

a nordic feast

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a nordic feast

— simple recipes
for gatherings with
friends and family

PRESTEL

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preface

My wife and I love gathering a crowd of friends or relations around the table for great conversation while we enjoy fabulous food and have a lovely time together. The joy of socializing is something we want to pass on to our children, and we grab every opportunity to spend quality time with our family.

In this book, I present lots of my favorite recipes for hosting a delicious meal with guests, plus six suggested menus for various events and festive occasions throughout the year: a summer barbecue with fresh seasonal produce, a lavish Sunday brunch to follow an evening of wild partying, a sociable light lunch with extended family, a relaxed mid-week supper with close friends, a festive Christmas dinner packed with family tradition, and a lively and colorful birthday picnic in the garden.

Since every menu is designed for a different occasion, each has its own atmosphere, its own vibe, and its own culinary focus. Many of the dishes have a Scandinavian inspiration; others have Mediterranean, Middle Eastern, or Asian influences. They all reflect the culinary experiences I've collected over the course of my life, which have shaped my style of cooking. Now, I want to share these with other people who are just as passionate as I am about cooking, hosting, and (most importantly of all) enjoying good food together.

Spending time in the physical presence of other people is vital, whether it's friends or family. These moments are so precious, you might even say they are the spice of life. Sadly, many people feel so constrained by their everyday lives, they barely find time to cook, let alone invite guests round. But with a bit of thought, it is eminently possible to fit these kinds of social events into our hectic lives. That is why every menu in this book comes with detailed notes about how and when each dish should be prepared—for example, a couple of days in advance or in the morning before your guests arrive. So, once the guests rock up, you are pretty much free to relax and enjoy the food together, even if you are hosting.

And the menu for a communal meal doesn't always have to be sophisticated or fancy. The main thing is seeing each other and spending quality time together. You can even organize an event where everyone contributes something to eat. Or you can cook together. There are so many options.

I also encourage you to experiment with the menus and put together recipes that particularly appeal to you. Feel free to leave out the odd dish and add something else instead. Vary the quantities depending on the size of your feast and how many people are coming. I certainly hope my recipes will inspire you to invite people over for food more often, so you can spend more time with the people who enrich your life.

enjoy!

— **mikkel karstad**



summer barbecue



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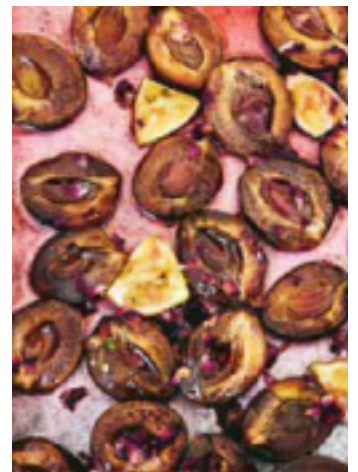


Campfires, kindling, smoke, and barbecued food. Words that get my culinary pulse racing. This style of cooking and eating is definitely something I want to pass on to my own children.

When you cook over a pure wood fire, you can achieve very high temperatures, giving the grilled food an absolutely exceptional barbecued, smoky flavor. Fish, shellfish, and vegetables are particularly great when prepared this way. They cook in no time at all and are packed with fresh flavor.

It's essential to chop the wood as small as possible, so you can constantly feed the fire with new logs and keep the temperature stable. If the firewood is too big, there will be greater temperature fluctuations, making it harder to control the cooking process. The wood itself should only be glowing because the flames are too hot and will just burn the food on the outside.

Here's my suggested menu for a relaxing summer evening barbecue with fresh, seasonal ingredients that you can enjoy with friends or family. Settle down around the warming fire, which has the added bonus of keeping annoying mosquitoes away!









blackberry juice with gin and tonic

MAKES 8 GLASSES

1½ cups (200 g) blackberries
(fresh or frozen)

1 cup (200 g) sugar

5 sprigs mint

Zest and juice of 1 organic lemon

1 cup (240 mL) gin

2 cups (480 mL) tonic water

Ice cubes

Put the blackberries, sugar, sprigs of mint, lemon zest, and juice in a saucepan with 1 cup (240 mL) of water and bring to a boil. Continue boiling for 2–3 minutes, then remove from the heat and leave to infuse (uncovered) for 15–20 minutes at room temperature.

Strain the juice through a fine sieve and cool completely in the fridge.

To serve, put a couple of ice cubes in eight glasses. Then, pour 2 tbsp (30 mL) of gin, ¼ cup (60 mL) of tonic, and ⅛ of the blackberry juice into each glass.

Serve immediately when your guests arrive or with the food. This drink is also deliciously refreshing without the gin.

PREP TIP

You can also make the juice a couple of days in advance and keep it in the fridge until ready to use, ideally in a sealed, sterilized bottle.





fried shrimp with black currant salt

SERVES 4

4¼ cups (1 L) grapeseed oil
4 cups (400 g) fresh medium shrimp,
shells on
¼ cup (50 g) chickpea (gram) flour
1 tbsp (10 g) freeze-dried black currants
2 tsp (2 g) sea salt

Slowly heat the grapeseed oil in a pan to a temperature of 320°F (160°C).

Toss the shrimp in their shells in the chickpea flour, just enough to give them a light coating, then shake off any excess flour.

Fry the shrimp in batches to make sure the temperature of the oil does not drop too much; cook each batch for about 1 minute, until they are golden and crisp on the outside, tender and juicy on the inside. Scoop the shrimp out of the oil using a slotted spoon, and let them drain on a few layers of paper towels. Fry all the shrimp in the same way. If necessary, allow the oil to return to the required temperature between batches.

Grind the black currants and salt in a pestle and mortar or spice mill until you have a fine red powder.

Sprinkle the fried shrimps with the black currant salt, and serve immediately as a warm snack before the main barbecue.