



Nordic Islands' Cuisine



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Alexander is an homage to the last noble owner of Pädaste Manor, **Alexander von Buxhoeveden**. Alex – as he was called by intimae – had a great impact on local life on the Islands. He was the Land Marshall and thus the highest in command. Without doubt his considerable wealth and his position at the court in St. Petersburg as one of the inner confidants of the last Czar, helped him to realize his quest. Little known is Alex's passion for nature; he was also an ardent collector of trees that he brought home from his travels, many of which still line our park. In a certain way Alexander was very much alike ordinary inhabitants of Muhu Island, who for centuries combined the love for their Island with new discoveries from neighboring Island communities. In this spirit I like to introduce you to the **Nordic Islands' cuisine**.

Having lived most of my life on various islands, I've always admired the sea's ability to unite people. Islanders have been great sailors throughout the centuries and I believe them to be more adventurous than mainlanders – eager to explore and discover.

Thanks to strong will and a history of having been challenged by new experiences, islanders' cuisine also tends to be more varied. Even now, travelers bring ingredients, herbs and techniques back from their trips in order to test and possibly introduce at home what they have encountered abroad. The inhabitants of Muhu Island have always had this kind of harmonious relationship with the sea, long before the concept of a nation state concentrated around an administrative capital came into existence. The travels of Muhu seamen to Gotland and other islands in the region are well documented throughout history. For most of its past, the Muhu Island community has thus been influenced by the other seafaring communities in the Nordic Islands region: Gotland, Bornholm, Åland, Öland, Rügen, as well as our neighboring islands of Saaremaa and Hiiumaa. This influence can still be well noted in the food and cultural traditions of Muhu families to this day.

At Pädaste Manor we decided to tread back, to unfold and sometimes rediscover this tradition. We like to offer our clients a choice of various palates from Muhu and neighboring islands in the fine tradition of Nordic Islands' Cuisine.

We offer tastes, which gain their character from the produce, techniques and recipes originating from the Nordic Islands. Terroir and the seasons guide us in our cuisine. There are incredible advantages to a rough and rugged climate. Have you ever pondered the influences of our summer, with its long evenings and bright nights, on the flavor of locally grown food? Not to mention the dampness of fall and crisp winter at its heels with their ever-changing temperatures. There's no doubt this all contributes to the taste of the food. The slower a plant grows, the better it tastes!

Cold influences flavor by making plants store more minerals. The islands belonging to the Nordic Islands' Cuisine area are all quite similar in this sense, despite their location. There is high quality lamb, venison, moose and wild boar, not to mention fish, vegetables, honey, herbs, leeks, mushrooms and berries.

Let's get more specific and have a look at some of the islands in our region. Gotland is worthy of mention because of its excellent lamb, truffles and aged cheeses. Cheese from Saaremaa, although somewhat lighter, is packed with the local influence of juniper. Moving on to Åland, this community is proud of their Calvados.

Also worth mentioning is their local cheese. From my own island of birth, Saaremaa, fish like flounder and herring stand out. Fried Baltic herring with churned cucumber salad is a dish I try to eat as often as I can when staying on Saaremaa. Muhu is home to a great variety of wild animals, and that's why we often make a traditional Muhu dish from game, called Lomat meats. When using traditional techniques like salting, drying, pickling and smoking to prepare the raw, fresh ingredients from our islands, we get a result that suits our kitchen perfectly.

One of the locals' favorite wildflowers, picked each spring after the snow melts, must be named Keys of Heaven for good reason. These little golden gems will light your way to the cuisine of the ancient Nordic islands. Let them be your inspiration on this voyage of discovery.

Welcome to Alexander!


Peeter Pihel,
Chef


ALEXANDER