



GO RURAL

Food and Drinks

 Finland
 Estonia
 Latvia

Food and Drinks



Finnish, Estonian and Latvian cuisine is based on natural products from clean environment. Spring and summer seasons are characterised by lighter dishes like greens, dairy products and seasonal fish, grilled meat, forest berries and mushrooms. Meat dishes with vegetable and grain side dishes, fermented and pickled vegetables dominate cold seasons meals.

There are three meals during the day – breakfast, dinner and supper. There could be tea or coffee breaks between them with tiny snacks. The main meal is dinner, with choice of soups, main dishes and desserts. Bread of various types is always served on the table.

Rural pubs have simpler meals that are richer in calories and the servings are larger. The restaurant servings are smaller, with more emphasis on quality. Chefs create refined taste combinations and surprise their customers with food as a special adventure by using fresh and seasonal local dishes.

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Cheese

Cow milk is used to prepare various types of cheese, starting from fresh and soft, up to seasoned, hard sorts of cheese. Cheese is also made from goat and sheep milk.

Photo: cows on pasture in early autumn



Midsummer Eve Cheese

On 23 June, Latvia celebrates Jāņi, the midsummer eve. The main meal of the celebration is Jāņi cheese. It can be bought all year long, but many housewives make this cheese themselves before midsummer eve.

Jāņi cheese is made from milk, cottage cheese, butter, eggs, salt and caraway seeds. It is pressed into round shape under a weight. It is eaten, when cooled down, cut in slices, together with Jāņi beer.

Original: 🇱🇻 sōir / 🇷🇺 Jāņu siers



Lapland Cheese

Lapland cheese or Leipäjuusto is made in Finland, the name of the cheese in Finnish means “bread cheese”. Most commonly, it is made from cow milk, a ready cheese is a round, 2 – 3 cm thick disc, which is fried in the oven, resulting in a brown, spotty crust, buttery taste and squeaky structure.

Less commonly, this cheese is made from goat and sheep milk as well. The cheese is served with cloudberry jam or fresh cloudberrries.

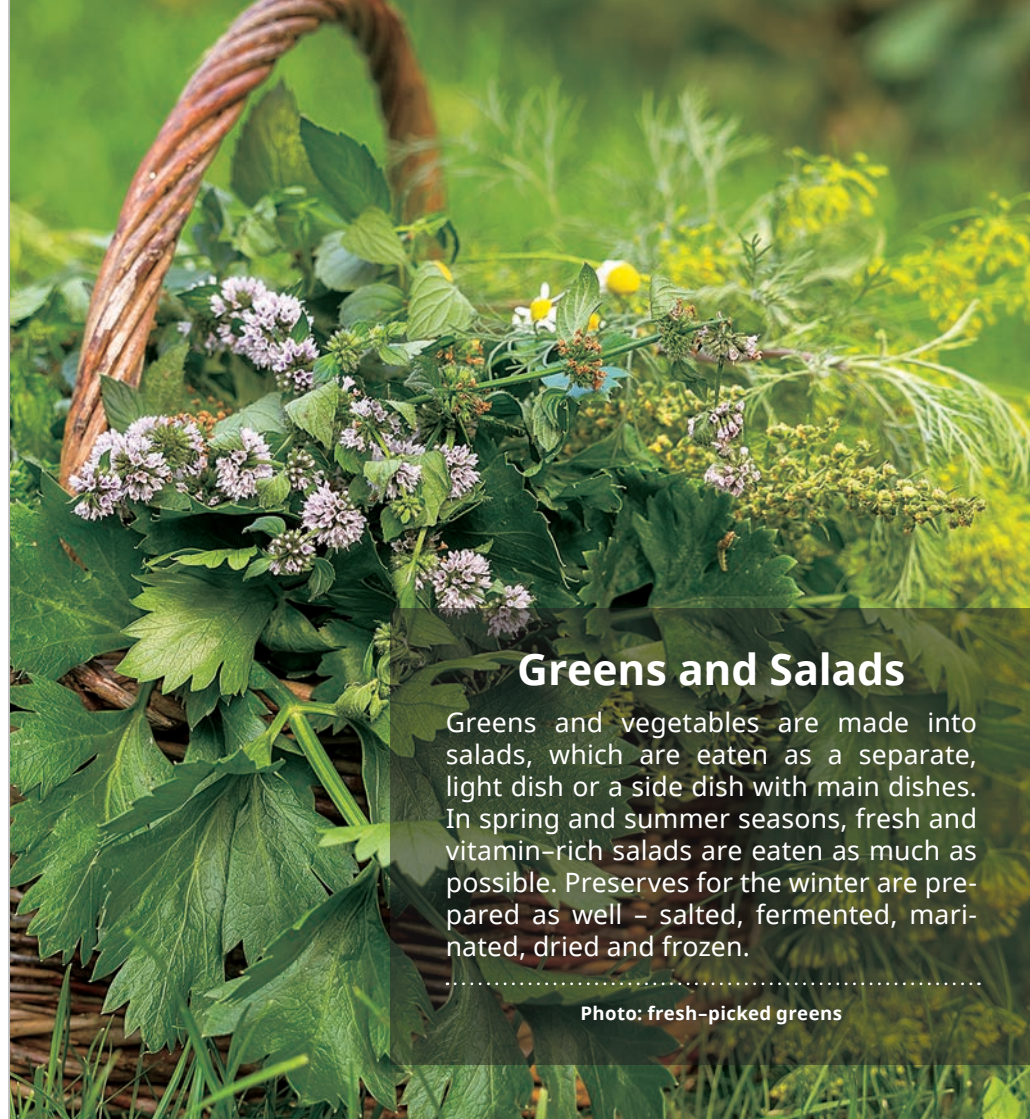
Original: 🇫🇮 leipäjuusto



Juniper Smoked Cheese

Estonian islands and coastline is famous for its beautiful juniper groves. Juniper berries and branches are used as a seasoning. The ripened cow milk cheese is smoked in juniper smoke, thus achieving a sharper, stronger taste and honey gold colour of the crust. The cheese is eaten alone or added to various dishes to achieve spicier taste tones.

Original:  kadaka juust



Greens and Salads

Greens and vegetables are made into salads, which are eaten as a separate, light dish or a side dish with main dishes. In spring and summer seasons, fresh and vitamin-rich salads are eaten as much as possible. Preserves for the winter are prepared as well – salted, fermented, marinated, dried and frozen.

Photo: fresh-picked greens



Fermented Cucumbers

The cucumbers placed in a glass jar are poured over with pickle, where dills with whole stems and seeds, as well as other seasonings are added according to the cook's taste: leaves of black currants, horseradish or cherries, garlic and pepper. The cucumbers are held under the pressure at least until the next day. The taste changes with every following day. Cucumbers for winter storage are fermented, pasteurised and then stored in a cool place. Marinated cucumbers have a different taste.

Original:  maustekurku /  hapukurk /  skābēti gurķi



Fresh Salads with Wild Greens

Green salads are made during the spring and summer season. Wild greens are especially rich in vitamins. Finely cut greens – dills, parsley leaves, green onions, rucola flowers, slices of boiled fresh potatoes, cucumbers and radishes are added to garden and wild lettuce leaves.

A light sour cream or oil-vinegar dressing is poured over the salad.

Original:  villiyrtsisalaatti /  roheline salat /  zaļie salāti



Lettuce with Vegetables

Summer vegetable salad is dressed with sour cream or natural yoghurt dressing, with large amount of chopped dills and green onions added to it. The special taste of the salad is obtained as the taste of vegetable juices are emitted from greens after the addition of salt and fermented dairy product taste mixes.

Lettuce leaves are torn, cucumbers and radishes cut into slices, greens chopped finely, the dressing is poured over the ingredients and mixed lightly. The salad is served immediately as a side dish with the main dish.

Original:  vihreä salaatti /  lehtsalat /  lapu salāti



Soups

Soups are made of vegetables, meat or fish, mushrooms, peas, beans, barley groats, root vegetables and spices. Cold soups on the basis of kefir or tomato juice are made in spring and summer. Nutritive and warming soups are most frequently eaten in autumn and winter season.

Photo: cooking fish soup on the fire



Sorrel Soup

Sorrels are one of the first greens in spring. They are used to make the soup with smoked pork or other meat of your choice, potatoes, carrots and groats.

For additional dose of vitamins, add fresh spinach or nettle leaves. Served with boiled egg, sour cream and rye bread.

Original:  hapuoblikasupp /  skābeņu zupa



Fish Soup

The soup can be made from salmon, eel, perch, pike perch, pollock, burbot or other fish. The broth is boiled from small fish, together with dills, pepper and bay leaves. The broth is strained off, poured into the pot again and cut carrots and potatoes are boiled in it. When vegetables are ready, add pieces of fish fillet and boil for a couple of minutes. Pour chopped dills over the soup before serving. Milk, sour cream or cream can be added to the soup.

Original:  kalakeitto /  kalasupp /  zivju zupa



Sauerkraut Soup

Sauerkraut soup is an autumn and winter meal. The taste of the soup is a composition of sour, sweet and salty tastes in a very pleasant proportion. It is boiled in meat broth with fermented sauerkraut, with addition of caraway seeds and, sometimes, carrots or cranberries. In Latvia fried or boiled potatoes, as well as bread are served separately. The soup is eaten very hot.

Original: 🇱🇻 hapukapsasupp / 🇷🇺 skābu kāpostu zupa



Pumpkin Puréed Soup

Place peeled pieces of pumpkin into the pot together with other vegetables of your choice – carrot, potatoes, celery, paprika. Add fried onion and garlic. When the roots are soft, blend the soup. Sour cream or cream can be added, fresh cheese, thyme or bay leaf, ground ginger root or various seeds, for instance, coriander, can be mixed in.

Original: 🇱🇻 kōrvitsa pūreesupp / 🇷🇺 ķirbja zupa



Yellow Pea Soup

Pea soup has been cooked before fasting, when consumption of meat is prohibited, since ancient times. The nutritive soup helps accumulate strength before the days of cleansing.

The yellow pea soup is boiled together with pig trotters or other soup meat, potatoes, carrots and grain. Bay leaf, thyme and mustard is added for taste. Pea soup is thick, soft and warming.

Original:  hernekeitto /  hernesupp /  zirņu zupa


Fish

Salmon, herring, carp, perch, burbot, catfish, tench, bream, pollan, pikes and many other fish are either caught by using nets or angled. Fish are fried, boiled, smoked, salted, marinated or jellied. Black and red caviar is a special treat.

Photo: a fisherman on the Lake Usma





 **Pike Perch**




The famous pike perch of Lake Peipus is very fresh, attenuating it with spices is not recommended. Fresh fillet pieces of the fish are lightly fried in butter and served with mashed potatoes, boiled or fried potatoes, or vegetables of your choice. Add a tiny amount of lemon juice and dill greens.

Original:  / kuha  koha /  cepts zandarts



New Potatoes with Herring 

The herring, which is brought from the northern seas, has had a great historical role in the cuisine of the Baltic States. When first new potatoes are harvested, they are boiled and served with pieces of marinated or fresh – salted herring. Sour cream, cottage cheese, fresh or marinated onions, green onions and dills are served with the dish. In Finland, it is a frequent dish at solstice.

Original:  sillia /  soolaheeringas /  sālita siļķe



Smoked Plaice

Smoking in hot or cold smoke is a local tradition that has been developed over centuries. Any fish can be smoked, but Baltic herring, cod, salmon and plaice are the most popular smoked fish.

The plaice is gutted, strung on the sticks and hung in smoke house. The fish are smoked until the desired thermal processing is achieved. Taste nuances are obtained by using smoke of various sorts of tree. The fish is eaten alone, with bread, or used for the cooking of different dishes.

Original: 🇫🇮 savukala / 🇸🇪 suitsutatud lest / 🇵🇱 kŹpinātas butes



Sprats

Baltic sprats are a salty and spicy speciality. Salting is an ancient traditional method of preserving fish for longer periods of time.

Whole, fresh sprats are salted in a spice mix containing allspice, black pepper, bay leaf and salt. A bit of wine can be added, too. The ready sprats can be eaten on a sandwich, together with boiled egg and boiled potatoes, cottage cheese and sour cream.

Original: 🇫🇮 maustesilakka / 🇸🇪 kilu / 🇵🇱 Źilavas



Crayfish

Boiled crayfish are the speciality that can be tasted in Finland and Estonia from May till August. They are caught in rivers and lakes. They are the tastiest, if boiled on the bank of the water body, in a large pot on the open fire. They are boiled in salted water, richly seasoned with dill and eaten hot by peeling tasty chunks of meat from shells. Light beer is drunk together with crayfish.

Original:  rapu /  vähk



Meat

Pork, beef, calf, lamb, poultry and rabbit meat meals are served with addition of vegetables and greens. The speciality of Finland is the meat of a reindeer, while in the entire territory of the Baltic States hunting of forest animals is permitted at certain seasons.

Photo: in the poultry house at Jaunieviņas farm



Reindeer with Mashed Potatoes



The meat of reindeer (poro) is very typical meal in Lapland, but you can get it in restaurants all over the country. The meat is frozen first, then cut into thin slices, quickly fried in butter and oil and then stewed slowly. Mash is made from boiled potatoes, milk and butter and served with the pieces of reindeer meat and poured over with lingonberry jam.

Original:  poronkärästys



Schnitzel

Pork dishes are very popular. The best, softest piece of pork is the lean back fillet. Schnitzel is a slice of pork fillet, which is hammered, salted, poured over with pepper, then breaded with egg, flour and ground bread and fried on hot pan until golden-brown. It is served with fried potatoes and stewed sauerkraut.

Original:  karbonaad /  karbonäde



Black Pudding with Cowberries

A sausage made of pig blood with barley groats was traditionally made for the table of autumn and winter solstice. Nowadays it is available all year round. The black pudding is fried on the pan until crunchy. Sometimes slices of bacon are added on the pan. It is served with lingonberry jam.

Original:  mustamakkara /  verivorst /  asinsdesas



Grilled Meat




In summer season the meat is frequently fried in open air on coal. The special aroma of meat, juiciness and taste are achieved by means of a marinade made of vinegar, oil, onions, garlic, greens and pepper, in which the pieces of meat are kept for a couple of hours or longer. Pork or chicken are marinated most frequently. The pieces of meat are grilled on hot coal, strung on skewers.

Original:  grillitud liha /  grilēta gaļa



Smoked Meat

Smoked meat is dark on the outside and soft and pink inside. It is consumed alone and frequently used to supplement the taste bouquet of other dishes. The pieces of pork are first salted in a cool place, then smoked in the traditional smoke sauna for the entire day in the tasty smoke of alder or juniper firewood.

Original:  palvikinkku /  suitsutatud liha /  kūpināta gaļa



Mushrooms

Mushrooms and berries can be picked in forests. It is better to pick mushrooms together with an expert, if you do not recognise mushrooms, because some mushrooms are very poisonous. Boleti and chanterelles can be picked safely and made into soups, sauces, salted or pickled in savoury marinade. Mushrooms are a popular vegetarian food.

Photo: wild boletus mushrooms



Mushroom Sauce

A very tasty sauce is made from fried mushrooms, for instance, chanterelles. The mushrooms are carefully cleaned and cut into pieces. They are first fried in butter together with onions and then wheat flour, salt and cream is added to the mushrooms. All ingredients are boiled for a short period of time and the sauce is served with boiled new potatoes and dills.

Original:  kanttarellikastike /  seenekaste /  sēņu mērce



Mushroom Salad


Some species of forest mushrooms are edible after being boiled. They can be salted for winter season. If the mushrooms are too salty, they are soaked in water or boiled again in clean water before consumption. Then they are chopped and prepared in salad with sour cream and fresh onions. Boiled egg can be added to the salad. The salad is consumed as a cold dish or together with boiled potatoes.

Original:  seenesalat /  sēņu salāti



Marinated Mushrooms

Edible mushrooms of small size are marinated. They are initially boiled and then poured over with the marinade, adding slices of onion, a couple of cloves of garlic, bay leaves, grains of black pepper and allspice, salt, sugar and vinegar to it. The taste must be balanced between sour, sweet and salty. A small marinated mushroom is an ideal snack with a glass of cold vodka.

Original:  etikkasienet /  marineeritud seened /  marinėtas sėnes



Bread

Bread is baked from rye, wheat, as well as buckwheat and barley, the dough is let to rise with yeast or a leaven. Both fine and healthy whole grain flour are used for variety, as well as bran, carrots, garlic, various seeds and even dried fruit.

Photo: taking out rye bread from a wood-fired oven



Rye bread

In accordance with ancient traditions rye bread is baked into large loaves. The flour is scalded with boiled water, the dough is mixed with the leaven and the malt and caraway seeds are added. The dough is fermented for long hours. It is baked at the temperature of 300 C in a firewood-fuelled oven. The overall process of scalded bread preparation lasts for two days.

Pan bread is also baked. It is made from softer dough, poured into shape and can be baked even in electric ovens.

Original:  ruisleipä /  rukkileib /  rupjmaize



Ruisreikäleipä






Ruisreikäleipä is a round-shaped rye bread from Finland with a hole in the centre. It is baked from coarse rye flour, by using natural leaven and adding previously baked bread crumbs to the dough. When the dough is battered, it is placed into a round shape, covered with the towel and left to ferment for several hours. The hole in the middle is made, if it is planned to hang the loaves of bread on the pole at the ceiling. This bread differs from other types of rye bread, because it does not have pronounced difference between the crust and the middle part of the bread.

Original:  ruisreikäleipä



Barley Karask

Barley karask is a bread baked from barley flour of various coarseness degrees, by adding wheat flour, cottage cheese or boiled potatoes. Karask can be baked round or brick-shaped, leaven or baking powder can be used to bake it. Wheat karask, in contrast to rye bread is lighter to taste and structure. Barley contains a lot of protein, which is well absorbed by the body.

Original:  ohraleipä /  odrakarask /  mieżu karaša



Desserts

In spring and summer desserts are often made from rhubarb, berries and fruit. In autumn and winter months the desserts become more nutritive, richer in spices and calories, with addition of chocolate, nuts and seeds. Rye bread is used in some traditional desserts.

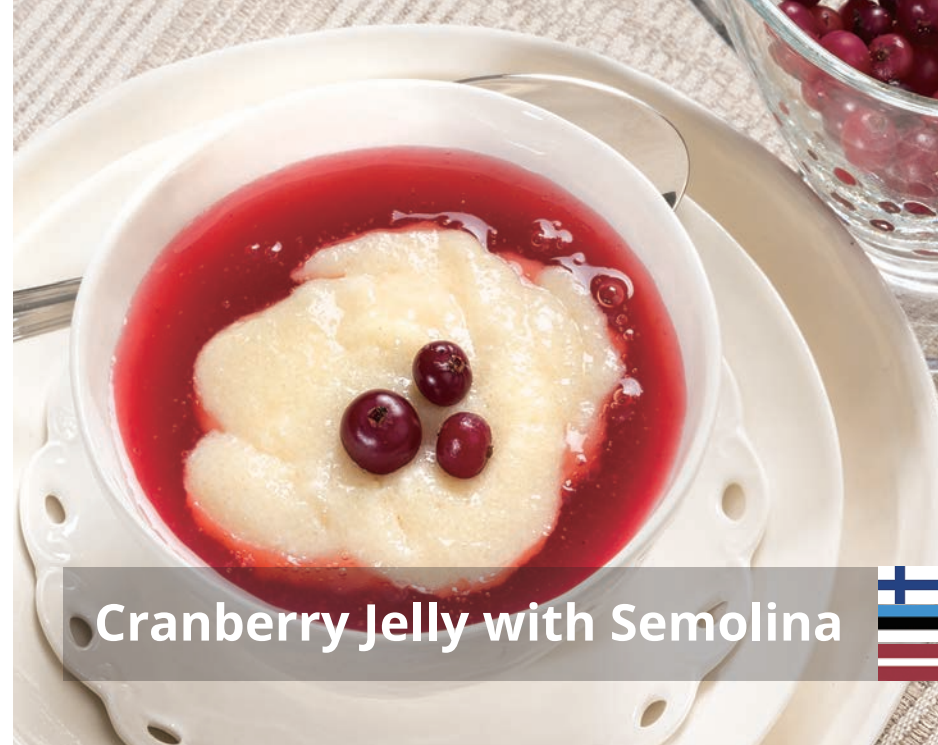
Photo: wild strawberries and bilberries



Berries with Milk



The special dessert of summer is forest berries with various additives, a healthy and simple to cook meal. Forest strawberries, raspberries or bilberries are put into the bowl, milk or yoghurt is poured over, a bit of sugar or honey is added and the dessert is ready!

Original:  marjamaito /  marjad piimaga /  ogas ar pienu



Cranberry Jelly with Semolina


Jelly is a sour-sweet berry juice, which is thickened by means of potato starch. Depending on the season, it is made from rhubarb or seasonal berries. Jelly that has a strong taste is served together with Semolina (Buberts), which is made from milk, semolina, egg yolks and vanilla. The jelly can also be eaten with a large spoon of whipped cream.

Original:  mannapuuro ja marjakiisseli /  bubert /  buberts



Ice-cream

Latvia and Estonia is famous for home made ice-cream. The ice-cream made of country eggs, milk and cream is especially tasty. Various types of ice-cream with berries, chicory, rhubarb, peppermint and other ingredients can be tasted. The ice-cream made in the town of Skrīveri contains whipped eggs, cream, cottage cheese, sugar and addition of fresh raspberries.

Original:  jātis /  saldējums



Kama Foam



Kama is a flour mix made of roasted rye, barley, wheat and dried green peas. Kama flour, a pinch of salt and sugar are mixed into a kefir, yoghurt or whipped cream and the mixture is left to rise. Fresh berries or jams can be added for taste. It is often eaten with cranberry sauce.

Original:  kama



Semolina Mousse with Milk

Semolina mousse is a dessert that is made at all seasons from seasonal berries or fruit. In spring it can be made from rhubarb, later from strawberries, red currants, black currants, apples, while in autumn and winter – from bog cranberries. Strawberries or other berries are boiled in a pot, semolina and sugar are added into the pot and the mixture is left to cool. Then the dessert is whipped until light and airy. It is eaten with cold milk.

Original:  vispipuuro /  mannaviht piimaga /  debesmanna



Pancakes

Pancakes are divided into sweet and salty. They are most frequently made of milk, eggs and wheat, but they can also be made of flour of other grain corps or vegetables. Sweet pancakes are usually served for breakfast or supper, while salty pancakes are eaten for dinner as well. Pancakes is a dish that can be supplemented with additives to individual taste.

Photo: pancake baking in Setumaa, Estonia



Crepes



Crepes are a popular breakfast and supper dish in Latvia. A batter is made from wheat flour, eggs, milk, sugar and salt. Batter is poured into the pan with a ladle and the crepe is spread on the entire pan, which has been pre-heated and greased in advance. The crepe is fried from both sides until golden. Crepes can be easily rolled or folded. They are eaten with strawberry jam or other jams, honey or sour cream at your choice.

Original:  plānās pankūkas



Filled Pancakes

Batter is made from wheat flour, eggs and milk and crepes are fried. Cottage cheese is mixed with egg, sugar and vanilla sugar. Raisins or ground lemon rind can be added. The cottage cheese mass is folded or rolled into crepes and fried in butter until gold brown. Serve with sour cream.

Original:  täidetud pannkoogid /  pildītās pankūkas



— Potato Pancakes

Grade potatoes of a floury variety, add salt and bake crunchy pancakes on a pre-heated pan. Serve immediately with sour cream and sweet-sour cowberry jam. The dish can be supplemented with slices of fried bacon or lox.

Original: 🇪🇵 kartupeļu pankūkas



Buns, Pies and Cakes

Buns, pies and cakes are baked for daily coffee breaks, as well as for celebrations and parties. Cheese, spinach, eggs, rice and meat are used as filling for salty pies. Sweet buns are baked with fruit, berries, cream, crumbs, nuts, meringue, chocolate and other tasty ingredients.

Photo: Café Supelsaksad, Pärnu



Bacon Buns

Bacon buns are associated with various seasonal celebrations, but they are on sale all year round. Round discs of leavened dough made of wheat, milk, yeast and spices are filled with smoked bacon, which has been fried with onions, folded in half and the margins are compressed with fingers to seal the pie. The pasties are covered with whipped egg and baked in a hot oven.

Original: 🇫🇮 peekonipirukas / 🇸🇪 speķa pīrāgi



Karelialian Pies

Rye dough pies with rice and egg filling come from Karelia, but nowadays they are baked in the entire territory of Finland. Oval base is rolled from rye dough. The filling of boiled rice, cream, egg and salt is placed on the base and the margins of the base are folded up with fingers. Finally the pie is covered with melted butter and boiled chopped egg, which has been mixed with butter and salt.

Original: 🇫🇮 karjalanpiirakka



Bilberry (Apple, Rhubarb) Cake

Fruit or berry cakes are baked according to season. In spring rhubarb cakes are made, in summer – cakes with seasonal berries. In winter frozen berries can be used, while apples are available all year round. Yeast dough or shortcrust pastry dough is made first, berries, apple slices or rhubarb pieces are placed on the base, then the base is poured over with the mixture of cream, eggs and sugar and baked in the oven until ready.

Original:  mustikkapiirakka /  mustika kook /  plātsmaize



Curd Cake

Prepare a yeast dough or shortcrust pastry dough base and spread on baking pan. Blend the cottage cheese together with eggs, sugar, vanilla, add raisins or lemon rind to taste. Cover the dough with the cottage cheese mass. Ground cinnamon can be spread over as desired. Bake in the oven. Cut in pieces and serve.

Original:  kohupiimakook /  biezpienmaize



Honey Cake

Due to short northern summers, honey is very valuable and tasty product in the region of Baltic States. One of the most popular cakes is honey cake. The dough is made from butter, flour, eggs, honey and spices and cake bases are baked. Sour cream, sugar and vanilla are spread between the layers. The cake is eaten on the next day, when the tastes have thoroughly infused.

Original:  meekook /  medus kūka



Drinks

Apart from clean drinking water, mineral water, juices, lemonades, kvass and herbal infusions are used as drinks in the Baltic States. Coffee also has an important role, especially in Finland:

Alcoholic beverages brewed in the Baltic States include various sorts of beer, slightly less popular is wine making and cider is produced in small amounts. Distilled beverages in Latvia include the famous Riga Black Balsam, in Finland – berry liqueurs and in Estonia – grain vodka.

Photo: gathering herbs for tea



Herbal Infusions

Latvia and Estonia have ancient traditions of medicinal herb use. People collect herbs for medicinal teas and infusions for personal use, but they can also be bought in pharmacies, shops and markets. Some of them can be used as daily refreshing drink, for instance, camomile, peppermint, wild marjoram or lady's mantle. Dried flowers are poured over with hot water, infused for a couple of minutes and drunk either alone or with honey.

Original:  ūrdītee /  zāļu tēja



Juices

Natural berry and fruit juices are available throughout the year. The most popular juices are apple, cranberry and black currant juice. A less common drink is birch sap. In early spring, when the trees wake up from dormancy, a hole is drilled into the trunk of birch trees and a peg is inserted, through the hole in which the sap slowly drops into a container. It is fermented with various additives for winter, eventually turning the juice into a naturally sparkling drink. In Estonia also freeze birch sap and drink it without additives.

Original:  mehu /  mahlad /  sulas



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