



Historical Dictionary of Iceland (Historical Dictionaries of Europe)

Sverrir Jakobsson, Guðmundur Halfdanarson

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Iceland demonstrates most of the characteristics of a modern liberal democracy. It has maintained political stability through a democratic process which enjoys universal legitimacy. Rapid economic modernization has also secured its inhabitants one of the highest living standards in the world, and a comprehensive and highly developed health system has ensured them longevity and one of the lowest rates of infant mortality in the world. Icelanders face, however, formidable challenges in maintaining their status as an independent nation. First, the Icelandic economy is fairly fragile, as overexploitation threatens the fish stocks that remain among Iceland's principal economic resources. Second, the country is rich in unused energy resources, because many of its rivers are still not harnessed, and geothermal power is abundant. But using these resources will necessarily damage the pristine nature of the country, forcing the politicians and the Icelandic public to choose between environmental protection and industrial expansion. Finally, it remains to be seen if a country with just over 329.740 inhabitants will be able to manage its foreign relations in a complex and constantly changing world.

This third edition of *Historical Dictionary of Iceland* contains a chronology, an introduction, and an extensive bibliography. The dictionary section has over 200 cross-referenced entries on important personalities, politics, economy, foreign relations, religion, and culture. This book is an excellent access point for students, researchers, and anyone wanting to know more about Iceland.

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