



Fogo Island Inn



At a Glance

An architectural marvel, the Fogo Island Inn sits on the edge of a bluff overlooking the North Atlantic Ocean, and offers guests an otherworldly experience.

Indagare Loves

- Day Break boxes left outside your door in the early morning containing coffee and pastries that encourage you to wake up with the sun.
- Geology, nature and foraging walks around the area led by local experts
- The community host that each guest is assigned, who takes visitors out for a half day tour of the island, relaying their own history with the place and regaling with stories and opinions.

Review

We travel, often, to disconnect. Unplugging from our everyday life allows us to refresh. Sometimes, however, the most successful travel experiences allow us—in fact,

encourage us—to make new connections.

To reach Fogo Island in Newfoundland, most visitors take two flights, spend a night in a motel en route, pick up a rental car and drive two hours and then catch a 90-minute ferry. The award-winning Fogo Island Inn, located in the hamlet of Joe Batt's Arm, is a further 20-minute drive away on the island's north coast. (Directions to the inn include such tips as "Five minutes after passing through Little Seldom, you will arrive at Seldom," and "watch out for caribou.") There are no signs, but you know you're there when the inn, resembling a ghost ship, makes itself visible atop a hill. To say it stands out belies the fact that it also completely fits in.

Self-made millionaire Zita Cobb built the inn in 2013 as a way to give back to her home. The daughter of illiterate parents and the only girl of seven children, Zita was sent away to school when the fishing-dominated economy crashed. After a couple of decades working for a Canadian fiber optics firm, the prodigal child returned, and is by and large seen as the island hero. The organization she created, Shorefast, has developed scholarships, artist-in-residence programs and finally the inn, a 29-room marvel of architecture and luxury.

Newfoundland-born architect Todd Saunders designed the dramatic X-shaped building to sit on a jutting outcrop of rocks that have been dated to be 420 million years old. Remote, cultural and special, it embodies qualities that all luxury properties should, but too often, don't. Upon check-in, as guests stand dumbfounded, transfixed by the expansive sea horizon visible from all parts of the property, the staff runs through activities options, itineraries and plans, but most new arrivals, hypnotized, are usually unable to focus.

Each of the guest rooms are different, with varied custom-designed wallpaper, island-sewn quilts and handmade furniture like rocking chairs and fishermen's beds, a kind of masculine chaise lounge. Everything, from the clothes hangers to the knitted throws are thoughtful additions to the room with art and comfort in mind, but the star is the full wall of floor-to-ceiling windows that look out to the incredible seascape. (High-tech binoculars for spotting icebergs, sea birds and the occasional fishing vessel sit on a side table within arm's reach.)

The property is designed, in fact, to be an experience rather than a hotel. Myriad activities are offered, all with the intention of connecting guests—to the local community, to the land and sea, to the history and culture of the place. Activities range from hiking, stargazing, fishing and boating expeditions, to furniture-making workshops, cooking and foraging experiences and visits to the island's art studios and galleries. During the iceberg season, watching the blue-ish monsters float past is a main

activity—and one that can transfix guests for multiple meditative hours. The highlight, however, is time spent with the community host who is partnered up with each guest who will take visitors around the island by car or foot, introducing the place and its culture while sharing personal anecdotes and experiences.

The hotel works in conjunction with ShoreFast, a non-profit organization founded by Zita that aims to enable artists—be they local or international—to see Fogo Island and use it as an inspiration for their craft. Other aspects of the association include preserving cultural heritage, encouraging business, helping to sustain the ocean and learn about the land. One hundred percent of profits made by the Inn are reinvested into the island and the organization's initiatives.

The hotel boasts a beautiful library with an impressive collection of local books; an art gallery showing rotating exhibitions by local and international artists who have visited; and a state-of-the-art cinema that shows screenings of the Fogo Island documentaries from the 1960s as well as other films. There are outdoor hot tubs and indoor saunas on the rooftop, as well as a gym with an extraordinary view.

Food in the spectacular restaurant is sourced locally whenever possible and almost everything is made in-house. Breakfast might be housemade goat's milk yogurt with granola and dried partridgeberries, or codcakes eggs benedict. Lunch highlights include cod chowder and lobster on a steamed bun with Asian slaw. Dinner is more formal and is typically a set menu featuring more ambitious dishes that marry the local traditions with the chef's talents.

After dinner, guests are welcome to have a cocktail (served atop chipped iceberg ice, which allegedly lasts longer) in the lounge while listening to live, local music. Throughout the day and into the evening, treats abound—warm brioche are served with freshly churned butter and molasses by the fire; tiny raisin scones get bundled up in a fishing tackle box and left outside your door in the morning; homemade truffles with candied caribou moss sit in hand-carved wooden boxes left on your bed at turn-down.

Overwhelmingly, being a guest at the Fogo Island Inn is a cocooning, enlightening experience. Sometimes it takes going to the end of the world to feel the most connected to a place.

Who Should Stay

While the property is not appropriate for families with small kids, those older children with an interest in the sea, geology and human geography will be fascinated by the island and the hotel can arrange for a family-friendly visit.

Contact Indagare's [Bookings Team](#) to book a stay.

[Read our Q&A with the owner of Fogo Island Inn.](#)

- Amelia Osborne Scott on July 22, 2015

