

# Welcome

Report No. 3, February 2018

to the 3rd Update Report on the  
Arctic Coast Way – Norðurstrandarleið

## Time for Experiences!

The Arctic Coast Way is much more than a new touring option! It is about unique experiences connecting visitors to the northern coast of Iceland by engaging their interest and immersing them in its nature, its people and its culture – to create lifetime memories and unforgettable stories which the visitors pass on as advocates for the Arctic Coast Way!

Since we created the concept for the Arctic Coast Way we have made it clear that it aims to be much more than just a new driving option but is an experience route which entrances visitors and encourages them to spend more time out of the car than in. Today's tourists expect more than sightseeing, they look for meaningful experiences – and the Arctic Coast Way is the place to find!

What makes the Arctic Coast Way unique? What are the hero experiences which show the heart of the Arctic Coast Way and deliver the unforgettable experiences our visitors will want to share in their stories?

We need you to find and develop these hero experiences! The exciting process of creating experiences will be in cooperation with our consultancy from the UK, Blue Sail. In April we will have 3 creative sessions along the Arctic Coast Way as a core element for the experience development. Please share with us your thoughts and feelings about the Arctic Coast Way so that we can create together something unique for the travel market!

# What is Experience Development?

**Experiential Travel**  
*Travel that engages travellers in a series of memorable events, that are revealed over time, are inherently personal, involve the senses, and make a connection on an emotional, physical, spiritual or intellectual level*

Canadian Tourism Commission

What is it all about? Experience development is a process to identify what is unique about the Arctic Coast Way and what are the authentic strengths that give us a competitive advantage on international markets. We look for these hero experiences that respond to consumer demand and have the potential to support sustainable growth for the companies and communities. Experience development helps businesses to create their individual offers according to the identified unique strengths. This involves creating experiences that will engage all the visitors' senses, immerse them actively, fill their souls and hearts and connect them to the places, to the locals and their life along the coast of North Iceland. These hero experiences will create lifelong memories and will be the basis of gripping stories our visitors take back to their families and friends encouraging them to be our next visitors and return again and again themselves.

Let's set the stage to encourage visitors to experience the Arctic Coast Way! The creative sessions in April 2018 in 3 zones of the Arctic Coast Way are all about answering these leading questions:

- › **We are different here – but why?**
- › **What can be done only here and nowhere else?**
- › **How can we involve visitors in our everyday life and provide hands-on interactive experiences?**
- › **How can we work together better? With whom can we partner to package and create more unique experiences?**
- › **Who are the experts and those with a treasure trove of knowledge in our community?**

By answering these questions, we set the Arctic Coast Way apart from all other destinations, connect the route to the demands of the target groups and become ready for a strong promise to broadcast to visitors!

# Why to do it for the Arctic Coast Way?

***“Tourism product is what you BUY. Tourism experience is what you REMEMBER!”***

Canadian Tourism Commission



The Arctic Coast Way guides its visitors about 800 km along the coastline of North Iceland. Just as its landscapes are many and various so are the faces and voices of the Arctic Coast Way, as it combines 17 municipalities, 21 villages and some hundred local businesses all with individual offers. Experience development aims to bring all these various elements together and create a single face and a single voice to portray a clear promise for a unique Arctic Coast Way, strong enough to be recognized around the world.

Experience development helps us to deliver the goals we have established for the development of the Arctic Coast Way.

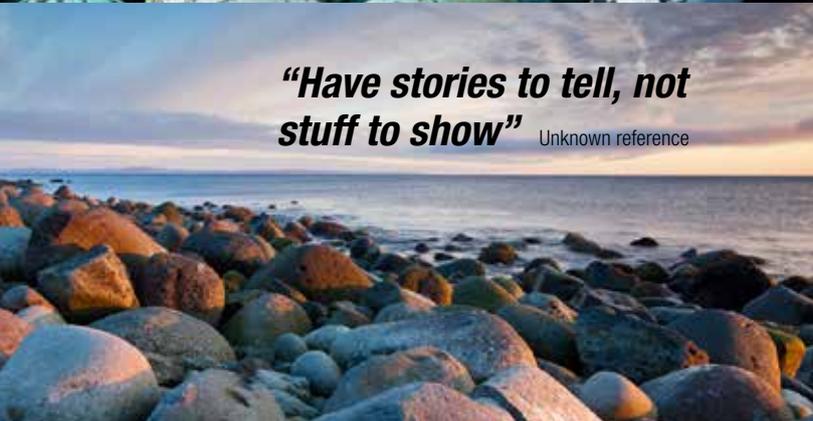
## The strong points of why to engage in experience development are:

- › **it is a response to market trends**
- › **it has competitive advantage on the competing international market**
- › **it attracts visitors and motivate them to choose this destination over those of competitors**
- › **it encourages visitors to stay longer and spend more**
- › **it supports sustainable development; promotes lower volume, higher value tourism**
- › **it encourages word of mouth and repeat business**
- › **it focuses on experiences that are not widely available, not mainstream or mass market**
- › **it provides reasons to travel outside peak times and explore beyond the “honeypots”**



# Why take part?

**“Have stories to tell, not stuff to show”** Unknown reference



Experience development is not just a single step we take before launching the Arctic Coast Way. It will only work if it is recognized as a long-term strategy. It might mean some extra work for providers to take part in these exciting transformational processes to transfer existing products into trendsetting hero experiences, but why is it worth to do?

## Experience development helps providers:

- › to take part in a new trend of worldwide tourism development
- › to attract higher end, more educated, more socially, culturally and environmentally conscious travellers
- › to get a stronger profile to achieve visibility and “cutting edge” products on the crowded international marketplace
- › to strengthen their unique brand and the shared story they tell



**Become a pioneer as an hero experience developer!**

Be one of the first to rise to the challenge and become a leading champion for the Arctic Coast Way. Those providers who support this process and develop hero experiences in accordance to the experience development plan for the Arctic Coast Way, will get the strongest position in Arctic Coast Way marketing, especially in the international marketing, as these experiences represent the promise of the Arctic Coast Way.



# Food Experience – taste the Arctic Coast Way

*“Learn something by doing  
something with someone who  
lives here.”*

Experience PEI.com

We decided already to place local food in a special position in experience development; and food-experiences will therefore be involved in the entire experience development process in order to best connect it with the other hero experiences.

Food-experiences are of a huge interest in the international travel market. Food is not just a big part of a successful and enjoyable holiday, but food-experiences connect travellers in a very emotional way to a place. Food production and food preparation is a huge part of any culture. With food experience development, we want to strengthen this important part of a successful journey to North Iceland.

In the creative sessions in April with Blue Sail we aim to bring together all tourism stakeholders and also food producers, event organisers, cafes and restaurants. We provide easy network access and start to develop food-experience packages. Later in the process, on XX.XX. 2018, will be an extra session just for the food stakeholders to develop in detail the food-experiences.

**Food experience is more than delicious food on a plate. It is about immersing the visitors actively and with all their senses to the specific taste and food culture of North Iceland. Food-experiences are an increasing worldwide trend.**

## Get inspired here:

### Learn to make Karelian pie:

<http://www.visitkarelia.fi/en/Travelling/hakutulos?product=6fb63c62-0190-46bc-9469-7058079afb37&list=true&adults=undefined>

### Lobster Bay Culinary Adventures

<http://www.novascotia.com/packages/experiences/lobster-bay-culinary-adventures/201472>

### Best of Halifax Foodie

<http://www.novascotia.com/packages/experiences/best-of-halifax-foodie-adventure/203635>

### Lighthouse Bites

<http://www.novascotia.com/packages/experiences/lighthouse-bites-full-moon-adventure/203634>

### Learn cooking on a farm with a chef

[http://kiltedchef.ca/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=133&catid=2&Itemid=101](http://kiltedchef.ca/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=133&catid=2&Itemid=101)

### From guesthouse to guesthouse cuisine tour

<http://www.visitkarelia.fi/en/Travelling/hakutulos?product=e064c775-9844-497f-bdc0-2d1a9e399099&list=true&adults=2>

### The Food Hike on the Roots, Rants and Roars festival

<https://www.rootsrantsandroars.ca/events->

# How do we do it?

## Block your dates already

**Seats are limited!  
Registration starts on  
26th March 2018!**

The experience development process started in November 2017 with a start-up workshop. The steering committee, Markaðsstofa Norðurlands and Blue Sail met for a half-day's creative session to collect emotions, feelings and opinions on the Arctic Coast Way.

### **Analyses – November 2017-March 2018**

Blue Sail will use the first impressions and results from the start-up meeting together with data about the destination North Iceland and Iceland to analyse target groups and travel medias, reviewing businesses along the Arctic Coast Way and experiences which exist so far and will review the Arctic Coast Way in comparison to other touring routes.

### **All working together for something unique – Creative Sessions April 2018**

**24.04.2018 Sauðárkrókur**

**25.04.2018 Akureyri**

**26.04.2018 Ásbyrgi**

We need you to take part in these interactive creative sessions; to think about the sense of place and experiences from a visitor's perspective, to support us through your local detailed knowledge and to unearth and develop the stories you want to tell and the hero experiences you can provide to bring the unique character of the Arctic Coast Way to life.

In summer 2018 Blue Sail will be in North Iceland doing in-depth interviews with stakeholders and providers plus on-territory experience research. All these elements and the results from the April-sessions will help design both an experience development plan for the Arctic Coast Way and an experience Tool Kit for providers.

### **Learning and Finishing off**

#### **– Briefing session in autumn**

A comprehensive session in Akureyri invites all participants of the April sessions to come together and discuss the recommendations Blue Sail will present for the Arctic Coast Way. The aim of the meeting is:

- › **to think further about the experience, how it currently meets visitors' needs and how it might need to be improved**
- › **to learn about and test the developed draft of the experience tool kit for providers**
- › **to discuss ways to strengthen the western and eastern region, and how to extend the season**
- › **to explore how the approach can be applied in providers' own individual operations and municipalities**

### **Ready to go**

#### **– the tool kit and the development plan October/November 2018**

Blue Sails delivers the final easy-to-snap-up experience development plan for the Arctic Coast Way and the final experience tool kit for the providers to support them in their individual efforts to develop their own experiences in accordance with the defined Arctic Coast Way hero experiences.



## You are not alone – into the future

After the cooperation with Blue Sail, Markaðsstofa Norðurlands will take over the continuing support of companies who become members of the Arctic Coast Way; helping them in their individual experience development and packaging, and, working with them to create the best possible outcome.

## A new partner for the Arctic Coast Way – Matarauður Íslands

We are very happy to cooperate with Matarauður Íslands and we appreciate their support in food-experience development by funding and contribution of knowledge. The financial support will span two years and cover the consultancy of Blue Sail for the development of food-experiences in 2018. In 2019 the focus will be on selected marketing materials, for example a food-passport for the Arctic Coast Way. Cooperation with Matarauður Íslands gives substantial support and opens up great opportunities for food stakeholders along the Arctic Coast Way to strengthen their businesses by participating in the food-experience development and allowing visitors to “taste the Arctic Coast Way”; thus attracting international attention and providing enhanced visibility for their businesses and products.

## BLUE SAIL

Blue Sail is a specialist destination consultancy – they help visitor destinations with their strategies and plans for tourism development and have extensive experience in helping “far-flung” rural coasts, with advice on attracting visitors to: Ireland’s Atlantic coast, Scotland’s North East coast, England’s Isles of Scilly archipelago, and the protected coastal Grands Sites of northern France. They are currently working on developing a touring route around the coast and Cairngorm Mountains of Aberdeenshire in Scotland, developing the Lakelands of Fermanagh in Northern Ireland, experience development planning for Ireland’s Ancient East, and new festivals to extend the tourist season for clients in Scotland and Ireland.

**Amanda Shepherd** is the creative director behind Blue Sail’s Shared Story approach. A natural storyteller and communicator, she’s an expert on helping places find their voice – working with locals on sense of place, creating place stories and distinctive experiences. She grew up by the sea and she’s got coastal tourism in her DNA.

**Lorna Easton** is one of the UK’s best-known destination marketers, Lorna’s the go-to person if you want to understand market trends and find the right visitors for you. Cultural tourism is a particular passion. She brings valuable experience as former director of marketing for Visit Scotland

**Neen Kelly** is Blue Sail’s specialist in outdoors tourism – both marketing and development. She has particular experience in developing adventure, activity and nature-based tourism – working with national parks, regions and businesses.



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Thanks to:



**Please note:**

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