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**Fresh, pure and home-grown –
emphasis placed on local cuisine in McDonalds-free Iceland**

Gourmet travellers can now experience a McDonalds-free Iceland, following the recent highly publicised closure of the destination's three franchise outlets of the fast food chain.

The Golden Arches restaurants, which were obliged to import their ingredients expensively from Germany, have been replaced by Icelandic-owned Metro outlets serving a menu created exclusively from Icelandic sourced ingredients. This 'local provenance' trend is being replicated across the country as restaurateurs look to capitalise on Iceland's affordable, high-quality produce.

In August, Reykjavik saw the opening of new farmer's market **Frú Lauga**, selling seasonal vegetables, pure mountain lamb, fresh seafood, sausages, free-range Icelandic eggs, sun-dried cod, and *skyr* (a unique low fat Icelandic dairy product similar to yoghurt) from all corners of the country.

Regional collaborations between local producers, farmers and fishermen are also working together to promote local food and make it more visible and accessible to visitors. **The Food Chest Skagafjörður** in northern Iceland and **Taste of the Westfjords** are two such projects where the region's restaurants and shops participate by labelling any dishes and produce made from local ingredients with the project's logos.

Sigga Groa, Icelandic Tourist Board marketing manager for the UK, commented:

"Dining out in Iceland is now even more affordable for British visitors than before the financial crash because of the current advantageous exchange rate. The use of high quality, locally sourced ingredients in our restaurants means we are supporting our producers, farmers and fishermen and keeping prices competitive.

"A typical three-course meal in Reykjavik might start at about £25 per person, with a beer costing around £3-4. Compare that with buying a beer in Paris where you are expected to pay up to 9 Euros."

For more information on Icelandic cuisine, regional restaurant guides, traditional recipes and a Who's Who of top Icelandic chefs visit www.icelandgourmetguide.com