

Argentína

Grrr. There's nothing like a good hunk of bloody meat to fill up after a long day. Iceland may be more famous for delicate fish and exotic seafood, but remember that the beef here is also free-range and if a good dose of iron and cholesterol is what's required, Argentina is possibly the best steak-house in town.

Argentína's website devotes several words to describing the quality of their beef and how it is prepared. My salivary glands were in overdrive well before I arrived. In addition to the various beef cuts on offer, there is a delicate lamb fillet, and chicken, pork and fish options, the most tempting being a fleshy halibut with delicate citrus-ginger vinaigrette. A broad selection of hearty shiraz and Spanish rioja showcase the extensive wine list.

Starters include a lobster soup which tastes blessedly of lobster and not of cream, and delicately grilled giant scallops with a chocolate vinaigrette sauce. At the other end of the meal, Argentína's menu boasts a crème brûlée "like it's supposed to be" and delivers on that promise, a crunchy sugar seal cracked open to reveal the creamy vanilla-flecked treat within.

But the main course is the highlight. One of the highly efficient waiters presents the feature item, complete with requisite baked potato, tangy salad, and homemade garlic and vegetable sauces. As we are about to dig in, another server offers freshly ground pepper from what is easily the largest pepper mill I have ever laid eyes on. Somehow it fits in the "big country" feel of the place.

The atmosphere is another of Argentína's attractions. Feel the layers of Reykjavík wash away as you descend the sloping corridor that leads to the heavy wooden door into the den of Argentína, exuding the confident classiness of an old boys' club. Sip a pre-dinner cocktail by the fireplace on the well-worn calf-skin benches. And revel in the intimacy of widely-spaced tables and log dividers which offer a remarkable degree of both privacy and warmth. If you're planning an affair, this is where it should be conducted.

For the less cynical, Argentína is the sort of place you would go to celebrate your 20th wedding anniversary – and then return for your 40th, likely indulging in many of the same dishes you remember from before. The restaurant provides a certain security, a feeling that, whatever curveballs life throws, this little enclave of the capital will always be an oasis.

And if you just want your meat fix, well it's not bad for that either ...

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Open daily for dinner only

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