

Foraging – Using your environment for inspiration

By Daniel Scheffler

Eating local, and buying local has been a big trend in the foodie industry for a while now, so it comes with no surprise that the evolution of this ever popular trend has come in the form of foraging – a real wandering in search of food. This trend has taken off across the globe alongside eating items grown close to home and is reviving an ancient method of collecting local ingredients in a fresh way. These ingredients are readily available in the neighborhood, for free, and can then be used in cooking for a whole new wild and organic addition to recipes. The other benefit is less intrusion from humans that can include pesticides and irrigation leading to less nutrition food. The Norwegian chef Rene Redzepi is one of the trailblazers in the trend, with the world's number one restaurant Noma (so says Restaurant Magazine, 2012) and a lust for adventure. He believes that wild foods picked from the area can add greatly to nutrition, variety and also flavor and is adamant that people should pay attention to the source of their food. The connection to nature and the earth and then bringing that what you have collected into your kitchen has been a great focus with the number of 'locavores', organic restaurants and markets and general produce companies. This trend takes hungry cooks beyond organic and one-step closer to nature into an untamed discovery of newly picked ingredients and is of course the ultimate luxury. The most practical solution for foragers would be to discover local parks and green areas and use foraging as nutritional supplements to recipes: including wild mushrooms, all kinds of spices, roots, nuts and many greens. Often these greens were considered weeds but have now been reclaimed as delicious additions to food. Connie Green, the America 'huntress' of ingredients mentions in her cookbook 'The Wild Table' that although wild food is gaining star status its simplicity and approach is perfect for any urban cook looking to celebrate the truly organic. With foraging comes some warning, before just cooking with anything that was picked from nature a bit of research is required to be absolutely sure what it is. Eating just any plant can be dangerous, and even deadly. Some experts in the foraging arena to know:

<http://foraging.com/>

<http://wildmanstevebrill.com/>

<http://wildfoodadventures.com/>

<http://www.mykoweb.com/>

Economic times and the rebirth of local agriculture in this century has sent people searching for better quality food, natural remedies and of course a connection with a simpler past. Foraging represents exactly that, so happy hunting.



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