

LEISURE

This section contains information on recreational activities, cultural facilities, voluntary groups and organizations, and the rules that apply to hunting, fishing and whaling.



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VOLUNTARY GROUPS, ORGANISATIONS, AND SPORTS CLUBS

There is a range of voluntary groups and organisations in the Faroes.

There are religious communities, scout associations, choirs, a variety of sports clubs, NGO clubs, and humanitarian organisations. Remember that there might also be activities at a more informal level in your local community, such as knitting clubs, bingo or card playing – please check with the local municipality. The aforementioned knitting clubs are informally organised and usually based around familiar relations, friends, school-friends – but not always.

Swimming pools are open to the public to use for an entrance fee. And as an individual you might also be able to sign on for a regular session at a local sports hall for year at the time, e.g. for badminton or five-a-side football with friends.

Most organisations require a membership fee, usually for a whole or half-year, and most organisations and groups are open for anyone to join.

If you wish to track down a particular sports club or activity your local municipality is a good place to start.

VOLUNTARY WORK, AND MEMBERSHIP

Most organisations are based on voluntary work and are to a very large extent funded through membership fees, lotteries, and sales at events of hot-dogs, cakes and the like. For each organisation and club it is of great value to have active members and volunteers who help to organise activities and fundraise.

NGOs and others

A number of NGOs working for specific goals of a philanthropic character are established in the Faroes and are open to new members and volunteers – for instance Amnesty International and Red Cross. The political youth associations are also open to volunteers and new members.

Religious and belief-based communities

Many islanders are members of religious or faith-based communities. Some people participate actively in work with children and youth, such as Sunday schools, children's choirs or summer camps. Otherwise, whether it is for the state church or other communities, volunteers and part-time employees help

organise meetings and services for faith communities.

Other islanders only participate in more ritual contexts, such as baptisms and confirmations, or are married and buried in ceremonies organised by the church or a religious community.

Religion plays an important role in Faroese culture. The Lutheran-Evangelical church is the official church, but there are various other churches in the Faroe Islands as well. The Plymouth Brethren are the second largest faith community. Others include Catholics, Seventh-day Adventists, Jehovah's Witnesses and Baha'is.

According to the constitution, everyone is entitled to associate in communities to worship according to his or her convictions. The public sector supports religious communities financially.

POPULAR SPORTS IN THE FAROE ISLANDS

Football, handball and gymnastics are amongst the most popular sports activities in the community. There are sports organisations in almost every larger village. Especially children and youth are active in the most popular sports.

Faroese sports clubs are open to everyone, although the ambition and level of professionalism do vary between sports clubs and types of sport. Children's sports activities take place on the children's terms and all children are included, regardless of ambitions or needs. The goal is for the children to enjoy themselves and have fun with friends. Parents must pay a membership fee for their children to join a sports club.

Boat racing, *kappróður*, is the national sport of the Faroe Islands. Rowing competitions are held in different towns and villages at festivals in late May, June and July, and the final competition is held in Tórshavn on St Olaf's Wake, Ólavsøka, on July 28th.

Other sports include swimming, chess, bridge, darts, badminton, golf, judo and table tennis.

THE PUBLIC LIBRARY

Every municipality has a public library. Most public libraries are established as parts of the local school. Libraries are open for everyone to use and you can get a user card if you have an ID no., p-tal. You can borrow books, videos, DVDs, CDs, etc. for free. The libraries vary in terms of the books and literature that are available and also which languages are represented. Often literature in English is available, in addition to Danish and Faroese literature. Library users also have access to a computer with internet connection in most libraries. The libraries have different opening hours and do vary in terms of available services from one municipality to the other.



EVENING SCHOOLS

Evening schools offer tuition in different subjects – from learning English to learning how to weld. You sign up to a subject of your liking, you pay the fee and you should expect an interesting course and a nice regular social event where you meet other people with whom you have a shared interest. The courses are almost all in Faroese. **For more about Faroese language tuition, see also the section Learning Faroese Language and Culture.**

There is normally a deadline for signing up and paying for courses.

The social aspect is an important part of evening school courses. Sharing cake and coffee, *drekkamuður*, literally meaning a drop of tea or coffee, is an important element of courses at the evening school. When you are looking for the nearest evening school, start with the local municipality or school – they will know where to direct you.

THE MUSIC SCHOOLS AND MUSIC LIFE

The pleasure derived from music is immense in the Faroe Islands. Almost every occasion is an opportunity to sing or play, or both, be it at national holidays, religious gatherings, weddings, funerals, or other occasions. There are also several choirs around the islands for male, female and mixed voices.

The Faroese music schools are very popular, and many children are learning to play a variety of musical instruments. The music school programme is partly public and partly municipally funded with over 10 music schools around the islands offering qualified music tuition. There might be waiting lists to join your local music school.

MUSEUMS AND CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS

The Nordic House

The Nordic House, *Norðurlandahúsið*, is a cultural organisation under the Nordic Council of Ministers with the objective of supporting and promoting Nordic and Faroese culture. It offers a wide range of events all year round, including concerts, exhibitions, and theatre performances.

Further information: The Nordic House in the Faroe Islands, www.nlh.fo

The National Art Gallery

The Faroese National Art Gallery, *Listasavnið*, in Tórshavn features a permanent exhibition of older and modern Faroese artists, as well as travelling exhibitions of foreign artists and special showcase exhibitions of Faroese artists.

Further information: National Gallery of the Faroe Islands, www.art.fo

The National Theatre

The National Theatre of the Faroe Islands, *Tjóðpallur Føroya*, is set in a former milk dairy in the centre of Tórshavn. The theatre performs Faroese plays, as well as classic and modern plays from other countries.

Further information: The National Theatre, www.tjodpallur.fo (in Faroese)

The Playhouse Theatre

The Playhouse Theatre, *Sjonleikarhúsið*, in Tórshavn has been the centre of a rich and diverse cultural life for a very long time. It hosts a wide variety of plays and cultural performances.

Further information: The Playhouse Theatre, www.sjonleikarahusid.com (in Faroese)

The National Library

The National Library, *Landsbókasavnið*, is the national book depository and library of the Faroe Islands. It collects, registers and preserves examples of Faroese literature, as well as books and articles discussing the Faroe Islands.

EVENTS AND NATIONAL HOLIDAYS

Further information: The National Library, www.flb.fo

The National Museum

The National Museum, *Tjóðsavnid*, is both a cultural and natural history museum. It offers displays on geology, archaeology, folk life and history. The museum has an open air branch located close to the permanent exhibition.

Further information: The Natural Museum, www.savn.fo

Reinsariid

This venue is part of the capital's cultural programme and on a weekly basis offers musical performances of different kinds, mostly contemporary pop/rock music.

Further information: www.reinsariid.fo

There are several recurring cultural events that are popular amongst the islanders and shed light on Faroese culture and arts, the fishing industry and other aspects of society.

Every year in June the Culture Night, *Mentanarnattin*, is held in Tórshavn. The programme of the event draws a lot of people out to visit workplaces that open to the public only on this evening, and art exhibitions are open all evening with no entrance fee – just to name a couple of items on the programme.

The Day of Faroese Seafarers and Fishermen, *Føroya Sjómannadagur*, is an annual event in Klaksvík that takes place over a weekend in early August. While informing about Faroese fishermen's life at sea and subjects related to the sea with lectures and exhibits, this is also a family-friendly event culminating in a grand and popular water fight in the harbour of Klaksvík.

A seafood day is held in Tórshavn in early May – showcasing various seafood products from Faroese waters, including the more exotic ones, fresh from the fishing vessels.

The Knitting Festival is an occasion to experience the knitting culture on the islands where locals and guests from abroad learn about knitting and enjoy each other's company. The Faroe Islands Knitting Festival has in previous years been held in mid April.

Local Festivals

Local festivals with sports, concerts and various other activities for all ages have traditionally been held around the islands during the summer. These festivals, known as *bygdastevnur*, take place annually starting in Klaksvík, Runavík, Sundalagið and Suðuroy in June and in Fuglafjørður, Vágur, Skálafjørður and Vestmanna in July. And in early August Ovastevna is held. The traditional rowing competition is a main attraction at most of these festivals.

St Olaf's Wake

The national holiday of the Faroe Islands, St Olaf's Wake, *Ólavsøka*, is held in Tórshavn on July 28th and 29th. People from all over the islands gather in the capital to celebrate the national holiday,

which is also a cultural and sports festival with rowing, football matches, art exhibitions, folk music, and Faroese chain dancing.

Ólavsøka starts on the eve of St Olaf, July 28th, with a procession of sports people and horse-riders and an opening ceremony in front of the parliament building. This event is usually broadcasted live by the National Faroese Broadcasting Company, KVF.

On the day of St Olaf, July 29th, the Faroese Parliament opens its session after the summer holiday with a procession and a service at the Cathedral in Tórshavn.

Music Festivals

There are several music festivals and concerts to choose from during the summer period. Both local musicians and internationally acclaimed artists visit Faroese venues

G! Festival is a large festival with international and local musicians held in Gøta in mid July.
Further information: www.gfestival.fo

Summar Festivalurin is a large festival with local musicians and international bands held in Klaksvík in early August.
Further information: www.summarfestivalur.fo (in Faroese)

Summartónar is a classical and contemporary music festival with a programme of concerts in churches, museums and other public venues around the islands in June and July.
Further information: www.composers.fo

The Country and Blues Festival is held in Sørvágur in early June.
Further information: www.country.fo

Voxbotn is a one-day festival held in Tórshavn in late June.



Further information: www.voxbotn.fo

NATIONAL HOLIDAYS

| JANUARY | FEBRUARY | MARCH | APRIL | MAY | JUNE |
|---|----------|---|--|---|--|
| <div>1st of January</div> <div>New Year's Day</div> | | <div>Falls between March/April</div> <div>Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Easter Sunday, Easter Monday</div> | <div>25th of April</div> <div>Flag Day</div> <div>A half day off for some employees, for others it is whole day off</div> | <div>1st of May</div> <div>May Day</div> <div>Labour Day, a day off for most workers</div> | <div>5th of June</div> <div>Constitution Day</div> <div>A half day off for most employees</div> |
| | | <div>Dýribíðidagur</div> <div>Danish/Faroese public holiday falling on the fourth Friday after Easter</div> | <div>Whit Sunday</div> <div>Public holiday falling on the Sunday that is nearest to the 50th day after Easter</div> | <div>Whit Monday</div> <div>Public holiday</div> | |
| | | | <div>Ascension Day</div> <div>Public holiday falling on the 40th day after Easter</div> | | |
| JULY | AUGUST | SEPTEMBER | OCTOBER | NOVEMBER | DECEMBER |
| <div>28th of July</div> <div>Eve of St Olaf's Wake</div> | | | | | <div>24th of December</div> <div>Christmas Eve</div> |
| <div>29th of July</div> <div>St Olaf's Wake</div> <div>Ólavsøka or Ólavsøkedagur</div> | | | | | <div>25th of December</div> <div>Christmas Day</div> |
| | | | | | <div>26th of December</div> <div>Second Christmas Day /Boxing Day</div> |
| | | | | | <div>31st of December</div> <div>New Year's Eve</div> |

IMPORTANT DATES AND DEADLINES




January

| | | |
|---|--|--|
|  | Biannual motor vehicle weight tax/carbon tax | <i>Around 2nd of January</i> |
|  | Registering children for elementary school start. Contact the municipality or the school office. | <i>During the course of January - place and exact date announced on the radio.</i> |




March



| | | |
|--|---|---|
|  | Grækarismessa – Return of the national bird, the oystercatcher, tjaldrið. Celebrating the arrival of spring | <i>12th March</i> |
|  | Application deadline – for Secondary School, Miðnám | <i>15th March</i> |
|  | Easter week school vacation | <i>Follows the Easter week</i> |
|  | Application deadline – for higher education (Kvøte 2, in Denmark) | <i>15th March</i> |
|  | Summer time begins | <i>Between 25th and 31st of March</i> |

April

| | | |
|---|---|------------------------------|
|  | Before 1st of April use of summer tires only allowed if conditions allow it | <i>1st April</i> |
|  | Application deadline – for higher education (Kvøte 2, Faroe Islands) | <i>15th April</i> |
|  | Lambing season | <i>During April-May</i> |

May




| | | |
|---|---|----------------------------------|
|  | Studded tires not allowed after 1st May | <i>1st May</i> |
|  | Deadline for filing in the tax return (regular) | <i>Around 1st May</i> |
|  | Mother`s Day | <i>Second Sunday in May</i> |

| | | |
|---|--|------------------------------|
|  | Holiday allowance payment | <i>2nd May</i> |
| | Start of the local festivals, Norðoyarstevna in Klaksvík | <i>End of May/start-June</i> |
|  | Father`s Day | <i>5th June</i> |


June

| | | |
|---|------------------|--------------------|
|  | School year ends | <i>End of June</i> |
|---|------------------|--------------------|





July

| | | |
|---|--|---|
|  | Application deadline – for higher education (Kvøta 1, Faroe Islands) | <i>1st of July</i> |
|  | Application deadline – for higher education (Kvøte 1, Denmark) | <i>5th July</i> |
|  | Biannual motor vehicle weight tax/carbon tax | <i>Around 1st July</i> |
| | St. Olaf`s Wake, Ólavsøka | <i>27th – 29th July</i> |

August

| | | |
|---|--------------------|---------------------------|
|  | School year starts | <i>Usually mid August</i> |
|---|--------------------|---------------------------|



October

| | | |
|---|-----------------------------------|--|
|  | Studded tires allowed | <i>15th October</i> |
|  | School autumn vacation | <i>Mid October</i> |
|  | Summer time ends | <i>Between 25th and 30th October</i> |
|  | Herdin of the sheep and slaughter | <i>During October</i> |

November

| | | |
|---|----------------------------|--------------------------------|
|  | Hare hunting season starts | <i>2nd November</i> |
|---|----------------------------|--------------------------------|

December

| | | |
|---|---|---------------------------------|
|  | Use of summer tires only allowed if conditions allow it. Winter or studded tires required | <i>1st December</i> |
|  | Hare hunting season ends | <i>31st December</i> |

HIKING

Access to the mountains, the shoreline and beaches is always an option – there are very few restrictions. Hiking in the mountains has become an increasingly popular activity in the Faroe Islands.

Before asphalt roads and drastic improvements in infrastructure from the 1960s onwards, walking in the mountains and between villages was almost the only means of transportation. On a regular basis, postal services, doctors, priests, etc. used mountain paths that linked villages together. On these paths there are guiding cairns, used as a guide in thick fog, a legacy from a bygone time. And when walking the mountains nowadays, it is advisable to use these old paths, instead of climbing over fences.

However, there are restrictions. And for some plots of land there are stricter rules, such as all cultivated fields, and land where sheep or cattle are kept and other fenced-in plots. Where there are fences there are usually gates that can be used. But remember that it is prohibited to trespass through fields, please bear in mind that all grass is intended for winter fodder.

When walking in the Faroese nature you need to take some precautions. Some come naturally, others perhaps not. Some precautions:

- Plan your trip beforehand.
- Where you find the old village paths visible in the landscape these are to be used instead of climbing over fences.
- Take notice of the weather conditions – do not go hiking if the weather is foggy. And be aware of sudden fog.
- Ask for advice in the local community on where to go and where not to go.
- Take care not to disturb birds or sheep. And close all gates behind you.
- During winter, be aware of the hunting season (2nd November to 31st December for hare hunting).

There are also hiking clubs you can join – there usually is a fee to be paid for each trip or membership.

For further information and to see the annual hiking programme of the Hiking Association, Gongufelagið: www.Visittorshavn.fo.



If you do get into trouble while hiking, if you should get lost, or if you should fall, then call 112, the emergency hotline, for help. Please be aware that there is not network coverage for mobile phones in all mountainous terrain or far from inhabited places.

FISHING

At the pier or from land

Saltwater fishing, at the pier for instance or coastal fishery, is generally free for everyone to do. You just need to stay outside the areas marked for industrial activities and make sure that you are not disturbing any industrial fishery activities at the quay.

In small boats

If you go fishing in a small boat you must make sure that you have the necessary safety equipment on-board and that everyone on-board wears a lifejacket or a life vest.

Fishing in inland lakes and rivers

Fishing wild salmon and trout in rivers and inland lakes can require a license/permit and is not always free, especially when the lake is on a landowner's private property, and there is regulation in place concerning fish catches. Therefore, it is a good idea before you plan your trip to ask in the local community, e.g. the municipality or the fishing club, Føroya Sílaveiðufelag, about places, good spots, and where to buy permits for fishing. There is a regulation in place, which you need to take into consideration. General rules can be studied at the website of

The Faroe Islands Fishing Club, *Føroya Sílaveiðufelag*, www.laks.fo – also in English.



HUNTING

Hare hunting

The hare-hunting season is 2nd November to 31st December. The owner of the land is the one who holds the rights to any hunting activity. In most parts of the islands there are areas for hunting hares and hunting rights can be bought from the owner of the land.

Bird hunting

Bird hunting is still practiced to a certain degree in the Faroe Islands by catching with nets or shooting. The law states that it is not allowed to hunt birds on Sundays or holidays. Please consult with the police regarding hunting seasons, which species may be hunted, and other terms.

For further information, contact the police. www.politi.fo – tel. 351448.

Whaling

Whaling has always been a communal hunting activity and a method to secure food and survival in a remote island group in the middle of the North Atlantic Ocean.

Whale drives in the Faroe Islands take place to provide food, and can happen at any time of the year. The driving,

beaching, killing and distribution of pilot whales are fully regulated by law and regulations. Catches are shared among the participants and local community.

When a school of pilot whales has been beached and killed, the catch is distributed. The district administrator calculates the shares and distributes tickets, showing how much meat and blubber each person, who is entitled to a share, will receive.

The whale meat and blubber is divided according to how many have participated in the hunt and how many whales are caught. Depending on the size of the catch, the people who live in the area typically also receive a share.

When the district administrator has distributed the tickets, known as *sedlar*, people go to the whale indicated on the ticket. Often, several people share a whale. They will butcher the whale together. You should contact the district administrator personally if you would like to get a share or further information.