

# Through Rivers into Lush Green

**The land of fire and ice. An attractive slogan and a really good description of Iceland—at least it was a few years ago.**

A few people we meet on the ferry who have traveled the island several times claim that the rough, unspoiled Iceland no longer exists. That said, the ferry ride is long and monotonous—and happy hour at the bar is very popular—so maybe we should not believe everything that we are told.

But the frequent use of the term “overtourism” gives us mixed feelings even before we arrive in Iceland. The deck of our ship is full of outdoor enthusiasts with different interests, from fishermen to photographers to skiers. And in the belly of the ferry, there are massive vehicles that make our off-road vehicle with a roof tent look rather puny. They were certainly not just brought to attract attention

in front of big city ice cream parlors. Ice cream is so popular in Iceland, that there’s actually a word for ice cream road trip: Ísbíltúr. Nevertheless, we also hear a few encouraging and enthusiastic reports with insider tips: “If you are here, then you definitely have to go there. Nobody knows that place.”

Unfortunately, the skeptical voices are confirmed during our first few days. The Fire and Ice tourism campaign was apparently so successful that it triggered an avalanche of social media adventurers and cell phone photographers who visit the country.

As we drive west on the lower Ring Road, we are asked by bus travelers to step out of the picture at almost every attraction. There are No Entry signs on every side street and notes at every parking lot explaining that camping is prohibited. >>>

