

KAINUU – where nature offers its best!



Natural food producers in Kainuu use these ingredients to make delicious products in which you can taste the wild nature, the northern climate, the traditional skills and a lot of love!

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Delicious berries

Fancy a lingonberry pie, a bilberry smoothie, crowberry juice or cloudberry jam? You can pick the ingredients for all these treats easily in the forests of Kainuu!

A land where berries like to grow

The forests and wetlands of Northern Finland provide plenty of space for wild berries to grow. The best bilberry patches can be found deep in the wilderness and in younger conifer forests, while lingonberries prefer drier terrain. Cloudberry typically grow in wetlands. While picking the berries, you can enjoy the wonderfully diverse and extremely clean nature, which really is in abundance in Kainuu!

The cold winters and white summers provide their own nuances to the delicious aromas. These berries are truly unique!

Finnish superfoods

Natural berries are an important source of vitamins C and E, fibre, minerals and micronutrients. Their seeds contain soft unsaturated fats and essential fatty acids. At the same time, natural berries contain zero cholesterol and very low calories. Berries are an excellent choice for a wide variety of diets that promote health and wellbeing. Food that grows in the wild is also sustainable.

Interesting berry products

The light blue bog bilberry tastes as nice as it looks. Cranberries in turn can be found under the snow having ripened the previous autumn and make delicious natural sweets that are further improved by the frost. Natural berries are also widely used in products that have attracted international interest. Berry powders, groats, snack products, jams, juices, marmalades and various drinks are popular and recommended.

Kainuu – Home of the World Berry Picking Championships

The World Berry Picking Championships have been held in Suomussalmi in Kainuu for over twenty years. The event takes place traditionally in September, when the world's best berry picker is decided!



Wild and free herbs

Nettles are packed with iron, while the beautiful lady's mantle promotes eternal youth. The dandelion is one of the best salad plants in the world.

The appeal of wild herbs

Lots of great tastes and nice stories are attached to fashionable wild herbs. They are part of both culinary and folk traditions. There is also growing interest in wild herbs. Wild herbs offer something new, yet also something genuinely old at the same time. They are treasures of the forest that are enjoying a real revival.

Wild herbs can be used like vegetables or as spices, ingredients for herbal beverages or even medicines. It is very important to correctly identify wild herbs when gathering them, since not all plants in the forest are suitable for human consumption. Herbs are best gathered in dry weather. It is also more pleasant for the gatherer!

Fresh, dried or frozen

Wild herbs should be used when fresh, right after they have been gathered. For winter consumption, however, it makes sense to dry the herbs and grind them into nutritious green powders. A pinch of green powder is enough to season most foods, as the aromas and flavours of the herbs often intensify when dried. Freezing is also possible. Fireweed blossom frozen inside ice cubes decorate drinks and bring summer even into the heart of winter.

Herbal beverages are energy drinks

Herbal beverages can be blended from any edible herb to create completely new flavour combinations. The leaves of meadowsweet, wild strawberries, birch, fireweed, bilberries and dandelions are all typical ingredients. Yarrow, heather and white clover flowers are also suitable for drinks. Herbs also attract pollinators and add taste to honey. For example, the taste of fireweed honey is perfect.

Kainuu –Home of Wild Food Week

Each year at the end of summer, Kainuu hosts Wild Food Week, during which local restaurants and professional chefs present their dishes made from naturally grown ingredients.



Popular mushrooms

Picking mushrooms is a great way to observe all the forest life. It does not take long to fill up a basket with bolete, milkcap, russula and chanterelle mushrooms once you find a good patch. Mushroom picking combines the joy of discovery with delicious food.

Rain brings out the mushrooms

The peak mushroom picking season is from August to October. A bit of rain is always needed for a good harvest. Mushroom picking offers a lifetime of learning, and it pays to find out about unfamiliar mushrooms. Poisonous mushrooms are a common sight whenever you go into the forests, so it is very important to correctly identify what you are picking. The best help, both in the forest and the kitchen, is a knowledgeable companion!

Cooking with mushrooms requires a bit of expertise. For example, false morel and milkcap mushrooms must be boiled repeatedly before consumption to remove toxins. Fresh mushrooms also spoil quickly, so they should be eaten or preserved immediately. Freezing, drying, salting and marinating are all good methods.

Taste the aromas

Mushrooms are traditionally cooked with lots of cream and butter. Mushrooms are low in calories but rich in aromas, and in principle they do not need to be cooked in butter. Instead, they can be fried in oil or chopped and served with vegetables and fish dishes.

Healthy nutrition

Mushrooms are a good source of fibre, and they also contain moderate amounts of vitamins A, B and D. Mushrooms are also rich in minerals and micronutrients. In particular they contain potassium, iron, zinc and selenium. Most of the weight of mushrooms comprises water, and the average amount of calories per 100 grams is just 25. Mushrooms contain very little sodium, so mushroom dishes do not increase blood pressure. In fact, picking mushrooms in the forest can help reduce it!

Kainuu – Home of the matsutake

Matsutake is a highly sought mushroom that thrives in Kainuu whenever there is a good mushroom harvest. With a little luck, your dream of finding your very own matsutake patch can come true. You will have to find the best mushroom patches yourself, but matsutake mushrooms make it all worthwhile!



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