

Cooking : the meeting of cultures in Greenland

Agathe Devisme, Ipiutaq guest farm, South Greenland

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English translation: Catherine Lauriol - Photos : copyright © Ipiutaq guest farm

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An encounter...



When I met Kalista a few years ago, food quickly became a common ground between us. Food and cooking were from the start one of the best channels of communication. Throughout my life in France, food had always been a way to give and be given love and affection, and this carried on in Greenland.

A daily relationship through food...



I was at Upernaviarsuk's experimental farm school in the south of Greenland where my sister was working. We were the only women amongst a group of young men who were happy to find out about a new culture through the meals that we cooked for them every day.

Greenland was a new and special environment for me, and the only language Kalista and I had in common was basic English. That's how food became an obvious way of communicating: many feelings and thoughts can be read on the face of someone eating!

From French roots to Greenlandic culture...



A few months later I moved to Greenland with my piano, watercolours and my recipes to start a new life as a cook at Upernaviarsuk's farm school.

I have inherited the knowledge and art of cooking a good meal from my mum and my grandmother who was from the south of France.

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At Upernaviarsuk, an isolated place where only a few people live, it is quite common not to be able to go to the nearest town for several weeks. That's how I learnt to concentrate my energy to cook well! Good food always enhances people's good mood and team spirit; cooking promotes the meeting of cultures...

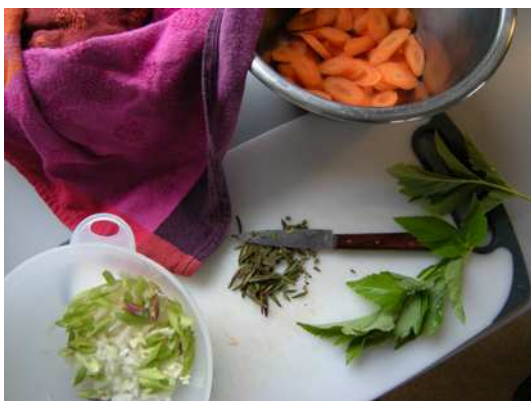


Food traditions are very different in Greenland from what they are in France. In Greenland one eats to feed oneself and keep healthy, whereas in France eating can often be experienced as a 'ceremony'. But we've learnt to respect each other and share a good meal.

Cooking is like painting...



I trained as an architect, but I've always been passionate about cooking, as well as playing music, drawing and painting.



I cook the same way I paint: I have a structure in mind, colours, herbs and spices available to me, a view out of the window and lots of love!

I use my recipes and cookery books the same way I look at an art book to find inspiration and ideas. I check which ingredients I have before deciding on a recipe, thus reinventing my recipe every time!

Recipes for a gourmet meal at Ipiutaq guest farm



After working as a cook at Upernaviarsuk's farm school, we decided to start a guest farm with Kalista at Ipiutaq, located a few miles from Narsarsuaq's international airport.



One of my roles at the guest farm is to cook and share my cooking with our guests. More information and pictures of some of my recipes can be found at www.ipiutaq.gl. For instance, have a look at my "Greenlandic Bouillabaisse" (fish stew) or my spicy scones with wild angelica served with Ipiutaq chutney.

An original gourmet cuisine, from traditional products to a French « savoir-faire »



peau de baleine



soupe de poissons



scones épicés



angélique



crevettes



soupe à l'oseille



herbes sauvages

"Ipiutaq's rare combination of excellent gastronomy, comfort and wild greenlandic nature is absolutely unique, highly addictive and completely unforgettable..."

in "The arctic settlers", Greenland Today n.1, november 2007