



# BALTIC SEA CULINARY ROUTES

## BALTIC SEA CULINARY ROUTES - THE NORTH DIGNITY



What is the smell of kitchens alongside the Baltic Sea? Every season, it is a bit different. A bit of the forest, the meadow, the sea, the rivers and lakes, the gardens and farms. A bit salty because of the wind from the sea, the fishing nets and the boys. A bit dizzying because of the forest, the mushrooms, the mint, the wild thyme, the sweet wood-ruff and the juniper berries. A bit sweet because of sun-warmed wild strawberries, the evening fog in a field of rye, some honey that is produced by bees, cells of wax and linden blossoms. A bit spicy because of alder smoke from the smokehouse, blue cheese and hemp butter. A bit fresh because of pickles, chopped dill and chives. A bit bitter because of the peels of new potatoes. A bit gentle because of fresh milk, cream and cheese. A bit intriguing because of caraway seeds, mustard and malt. A bit tempting because of cinnamon, cardamom and chocolate that are made to local delicacies. A bit strong because of distilled drinks like aquavit and vodka.

What colours are found in the kitchens alongside the Baltic Sea? White dairy products, black blood sausages, a rainbow of colours among vegetables and berries, brown nuts, mushrooms, silver and golden pumpkins, and seeds from the white to the black.

What sounds are heard in the kitchens alongside the Baltic Sea? Crackling, crunching, boiling, bubbling, sizzling, quietly steaming.

What is the taste of foods alongside the Baltic Sea? The most important thing is to strike a balance among the various flavours that come from nature, among traditions and innovations, careful work and creative ease, comfort and elegant style. Take a bit from the East, the West, the North and the South. Taste cannot be described or written down - come and taste it yourself!

This map is created by 10 partner organisations representing countries in the Baltic Sea region and its aim is to highlight the best features of the Baltic Sea region cuisine. The map will give some guidance and inspiration for an exciting culinary experience around the Baltic Sea. With this map a traveller will be able to find and savour the traditional foods and a great variety of products that have been used for centuries and appear in new forms and tastes in cuisine of today. The map shows the capitals and largest cities with airports and sea ports in the Baltic Sea region. More information [www.balticseaculinary.com](http://www.balticseaculinary.com)

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## NORWAY

Norwegian cuisine draws heavily on the raw materials available throughout the country. Many of the traditional dishes are results of using conserved materials. Seafood is the heart and soul of Norwegian fare, and is famous for its salmon, which also may be smoked or cured (gravet). Norwegian farmers also produce very good quality lamb. The traditional cider production has its renaissance, as well as the famous akevitt (aquavit).

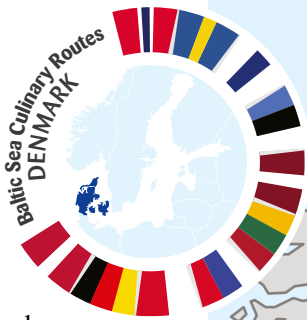
[www.visitnorway.com](http://www.visitnorway.com)  
[www.hanen.no](http://www.hanen.no)  
[www.nasjonaleturistveger.no](http://www.nasjonaleturistveger.no)



## SWEDEN

Sweden is one of the largest countries in Europe. With only 9,3 million citizens and merely 3 % of its surface inhabited, wild nature is one of its greatest assets. Traditional dishes are based on what the land and sea have to offer. Long, cold winters have made different methods of preservation an important part of tradition. Cured, salted and pickled fish, meats and vegetables lay at the very heart of the Swedish kitchen. Nature's pantry provides products of unique quality and diversity!

[www.tryswedish.com](http://www.tryswedish.com)  
[www.visitsweden.com](http://www.visitsweden.com)  
[www.culinary-heritage.com](http://www.culinary-heritage.com)



## DENMARK

The flavour of Denmark is a fascinating mixture, embracing both the gourmet aspects of The New Nordic kitchen as well as the traditional local cuisine. Known for the high quality of its food products such as bacon, beer, dairy products, fish & seafood, and cookies. Denmark is a leader when it comes to organic food, with much food production taking place in close harmony with nature. Using the traditional commodities such as potatoes, root vegetables, cabbage combined with local herbs and the skilled chefs in Denmark give you great and memorable taste experiences.

[www.smagenafdanmark.dk](http://www.smagenafdanmark.dk)  
[www.sydvestjyskesmagsoplevelser.dk](http://www.sydvestjyskesmagsoplevelser.dk)



## GERMANY

Northern Germany is famous for its unique nature and a great variety of regional products. The culinary facets are as manifold as this piece of land is. Right at the top of the menu is fresh fish, prepared in several ways. Mostly in autumn also venison from the forests is offered. Specialities made from sea buckthorn are also typical of the North. And last but not least there is a great brewing tradition for 700 years. Dozens of brewery inns across the state offer their own home-made barley brew. However - locals and tourists celebrate the tasty, healthy dishes as part of the fish festivals, culinary days and manor kitchen weeks during the whole year. The food, served in the stylish ambiance of tasteful manor houses and magnificent palaces, touches all the human senses.

[www.off-to-mv.com/en/cuisine](http://www.off-to-mv.com/en/cuisine)  
[www.ruegenprodukte.de](http://www.ruegenprodukte.de)



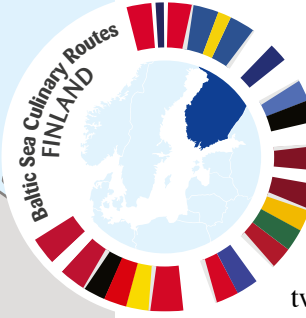
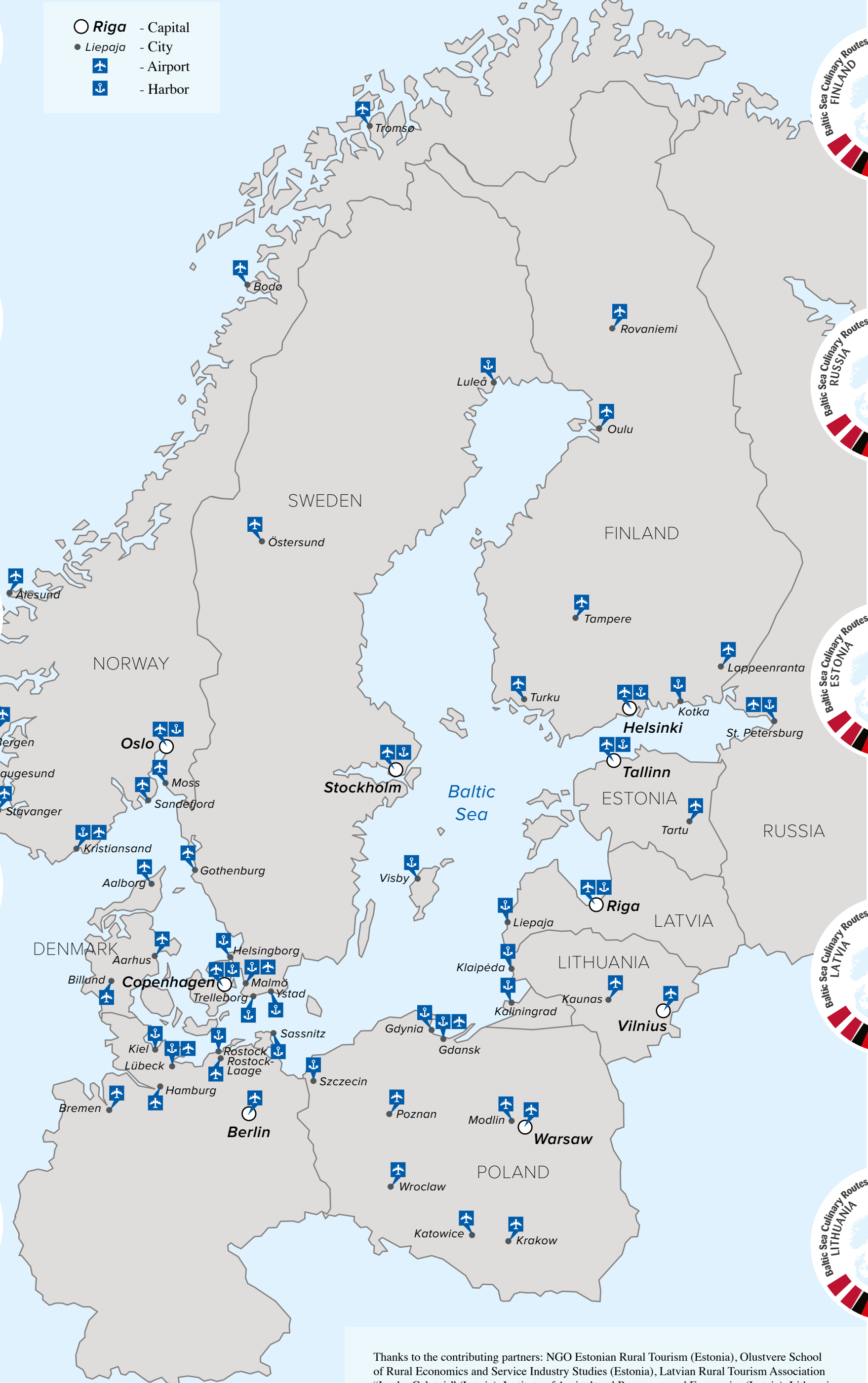
## POLAND

Owing to its location and history, Poland has very rich culinary heritage. Many Polish dishes exhibit traces of the cuisine of the East and West, North and South. Polish dishes have always been full of flavours and aromas. They have been seasoned with many local herbs, as well as spices brought from faraway lands. While our cold meat, bread and dairy products are already known in many countries, a number of delicious soups and different kinds of roast meat are still waiting to be discovered.

[www.poland.travel](http://www.poland.travel)  
[www.minrol.gov.pl](http://www.minrol.gov.pl)  
[www.produkty-tradycyjne.pl](http://www.produkty-tradycyjne.pl)

[www.balticseaculinary.com](http://www.balticseaculinary.com)

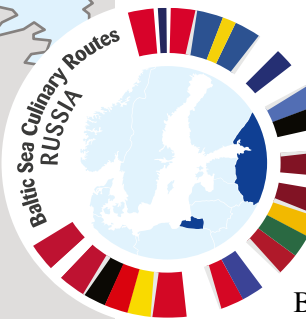
- **Riga** - Capital
- **Liepaja** - City
- ✈ - Airport
- ⚓ - Harbor



## FINLAND

Finnish food has its origins in the tastes of the nature. The wild berries, mushrooms and game animals in the forests, the fish in rivers, lakes and sea, and reindeer from Lapland provide us with strong flavours and the four seasons are shown. The location between East and West has given a powerful impact on our food. We have rich regional food and bread cultures, alongside with completely new functional food innovations.

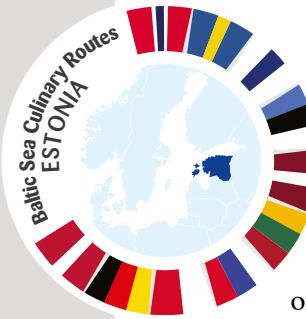
[www.visitfinland.com](http://www.visitfinland.com)  
[www.aitojamakuja.fi](http://www.aitojamakuja.fi)  
[www.tasteoffinland.fi](http://www.tasteoffinland.fi)



## RUSSIA

Actually, Russian cuisine is a cuisine of more than 190 nations! Russia is located in 11 time zones, and it implies totally different climatic conditions and accordingly rich and various national traditions of gastronomy. Two regions of Russia have an access to the Baltic Sea: Kaliningrad and Leningrad regions, including the city of Saint Petersburg. On the one hand, the influence of the Baltic Sea gastronomy traditions is very strong in these regions. On the other hand, XIX century in Saint Petersburg was marked by the formation of the Russian imperial cuisine traditions.

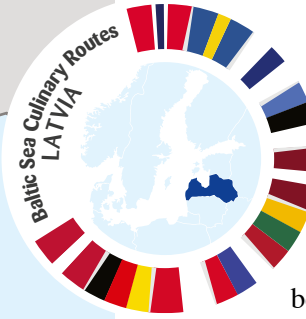
[www.russiatourism.ru](http://www.russiatourism.ru)  
[en.visit-russia.ru](http://en.visit-russia.ru)



## ESTONIA

Estonian cuisine has developed on the basis of traditional farm and estate cooking and offering, later following the traditions of cooking in cities. Use of domestic and local, incl. organic, foodstuffs is typical of Estonian food culture. Different seasons are clearly expressed on Estonian food table. Besides fresh and lighter summer and autumn dishes, preserves and meat dishes are prevailing on food table in winter and spring. Spring is the season of fish dishes, summer is the season of berries and autumn is the time for mushroom and game dishes.

[www.maaturism.ee](http://www.maaturism.ee)  
[www.estonianfood.eu](http://www.estonianfood.eu)  
[www.visitestonia.com](http://www.visitestonia.com)



## LATVIA

Latvian culinary has influences from both East and the West. It is distinctly seasonal with a strong emphasis on wild food. Spring brings birch juice, the Summer Solstice brings caraway seed cheese and beer. In Autumn, mushroom hunting and cranberry gathering becomes a national obsession. Winter is the time of smoked meat and fish, warming soups and bacon pies. For the simplest of snacks, just smear hemp butter and honey on a slice of rye bread!

[www.countryholidays.lv](http://www.countryholidays.lv)  
[www.latvia.travel](http://www.latvia.travel)



## LITHUANIA

Lithuanian cuisine is known for the black rye bread, big choice of potatoes dishes, dairy products and smoked meat. Lithuanians are proud of old going traditions of local beer, mead and fruit wines. Herbs and plants from Lithuanian meadows together with wild berries and mushrooms from the ancient woodlands make Lithuanian seasonal dishes even more colorful.

[www.countryside.lt](http://www.countryside.lt)

Thanks to the contributing partners: NGO Estonian Rural Tourism (Estonia), Olustvere School of Rural Economics and Service Industry Studies (Estonia), Latvian Rural Tourism Association "Lauku Celotajs" (Latvia), Institute of Agricultural Resources and Economics (Latvia), Lithuanian Countryside Tourism Association (Lithuania), Polish Tourist Organisation (Poland), HANEN (Norway), Sydvestjysk Udviklingsforum (Denmark), SÖSK (Culinary Heritage Europe) (Sweden), Lahti University of Applied Sciences Ltd. (Finland), LLC "International Center of Wine and Gastronomy" (Russia), Mecklenburg-Vorpommern Tourist Board (Germany).



# LOCAL TASTE FROM NATURE

## FORESTS



### WILD GAME

There are vast pine forests in the lands that surround the Baltic Sea, which were the origin for the famous mineral that is amber. There are also fir forests and mixed tree forests that are home to various wild animals and birds. Wild game, therefore, is an inherent part of Baltic cuisine. Wild game is very healthy, the animals have eaten the cleanest food so the nutritional

value is higher than in the case with livestock from farms. Popular animals in the area of wild game include reindeer, deer, rabbit and beaver. Moose are hunted in Nordic countries, and good chefs can also produce tasty dishes of wild board and stag. People hunt ducks, geese, grouse and other birds. The specifics of the taste of wild game will

depend on the animal's gender, the season when it was hunted, and other circumstances such as the terror that makes the diversity of tastes and flavours amazingly wide. Wild game often requires more spice than domesticated animals and birds and cooking times are longer. The results are always delightful with nature's own pure raw materials.

### FOREST BERRIES

The season for wild berries starts in June, when the colour red dominates – aromatic wild strawberries and sweet raspberries. In July, there are dark blue blueberries and bilberries, as well as blackberries. Later in

the summer there are yellow cloudbberries, orange rowan berries and sea buckthorn. Berries are red again in the autumn – red bilberries and cranberries that are full of vitamins and are frozen or cooked into sweet-

and-sour jams or sauces. They are also used for traditional desserts such as cakes, tortes, puddings, beverages or jellies.



### WILD MUSHROOMS

People in all of the countries of the Baltic sea region eat chanterelles and boletes, which have mild taste and can be used for lots of different dishes such as broths, creamed soups, sauces or sautéed dishes. Mushrooms are added to meat dishes,

used for stuffing, salted or marinated into spicy snacks and salads. Frozen or dried mushrooms are perfect for winter use, and mushrooms are an invaluable source of proteins for vegetarians. There are lots of different mushrooms

that are recognised and eaten by local residents, but beware of unfamiliar mushrooms in the forest, because they can be poisonous! If you want to go mushroom hunting, but have no experience, ask a guide to come with you.



### NUTS AND SEEDS

Nuts grow in the wild and in gardens. Hazelnuts grow throughout the Baltic region and are eaten raw or are used for

baked goods. Walnuts are grown in Poland and Germany, while cedar nuts are found in the forests of the Nordic countries. All nuts

are nutritional, and they can also be pressed for oil.

## MEADOWS AND PASTURES

### RYE BREAD

Rye bread is made of freshly ground rye flour. Homemakers and small businesses use sourdough starter and wood-fired stoves. Loaves can be round or angular, with all kinds of additives such as seeds, grains, coriander, caraway seeds or malt, all of which make the bread aromatic and

tasty. Rye bread is strong and nourishing, and even a small slice may be enough for a meal. Rye bread can be stored for a long time and is a popular souvenir for tourists. People in all Baltic Sea region countries eat various kinds of sandwiches on a daily basis. Bread is served with soups and

mains. Rye breadcrumbs are used in many of the countries to produce a dessert with a sour berry jam and sweet cream. People in Poland use rye dough starter to cook a sour bread soup called "zurek." Rye bread is not baked in Norway, where people prefer whole-grain bread.



Photo - SIA Kuldīgas maizes ceptuve



### GRAINS AND LEGUMES

Buckwheat, barley, pearl barley and oats are used to cook porridges or steamed as sides for meat dishes. People have cooked peas and beans since time eternal. Throughout the Baltic region, people cook yellow pea or bean soup with smoked pork, while in Latvia cooks also use grey peas. Estonians use kama flour that is a combination of rye,

barley and wheat flour, as well as dried peas. The mixture is not cooked. It is eaten with soured milk products or added to desserts. Semolina is used for desserts. One popular version involves berries or fruit to cook a dessert that is eaten with milk or a vanilla sauce. Semolina pudding is served with

jellies. Various seeds are used for bread and pastries, including flax, poppy, sunflower and other valuable seeds. Hemp seeds are pressed in Latvia to produce oil and butter. Rapeseed oil is common all around the Baltic Sea.

### POTATOES

Potatoes are the most popular root vegetable in Latvia. They grow very well in our climate, are tasty, and are known as second bread. Potatoes are the most popular side for main dishes. They are cooked with or without their peels, baked in the oven or cooked on a pan. In Denmark,

potatoes are caramelised with sugar and butter at Christmas to produce Brunede kartofler. Potatoes are mashed and added to soups and sautés. Grated potatoes are used to make pancakes, and potatoes are used to cook dumplings (Kneidle in Poland, which are sweet or salty, Cepelinai

in Lithuania, and Klöße in Germany). Lithuanians also produce a savoury pudding known as Kugelis. Crispy potato chips are useful for quick snacks. They are made of specific types of potatoes and enriched with various interesting combinations of tastes.



### CABBAGES AND BEETS

Cabbages are eaten in the Baltic region most every day in coleslaw, soups and sautés. Very popular in all of the countries of the region is stuffed cabbage, which involves ground meat and rice that are stuffed inside cabbage leaves and then sautéed in a sauce. People grow cauliflower, broccoli and Brussels sprouts. Sautéed sauerkraut is often served alongside roast pork, ribs or sausages during

the Christmas season. In Poland, bigos involves meat, dried boletes, black plums and red wine. Danes cook rødkål, which is made of red cabbage and a side of duck fat, sugar, vinegar, red wine, apples, onions and spices. Red beets are also popular. They are boiled in their peels and then cleaned and chopped up for salads or soups. In Scandinavia and the Baltic countries,

beets are eaten in salads that are served with herring, pickled potatoes and soured cream. In Finland, the salads are known as rossoli, while in the Baltic States they are known as "herring in a coat." Chilled beet soup is popular in the summer, as is borscht in the winter. Borscht originated in Russia. Poles cook a clear beet soup called barszcz z uszkami.

### FLOWERS AND GRASSES

Wild plants are very nutritious and can be used for dishes and beverages. Herbs for herbal teas can be collected from the early spring until late in the autumn and then stored for the long winter. Blossoms,

flowers, leaves, mint and roots help to ensure good health and to deal with various illnesses if knowledgeable people offer the right kinds of teas. Herbal teas are also used to produce various original balsams, which

are liqueurs. Edible flowers and various plants that are seen as weeds are used for salads and sandwiches, as well as green cocktails and smoothies.

### HONEY

Bees provide excellent honey from flowers during the short Nordic summer. The insects collect pollen from various plants – osier and pussy willows during the spring, various flowers during the spring and summer (lime blossoms in particular), and then heather in the autumn. Each type of honey differs in colour, taste and aroma, and each person will find the perfect variety. Honey

should be bought for well-known beekeepers or certified farms. In addition to honey, other bee products that are sold include pollen, ambrosia and propolis. Honey is eaten with rye bread and milk, as well as with cottage cheese and cheeses. People in the Baltic States bake honey cakes filled with soured cream. Honey is also one of the main ingredients

in Christmas gingerbread, which is usually decorated in a beautiful way and presented as gifts. Gingerbread can be bought at Christmas markets. It has an enchanting aroma that can be felt from a great distance, mixing together with the aromas of cinnamon, orange peel and mulled wine.



## RIVERS, LAKES, THE SEA



### STREAM WATER

Of great value is pure and tasty drinking water from a stream, well, or a deep well. Tap water is usually of perfectly good

quality and can be drunk. People who are accustomed to high-quality water often refuse carbonated sweet drinks that are

full of unnecessary calories. The quality of water is also importance in the production of local beverages.

### FRESHWATER FISH

River and lake fish are available all year round – trout, pike, perch, bream, roach, vimba, eel, etc. Crayfish are available during the season. Early sunrises with a

fishing pole, ice fishing and, in accordance with legal regulations, fishing with nets are all possible. Fresh fish are used to cook aromatic soups. They are cooked

on coals or in the oven, served in creamed sauces, smoked, salted or dried. Round-mouthed lampreys are also common in the Baltic States.



### SALTWATER FISH

Cod, salmon, plaice, herring, perch, bass – all of the fish from the Baltic Sea cannot be listed here. There are specific ways of preparing fish in each region of the countries that are along the sea. The fish are salted (lutefisk in Norway is salted and dried cod), salted (gravlaks with dill in Norway, gravlax with a shot of cognac in Sweden), fermented (rakfisk in Norway is fermented trout), hot or cold smoked, baked, cooked, marinated in spicy or gentle sauces and herbs.

People in Scandinavia cook fish soup with milk. Kalakeitto in Finland is fish soup with cream, while lohikeitto is fish soup with milk. Scandinavians often serve food in the smorgasbord fashion, as is seen in the

form of breakfast buffets at hotels all around the world. The word means "sandwich table," and a proper smorgasbord has lots of cold cuts, including saltwater fish that is salted and prepared in various ways. These are put on bread for sandwiches. Norway is proud of its salmon. Denmark surprises with its delicious shrimps and oysters, while Germany tempts gourmands with fresh mussels (Miesmuscheln). Canned fish is easy to transport. Of particular importance is herring, whether salted, marinated or smoked, served on buffets and in hot dishes. Baltic people eat herring with boiled potatoes, cottage cheese and onions. Low-salt herring is added to milk soup with vegetables

in Latvia. Scandinavians prepare herring in sweet marinade or a tomato or mustard sauce. This is a traditional holiday dish. Germans roll up herring filets that are stuffed with pickles or onions, and then put them in an herbed marinade. Catholics in Poland link herring to Lent. Sweden's surströmming is fermented herring with a very sharp taste and powerful smell. Transporting this product by plane is forbidden, so go to Sweden to enjoy it. Baltic herring and Baltic sprats are baked, marinated, served in herbed sauces or wine sauces, salted or smoked. Aromatic canned sprats are a wonderful export product from Latvia.

## HOME AND GARDEN

### MILK, CREAM, BUTTER AND CHEESE

Milk in the Baltic region comes from cows, goats and sheep, and dairy products have been a key part of the Baltic diet since antiquity. Milk is used to produce cream, soured milk products and cheese. Soured cream is used for vegetable salads and added to soups, sauces, meat dishes, casseroles and baked goods. Butter is churned from sweet or soured cream. It is spread on bread, used to cook vegetables, mushrooms, meat and pancakes, and added to porridges. It is irreplaceable for fine cakes and other baked goods. A unique soured milk product is kefir, which is produced with a specific fungus

and drunk with potato or legume dishes. Cottage cheese is produced quickly and easily from leavened milk. It is eaten with potatoes, baked into buns, used for dumplings, and also used for cakes and pies. All of the countries of the Baltic Sea region produce tasty ice cream, best of all from real milk and cream. There are a great many different kinds of cheeses in the region. Latvians produce a Summer Solstice cheese with eggs, butter and caraway seeds, and Estonians and Lithuanians have a similar one. Danes are proud of their bleu cheese (Danablu), with Järlsberg cheese being a famous

Norwegian export. Rather more unusual is Gjetost brown cheese, which is actually caramelised cow milk. In the Polish mountains, shepherds use sheep's milk to produce Osypek, which is pressed into special wooden forms. Germany produces fresh, retted and hard cheeses. Trisiter is popular. Or Alter Schwede (Old Swede), which is produced and very much loved in North Germany. Lithuanians offer spicy hard cheeses (Džiugas). The pride of Finland is crunch Lapland cheese that is grilled and eaten with cloudberry jam.



Photo - z/s Vecsilgājiņi



### MEAT

People in the Baltic Sea region eat pork, veal, lamb, beef, poultry and rabbits. Pork is roasted, boiled or smoked. It is used for sausages and jellied pork, for roasts and pork chops. North Germans like to stuff pork ribs with dried plums. Beef is used for steaks, as well as thick and hearty soups such as soljanka, which comes from Russian cuisine. Throughout the region very popular are balls or patties made of mixed ground meats (Frikadellen in Germany, Köttbullar in Sweden,

kotletes in Latvian). On November 10, St Martin's Day, Latvians serve stuffed goose, duck or chicken. On Easter in Scandinavia, a common dish is a roast leg of lamb with garlic and rosemary served with potatoes or bans. During warm weather, outdoor grilling is popular throughout the region. Many farms in the Baltic States traditionally smoke pork, sausages and fish. There are hot and cold methods, with cold-smoked fish or meat being able to be

stored for a longer time. In Scandinavia, the method is used for salmon as well as for wild game since ancient history. Hot-smoked dishes involved pork and fish that are juicier and softer than cold-smoked ones. Alder wood has particularly aromatic smoke, and marinated herbs are often used to ensure a more interesting taste. Smoked meat is eaten on its own, cooked with eggs or potatoes, sautéed, or added to different soups to offer them a unique taste.

### PICKLING, SLATING, MARINATING

During the autumn and winter, people pickle cabbage, adding caraway seeds, carrots or cranberries. The resulting sauerkraut is eaten as a salad, sautéed, or cooked in soups. Sauerkraut soup is served with potatoes, and the soup is as

filling as any main. During cold weather, sauerkraut is a good source of vitamins and is good for your health. For winter storage, people also salt or marinate cucumbers and can tomatoes, squash and red peppers. Fresh fruits and

vegetables are available year-round at supermarkets, but recipes nurtured during numerous generations are still used. At the beginning of the summer, each market smells of low-salt pickles to which aromatic herbs and garlic are added.



### GARDEN FRUITS AND BERRIES

Juicy berries and fruits ripen during the summer. Strawberries, raspberries, plums, sour cherries, pears and apples are available in all countries in the Baltic Sea region. Fruit and berry orchards take up lots of land in Poland, where sweet cherries and apricots are also grown. Highbush

blueberries are increasingly popular. People use fruits and berries to produce jams, beverages, cakes, baked goods and desserts. North German's most favourite berry is the seabuckthorn which is used to make jam, juice, liqueur and different kinds of sweets. Jellies made of berries are

cooked throughout the region, using berries, preferably red and sour ones, adding sugar and potato starch (Rote Grütze in Germany and Rodgrød in Denmark for the Christmas season). Juicy and sour rhubarb is particularly delightful in the spring, and it is used for desserts and cakes.

### HERBS AND AROMATICS

Food is supplemented with chives and fresh or sautéed onions to add taste and vitamins. Many countries in the Baltic

Sea region have soups and salads that involve lots of dill, as well as parsley and celery or peppermint leaves. Grated

horseradish or a mustard sauce are served with fish. Garlic, thyme, marjoram and rosemary are also quite common.

### BEER

Every country is proud of its beer, which is known as liquid bread. It is a light beverage that is full of vitamins, encourages appetite and is soothing during hot weather. Danes are proud of Tuborg and Carlsberg. Finns of Lapin Kulta, Swedes about all their variety of microbreweries. Germans are known for their good beer which is brewed according to the regulations of the so-called

"purity law" from 1516. It means that beer may only consist of hop, malt, yeast and water. Any other ingredients are strongly forbidden. Craft and niche beers are becoming more and more popular in Poland. In the Baltic States, small breweries offer unfiltered beer that is made on the basis of ancient recipes. It can be light or dark, made of barley with added hopes and malt, and

with a rich taste. Unfiltered beer is alive, so it cannot be stored too long. Come for a visit to taste it! In the Baltic States, rye bread and malt are used to produce a non-alcoholic, dark and sparkling beverage known as kvass. It is in much demand during hot summer days.

### DISTILLATES

During cold weather, glasses of warming beverages are perfect. All of the countries around the Baltic Sea have ancient distilling traditions, which alcoholic beverages made

of grain, potatoes, fruit, berries and even jams. Each country is proud of its special beverages – Aquavit in Norway, Finlandia in Finland, Absolut Vodka in Sweden,

Gammel Dansk in Denmark, Vana Tallin in Estonia, Black Balsam in Latvian, fruit brandy in Germany, Degtinė in Lithuania, and Miody Dabrowski in Poland.