



DAGAR MYRKURS

DAYS OF DARKNESS

MANUAL OF IMPLEMENTATION
2025-2029

About Days of darkness

Days of Darkness is a community festival for all residents of East Iceland, aimed at encouraging togetherness. The festival takes place at the beginning of winter and has strong ties to ancient celebrations held at this time of year. It is primarily intended as a festival for locals, but anyone interested is welcome to participate.

The festival lasts for a full week at the end of October and/or the beginning of November. It is held shortly after or around the First Day of Winter (which always falls between October 21st–28th), and Halloween (October 31st) is within the festival period.

During this time in ancient times, Norse people held grand gatherings and feasts known as *Veturnætur* and *Disablót*. This was a time of transition when summer turned into winter, and it was believed that the boundaries between worlds became thinner, making it possible to sense the supernatural and even see ghosts and elves.

With the adoption of Christianity, these celebrations shifted to November 1st and became All Saints' Day. Elsewhere, such as in Ireland and Scotland, early winter festivals focused on honoring the dead. Later, these traditions spread to America with immigrants and evolved into what we now know as Halloween.

Days of Darkness is a modern take on early winter celebrations. Through it, we give thanks for the summer and welcome the winter. We embrace darkness, the supernatural, romance, and old traditions in various ways. Residents play an active role in the festival, with events and gatherings primarily driven by their own initiatives and participation.



The winning photo in Days of Darkness 2023 photography competition by Jón Einar Ágústsson.



The winning photo in Days of Darkness 2021 photography competition by Ásgeir Metúsalemsson.

Steering committee

To oversee and organize the festival, a steering committee is formed, which meets regularly throughout the year. The steering committee includes:

- » A representative from Fjarðabyggð
- » A representative from Fljótshreppur
- » A representative from Múlaþing
- » A representative from Vopnafjarðarhreppur
- » Two staff members from Austurbrú, one of whom serves as the project manager for Days of Darkness

Other stakeholders may be invited to committee meetings as needed.

ROLE OF THE STEERING COMMITTEE

The steering committee organizes the festival each year. Its role is to engage residents, associations, businesses, and institutions. The committee meets at least four times a year.

The first meeting is held in March or April, during which a draft of the upcoming festival is presented. The festival dates are announced to residents, institutions, and businesses in East Iceland. Promotions begin on social media, Austurbrú's website, and the websites and community pages of the municipalities.

The second meeting takes place in August or early September and focuses on planning the autumn festival. Continued emphasis is placed on engaging residents and local associations in the communities of East Iceland. A call for events is issued, followed by the announcement of the full festival program.

The third meeting is held in early October, where final preparations and organization take place. The festival is widely promoted.

The fourth meeting is held before the end of November, during which the festival is reviewed, and information on the number of events and overall participation is gathered.

FESTIVAL REVIEW

After the festival, the Days of Darkness project manager collects information about the events, including their number and locations. The project manager finalizes an annual report and financial statement, which are submitted to the steering committee, the managing director, and the senior project manager at Austurbrú.

Promotion and workflow

- » At the beginning of September, a detailed email should be sent to businesses, associations, and institutions to remind them about the festival. Additionally, announcements should be made on community pages on Facebook. Events will be recorded in a shared document.
- » At the end of September, cultural representatives from the municipalities will hold an open meeting and/or request event submissions from all local communities. The municipal representatives will then send the compiled program to Austurbrú staff, who will process the information. These details must be submitted no later than two weeks before the festival begins.
- » Event organizers are responsible for their own events, ensuring they are posted on Facebook and promoted through other channels if necessary. They must also set Days of Darkness as a “co-host” on Facebook.
- » A unified visual identity will be used across all advertisements. Austurbrú staff will send a template to municipal representatives, who will then distribute it within their communities.
- » A photography competition will be held for the best Days of Darkness photo. The winning entry will receive a prize of 50,000 ISK and the Photo of the Year will be used in promotional materials.

Advertising schedule

- » March/April: An announcement will be made introducing the festival dates.
- » Early September: An email will be sent to businesses, associations, institutions, and posted on community pages, municipal websites, and Austurbrú’s platforms.
- » Early October: Advertisements will appear in Dagskráin and on social media.
- » Two weeks before the festival: Promotions will increase on social media.
- » One week before the festival: Final advertisements will be published in Dagskráin and on social media.

Festival dates for the next five years:

2025: 27th of October to 2nd of November

2026: 26th of October to 1st of November

2027: 25th of October to 31st of October

2028: 30th of October to 5th of November

2029: 29th of October to 4th of November

The handbook will be reviewed at the end of each festival.

Approved by the Days of Darkness steering committee on November 14th, 2024.

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