

THE TASTE OF ÅLAND

The Ålandic dish of the century





A CENTURY
of
WILLFULNESS

#SÄTTÅLANDPÅTALLRIKEN



THE TASTE OF ÅLAND

What do Ålanders consider to be the real taste of Åland? In the autumn of 2021, we searched far and wide to find the Ålandic dish of the century. Among numerous nominations, nine finalists were selected and in an open vote a true classic, the Åland Pancake, was chosen the winner. Thus Åland tastes of eggs, flour, milk, goats, sugar – and, of course, much much more.

In this pamphlet, you will find The Ålandic Dish of the Century as well as all the other finalists. Recipes seasoned with traditional food culture, useful tips from both the past and the present, the occasional scandal and a substantial amount of local pride and willfulness.

Willfulness has been an essential feature of the Ålanders for more than a century and it also characterizes the way we cherish our cultural heritage that is local food and cooking. We create unique flavours by combining old preparation techniques, tastes and food storage with influences from abroad and modern cooking methods. Traditional knowhow seasoned with contemporary curiosity, small-scale food craft alongside large-scale production industry.

We let the seasons set the menu. The fresh and clean sea air, the fertile soil and a long growing season with many hours of sun guarantee produce of the highest quality.

Our common goal is to always convey to you, our guest, the history of Ålandic food in a respectful and sustainable manner.

Bon appétit!

SNÖMOS =
THE ÅLANDIC WORD
FOR WHIPPED CREAM



ÅLAND PANCAKE

An Ålandic national treasure and an eternal question that both unites and divides people – should you use semolina or rice as your main ingredient? The traditional trimmings, however, most people can agree on – prune custard seasoned with cinnamon and "snömos", the Ålandic word for whipped cream.

In the old days in the archipelago, serving pancake with a snaps was a way to lure passing boats to stop by at the jetty to share local gossip as well as world news. Still today, Ålanders and foreigners gather around the Åland pancake and most local cafés and restaurants have it on their menu.

When it comes to the question of semolina or rice, the choice is yours. It could be noted, however, that semolina is actually produced locally whereas rice has to be imported.

ÅLAND PANCAKE

1 l milk
 1,5 dl semolina (or 1 dl rice grains)
 1 dl flour
 3 eggs
 ½-1 dl sugar
 ½ tsp salt
 2 tsp freshly ground cardamom
 50 g butter

Cook the grains of your choice with milk, then let the porridge cool down. Beat the eggs with the sugar and mix with the porridge. Add flour, salt and cardamom. Add more milk if the batter is too thick. Butter an ovenproof dish and pour in the batter. Sprinkle the top with a few dollops of butter. Bake in oven at 200 degrees for 40-60 minutes.

Recipe taken from the cookbook "Ät med hela mun" by Ålands Marthadistrikt



"Guests complained about their pancake, restaurant owner called the police".

Åland pancake once even made the headlines and caused a police intervention.



WATERFOWL



Roasted waterfowl, waterfowl soup, "råddakråpå" – the local dishes based on waterfowl are quite a few and deeply rooted in our society.

Roasted waterfowl, waterfowl soup, "råddakråpå" – the local dishes based on waterfowl are quite a few and deeply rooted in our society. For a long time, fresh waterfowl was a sure sign of spring but today spring hunting is illegal according to the EU. As a result, the most frequent species have changed from eider and scoter to goldeneye and tufted duck and in the autumn flocks of mallards passing through the archipelago on their way south.

Traditionally the bird is plucked, then seared over a fire of elder wood to give it the right flavour. The seasoning usually consists of bay leaves, juniper berries, allspice and a lot of onions. The dish is often served with lingonberries, unless it is a soup.

Waterfowl Soup with Dumplings

WATERFOWL SOUP

2 waterfowl, e.g. goldeneye or tufted duck
1 medium-sized onion
10 allspice peppercorns
5 white peppercorns
6 l water
3 tbsp salt
1 kg potatoes
300 g swedes
300 g carrots

The birds are plucked, seared, gutted and cleaned. They are then cooked in plenty of water and salt for two to four hours. The bird feet can be cooked too to add richness and colour to the soup.

Cut the onion and add it to the broth together with the peppercorns. Peel the swedes and the carrots, cut into slices and add when the birds are nearly cooked. Peel and cut the potatoes into quarters and add them to the soup when the root vegetables are almost ready.

The birds are then removed, cut into portions and again added to the soup. Season with salt and white pepper.

DUMPLINGS

3 potatoes
3-4 dl milk
2,5 cups of flour
2-3 eggs
salt and nutmeg to taste

Boil and mash the potatoes. Add the remaining ingredients and mix well. Remove some of the broth and put in a saucepan. Bring the broth to a boil. Use a spoon to form dumplings and add them carefully to the boiling broth. Cook for a couple of minutes, then remove. Add the dumplings to the soup at service since they fall apart quite easily.

"It is the seared bird that gives the soup its distinctive flavour. Therefore season with care. You can, however, add a little marjoram, which used to be the custom in Lemland and Lumparland."

The Ålandic dish of the century

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All recipes concerning Rökka hotdogs are highly confidential. Therefore we will treat you to some historical delicacies instead:

2004

Rökka is featured in a Japanese tourist brochure and visited by a busload of Japanese tourists who are all treated to a hot-dog each.

2017

Rökka caters a wedding dinner, an obvious choice since the couple in question met at Rökka's.

2018

A sales record with 2000 hotdogs sold in one day. This takes place in July when Mariehamn is hosting both a cruising event and a music festival.



RÖKKA SAUSAGE

Locally produced Wiener sausages from Dahlmans served in a hot and slightly sticky steamed bun with homemade strong mustard and cucumber relish – most people living in Åland have at some point stopped to eat at

”Three hotdogs with strong mustard, ketchup, pickled cucumber and a small carton of milk, please”



Rökerikiosken, ”Rökka”, just outside central Mariehamn. The chosen drink is of course a two-decilitre carton of milk from Ålandsmejeriet, a packaging size that still exists mainly because it sells so well here.

SUNDSPIROG

Sundspirog, also called Bomarsundspirog or Russian Minced Meat Pasty, is clear evidence of Russian presence in Åland. Finland, and therefore Åland too, was under Russian rule between 1809 and 1917 and thousands of Russian soldiers were temporarily housed in local farms during the construction of the Bomarsund Fortress in Sund.

The Russian Minced Meat Pasty, or Sundspirog, is wheat dough stuffed with fried minced meat, cooked rice and boiled eggs. In other words, real food for a lumberjack. Or should we say real food for a fortress builder?





SUNDSPIROG

Ingredients for the porridge:

1 l milk

1½ dl rice grains

Ingredients for the pasty:

½ l milk

50 g yeast

1 l flour

250 g melted butter

Ingredients for the stuffing:

½ kg minced meat

1 large onion, finely chopped

2 tsp salt

1 tsp pepper

butter

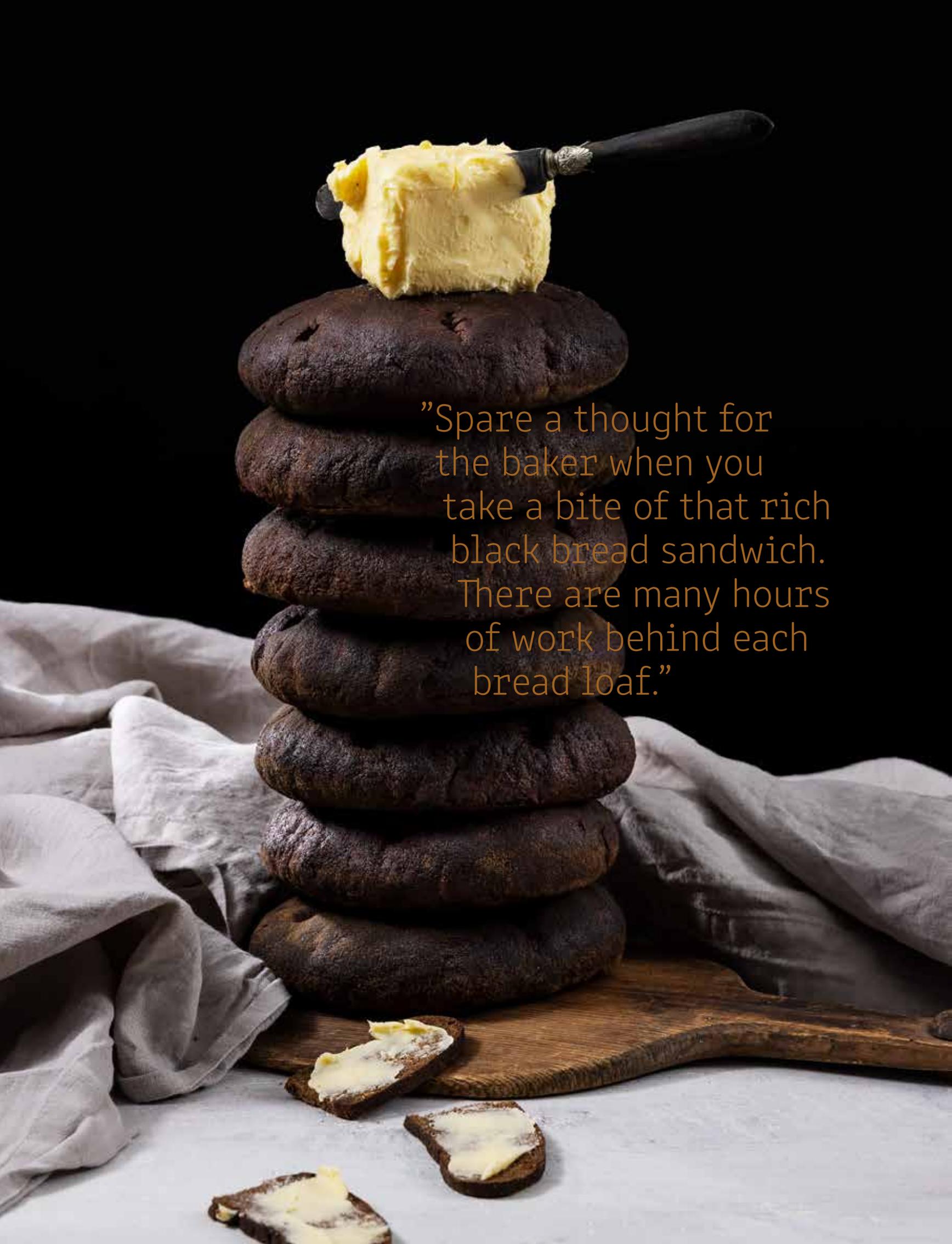
2 hardboiled eggs

Chop the eggs. Fry the minced meat in butter together with the onion. Season with salt and pepper. Mix together with the porridge.

Roll out the pasty dough, making two squares the size of a roasting pan. Place one square of dough in a buttered roasting pan, cover with stuffing and chopped egg, then place the remaining dough on top. Pinch the edges of the dough to seal the pasty.

Brush the pasty with beaten egg and bake in oven at 175 degrees for 30-40 minutes, until the crust is nice and golden.

Recipe taken from the cookbook "Ät med hela mun"
by Ålands Marthadistrikt



”Spare a thought for the baker when you take a bite of that rich black bread sandwich. There are many hours of work behind each bread loaf.”



PROVISION!

ÅLAND BLACK BREAD

Different types of malt bread with long shelf life are baked all along the Finnish coastline but Åland black bread is the darkest and heaviest of them all.

Åland black bread was originally intended for long sea voyages and it takes several days for the bread to get its dark colour. After baking, the loaves are left in the stove to cool and are then wrapped in wool blankets. Rye, sourdough and in some cases sour milk are the main ingredients but time and handicraft decide the outcome.

Black bread will keep for a long time and was therefore excellent provision when heading for fishing communities or going on trading trips to nearby places. When the bread was eventually too dry to eat, it could be boiled in water to make a porridge, which is called "Besö" in the eastern parts of the archipelago.

Even today, black bread is a must-have in most local homes both on weekdays and during holidays. It is served with butter, pickled herring or other types of pickled fish and different kinds of sauces.

FRIED HERRING AND MASHED POTATOES

"How many pans a person?" is an old way of measuring portions when it comes to herring. Whether you prefer fillets or whole herring with only the head and intestines removed, is a question of taste. A whole herring, tail and all, takes but a few minutes to prepare, which is a true sign of fine quality.

It is also easier to tell how fresh a fish is if it is intact. Puritans claim that a herring should not be stored for more than an hour or so and that it should move and flap in the pan to taste the best. Fried herring is often served with mashed potatoes, lingonberries, pickled cucumber or pickled beetroots.



The Ålander's Feeling for Herring

IF THERE ARE MANY WORDS FOR SNOW IN THE GREENLANDIC LANGUAGE, THERE ARE CERTAINLY MANY WORDS FOR DESCRIBING HERRING IN ÅLAND.

Lekströmming – spawning, dry and small herring full of roe or milt, caught at the bottom of the sea.

Flåtströmming, oppvåttnesströmming – fat and tasty herring caught close to the surface.

Pilar eller pripiler – local word from Eckerö used to describe small herring.

Eringsströmming – herring caught early in the autumn.

Rokar – big, skinny herring, does not taste very good.

Vitromnar – big, fat herring, not yet spawning.

Senfådder strömming – fine, fat herring caught late in the season in November-December.

Gela – removing fish intestines with one's thumb. This used to be such an important skill that the right hand thumb nail was often referred to as "gelarnagel".

HERRING AND POTATO GRATIN

In the old days, when the stove or oven was already heated for baking, it was common to bake food au gratin. The most common dish, from a local point of view, is probably herring and potato gratin.

In an ovenproof dish, put layers of salted herring – whole or deboned – together with sliced potatoes, onions, and chopped dill. Cover with a mixture of eggs and milk seasoned with salt, white pepper and nutmeg. Add a few dollops of butter and bake in the oven until the potatoes are golden and tender.

Herring and potato gratin used to be a typical dish during winter, since all the ingredients could be found in people's larders all year round. Or to quote one of the nominations for this dish: "The herring and potato gratin has kept many crofters from starvation".





SMOKED FISH

Smoking fish is something of a national sport in Åland and a summer cottage without a fishnet and some kind of smoker is quite rare.

In Åland smoked fish usually means that it is hot-smoked, most commonly using alder and juniper, two speices of wood that are also predominant in the barren archipelago of the Åland Islands. The Ålanders themselves mostly fish and smoke perch, whitefish and flounder but in local shops and markets you can always find smoked and seasoned trout or salmon.

SMOKED HERRING

Smoking herring takes a certain skill and at present there are only a few local fishermen who smoke herring for sale.

One of a few who know how to smoke herring is Leif Bergman and this is how he does it:



"The herring has to be really fresh, fat and fine – the kind you can get hold of in local waters in April to May, possibly June. Trawled herring will not do since it is always too small and often crushed.

You select the finest ones, they have to be of an even size or else they will be difficult to smoke.

You then hang the herring, we use spiked skewers which we insert through the skull of the fish to prevent it from falling down during smoking.

We use only alder wood, which is and always has been the local tradition. There are those who have tried to use an electric smoker but the taste is not at all the same. The first half hour you need to keep the oven hatch open to ensure the herring is dry enough and will not fall off.

When the herring is ready they are taken down, this usually takes two to three hours. We then sprinkle with salt and store the smoked herring in boxes. If you smoke herring at home and want to eat it straight away, you can dip the fish in brine instead."

JAM!

APPLE PURÉE!





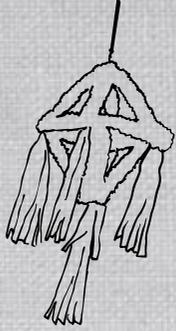
CREAM FILLED DONUT

”In 1965, the Cream Filled Donut was introduced in Åland and today it has its given place in our society. It all started thanks to baker Hjördis Karlsson.”

This according to an article in Ålandstidningen in October 2021.

The idea to fill a long donut with fresh whipped cream was something Hjördis Karlsson picked up from Sweden. The very first cream filled donuts were baked at Lilla Hembageriet, a nowadays torn down yellow wooden house in Nygatan in central Mariehamn. The donuts became so famous that they were flown to Helsinki to be sold at Stockmann department store.

The only change to the original donut is that today there is also a slightly smaller version. Why change something perfect? The question of whether there should be apple purée or raspberry jam under the whipped cream is perhaps the biggest controversy.



ÅLAND
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THANKS TO



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PÅ ÅLAND

