

WELLBEING FOOD

THE ART OF PLATING



Food styling & decoration

Food carries a variety of cultural and historical values. Values that you can use to strengthen your company profile, your brand, and the wellbeing experiences you offer to your guests.

By using local raw material, cultivated plants or traditional local (cultural-historical) dishes or products, you can create a story around each offering. You can also create emotions and communicate the uniqueness of your area. This is also called storytelling.

The basis of your food offers should of course be that they are healthy, based on local, raw products, that are in themselves or in combination nutrient-dense and offer your guest an as wholesome, nutritious dish as possible. The raw materials should be "clean", with as few additives as possible, natural or ecological, and free from artificial flavour enhancers and preservatives. And of course, they should not contain any other undesirable substances caused by environmental impact.



Wellbeing food - creative & delicious design

An important part of your wellbeing food or dishes, is the appearance. Food design such as decoration, colours, combination of raw materials and texture variations, as well as using different shapes, can play a big role in how your offers will be received. The phrase "we eat with our eyes" agrees well with how guests and customers choose their food. Presenting your food in a tasty, natural and appealing way is especially important in the present time, particularly if you communicate your offers with photos on your website and in social media. Even if you are less active online, your offers can flourish by having your guests' photograph, share and tag your company, or the food they buy.

Reconnect to cultural history

Be innovative with local traditions, lift what is typical, even "beige" everyday food, which may be less exciting for you, can be an extraordinary experience for your guests. Design your menu to make it as amazing as the organic and local products you use. Communicate your messages or stories and reconnect to your local traditions.

What makes your brand or destination unique? Presenting your raw materials in a natural way can convey a feeling of authenticity and honesty. Sometimes, the least spectacular soup can get a boost and reach heights with decorative flowers, leaves or small wild (edible) plants. Let your creativity flourish!





Porcelain & table arrangements

Handmade & locally produced porcelain

There are many creative artisans who produce beautiful handmade pottery that can elevate your dishes to reach heights. Collaborate with your local glass blowers, blacksmiths, potters, and crafters that work with various materials that can manufacture various decorative utilities and objects that can be used to give your dishes or table decorations a unique look and feeling. The advantages of working with local crafters are that you can get special requests or unique customized products, while supporting the local businesses in your community.

Feel free to experiment with various materials and explore different kind of surfaces. Pottery, glass, and stoneware can for instance be fine and smooth, or rough, and convey a more natural feeling. Let the structures of your plates and platters be an asset to your meal experiences. Remember to include the cutlery. Function, material, sharpness, weight, as well size and balance, are important aspects to consider completing your table setting. Feel for yourself if they are nice to hold in your hands during a whole meal.

Stone

Stones of various shapes can be used for arranging food, replacing plates or platters and when heated, acting as a heat plate, or contrariwise chilled, keeping food and drinks cool. Pebbles can also be decorative as table ornaments, in water glasses or in beverage jars. There are several region-specific stone types, such as the characteristic Swedish "Ölandic" lime stone, slate, and granite you could use for your table setting. Which stone types are characteristic in your region? Look around in your garden, contact a quarry or a local artisan to find out.

Wood & bark

Let nature step in your venue and let it become a part of your table setting. You can use wooden cutting boards, preferably locally produced, from an artisan, or make them yourself. You can for example use slices of a tree trunk, with or without bark. You can also use bark for serving and arranging snacks, pastries, bread or to keep napkins and cutlery in place.



Decorate with edible plants

Look around in your garden, maybe the decoration for your dishes will grow in your flowerbeds!

Spring: Viola and Pansy (which are related to Viola), Lilac, Honeysuckle, Bear leek flower, Dandelion, Forget-me-not, Sweet Pea, Tulip, Daisy, Apple and Cherry blossom, Spruce shoot, Cowslip, Ground elder.

Summer: Chives, Borage, Lavender, Elderflower, Marigold, Indian Cresse, Squash/Zucchini) & Pumpkin flowers, Oregano flowers, Sunflower leaves, Rose petals, Chamomile, Day Lily, Carnation, Runner beans, Bluebell, Cornflower, Lemon Verbena, Summer Begonia, Hollyhock (Alcea), Lime blossom, Daisy, Red clover, Herbal Tagetes.

The late summer/autumn: Fireweed, Chicory, Yarrow, Anise hyssop, Rowanberry.

There are many more flowers and plants that are edible. If you are unsure, you can always double check with your national "Poison information centre". If you use many flowers in your decorations, it may be good to grow them yourself, leaving the wild plants for the butterflies and bees.

Let your garden bloom

Feel free to let vegetables and herbs bloom, it benefits many pollinators, you can also use the flowers in your dishes. Examples are Broccoli, Kale, Cauliflower, Chives, Radish, Spinach and Rucola, Mint, Thyme, Basil, Oregano, Fennel, Dill and Rosemary.

Use your summer flowers even in the fall and winter. Freeze ice cubes with flowers, dry flowers and herbs to decorate, or season with the fantastic flavours which summer has to offer - all year round.

Communicate your creativity

Let your guests know about your decorations, your locally produced pottery, and decorative objects. Lift what you use and where it comes from on your website, in social media, on a poster in a room or add an information sheet to your menu.



Become a secondhand treasure hunter - find your gems in nature and in local shops

Sometimes you may want to let your food speak for itself. Get creative and try to enhance your guest's experience with the help of an inventive table setting. Think about the overall impression you want to convey. What suits the food? How can you connect your table setting to the ingredients, to your region, to a certain season or a specific holiday? What feelings do you want to create? Mix natural materials such as stone, grass, twigs, flowers and water (or ice!). Try combining them with soft elements such as various sustainable textiles. Working with counter poles can also be a way to make your guests attentive. Glass, stoneware, and metal together with plants can create many different effects. Take a walk in nature, along the beach, and stop at local second hand shops to find great bargains for your unique table settings.

From the beach: driftwood, dried seaweed, seagrass, pebbles, sand, sanded glass, parts of fishing nets (for attaching objects) or shells.

From the forest: Cones, bark, berry clusters, small tree trunks, dried fruit and wooden chunks from forestry (to build variation in heights, at the salad table, for spices and herbs, or gravy). Also fallen branches or branches with lichens can be pleasant. Visit a local sawmill, they might occasionally dispose of beautiful, non-usable wooden chunks, that you could use as cutting boards or doilies. Be sure to have the landowner's permission before collecting or picking anything.

From the second-hand shop: Glass, bottles, vases, metal cans, drying towels, coasters, linen cloths and other textiles. Baskets, jewellery, mirrors, cutlery, wooden bowls, smaller trays and other (cultural) historical kitchen utensils, cooking and baking equipment or candle holders.

Whatever you choose, get inventive and let your creativity sparkle. Think outside the box and look up and around. All decoration does not need to get placed on the food, on the plate or on the table. Beautiful arrangements with second-hand bargains, twigs and flowers can also be hung on the wall or ceiling together with a LED light trail. Feel free to talk to local companies, maybe you can establish an exchange with a sawmill, florists, decor shops, second-hand shops, or gardeners.



Please consider:

- Rules and regulations for what you may pick in the wild so that you do not accidentally pick protected plants or objects.
- Picking and collecting stones, fallen branches, flowers or other things is not allowed in protected areas and in nature reserves. Read about the site regulations before heading out.
- Be sure to have the owner's permission before collecting or picking anything.
- Pick and collect what has already fallen from plants, trees or has withered, saving living and thriving plants that still need to spread their seeds for our biodiversity.
- Pick and collect in moderation. Avoid collecting all your treasures from one place. Take care of nature and keep in mind that animal and insect life should take precedence. Think about sustainability.
- Be mindful of where you pick or collect plants, flowers, stones, and branches. It is advisable to collect them where there are no emissions from exhaust gases or where no harmful substances have been spread. Avoid locations where pets often are walked.
- Annual flowers used in food should be sown from seeds. Purchased flowers could be treated with harmful substances.
- If you do not buy locally or produce your decorations yourself, avoid products and material that has been transported unnecessarily far. Ensure that they are fair and sustainably sourced.

