



**Northern
Cereals**



**Northern Periphery and
Arctic Programme**
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EUROPEAN UNION
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Northern Periphery and Arctic Programme
Northern Cereals – New Markets for a Changing Environment

Þoran Distillery

**Knowledge Exchange Benefits and Production of Whisky, Gin
and Malted Barley**

<https://www.thoran.is/>

Deliverable T4.2.4



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The Þoran Company

Since 2013, Þoran Distillery ehf has been developing alcoholic beverages, such as whisky and gin, using Icelandic ingredients. The company was an associate partner in the Cereal project under the Northern Periphery and Arctic Program, and enjoyed many benefits of that partnership, including, but not limited to, being allowed to visit the Highland Park and Scapa distilleries in Orkney, breweries in Norway, and getting a chance to work with creative and talented individuals in the field of agriculture and beverage production.

The gin being developed at Þoran is made from wheat alcohol, Icelandic water and a mix of 9 botanicals, some local, some imported. The idea was to first of all to make a great tasting gin using as many Icelandic ingredients that were available, but not to exclusively limit it to Icelandic botanicals, simply for the sake of it. For the whisky, Icelandic barley was malted using methods learned at Highland Park in Orkney, which were then further developed and adjusted for Icelandic conditions.

The malting process took place in two parts; once during the winter, where 97 kg of barley were malted, and once more during the winter, where another 100 kg of barley were malted, improving the methods from the previous malting session. The barley chosen was the Icelandic strain Kría, which was grown in Sweden.

The malting process

Steeping

The first stage of the malting process involves steeping, i.e. soaking the barley in water (at ca. 8-11°C), letting it sit for a few hours, then drain away the water and let the barley sit for a while longer. This cycle of letting the barley soak in and out of water was repeated 5 times, or until the internal moisture of the barley had reached ca. 45% and chits were becoming visible.

The steeping was done in an insulated bulk container/tub with a custom-made false bottom to drain away the water.

Germination

Next, the barley was spread out on a plastic covered floor and flipped every 8 hours or so. This process took 48 hours, at which point the barley had sprouted rootlets, roughly the same length as the grain itself.

The germination took place in a hermetically sealed and temperature controlled room at the Agricultural University of Iceland.



Drying

Once the rootlets had begun to form, the grain was moved into a custom-built smoke hut and dried over a burning fire (40-58°C).

During the second malting, a large oven at the AUI was used for this purpose, where the grain was dried for 24 hours at a temperature of 40-55°C

Smoking/tanning

During the first malting, this process took place in the custom-built smoke hut, where Icelandic birch and dried sheep manure was burnt to smoke/tan the barley. However, for the second malting run, the barley was placed in bags made from gauze and hung in a smokehouse at a local meat processing plant.

At the end of the two malting runs, we had roughly 200 kg of malted barley. This barley was then used to make 30 litres of whisky, which is now resting comfortably in an ex-bourbon oak cask.