meters of the main roads connecting villages.
- Do not fly within five kilometers (three miles) of Vágar airport.
- Do not fly over summer houses, campgrounds, or places where people gather—such as festivals.
- Do not fly more than 100 meters (330 feet) from the ground.
- Drones must be insured.

It is important to keep an eye on updates to the regulations on this page:
visitfaroeislands.com/plan-your-stay/practical-information-2/drones/



GLOSSARY

THE FAROE ISLANDS

THE LANGUAGE

A little glossary of the basics

Faroese is an inflected language that resembles Icelandic a lot: it uses the same structure, which involves combining several existing words to make a new word. If you know a little Icelandic, you will find yourself on familiar territory.



ENGLISH	/	FAROESE	/	ICELANDIC
<i>yes</i>		<i>ja</i>		<i>já</i>
<i>no</i>		<i>nei</i>		<i>nei</i>
<i>hello</i>		<i>góðan dag</i>		<i>góðan daginn</i>
<i>goodbye</i>		<i>farvæl</i>		<i>bless</i>
<i>thanks a lot</i>		<i>takk fyri</i>		<i>takk fyrir</i>
<i>mountain</i>		<i>-fjall</i>		<i>-fjall</i>
<i>summit</i>		<i>tindur</i>		<i>tindur</i>
<i>valley</i>		<i>-dalur</i>		<i>-dalurinn</i>
<i>waterfall</i>		<i>-fossur</i>		<i>-foss</i>
<i>lake</i>		<i>-vatn</i>		<i>-vatn</i>
<i>fjord</i>		<i>-fjørður</i>		<i>-fjørður</i>
<i>fault</i>		<i>gjóta</i>		<i>-gjá</i>
<i>gorge</i>		<i>gjógv</i>		<i>-gljúfur</i>
<i>strait</i>		<i>sund</i>		<i>sund</i>
<i>crater</i>		<i>gosop</i>		<i>-gigur</i>
<i>iland</i>		<i>oyggj</i>		<i>eyjan</i>
<i>islet</i>		<i>hólmur</i>		<i>hólmur</i>
<i>road or way</i>		<i>vegur</i>		<i>vegur</i>
<i>sea stack</i>		<i>drangur</i>		<i>drangur</i>
<i>lighthouse</i>		<i>viti</i>		<i>viti</i>
<i>tunnel</i>		<i>gong</i>		<i>göng</i>

APPENDICES

THE FAROE ISLANDS

THE LOCAL OFFICES OF VISIT FAROE ISLANDS

With your logistical preparations complete, you are all set to go on an adventure! I cannot recommend highly enough that you drop in to the local offices of **Visit Faroe Islands** and **Visit Tórshavn**. There you will find plenty of maps, tips, timetables, and activities. The people in these local offices are experts on their area; they can tell you about different hikes and their potential dangers, and maybe share with you a few closely guarded secrets.

visitfaroeislands.com

visiteysturoy.fo

visitnordoy.fo

visitSuduroy.fo

visitsandoy.fo

visitnolsoy.fo

visitVagar.fo

visitTorshavn.fo

ESSENTIAL PHONE NUMBERS

Country prefix +298

Emergency number 112

Police +298 351448

Medical assistance 1870

Dental emergency +298 314544

Number information 118

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The great team at Visit Faroe Islands and Visit Tórshavn

Guðrið, Súsanna, Brynhild, Bárður, Levi, Marjun, Theresa, Sølvi, Tordis, Kristina, Elsa, Heidi...

-

Guðrun, Johan, Rógvi and his family, Anthony, Chris, Thomas...

All the kind and helpful people I met in Tórshavn, on Mykines and across this wonderful country.

USE OF THIS GUIDE

THE FAROE ISLANDS

USE OF THIS GUIDE

This production of this guide involved several months of research and writing.

I hope you liked it.

It is reserved for strictly personal use.

I ask that you respect its copyright.

This is what you may and may not do with this guide:

YOU MAY

Use and enjoy it anyplace, anytime! You can download and read the guide on your personal electronic devices (tablet, phone, computer). Since the guide is in PDF format, I would recommend you read it using Acrobat Reader (which is free), but you can use any app or software you like.



You may also print out the guide, if you wish, either in whole or in part, it's up to you!

YOU MAY NOT

- copy all or part of the guide;
- extract pages or split it into several parts;
- share or copy the content;
- give the guide to anyone.

Please contact me if you have any questions:

info@international-photographer.com

TIP



I suggest that you create an INTERNATIONAL PHOTOGRAPHER folder on your Google Drive or Dropbox. That way, your digital guides will follow you wherever you travel!

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Michaël LEVY was born in Toulouse on 29th June 1971

- He spent the first years of his life in a small village in the Lot region of **south-west France**, not far from the town of **Cahors**, then moved to a village 50 kilometers (30 miles) south of **Toulouse** at the age of ten.
- His childhood was punctuated by two sad events: the death of his father when Michaël was only 13; a loss of vision in his right eye from cancer, when he was 15.
- Drawn to the arts from a young age, he started playing the violin aged five, followed by the piano, and the guitar, before turning his hand to drawing; he bought himself his first camera when he was 20 (a **Minolta X 700** with a **50 mm f/1.7 lens**).
- This marked a turning point in Michaël's life. He spent his days shooting roll after roll of Kodak film (**T-MAX** and **TRI-X**) and his nights making enlargements in his bathroom/darkroom.
- In 1998, he enrolled at a graphic design school to perfect his skills.
- In 2008, he undertook his first **PHOTOGRAPHIC ROADTRIP**, to the United States.
- Following numerous requests and questions from a wide variety of readers, Michaël decided to create a series of tools for travelers/photographers.
- Two guides appeared in 2010 and 2011: **SOUTHWEST eROADBOOK**, and **ICELAND eROADBOOK**.
- In 2012, Michaël LEVY registered the trademark **INTERNATIONAL PHOTOGRAPHER** and published the very first geographical map for travel photographers: **ICELAND V1 (SOLD OUT)**
- In 2013 **ICELAND V2** is published (**SOLD OUT**)
- In 2014 **ICELAND V3** is published
- In 2018: **New website, FAROE ISLANDS MAP V1 + eROADBOOK + DIGITAL ATLAS**

Next destination: Wonderful Scotland!

OFFICIAL SPONSOR

THE FAROE ISLANDS



Visit Faroe Islands

Official Tourist Board of the Faroe Islands

FAROE ISLANDS

eROADBOOK



This eROADBOOK was written and produced by MICHAEL LEVY ©

English translation by Roland Glasser ©

Photographs and maps by Michael LEVY ©

The entire content is protected by copyright.

Any reproduction is strictly prohibited.



ISBN 979-10-92378-04-7

Legal deposit BnF May 2018



📷 4:42 pm

📷 *f/8*

🕒 20 sec

📷 35 mm

ISO 100

