

Eldsmiðjan

Eldsmiðjan is one of the best places in Reykjavík to enjoy traditional Icelandic cuisine. There may not be a lamb fillet or salt cod in sight, but this small restaurant, more popular for its take-away service than dining in, can provide you with the best quality food of its genre in the city: pizza.

This dish is so ingrained in the culture of Iceland (it's rumoured there are more Domino's outlets here per capita than anywhere else) that it is only appropriate to include it as "traditional" with the nation's other well known food commodities like fish, skyr and lamb.

At Eldsmiðjan they take pizza to the next level. The restaurant itself is located in a little house on a street corner in primarily residential Thingholt, near Hallgrímskirkja Church. As teenagers efficiently prepare pizzas on the cramped ground floor, seating is available on the upper two levels. Servers work off any adverse nutritional effects from the pizza by ascending and descending the staircases innumerable times each day.

My companion's Pizza del Mar (1245 ISK) had thick wedges of chalky pink smoked salmon which contrasted visually with the bright greens of the broccoli. It was sort of like quirky 1970s wallpaper, but much tastier.

I ordered the Pizza de la Chef - a concoction of the One in Charge, which on this occasion included spiced chicken, sundried tomatoes, spicy pepperoni, and cream cheese.

Other unusual pizza toppings include asparagus, snails, and that Icelandic pizza topping favourite - blue cheese. Freshly prepared and professionally presented, I have no doubt that any pizza - of the 28 on offer - you choose will be satisfying.

Maybe it was all the young people working so cheerfully and energetically that made Eldsmiðjan remind me of a local student hangout from university days. Maybe it was the serving size and the fact that you could probably split the smallest 10-inch pizza between two people and walk away satisfied, having spent only about ISK 600 on a meal. It certainly wasn't the clientele itself, which seemed to be comprised in equal measure of local friends, families, and tourists.

In any case, a meal here was pleasant, good value, and creative. It's the perfect place to try that traditional Icelandic *flatbaka*.

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