

Stokrotka

Culinarily speaking, it's rare to find a "hidden gem" in Reykjavík since so many restaurants are so alike. So it's probably appropriate that the gem I recently discovered is not in fact in Reykjavík, but in Hafnarfjörður, a small town on the capital's outskirts.

Stokrotka has been open for almost three years. It's a specialized food shop selling imported Polish products, originally marketed to the hundreds of Poles living in the Reykjavík area, but now also popular with the many others who enjoy sausages, sauerkraut and pierogies.

Stokrotka now also qualifies as a restaurant because Maria Valgeirsson, the enterprising woman who owns the business has set up two tables - comfortably seating no more than eight - for a weekday lunch service. The tables are set in their own section of the small store and everyday there is a different Polish dish (or two) to choose from. On my visit the meat options were Polish meatballs (*kotlet mielony*) or *kielbasa* sausage with onions. The sides dishes were green beans and *kopytka*, a mixture of potatoes and flour deliciously fried and flavoured with herbs.

The portions were generous and the food hearty and unpretentious in the way that only home-cooked food can be. If the food was slightly salty, it only made me wish I had had some Polish vodka to wash everything down.

Best of all, it seems we were being charged in the ISK equivalent of zloty. This generous lunch for two with meat, vegetables and potatoes, cost a miniscule ISK 925 in total. Never before have I had a sit-down home cooked meal in Reykjavík for this price. Then again, this was Hafnarfjörður, where the livin' is easy.

When lunch was finished I completed my shopping for the day, indulging in the treats I can't find at my local shop: blueberry filled pierogies, long chains of *kielbasa* and the sweetened flaky sesame bar that is the popular *chalwa*.

It may be in the outer reaches of a town in the outer reaches of Reykjavík, but the journey to Stokrotka is well worth it. Iceland can finally learn that there is more to Polish cuisine than Prins Póló chocolate bars.

Hvaleyrarbraut 35, Hafnarfjörður
Lunch served on weekdays
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