

*One of the main colours of the summery Estonian kitchen is yellow. The touch of the sun lends its colour and flavour to the food as well. Yellow, melt in the mouth early potatoes with butter-fried chanterelles on the side. Vegetables from the garden arrive on the plate, berries from the forest and garden into baskets. The flavours of the summer are captured in jams and juices. Golden honey is harvested from beehives. People started to prepare food in outdoor kitchens during the warm season already back in the olden days. They are now also eager to go outside to have a picnic or barbecue during the short summer, outdoor cafes are popular for having a meal. Kama with buttermilk is a traditional summer dish and domestic ice-cream is enjoyed as well these days. The flavours of summer are light and juicy.*

Estonian summer has a rich palette of berries to offer – wild and garden strawberries are the first to ripen, followed by bilberries, green strawberries, raspberries, redcurrants, white currants and blackcurrants, gooseberries, and blackberries, one after another, and lingonberries right in the end of the summer. Berries have been eaten raw as summertime treats or with honey, sugar and milk. In fancy kitchens, they have been used to prepare elegant desserts, including berry tarts, jellies and ice-cream. Berries have also been used for home-made liqueur and rows of jam jars have been seen as the pride of the household. The taste of wild berries is valued by today's top chefs as well, who are not even afraid of adding them to main courses.

Summer dishes have always been light, prepared quickly and with little effort. Haymakers and reapers used to bring along buttermilk, a piece of bread and something salty. Milk soup, kama, curd or farm cheese served as a replenishing snack on a hot summer day. Root beer has been good for slaking thirst, while men can't do without some cooling barley beer even today.

Noblemen and wealthy burgesses longed to sit on the balcony, in the park, by a forest or the sea to enjoy delicious snacks and beverages in the canorous summer air. More recently, having picnics became popular among townfolk and summer cafes and ice-cream pavilions arrived in Estonia from Europe. Today, there is every right to call Estonians the barbecuing nation – meat, seasoned in different marinades, sausages, as well as vegetables and fruit are barbecued.

The smell of smoked fish is alluring food-lovers in the summer; flatfish is enjoyed on the coast and vendace by Lake Peipus. This is also the time for crawfish dishes which have become a delicacy in Estonia these days. Produce from own garden and pure farm products are valued again – juicy young carrots, crunchy peas, full bean pods, red-cheeked tomatoes. Novel summery food experiences are provided by the café days and food festivals organised in several Estonian towns and villages, where visitors can enjoy local gourmet food as well as the scents and flavours of the global cuisine.