**Delightful Icelandic Words and Phrases**

**"I COME COMPLETELY FROM THE MOUNTAINS." - *Ég kem alveg af fjöllum.***

When you have no idea what people are talking about, you can use this handy phrase. This phrase means that someone is completely out of the loop and has no idea what is going on.

Sentence: “*What are you guys talking about? I come completely from the mountains!*”

**"I WILL FIND OUT YOU ON A BEACH." - *Ég mun finna þig í fjöru.***

If you're Icelandic, beware of the beach: [This idiom](http://www.iheartreykjavik.net/2015/03/15-peculiar-icelandic-phrases/) (or threat) means, “I will get back at you,” “I’ll get my revenge,” or “Don’t make me hurt you.”

**RATlLJÓST**

If you ever need to find your way out of a cave, or just navigate to the kitchen in the middle of the night to snack on some [hangikjöt](http://www.planiceland.com/5-best-and-5-worst-foods/), this word will come in handy—it basically [translates](http://digicoll.library.wisc.edu/cgi-bin/IcelOnline/IcelOnline.TEId-idx?type=simple&size=First+100&rgn=lemma&q1=rata&submit=Search) [to](http://digicoll.library.wisc.edu/cgi-bin/IcelOnline/IcelOnline.TEId-idx?type=entry&eid=LJO1S-1&q1=lj%F3s) “enough light to navigate.”

**GLUGGAVEÐUR**

This word gets a lot of traction in Iceland: It means “[window-weather](http://grapevine.is/news/2013/11/08/thirty-semifinalists-chosen-for-most-beautiful-icelandic-word/).” As in, the kind of weather that’s nice to look at, but not experience. A very special Icelandic saying is window-weather. It means that when you look outside the window it looks like the weather is amazing, but when you go outside it is actually really cold. Therefore, it is called window weather.

Sentence: “*I really wanted to go to the beach after I looked out the window, but I realized that it is just window weather*.”

**“THEY SPLASH THE SKYR WHO OWN IT." - *Þeir sletta skyrinu sem eiga það.***

Skyr is an Icelandic yogurt-like dairy product and it’s been used for sustenance as well as [ammunition](http://www.seriouseats.com/2012/05/behind-the-scenes-at-a-skyr-factory-iceland-yogurt-how-it-is-made.html) for years. This saying is analogous to “people who live in glass houses shouldn't throw stones.” It’s used [ironically](http://lisibo.com/2011/02/icelandic-sayings-on-saturday-7/) when referencing people who think they can do anything just because they have money.

**"THERE ARE SO MANY WONDERS IN A COW'S HEAD." - *Það eru margar undur í höfuðkúpu.***

You [might find](http://www.lifehack.org/articles/lifestyle/phrases-become-nonsense-when-translated-into-english.html?bd=2015527) occasion to say this anytime something strange or amazing happens. As an added bonus, it's much more elegant-sounding than “Man, the world is nutso.”

**"TO LAY YOUR HEAD IN WATER." *- Að leggja höfuðið í bleyti***

While “on a pillow” might be the more logical place to rest your head, [this phrase](http://www.iheartreykjavik.net/2015/03/15-peculiar-icelandic-phrases/) suggests you put it in water to soak when you need to spend some time working something out or coming up with a new idea. This is kind of like saying, "sleep on it."

When you really have to think deeply about something or make a decision on something, Icelandic people use the phrase “lay your head in water”.

Sentence: “*I don’t know what to do. I’m going to lay my head in water and figure it out*”

**"THAT IS THE RAISIN AT THE END OF THE SAUSAGE." - Það er rúsínan í pylsuendanum.**

This phrase is used to describe a pleasant surprise or the highlight of something. It's a nice supplement to an already wonderful treat. Or something.

Sentence: “*Seeing the northern lights in Iceland was the raisin at the end of the hot dog.*”

Something that comes as a surprise at the end of something, something extra that wasn’t expected. Usually something positive.

Sentence: “*Ryan Gosling taking his top off at the end of the already fantastic film was the raisin in the end of the hot dog.”*

### **Nimmst Du mich auf den Arm? - Ertu að grinast?**

**Totally Out Driving - *Alveg Út Að Aka***

If somebody is acting crazy or is completely off about something, Icelandic people say that that person is totally or completely out driving.

Sentence: “*Am I right to do this or am I totally out driving?*”

**"NO MITTEN-GRABBING/MITTEN-TAKES." - *Nú duga engin vettlingatök.***

When you want something [done carefully](http://grapevine.is/mag/articles/2004/08/20/the-politeness-of-icelanders/) and properly, this is the phrase to use.

**"ON WITH THE BUTTER!" - *Áfram með smjörið.***

One of Tim Gunn’s favorite phrases, “Carry on,” directly channels this Nordic saying. Keep doing what you’re doing, forge ahead, keep on keepin' on, [get to work](http://antialiasis.tumblr.com/post/115767992010/icelandic-fact-of-the-moment-8), keep moving—any of these could work on Project Runway, but “on with the butter” is definitely the catchiest.

When people are not doing their jobs, you can tell them to get on with the butter. This is a phrase used when you really need to get something done.

Sentence: “*Stop slacking, get on with the butter!*”

***VAÐLAHEIÐARVEGAVINNUVERKFÆRAGEYMSLUSKÚRAÚTIDYRALYKLAKIPPUHRINGUR***

Yep, [this is a word](http://icelandinpictures.com/post/26336819147/longest-word-in-icelandic), and it means "key ring of the key chain of the outer door to the storage tool shed of the road workers on the Vaðlaheiði" from which you might be able to glean that it’s largely (OK, pretty much entirely) for show. (Go ahead—try to use it in a sentence.)

The Icelandic language has a [reputation](http://www.dailykos.com/story/2012/09/24/1135901/--slensKos-The-Icelandic-Language-Or-What-s-So-Scary-About-Super-Long-Words) for lengthy words, and this one is one of the longest of them all. Others include *landbúnaðarframleiðsla, hæstaréttar­mála­flut­nings­maður, fjárfestingarfyrirtæki,* and *byggingar­verkfræðingur*.

**Blind is a Bookless Man - *Blindur* *er Bóklaus Maður***

Icelandic people read the most books in the world per capita. Reading is a huge part of the culture, and therefore this saying exists. Blind is a bookless man. If you don’t read, you are blind to so many things.

Sentence: “*Paul can be so ignorant sometimes. Blind is a bookless man.*”

**Nobody Becomes an Unbeaten Bishop - *Enginn Verður Óbarinn Biskup***

One expression you are likely to hear in Iceland is “Enginn verður óbarinn biskup,” which literally means “no one will be an unbeaten bishop.” Essentially, the phrase means “it takes considerable work to reach your goals”.

You have to apply yourself to reach your goals and be ready to meet obstacles

Sentence: “no pain, no gain”.

Sentence: “*John, stop whining! No one becomes a bishop without a beating.”*

The phrase is apparently even confusing to Icelanders, many of whom have questioned whether beating up bishops was a common practice in the old days. In fact, it’s a reference to one [Bishop Guðmundur Arason](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gu%C3%B0mundur_Arason), who was influential in the 12th and 13th centuries. Guðmundur apparently had to endure a lot of hardship in order to attain this high office, especially as a child, when he would be severely beaten if he slacked off on his studies.Today we know that physical violence does not help children study, but the expression has persisted over the years to present day.

**It All Comes with the Cold Water - *Kemur Allt Með Kalda Vatninu***

If you meet some Icelanders that are being impatient, you can remind them that it all comes with the cold water. Meaning, if you are patient, things will fall into place.

Sentence: “*Be patient, it all comes with the cold water.*”

**Thank You for Last Time - *Takk Fyrir Síðast***

When Icelandic people have enjoyed a fun time together at a gathering, the next time they will meet, they will say “Thank you for last time”. They are thanking the other person for the fun they had at their last gathering.

Sentence: “*Thank you for last time, I had a great time*”

**Give under the Foot - *Gefa Undir Fótinn***

Instead of saying that you are going to flirt with somebody in Iceland, tell people that you are going to give someone under the foot. This is a nicer phrase for flirting.

Sentence: “*She was totally giving you under the foot!* “

**Bite the Molar - *Bíta á jaxlinn***

With Iceland extreme weather, Icelanders often have to be tough. Icelandic people have a special saying for this, to bite the molar. It means that when something difficult is ahead, you should bite the molar and continue.

Sentence: *“I don’t want to go out in this stormy weather, but I’m going to bite the molar and go”*

### **I took him to the bakery - *Ég tók hann í bakaríið***

When you are going to win a physical altercation with someone, you can use this phrase “to take somebody to the bakery”. This phrase is often used in sports as well.

Sentence: “*I can’t wait until we compete against the other team, we will take them to the bakery*.”

I kicked his ass or I sure told him off.

Sentence: “*John lied to me about the butter, I’ll take him to the bakery!*”

### **I will show you the two worlds - Ég skal sýna þér í tvo heimana**

Used as a threat, for example threatening physical violence.

Sentence: *“If you don’t return the cookie you stole I will show you the two worlds”*

### **Isn’t everything OK at home? - Er ekki allt í lagi heima hjá þér?**

By saying this you are suggesting that there’s something wrong with the other person, that they are stupid or that they are missing a few pages for example.

Sentence: *“You drive backwards down Laugavegur? Isn’t everything OK at home?”*

### **He’s on the wrong shelf in life - Hann er á rangri hillu í lífinu**

When someone is doing the wrong job or pursuing the wrong dream

Sentence: “*John is on the wrong shelf in life, he should have become a spy instead of a kindergarten teacher.”*

### **He doesn’t walk whole to the forest - Hann gengur ekki heill til skógar**

When a person is not well, either physically or mentally.

Sentence: “*John doesn’t walk whole to the forest after he slipped on the butter and broke his leg.”*

### **I won’t sell it more expensive than I bought it - Ég sel það ekki dýrara en keypti það**

Used when you are passing along gossip to free yourself from blame if the gossip turns out to be false

Sentence: “*I was told John is stalking Kim Kardashian, I won’t sell it more expensive than I bought it.”*

### **You are such a Latte-drinking wool scarf - Þú ert nú meiri lattelepjandi lopatrefillinn\***

A denigrating term for those who live in the center of Reykjavík – apparently all we do is drink lattes and wear wool scarfs.

Sentence: “*Those latte drinking wool scarves think 101 Reykjavík is the center of the earth.”*

### **Das wird schon. – Þetta reddast.**

Am Ende wird alles gut.