



Guess what you might find on your plate at Noma, one of Europe's most famous restaurants that was ranked as the world's best restaurant from 2010 to 2014 and still in the top three in 2015?

Like most guests who book a table months in advance, you will be treated to a meal of deep-fried moss, edible flowers and if you are very lucky even live ants!

The epic rise of Noma which serves 'New Nordic Cuisine' led to a revolution in kitchens across the world which were in turn inspired by the revival of this traditional Nordic style of food preparation and curation.

The New Nordic kitchen is characterized by its uniquely Nordic identity among the world's greatest cuisines and by its commitment to organic, sustainable and local products. So basically a New Nordic menu relies on seasonal favourites and serves food based on produce that's available, creating a menu based on supply rather than demand.

"Ingredient driven food is the key," says Chef Kelvin Cheung (Ex-Ellipsis) and currently helming his latest venture One Siroos Over. The chef will first figure out what is seasonally prevalent and then style dishes around this fresh produce or catch.

For example at Noma, the restaurant's menu changes with the seasons, with themes based on the forest in the fall, the sea in winter and on vegetables—grown



Interiors of Noma restaurant—amongst the pioneers of new Nordic food



The Little Mermaid was commissioned by Carl Jacobsen of Carlsberg as a gift to Copenhagen

NEW NORDIC DEMYSTIFIED

Denmark pushes the envelope with its distinctive style of cooking that has taken the world by storm. **Fareeda Kanga** unearths the secrets that have catapulted nouveau Nordic cuisine to the top of the culinary charts.

In its own urban garden—during spring and summer.

The menu is in sync with the seasons, such as milk curd and the first garlic of 2015; and the first green shoots of spring with a scallop marinade. The chefs employ techniques such as fermenting and pickling that remained previously unfashionable and unheard of.

"Simplicity is a very important part of Nordic cuisine as it utilizes fewer components and relies more upon high quality products, grown under Nordic conditions. The reason for this is that ingredients should be distinct and recognizable, and their preparation and presentation should bring out their local characteristics," says Chef Ashish Bhasin, Executive Chef, Trident BKC, Mumbai.

Preservation techniques, such as drying, fermenting, smoking, salting, pickling and preserving meat, vegetables, fruits and fish, have for centuries enabled people to survive long, dark winters. In the Nordic countries, these methods have developed into exceptional ways of adding both culinary and economic value to their raw materials and are the cornerstones of how the food is prepared.

"Some of the well-known ingredients used in Nordic cuisine are cold-water fish, which have taken countries like France by storm. Cod served along with its roe and liver has long been a winter favourite in the north. They now have the opportunity to show what fresh fish is really like, and both demand and status are high," says Chef Bhasin.

Another interesting ingredient grown in this region cloudberries, grow sparsely in their mountainous regions. Their flavour is unique and they can be stored without any preservatives.

THE NORDIC LINK TO INDIA

On a delayed domestic flight within India (in the course of my research for this article) I accidentally stumbled across a write-up in an inflight magazine on the cuisine of Coorg. Here the dominance of seasonal vegetables like bamboo shoot (May-August), jungle mango (April-June) or jackfruit (September-December) in local menus is prevalent and only served as a seasonal treat. Kodava cuisine as this type of food is referred to is very partial to pork and game as hunting in the misty hills was one of the main occupations. Carny meats like wild boar are pickled and sauced much like the Nordic style or served in a curry.

"Many cuisines around the world share similar styles of food preparation and ingredients although they may have nothing in common ethnically but geographical similarities create a culinary tie," says gourmet chef and cookbook author, Karen Anand.



New Nordic Food—local ingredients & seasonal flavours

Nyhavn is a 17th century waterfront canal & entertainment district in Copenhagen, a perfect place to enjoy a drink & sample authentic Nordic food



Claus Meyer, Danish star chef & restaurateur & co-owner of Noma

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Best places to sample new Nordic cuisine:

Manfreds
Manfreds is located in the hip street, Jægersborggade in Nørrebro. The restaurant focuses on everyday food, which is aided by modern techniques and raw materials of the highest quality. The raw ingredients are biodynamic vegetables from Kiselgården and Birkemoesgård, roots from Lammefjord, pig from Hindsholm, lamb from Haverødsgård, ox from Minslund and herbs from the forest.

At Manfreds the wine is natural wine, which has made the restaurant Copenhagen's first natural wine bar.

Address: Jægersborggade 40, 2200 København N
www.manfreds.dk

