

INTRODUCTION TO ICELANDIC DICTION

NATS 2026 San Antonio

Carissa Scroggins

This is a beginner's guide to Icelandic sounds, not a comprehensive lyric diction textbook

Unexpected sounds/symbols:

[^h] = indicates aspiration/"wet" consonant

[[̥]] [_̥] = indicates voiceless (a puff of air will be included); for nasals, a puff of air is sent through nose (before if medial and after if final), for liquids, a puff of air is sent through side of mouth.

[ç] = voiceless palatal plosive (a mixture of [g] and [k])

Vowels	IPA	Diph.	IPA	Cons.	IPA	Cons.	IPA	Nasals	IPA
i	[i] or [i:]	á	[au] or [au:]	b	[p]	f	[f]	m	[m] or [m̥]
í	[i]	ó	[ou] or [ou:]	p	[p ^h]	ð	[ð]	n	[n] or [n̥]
ý	[i:]	ei	[ei] or [ei:]	d	[t]	þ	[θ]	ng	[ŋ] or [ŋ̥]
e	[ɛ] or [ɛ:]	æ	[ai] or [ai:]	t	[t ^h]	s	[s]	nk	[ŋ̥] or [ŋ̥]
a	[a] or [a:]	au	[œi] or [œi:]	g	[ç] , [k], [ç̥] or silent	j	[j]	Liquids	IPA
u	[y] or [y:]	ug	[yi]	k	[c ^h], [k ^h], or [x]	hj	[ç]	l	[l] or [l̥]
ö	[œ] or [œ:]	og	[ɔi]	v	[v]	h	[h]	r	[r] or [r̥]
ú	[u] or [u:]								
o	[ɔ] or [ɔ:]								

For more comprehensive information:

["A Short Overview of the Icelandic Sound System Pronunciation Variants and Phonetic Transcription"](#) by Eiríkur Rögnvaldsson