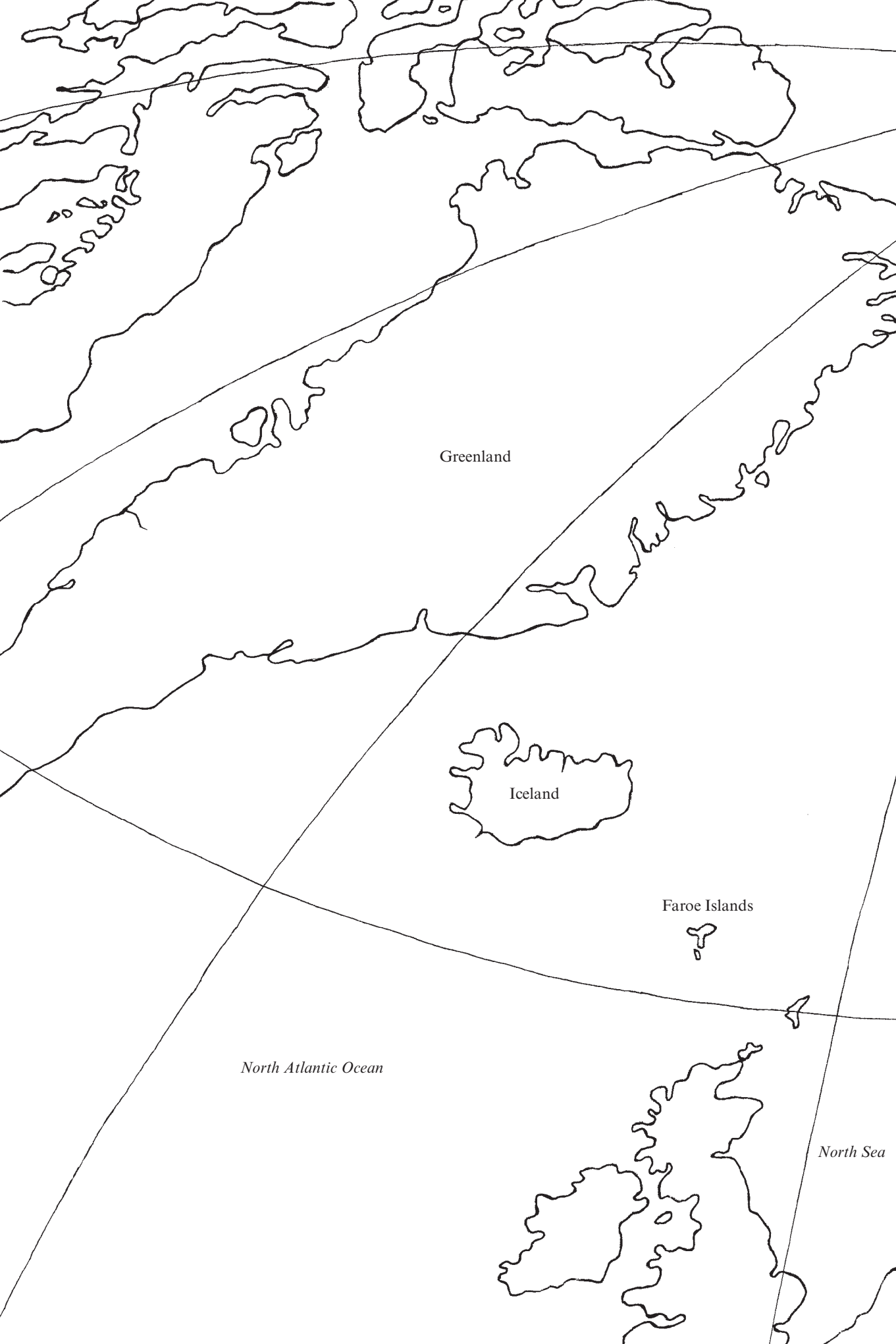


Magnus Nilsson

THE NORDIC COOK BOOK



PHAIDON



Greenland

Iceland

Faroe Islands

North Atlantic Ocean

North Sea



Greenland Sea

Barents Sea

Norwegian Sea

Sápmi region

Finland

Norway

Sweden

Denmark

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A BRIEF HISTORY OF NORDIC CUISINE



A blend of preserved and fresh flavours

The fastest way to understand the Nordic region's food culture is to eat an open sandwich topped with butter and hard cheese. Such a sandwich is usually made from fresh ingredients that have been preserved for long-term storage, such as bread, leavened, seasoned butter and dry, hard cheese that has ideally been matured for one or two years. Many northerners eat this sandwich every day; its origins can be traced back for more than a millennium and it exists in hundreds of variants. An open cheese sandwich speaks of the most fundamental aspects that make up a food culture in the Nordic region, but also demonstrates that a 'taste chord' (the harmony that comes from several flavours) can live a very long time if it's important to people and provides meaning.

The Nordic region is a large geographical area that shares a common cultural and political history, and thus it also has a partially shared food culture. The outer frame is based on a common religious belief. These were heathen beliefs during the Viking Age, which then became a mutual Christian faith. The common religious faith also created partly shared language that even today allows northerners, when they meet, to decide whether to speak 'Scandinavian', which means speaking their own native language and simply using words they know to be understood in other Nordic countries. 'Scandinavian', however, differs from the Finnish language family so it's not as easy to speak a Scandinavian that the Finns understand. Sometimes Swedish, a minority language in Finland, is used instead. The common religious belief has also formed the basis for a common understanding of how the meals are created and also how they should be eaten in family and other gatherings. Political partnerships that created common kingdoms back

in history, together with the continuous seizure of each other's lands, created a cultural affinity. But when the two remaining major powers in the Nordic area in the late 1600s, Denmark and Sweden, divided the Nordic area between them, the Scandinavian mountain range created two independent halves of a common idea and shared history which was to influence the following centuries. One can therefore describe the Nordic food culture as having west Nordic and east Nordic counterparts.

In the west Nordic part, Denmark and Danish culture were the norm. In the eastern Nordic part Sweden and Finland shared a cultural community. The kingdom of Denmark had also comprised Norway (which left the Danish Kingdom in 1814 to be a part of Sweden until 1905 when it became an independent kingdom) and Iceland (which became a republic independent from Denmark in 1944). Even today, the Faroe Islands and Greenland are autonomous areas within the Danish Kingdom, which thus is a major north European cultural community, at least in terms of area.

The eastern part of the Nordic countries has been characterized by Sweden and the Swedish political culture. Finland was an integral part of the kingdom of Sweden–Finland from the Middle Ages to the 1800s. Sweden lost Finland to the Russians in 1809 and it ended up under Russian rule until it became an independent republic in 1917. Large parts of the Baltic region were also under Swedish rule further back in time. Both the western and eastern Nordic food cultures are characterized by an exchange of ideas throughout the history of the Holy Roman Empire but were also influenced by France, the Netherlands and the UK. Since the early 1800s, the US has been a significant culinary cultural inspiration from which to retrieve both dishes and seasonings,





NORWEGIAN REDUCED CURDS AND WHEY MADE WITH LIQUID RENNET

Dravle (Norway)

Preparation and cooking time: 4 hours

Serves: 4 as a main course with charcuterie and 8 as a dessert with cinnamon and sugar

2 litres/3½ UK pints (8¼ cups) milk
1 tablespoon liquid rennet
sugar and ground cinnamon, to serve

Pour the milk into a heavy-bottomed saucepan and heat to 37°C/98.6°F. Remove from the heat, then add the liquid rennet and stir with a spoon to mix thoroughly. Don't mix for longer than 30 seconds, as this is when the rennet starts acting on the milk and shouldn't be disturbed too much. Put the lid on and leave to set for 30 minutes.

Use a whisk to break the firm curd into smaller pieces and start heating again over a medium heat. Bring to a simmer, then cook gently for 2–3 hours, or until the desired degree of browning is achieved. Stir frequently so that it doesn't burn, but do it carefully, without crushing the grains of cheese too much. Transfer to a bowl and refrigerate before serving. Sprinkle with sugar and cinnamon before eating.

SWEDISH REDUCED CURDS, AS IN JÄMTLAND

Jämtländsk sötost (Sweden)

This dessert brings back childhood memories for me as it used to be served at my grandmother's house with cloudberry and whipped cream.

Preparation and cooking time: 3–4 hours

Serves: 4

2 litres/3½ UK pints (8¼ cups) milk
200 ml/7 fl oz (¾ cup plus 1 tablespoon) cream
2 eggs
1 tablespoon liquid rennet
1 cassia cinnamon stick
1 tablespoon golden syrup

Pour the milk and cream into a heavy-bottomed pot and heat to 37°C/98.6°F before removing it from the heat and placing it next to the stove. Whisk in the eggs and the liquid rennet, then add the cinnamon to the mixture, cover the pan and leave for 30 minutes. Use a long knife to cut the curds carefully into 3 cm/1¼ inch cubes. Slowly bring to a simmer over a low heat, then cook for 2–3 hours until the desired colour is achieved, stirring frequently. When cooked, add the syrup and refrigerate before serving.

For image see opposite page

SWEDISH REDUCED CURD FINISHED IN THE OVEN

Sötost (Sweden)

Serve warm with whipped cream and berries or jam (page 690).

Preparation and cooking time: 1 hour

Serves: 4

2 litres/3½ UK pints (8¼ cups) milk
100 ml/3½ fl oz (½ cup plus 1 tablespoon)
cream
100 g/3½ oz (½ cup) sugar
1 cassia cinnamon stick
2 eggs
1 teaspoon liquid rennet

Combine the milk, cream, sugar and cinnamon in a heavy-bottomed pot and bring to a simmer. Cook until it has reduced in volume by half. Leave off the heat to cool until it reaches 37°C/98.6°F.

Preheat the oven to 175°C/345°F/Gas Mark 4.

Add the eggs and the rennet to the mixture in the pot and whisk briskly to combine. Don't mix for longer than 30 seconds, as this is when the liquid rennet starts acting on the milk and shouldn't be disturbed too much. Pour the mixture into an ovenproof dish, to a depth of 2–2.5 cm/¾–1 inch. Place it in the oven and cook for 40 minutes.



Clockwise from top left: Norwegian Reduced Curds and Whey made with Cultured Milk (page 69); Baked Colostrum Pudding (page 75); strawberry jam (page 690); cream; Swedish Reduced Curds, as in Jämtland (page 70); Swedish Curd Cake (page 625)





COARSE POTATO PANCAKES

Raggmunk / Lufsa / Råriven pannkaka
(Sweden)

These pancakes can either be fried in a pan on the stove – when they are known as *raggmunk* – or baked in the oven, when they are called *lufsa* or *råriven pannkaka*. Either way, serve them with slices of Fried Salt Pork (page 302) and Sugared Lingonberries (page 692).

Preparation and cooking time: 1 hour

Makes: 20 pancakes

600 g/1 lb 5 oz potatoes
½ quantity Thin Pancake batter
(page 450) made with 3 eggs
butter, for frying
salt, to taste

Peel and grate the potatoes coarsely on an ordinary box grater. Use your hands to squeeze them tightly so as to remove any excess liquid. Transfer to a bowl and stir in the pancake batter. Season with salt, to taste.

To fry them in a pan, preheat the oven to 120°C/235°F/Gas Mark ½.

Melt some butter in a frying pan over a medium heat. Add a good amount of batter to make a large pancake that covers the bottom of the pan, or dollop in spoonfuls to make several smaller ones (which I prefer). Either way, flatten the mixture with the back of your spoon so that you don't have a mound of potato sitting in a pool of batter. Fry until the underside is deeply golden, then flip over and fry the other side. Don't rush these pancakes as they have to cook all the way through to be tasty. Keep them warm in the oven while you fry the remaining pancakes.

Alternatively, to bake them in the oven, preheat the oven to 200°C/400°F/Gas Mark 6.

Melt some butter in a roasting pan. Pour in the pancake batter and return the pan to the oven. Bake until the pancake is cooked all the way through.

For image see opposite page

POTATO PATTIES

Potatisbullar (Sweden)

When I grew up, *potatisbullar* were always made from riced potatoes, or sometimes from leftover mashed potatoes. Today though, there are so many commercial varieties of *potatisbullar* around that most people think of them as being made with grated potatoes. A sort of mix between the real potato ball and a *råraka* or Coarse Potato Cake (page 118).

When I make the authentic version at home, my kids are always disappointed – not because they aren't tasty, but because from their point of view, my way (the old way), is not correct.

Preparation and cooking time: 30 minutes

Serves: 4

800 g/1¾ lb floury boiled potatoes, peeled,
riced and left to cool a little
2 eggs
50 ml/2 fl oz (3½ tablespoons) milk
50 g/2½ oz (⅓ cup plus 1 tablespoon) plain
(all-purpose) flour
butter, for frying
salt and white pepper, to taste

Combine the potatoes, eggs and milk in a bowl and sift over the flour. Mix everything together well, but not for too long (the longer you work it the firmer and denser the balls will become).

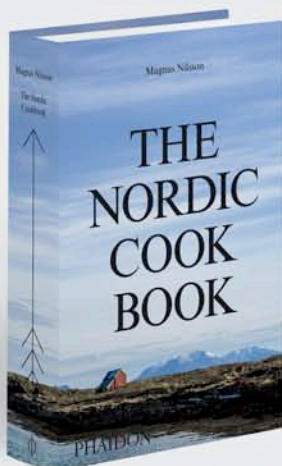
Shape the mixture into little patties. Butter a pan and fry the patties over a medium–high heat until they are golden on both sides. Don't hurry. They need to caramelize properly and heat all the way through to cook the flour.

If you want, you can fry your potato patties in multiple pans, but if you only have one pan, then you can fry them in batches and keep them warm in an oven preheated to 120°C/235°F/Gas Mark ½.

For image see opposite page



Clockwise from top left: Coarse Potato Pancakes (page 124) with Fried Salt Pork (page 302); Potato Patties (page 124); Potato Soup (page 122); Norwegian Potato Porridge (page 122); Jansson's Temptation, Swedish Potato and Sprat Casserole (page 212); Danish Burning Love (page 122)



Leading international chef Magnus Nilsson's take on home cooking.

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Magnus travelled throughout the Nordic region not only collecting recipes but photographing the landscape and people.

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The definitive guide to Nordic home cooking and its rich culinary offerings.

Features 700 simple and authentic recipes from Denmark, the Faroe Islands, Finland, Greenland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden, all of which can be easily recreated at home.

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Explains Nordic ingredients, cooking techniques and culinary history so anyone can cook their favourite Nordic dishes in the authentic way. New York, where he and his creative collaborators live and work.

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