

Why Finns are obsessed with blueberries
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=57HYrItZiKc>
Transcript: <https://dontveter.com/ec/blueberries.pdf>

Finland is in love with blueberries. The Finns call them 'Mustikka' – and for them, they're somewhat of a staple.

But can anyone just go into the forest and pick them freely? And why are they considered a superfood?

It's the symbol of the forest loving nation. Healthy food that we can have straight from our forests.

Picking blueberries means that I am just appreciative what mother nature is giving us.

Meet Varpu: Blogger and berry lover

Just like many Finns, blogger Varpu Rusila is all about nature. Long walks through the trees, gathering berries from the forest floor.

It's been a cherished family tradition ever since she can remember.

Blueberries are the iconic berry of Finland and we have something called 'everyone's rights' and that means that everyone can wander in any forest in Finland and as long as we don't disturb anyone or be in somebody's yard, we can actually go and pick berries.

Every summer we just wait and wait for the blueberry season to come and then when it's up we are in the forest.

The best blueberry spots they are passed down from generation to another.

And when you get married, you are introduced to your spouse's best spots.

Finnish forests and family traditions

This is Finland's Lakeland region, an hour and a half from Helsinki.

We visit Lahti, where Varpu lives and works. She blogs about the Finnish way of life.

And that includes the gathering of wild blueberries with her daughter.

This is an activity that my grandmother taught me to do and then I've been going with my own mother and father and now I'm doing it with my own child.

So that is so, so special. That's very normal.

And that is also like the badge of honour. We are not that fussy about having blue fingers in Finland because it means that you have been out in the wilderness.

Hardly a day goes by where Varpu doesn't prepare something with blueberries.

The recipe that we're doing today is my family recipe and this is our go-to recipe when we are making a blueberry pie.

We can do it in a heartbeat. So it's really, really like a 5 minute recipe.

So let's get started. First, Varpu mixes flour, baking powder, oats, and a little salt.

In a second bowl, she mixes butter and sugar. Then, one egg. In goes in the flour mix...

And finally, some typical Finnish sour cream. The sour cream is really interesting in Finland.

It is with a bit more sour taste to it, so it's very close to crème fraîche and we can also substitute it with some cream yoghurt.

The cream is folded in lightly, before spreading the dough in a greased pan. In Finland we love to use the wild blueberries. We actually use the farmed blueberries only for garnishing.

You wouldn't typically see a blueberry pie made out of those garden ones.

We believe that this is the real stuff, so to speak.

They are high in vitamin C, fibre and also antioxidants, these real, real blueberries.

And I will just put them all around this plate. Add a little bit of sugar.

And if you were to use frozen blueberries, then I would suggest that you would put one tablespoon of potato starch on top because frozen blueberries will give you more fluid so that it's not too watery.

So that's my tip for that.

And into the oven it goes: 25 minutes at 225 celsius.

So there's a high chance that you might have blue fingers, and I have a hack for you.

I will pick a small slice of rhubarb, slice it like this, and this takes it away completely. You could also use lemon.

The capital Helsinki is also known for its love of wild berries. In fact, Finns consume eight kilos per capita a year—the equivalent of a large cleaning bucket.

So you'd be hard pressed to find a market or café that doesn't feature the foresty fruits.

They come in every imaginable form: blueberry ice cream, blueberry licorice, blueberry muesli, as a side dish to reindeer ham, and in countless baked goods.

You can use them in many ways. With the porridge in the morning time.

I also like fresh berries or frozen berries with yoghurt in the mornings.

But of course, the warm blueberry pie with cold ice cream is a perfect combination as well.

For Finnish breakfast, they're often served on yogurt or in blueberry porridge.

Can you believe that I eat this every morning and I'm not bored at all?

And this is how we typically do them.

So we put this tiny butter, we say in Finnish it's like butter eye for the porridge.

Then this is organic honey and then we add blueberries.

This is the number one breakfast dish in Finland for sure.

I think every Finnish person has fond memories of blueberry porridge.

And for lunch, a blueberry salad with Finnish cheese.

Here we have the most iconic Finnish cheese. It's called Leipäjuusto.

It has a nickname, it's called Squeaky Cheese because it makes this really oddly satisfying cheeky noise when you chew it.

The cheese is cubed, and the salad tossed in a vinaigrette — the perfect light lunch.

But now, it's time for the blueberry pie, fresh out of the oven.

Finns prefer to eat it warm. And at Varpu's house, vanilla sauce is a must.

This is how we make it. The Finnish way to eat blueberry pie. Super great and just so good. So good.

What's your favorite blueberry dish?

Blueberries: A surprisingly versatile ingredient.

But how about you? have any blueberry recipes we should know about? Let us know in the comments!