

Northern

— WILD —
KITCHEN



Home Cooking *from the Heart of Norway*

Nevada Berg

 PRESTEL



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Introduction



The aged timber creaks beneath my feet, as a gentle breeze seeps through the small crevices in the log walls. I lower my head as I make my way inside our seventeenth-century *stabbur*. The *stabbur*, a traditional storage house for food, was once a necessity for many farms across Norway. Before refrigeration, fish and livestock were cured and hung to dry, while other goods, such as flour and flatbread, were kept here as well. This *stabbur* is just one of many dotted across the country, especially throughout the area of Numedal, the great medieval valley I now call home.

Not long ago, I arrived in Norway, with my Norwegian husband and son, after years of nomadic travel. Longing for a home and community to be rooted in, we came to an unexpected place. A place deep in the belly of Norway, where the mountains tower and a river storms through a winding valley. Then we did something many young people seem to do these days when they move to the countryside: We bought a farm—a mountain farm. We bought it before I had ever seen it in person. This lovely, old farm tells the stories of those who came before us, and bears witness to a part of Norway’s traditional food culture.

I knew before I came to live here that there was so much more to Norwegian food than I was aware of—more than just the contrast of meat and boiled potatoes versus the New Nordic cuisine, which finds chefs presenting local food in a technical yet aesthetically beautiful way that is not easy to replicate at home. But I was still surprised to find the vast amount and incredible quality of the produce and livestock available, and to discover that deep in the northern wild, lies one of nature’s culinary banquets. Seasonal, forgiving, abundant—like a land flowing with milk and honey.

My understanding of Norwegian cuisine went from an unfortunate stereotype to a world filled with berry-infused moose sausage, fermented trout, wild nettle soup, rhubarb juice made from birch sap, home-brewed beer, and traditional cheeses and porridges made on the farm. The variation and quality of the dishes struck something deep inside me and I found myself asking why the bounty and complexity inherent in the Norwegian kitchen was not more well known, not to mention more commonly praised and highlighted.

As I started to explore the cuisine, I had the privilege to meet the people behind the local products. People who are intensely passionate about maintaining their family traditions and creating new ones. They even inspired me to make my own variations using local ingredients. I started writing about everything I was learning—cataloging recipes, stories, and traditions—and I wanted to share my excitement with everyone, so a few months after we arrived, I started my blog, *North Wild Kitchen*. I also picked my first wild European blueberry that year, and salted and hung to dry my first leg of lamb. We raised nineteen chicks to provide a steady flow of fresh, free-range eggs and I picked, canned, and froze far too many plums. Even now, with every passing moment, the list continues to grow.

The more I study and read about Norway's food culture, the more I grasp its simultaneous simplicity and complexity. It's simple in that traditionally most Norwegians used what they had available, making everyday dishes for sustenance rather than for pleasure or creativity. At the same time, Norway has a rich and complex culinary heritage that's deeply influenced by other Scandinavian and European countries. Religion and wealth distribution throughout the centuries, as well as geography and social and cultural differences, also played a role in the eating habits of Norwegians. For instance, while the wealthy enjoyed exotic imported ingredients, the majority of the population, who were poor to say the least, used a few basic ingredients to make hearty meals to fill the belly and provide fuel for a hard day's work. The landscape also affected the diet, from the coast and fjords to the mountains and lowlands. Settlements often isolated people, which led to national dishes taking on slight differences from region to region, so that one dish could have more than a hundred variations. It's a cuisine that has evolved, and continues to do so, while also holding on to many of its traditions.

This cookbook is more than just a collection of Norwegian dishes. It is an exploration of the where, the why, and the how—the history and stories beyond the plate. There are traditional recipes that have been passed down for centuries, as well as newer recipes that are so embedded in the food culture that it seems like they've been traditional Norwegian dishes all along. I also include recipes that utilize Norwegian ingredients in creative and innovative ways. Together, these create a more complete and accurate picture of Norwegian cuisine and how Norwegians eat today.

I hope you'll journey with me as I examine some of the most iconic symbols and activities related to Norway's food and culinary traditions, and expand upon them with corresponding recipes. I've tried to share dishes that can be translated across countries, and to use ingredients that can be substituted to fit what's available to you. This is just a small collection of recipes, representing what I've been exposed to thus far, and is in no way an exhaustive collection. This is more of a beginning, a scratch on the surface of what Norway offers. I hope this broadens your definition of Norwegian cuisine, while also providing a glimpse into the many exciting ingredients this country has to offer. I also hope it inspires you to look at the ingredients in your own surroundings and to be creative and experimental in your own kitchen.

Norwegian Cuisine Today

To define what is authentic Norwegian cuisine is to accept the overlaps and influences created by centuries of trade and migration and the adoption of culinary dishes from other regions and cultures. Understandably, Norway shares many similarities with its Nordic neighbors, as well as mainland Europe and the northernmost parts of the British Isles. The country has also been exposed to food from other parts of the globe, opening its diet to new flavors and popular dishes from near and far.

Norwegian cuisine still features many traditional dishes, but the modern palate reflects a more worldly perspective that enjoys a range of international products and dining experiences, such as tapas and wine bars. Pizza and tacos are the norm, with Friday being deemed "Taco Friday," while takeout options like kebab and sushi are popular late-night meals. Trends also



dominate the culinary scene, with food trucks popping up and restaurants serving the latest culinary craze. And yet, behind the grandeur and excitement of the new, there's still a strong interest in learning traditional techniques and using local ingredients.

Chefs are putting their marks on Norwegian ingredients and traditions, and revolutionizing the way the cuisine is perceived. At the same time, artisans and craftsmen are utilizing what's available to them locally, and making a name for themselves and their products both domestically and internationally. Fish and seafood remain one of the country's most important exports—and the quality is recognized around the world—but Norway now boasts some of the best cheesemakers in the world. There's also a focus on sustainability and using the country's incredible natural ingredients in a responsible way. Best of all, this excitement and innovation is filtering throughout the country and more Norwegians are being drawn to cooking and gaining a fresh perspective on the cuisine.

From the past, we can take valuable lessons in cooking methods, such as smoking, preserving, and storing, as well as hunting. Survival encouraged time-tested processes that we're returning to now, so we can learn from them and also remember what a fish that's cooked on a stone over a hot fire in the middle of the forest tastes like. And as we are blessed to live in abundance and have a knowledge of and access to food and methods from around the globe, we can integrate both the past and the present into innovative and inspired meals, all the while taking advantage of the incredible bounty. By every definition, these meals are Norwegian, because the products are locally sourced, and the tastes embody the evolution of the Nordic plate.



Notes on Ingredients and Equipment

The idea behind each recipe is to highlight Norwegian ingredients, but if you're unable to access these ingredients or equipment, substitutions are heartily welcome. Innovation in the kitchen happens when we are inspired to try making new things with what we have.

It's also important to note that the outcome of any dish reflects the quality of the ingredients used. An apple plucked straight from a tree branch will taste much different than one flown in and sold in a grocery store.

Ingredient measurements are listed in both imperial and metric measurements. In some instances, they are rounded up or down to match more closely with each other and make it easier for you, independent of which measurement system you use. These slight differences should not affect the outcome of the recipes.

BUTTER—Common Norwegian butter tends to be lightly salted and I use this butter in all my baking and cooking. Some recipes contain margarine because this is how the recipe was passed down from generation to generation. If you wish to omit the margarine, substitute it with lightly salted butter.

CHEESE—I often refer to white cheeses made of goat's milk, which are not to be confused with soft fresh goat cheese. These are usually semi-firm and have a mellow goat flavor.

CULTURED MILK—I use *kulturmilk* and kefir, products of soured milk, in cheesemaking and baking. For the recipes in this book where I normally use *kulturmilk*, I have listed buttermilk in the ingredient list. For the recipes using kefir, it's also fine to substitute with buttermilk.

DAIRY—Norwegian dairy products contain high percentages of fat. Full-fat sour cream, for example, is 35 percent fat. I specify which recipes require full-fat dairy products; elsewhere you can use lower fat products.

EGGS—My eggs come straight from our hens and I always leave them at room temperature. When possible, use room temperature eggs.

FLOUR (BARLEY, RYE, WHOLE WHEAT)—In Norway, barley, rye, and whole-wheat flours come in both fine and coarse textures. Fine flours are similar in texture to all-purpose flour whereas coarse flours, sometimes referred to as stone ground, have a rougher texture. If coarse flours are not readily available, try specialty bread shops or a local baker.

FLOUR (WHITE)—When it comes to white flour, I use all-purpose flour, sifted. However, it's not necessary to use sifted flour for non-baking recipes and I have specified this in those recipes. For a gluten-free option, substitute equal parts sifted GF flour.

FRUIT AND BERRIES—Many of the fruits and berries we use are grown in our garden or picked in the wild. Here are substitutions for those that might be harder to access:

Bilberries (European blueberries)—blueberries

Blackcurrants—blackberries (although, they taste completely different)

Cloudberrries—golden raspberries

Lingonberries—cranberries

OIL—I use good-quality rapeseed oil in the majority of my cooking and baking. In all of the recipes calling for oil, I have suggested you use a mild-flavored oil, like canola or a mild olive oil, since rapeseed oil might not be readily available in your area.

MEATS—I'm a firm believer in using high-quality meat, preferably sourced locally from a farmer or butcher.

SUGAR—I always use granulated sugar unless specified in the recipe.

SYRUPS—In Norway, there are two kinds of syrup, light and dark. The closest substitute for light syrup is golden syrup, which you should be able to find in specialty shops. For dark syrup, substitute with light molasses.

WILD MEATS—Use the following guidelines for substitutions:

Venison (deer)—moose, reindeer (caribou), and elk are interchangeable

Pheasant—chicken or turkey

Moose—elk or venison

Grouse—partridge or quail

Hare—chicken or turkey

Beef, lamb, or goat can also be used as substitutes for any of these wild meats, but the flavor profiles will be drastically different.

RICER—This kitchen accessory is helpful for getting a smooth consistency from the potatoes used to make flatbreads and *lefse*. I highly recommend investing in one.

ROLLING PINS—Norwegians use various indented rolling pins to make *lefse* and flatbreads. I have tested all the recipes with a regular rolling pin as well, and it works fine, though it takes a little extra effort.

TAKKE—This Norwegian griddle is very large, round, and can be electric or heated by fire. If you can't access one, use a frying pan instead. You won't be able to cook as many cakes or breads at once, or make them as large, but they'll turn out great nonetheless.





Sankingen

THE FORAGE





Foraging is a unique expression of connectivity. Since ancient times, people have gathered food from nature to provide sustenance and energy. Today, foraging is one of life's pleasures, and for Norwegians, a way to combine fresh air, exercise, and a good meal following a successful pick.

The day is unstructured, with open expectations. You follow the curves of the landscape and the rays of the sun. The sounds of branches crackling underneath, streams trickling nearby, and leaves dancing in the breeze all become part of the day's soundtrack. Foraging is about more than the edibles themselves; it's about the moments, the laughter, the stillness, and the discovery. It's as much about the journey as the destination, and fosters a deeper connection to nature and ourselves.

There is something romantic about eating what nature provides, especially when you've never given it such thought before. When we take the time to look a bit closer, we inevitably discover. What may have seemed like an obtrusive bed of weeds—or perhaps an overly lush landscape—becomes an array of edibles in varying tastes and textures. And with their bounty of vitamins, minerals, and nutrients, they're a welcome relief after a long, barren winter.

Norway's incredible array of wild edibles has left a distinct mark on the cuisine. Wild berries, such as bilberries, lingonberries, strawberries, and cloudberries are showcased in dishes throughout the summer and autumn months. Hundreds of wild mushrooms, such as chanterelles and hen of the woods, appear in late summer. Juniper and its berries have long been used as a flavor enhancement, as well as a means for producing homemade beer. Wild herbs and plants like dill, caraway, parsnip, angelica, wild garlic, chervil, and horseradish have been documented as popular ingredients dating back to the Viking age and possibly even earlier. Stinging nettle, tree sap, and wild flowers make delectable drinks, among other things. Along the coasts, you'll find sea kale, pepperwort, scurvy grass, and sea rocket complementing the various fish and seafood found in the sea. And this is just a tiny sample of the local, ecological, healthy, and free foods available throughout the Norwegian landscape.

Understanding what's accessible right in front of us is powerful. It celebrates the nuances of ingredients in their native environment, and opens the doors to endless culinary adventures. Putting nature on the menu has become more enticing and popular these days, thanks in part to gourmet kitchens, the New Nordic movement, and our desire for a more sustainable and direct approach to our food system. Going out and picking for oneself and then experimenting in the kitchen encourages an adventurous spirit, and provides the freedom to cook in a way that makes food more than just a meal; it becomes a lifestyle.

In Norway, we have the concept of *allemannsretten* ("every man's right"), which is the right to use nature freely, independent of who owns the property. Included in this tradition is the right to travel the land, stay on the land, and gather from the land. The main rule is to be careful and respectful of nature, as well as the people who own the land and those who will come after. People are free to pluck wild plants, flowers, bushes, and mushrooms. Wild nuts must be eaten on location, and collecting tree sap requires permission from the landowner.

The unwritten agreement is to take only what you need. This idea—it's a way of life, really—reflects Norwegians' respect for nature. Fulfillment comes not only from taking what we need, but also from ensuring that we leave something for others to enjoy as well. This, in turn, allows nature to replenish itself, and helps create a sustainable cycle.

In this chapter, I touch briefly on some of the more common edibles foraged in Norway and those that are most easily recognized and accessible. With any foraging expedition, it is extremely important to be one hundred percent sure that what you are picking is indeed fit for consumption and not dangerous. Some edibles can look like poisonous variations, so always seek out the help of local experts and take caution.

Wild Garlic Soup

RAMSLØKSUPPE

Wild garlic, or ramps, can be found along the coasts and in the forests of Norway, mainly in May and June. The season is short, only a few weeks, and as quickly as this delightful plant grows, it withers before the start of summer. Wild garlic is a culinary treasure, used by chefs and home cooks that want to serve up the perfect taste of springtime. It's also incredibly nutritious, and has been valued for centuries for its medicinal properties.

With its subtle garlic flavor, this delicate green is incredibly versatile, and makes a nice addition to soups, salads, tarts, and sauces. It's one of those ingredients that requires only a little imagination to go a long way in the kitchen. If you can't get your hands on wild garlic, substitute garlic chives. • *serves 4*

2 tablespoons lightly salted butter
1 medium onion, finely chopped
3 medium potatoes, peeled and diced
4¼ cups (1 l) vegetable stock

7 ounces (200 g) wild garlic leaves,
roughly chopped
Salt and pepper
Heavy cream (optional)

In a large, heavy saucepan, heat the butter over medium heat. Add the onion and sauté for 8 to 10 minutes or until soft and translucent. Add the potatoes and sauté for about 5 minutes to soften them slightly, stirring often. Add the vegetable stock and bring to a boil. Lower the heat and simmer, covered, for 15 to 20 minutes or until the potatoes are cooked all the way through. Add the wild garlic leaves and cook for 2 to 3 minutes or until the leaves have wilted. Transfer to a blender, or use an immersion blender, and purée until smooth, being careful of the heat. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

Serve in individual bowls with a dash of heavy cream on top, if using.





Creamy Sorrel Potato Salad

POTETSALAT MED ENGSYRE

Sorrel, known as *engsyre* or *surblad* (“sour leaves”) in Norwegian, arrives in early spring and stays until late fall. It’s a hearty herb and comes back every year, which means there will always be a supply on hand to use. Sorrel has a crisp and tangy bite to it, almost like a sour apple, making it an ideal herb to brighten up dishes like salads and fish.

Potato salad is a common side dish in Norway and throughout the Nordic region. The classic version is mayonnaise-based and features spring onions. With the addition of radishes and hard-boiled eggs, plus sorrel dominating the dressing, this is definitely a spin on tradition. I tend to favor extra dressing with this salad, so the sorrel really stands out against the egg and potatoes.

serves 4

5 medium non-starchy potatoes,
such as new potatoes, rinsed

½ cup (120 ml) mayonnaise

½ cup (120 ml) sour cream

½ teaspoon strong mustard

1 ounce (28 g) young sorrel leaves,
plus more for garnish

½ teaspoon salt

4 to 5 radishes, thinly sliced

3 large hard-boiled eggs, chopped

In a large pot, cover the potatoes with cold salted water and bring to a boil. Lower the heat and simmer for 10 to 15 minutes, until the potatoes are barely tender when pierced with a knife. Drain the potatoes and return to the pot. Cover with a tea towel and let rest for 15 minutes. Peel the potatoes and cut into bite-size pieces.

While the potatoes are cooking, combine the mayonnaise, sour cream, mustard, sorrel, and salt in a food processor and pulse until the sorrel is fully incorporated into the dressing.

In a large serving bowl, combine the potatoes, radishes, and hard-boiled eggs. Add the sorrel dressing, gently toss, garnish with more sorrel leaves, and serve.

Beer-Battered Spruce Tips with Syrup

GRANSKUDD FRITERT I ØL MED GRANSKUDD SIRUP

Toward the end of spruce tip season in the late spring, the tips lengthen and their citrus aspect intensifies, making them ideal for battering and frying until golden brown. You get a lovely lemon taste with a chewy yet soft texture. These are delicious right out of the oil with a little salt, but turn into something extraordinary when dipped into spruce tip syrup. It's a balance of sweet and savory, with floral and citrus notes. Feel free to substitute with the tips from other edible conifers.
serves 4

FOR THE SPRUCE TIP SYRUP

4 to 5 handfuls spruce tips
About 2 ½ to 3 cups (500 to 600 g)
granulated sugar

FOR THE BEER BATTER

1 cup (240 ml) ale or lager
1 cup (120 g) all-purpose flour, sifted
½ teaspoon salt

FOR THE SPRUCE TIPS

4 cups (960 ml) cooking oil
2 to 3 handfuls 2-inch-long (5 cm)
mature spruce tips
Flaky salt

For the spruce tip syrup, in a medium saucepan, combine the spruce tips and just enough cold water to barely cover and bring to a boil. Lower the heat and simmer, covered, for 30 minutes to extract the flavor. Pour through a mesh strainer into a large, heavy saucepan; discard the spruce tips. Measure the liquid and calculate 2 parts sugar for every 3 parts liquid. Combine the calculated sugar and liquid in the large, heavy saucepan and bring to a boil. Continue boiling, removing any white foam that forms on top, until reduced and thickened to the point when the syrup coats the back of a spoon. For accuracy, use a candy thermometer and remove the syrup from the heat when it reaches the thread stage (230°F / 110°C). Place in a clean glass jar with a lid and let cool.

For the beer batter, in a medium bowl, whisk together the beer, flour, and salt. Let rest for 15 minutes.

While the batter is resting, heat the cooking oil in a medium, heavy saucepan over medium-high heat. When you can drop in a little batter and it begins to sizzle, the oil is hot enough.

Line a large plate with paper towels.

For the spruce tips, dip the tips in the batter, making sure they are evenly coated. When the oil is hot, carefully place 2 to 3 tips in the oil and fry, turning once, for about 1 minute, or until crisp, golden brown, and cooked through. Transfer to the paper towel-lined plate and immediately sprinkle with flaky salt. Repeat with the remaining spruce tips.

Serve immediately with the spruce tip syrup on the side.



— Hva var bakgrunnen for at du la om til skolebarn?

— Jeg hadde bror som var gift med en skolelærer. Han hadde tre barn som gikk på skolebarn. Det var en veldig god erfaring for meg. Det var en veldig god erfaring for meg. Det var en veldig god erfaring for meg.



Glennys og Telenor

— Kan du fortelle om din prosjekt?

— Ja, det er et veldig spennende prosjekt. Det handler om å utvikle nye tjenester for våre kunder. Det er veldig spennende og utfordrende. Det er veldig spennende og utfordrende.

Lands ØK



Oatmeal with Raw Spruce Tip Granola and Blackberries

HAVREGRØT MED GRANSKUDDGRANOLA OG BJØRNEBÆR

Late in spring, Norway's luscious spruce trees start to change. Fresh shoots with brown casings appear, and as the days pass, the casings break open and small, vibrant green tips begin to emerge. The little shoots continue to grow and fan out, eventually blending in and turning into dark green needles. It can be easy to miss the change, but in those few short weeks when the tips are sprouting, you can gather them and use them in a variety of dishes and drinks. The tips are full of vitamin C and have a lovely citrus taste. Young tips tend to be more flavorful and less acidic, so it's good to pick them right when they are just budding.

Porridge maintains an important place in Norwegian culinary culture. Here, I've combined fresh spruce tips with nuts and blackberries to give this hearty dish an earthy flavor profile reminiscent of the mountains. Be sure to use whole milk for wonderfully rich and creamy oatmeal.

serves 4

2 cups (200 g) quick-cooking oats	2 tablespoons sunflower seeds, unsalted
4 cups (960 ml) whole milk	2 tablespoons pumpkin seeds, unsalted
½ teaspoon salt	6 tablespoons freshly picked spruce tips
2 tablespoons whole, raw almonds, unsalted	2 tablespoons granulated sugar
2 tablespoons whole, raw hazelnuts, unsalted	1 cup (125 g) blackberries

In a medium, heavy saucepan, combine the oats, milk, and salt and bring to a boil, stirring frequently. Lower the heat and simmer for about 5 minutes or until the oats are soft, continuing to stir.

Combine the almonds, hazelnuts, sunflower seeds, pumpkin seeds, spruce tips, and sugar in a food processor and pulse until blended but still chunky.

Divide the warm oatmeal among bowls, top with the raw granola and blackberries, and serve.

Wild Nettle and Honey Cake

BRENNESLEKAKE

Sprouts of stinging nettles pop up in late spring and within a few short days, they begin their swift and relentless siege to take over the ground. While known for their dominance and sting, with good gloves and boiling water, nettles can be handled and tamed. They've long been appreciated for their medicinal and health benefits, as well as for their texture and culinary potential. Even the Vikings understood their value; nettle fibers were discovered in the Oseberg find, a Norwegian Viking burial ship from around 834 AD.

This subtly sweet cake is a great introduction to nettles, as they pair incredibly well with honey. And it will impress everyone, especially when you reveal that the star ingredient is that prickly weed growing in the yard. • *serves 10 to 12*

FOR THE CAKE

2 big handfuls young nettle leaves, washed

½ cup (112 g) lightly salted butter, softened

1 cup plus 2 tablespoons (220 g) granulated sugar

3 large eggs, at room temperature

½ cup (120 ml) honey

2½ cups (300 g) all-purpose flour, sifted

2 teaspoons baking soda

FOR THE WHIPPED CREAM

2 cups (480 ml) heavy cream

2 tablespoons granulated sugar

½ teaspoon almond extract

Preheat the oven to 300°F (150°C). Butter 2 (8-inch / 20-cm) round cake pans and line with parchment paper.

For the cake, bring a medium saucepan of water to a boil. Add the nettle leaves, lower the heat, and simmer for about 5 minutes. Drain the nettles, transfer to a blender or food processor, and purée until smooth. Set aside to cool.

In a large bowl, use an electric mixer to beat the butter and sugar until fluffy. Add the eggs, 1 at a time, incorporating each egg before adding the next one, and continue beating for a few minutes until thick, creamy, and light yellow. Add the honey and nettle purée and beat until thoroughly blended.

In a medium bowl, whisk together the flour and baking soda. Add to the butter mixture and beat until combined—it will be slightly stiff. Pour the batter into the prepared pans and bake for 30 to 35 minutes or until a toothpick inserted in the center of the cake comes out clean. Let the cakes cool in the pans for 10 minutes before turning them out onto a wire rack. Let cool completely.

For the whipped cream, whip the heavy cream, sugar, and almond extract until stiff peaks form.

To assemble the cake, spread some of the whipped cream on top of 1 cake. Place the other cake on top and spread the rest of the whipped cream on the top and, if you like, on the sides. Refrigerate until ready to serve.



