

By Denmark

## WHITE PAPERS

for solutions of tomorrow

# GASTRONOMY

THE DIVERSE AND HIGHLY SPECIALISED COMPETENCES  
OF THE DANISH FOOD CLUSTER

### INSIDE THIS WHITE PAPER:

- How Denmark became an organic world champion
- The collaboration that builds a culinary future
- Sustainable solutions in the kitchen and beyond



Solutions of tomorrow  
By Denmark

## **Gastronomy**

The diverse and highly specialised competences  
of the Danish food cluster  
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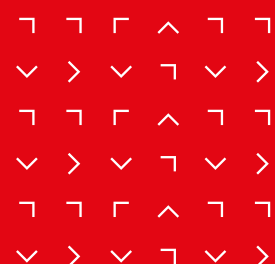
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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**Denmark has always been known for bacon, butter and biscuits. But, if anyone had said 25 years ago that Denmark was destined to be a leading star on the culinary skyline, the hub of a Scandinavian gastronomical awakening based on local ingredients, and home to the world's best restaurant several times over, then most people would have laughed out loud.**

Nevertheless, this is what has happened. Since the Manifesto for New Nordic Cuisine was conceived in 2004, restaurant kitchens have driven a rapid transformation. Agriculture, food manufacturers and the political system have since given the movement their full backing – to the benefit of Danish gastronomy.

The traditional understanding of gastronomy is 'the practice or art of eating and drinking well', but it is equally about the culture and knowledge behind the food we eat. In other words, it is about much more than restaurant kitchens today.

Today, the world associates Denmark with high gastronomic quality

Denmark's reputation as a leading gastronomic destination has grown out of a culture for sustainability, cooperation and science along with an increased terroir awareness and organic mindset. Today, the world associates Denmark with high gastronomic quality. It's a position Denmark aims to maintain through the hard work and innovative playfulness that delivers value to food business partners.

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Learn more about the Danish food cluster at Food Nation

### Supporting the SDGs – how does Denmark contribute?

The UN's 17 sustainable development goals (SDGs) are an important topic for companies, organisations and stakeholders within the Danish food cluster. Many have pinpointed how they actively support the goals.

At national level, we see the SDGs as a guiding light for establishing best food production practices, prioritising research and development efforts and identifying innovation targets that will drive us towards a sustainable future.



# FOREWORD



Photo: Steen Brogaard

## International guests can enjoy some of the world's best restaurants when visiting Denmark – the newest gastronomic superpower on the world map

Danish gastronomy has undergone a rapid transition in the last decades. Stepping out of the shadow of culinary anonymity, Denmark has earned a reputation as one of the world's gastronomic giants. Denmark's strengths within organic food production, sustainability and scientific research have all contributed.

When it comes to inspiration on how to eat healthy, climate friendly and sustainably Danish gastronomy has a lot to offer

Since leading chefs signed the Manifesto for New Nordic Cuisine in 2004 the Danish gastronomy adventure has told a story of seasonality, local produce and a rediscovery of herbs, berries, root vegetables and other ingredients that are unique to the Danish climate, nature and landscape.

As such the reinvention of Danish gastronomy is also a result of a close collaboration across the value chain. Danish restaurants are experimenting with locally sourced raw materials while ambitious Danish chefs are paving the way for a cleaner, greener and healthier culinary tradition in Denmark. At the same time Danish farmers are rethinking the way they produce and harvest their crops and the Danish food cluster has made gastronomy the starting point for developing high-quality specialities that spread joy at home and abroad. And a number of government initiatives continue to support and promote Denmark's gastronomic development.

The New Nordic culinary movement is not only visible in Copenhagen's fine dining restaurants. It is also part of the mindset across the civil society in Denmark where actors and organisations initiate activities that aim to nurture a sustainable food culture in the next generation for example by teaching kids the basic principles of organic gardening.

I believe that gastronomy is crucial to realize a healthy and sustainable global food system for people and planet. When it comes to inspiration on how to eat healthy, climate friendly and sustainable Danish gastronomy has a lot to offer. The sustainability challenge is at the centre of the thinking of both Danish top chefs and top food companies and my guess is that we will see even more of Danish gastronomy going green in the future.

This white paper covers Denmark's gastronomic competences across a diverse, innovative and highly specialised food cluster. I am glad to share it with you and hope you will find it a source of inspiration.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jacob Jensen". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Jacob Jensen

Minister for Food, Agriculture and Fisheries





CHAPTER 1

# A NEW MILLENNIUM WITH NEW NORDIC CUISINE

THE FOUNDING OF MODERN DANISH  
GASTRONOMY

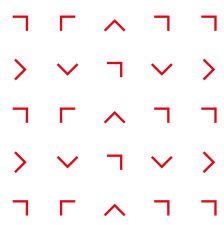


Photo: Ulrika Mårtensson

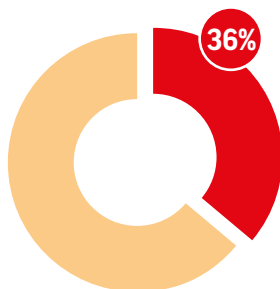
**New Nordic Cuisine has broken free of norms, prejudices and expectations and created a new culinary art, covering everything from ingredients and technique to terroir and story-telling. Combined with a strong mealtime culture and tradition for gathering around a table on special occasions, it is the foundation on which Danish gastronomy is now built.**

### Michelin stars in Denmark

**2024:** ☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆  
☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆  
☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆  
☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆

Copenhagen is the Nordic city with most stars.

Source: Michelin Guide



36% of international tourists highlight good Danish restaurants as a key reason for visiting Denmark.

Source: Visit Denmark

Since the start of the new millennium, the New Nordic movement has inspired many successful speciality products with strong local stories – made possible by the climate, soil and agricultural traditions that exist in each part of our small country.

The primary trigger was the explosive development of the Nordic restaurant scene, particularly in Copenhagen with Restaurant Noma at the forefront. Noma has since been five-times winner of World's Best Restaurant.

In 2004, the philosophy that grew Noma, and the many Michelin-starred restaurants that followed, was put down in writing. The Manifesto for New Nordic Cuisine was initiated by the Danish gastronomic entrepreneur Claus Meyer, co-founder of Noma, and signed by twelve Nordic chefs. Together, they agreed on the manifesto's ten principles for hygiene, seasonal produce, ethics, health, sustainability and quality. The aim was to take actions that could change attitudes. Noma was the first of these actions.

The manifesto had a clear objective: to create a new culinary genre which, through its own personality and tastefulness, could be measured with the greatest cuisines in the world.

**New Nordic Cuisine has spread from innovative chefs in Danish restaurants to large and small industrial food producers**

Through its innovative approach to traditional food products, strong focus on health and ethical philosophy, the manifesto also created a set of principles which, today, are implemented all over the world. This shared gastronomical understanding has spread from innovative chefs in Danish restaurants to industrial food producers, large and small. As a result, the culture of innovation, knowledge-sharing and cooperation lives in many high-quality, commercial specialties which can now be enjoyed by all.

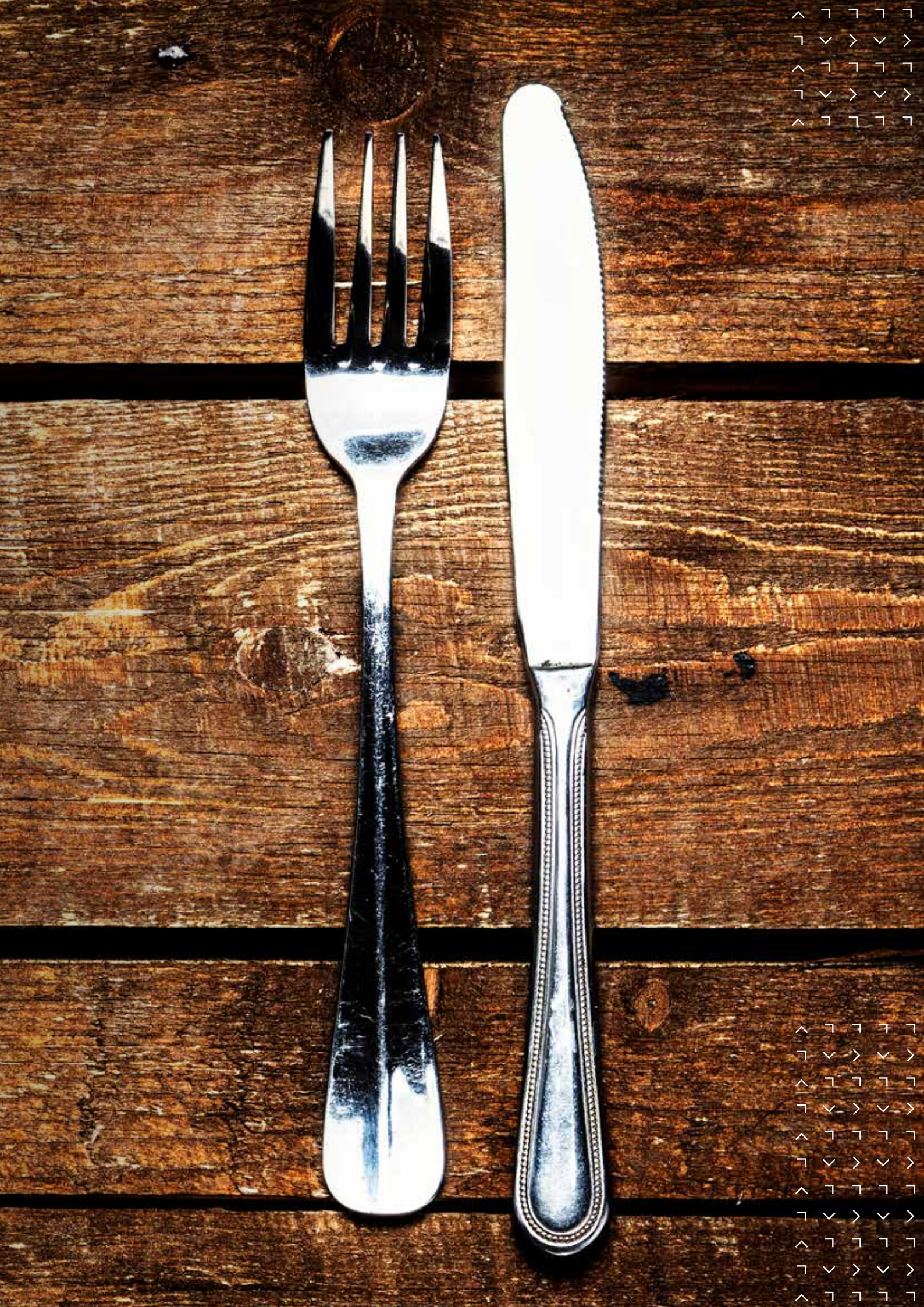




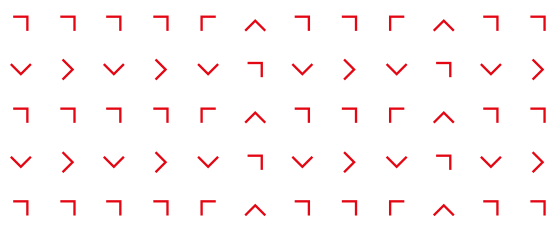
## Manifesto for the New Nordic Cuisine

1. To express the purity, freshness, **simplicity and ethics** we wish to associate with our region.
  2. To reflect the **changing of the seasons** in the meals we make.
  3. To base our cooking on ingredients and produce whose characteristics are particularly **excellent in our climates, landscapes and waters.**
  4. To combine the demand for good taste with **modern knowledge of health and well-being.**
  5. To promote **Nordic products** and the variety of Nordic producers – and to spread the word about their underlying cultures.
  6. To promote animal welfare and a **sound production process** in our seas, on our farmland and in the wild.
  7. To develop potentially **new applications of traditional Nordic food products.**
  8. To combine the best in **Nordic cookery and culinary traditions** with impulses from abroad.
  9. To combine **local self-sufficiency** with **regional sharing** of high-quality products.
  10. To join forces with consumer representatives, other cooking craftsmen, agriculture, the fishing, food, retail and wholesale industries, researchers, teachers, politicians and authorities on this project for the benefit and advantage of everyone in the Nordic countries.
- 









# GUSTU AND THE VALUES WE SHARE

Earlier, Bolivia was a country that lacked a proud culinary tradition rooted in local produce, much like Denmark in the past. In 2012, this started to change with the founding of Gustu in La Paz, a new restaurant and chef school based on the Manifesto for the New Nordic Cuisine and supported by the Danish development organisation Ibis.

The chef school has grown rapidly into an important local institution, where disadvantaged young people can find a future career in the art of food. At the same time, the Gustu team have taken the local produce and

raised it to new culinary heights. Cooperation agreements with local food manufacturers ensure local farmers a fair price for their produce.

The chef school has grown rapidly into an important local institution, where disadvantaged young people can find a future career in the art of food

That the Bolivian people now share the values of the New Nordic manifesto – good artisanal skills, local anchorage and social and economic sustainability – is abundantly clear. Gustu has caught the eye of prestigious lists like the World's 50 Best Restaurants Latin America. In 2016, the restaurant's Danish chef Kamilla Seidler was named Latin America's Best Female Chef.

Several classes of future Bolivian chefs have so far completed their training at Gustu which, in addition to being a restaurant and chef school, is now also a project for healthy school food. Most of all, it has become a gastronomic movement that celebrates and promotes the country's natural and cultural wealth through shared responsibility agreements between producers, farmers, schools and chefs.

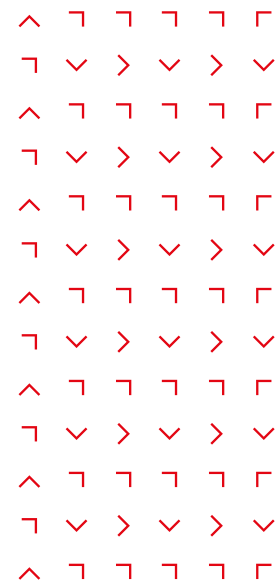


Photo: Luis Fernández

Case by Kamilla Seidler/Gustu



# “VILD MAD” BRINGS US CLOSER TO NATURE – AND GASTRONOMY



Unknown to most of us, edible nature is on our doorstep – and there is so much more to it than food alone. Through the national foraging project VILD MAD (Danish for wild food), it is a springboard to being part of a community, learning, local engagement and innovation.

VILD MAD is an app that guides users through nature's pantry, a website with an online room for schoolteachers and a series of outdoor events with nature guides. The mission is to teach children and adults about the edible plants that grow in the wild, bringing us all closer to nature and the raw material fundamental to Danish gastronomy.

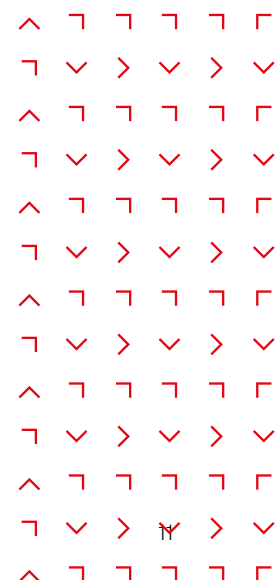
The VILD MAD project began in 2015 and has been developed in close cooperation with MAD – a global network of chefs and food professionals that began with Restaurant Noma – and a series of organisations that promote nature and raise awareness of wild raw materials.

To date, the app has more than 150.000 users who can pick and prepare wild ingredients with ease using recipes developed by some of the world's best chefs, who also love foraging.



Photo: Hans-Henrik Hoeg

Bringing us all closer to nature and the raw material fundamental to Danish gastronomy



Case by VILD MAD/MAD

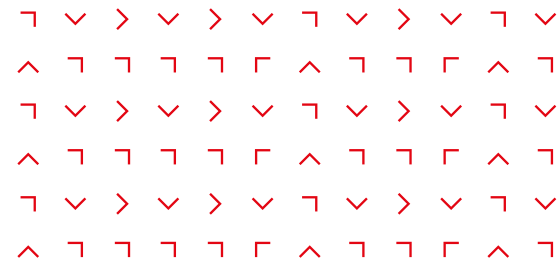


**CHAPTER 2**

# **FROM NICHE TO MAINSTREAM CATEGORY**

**HOW DENMARK BECAME  
AN ORGANIC WORLD CHAMPION**





**Denmark has come a long way since the days when organic food was seen as a hippie invention. Today, we are proud to be an organic world champion. In our supermarkets, the category accounts for more than 12% of sales.**

Ambitious political initiatives, financial incentives and a long tradition for state-run organic certification are all part of the reason for the organic success. More than 30 years since its launch, the red 'Ø' organic label enjoys a high level of trust among consumers, who see it as a guarantee that the regulatory requirements for organic food production have been met.

#### **The Organic Cuisine Label**

Organic food has also gained a strong position in professional kitchens. 'The Organic Cuisine Label' is a branding tool that public and private kitchens can use to brand the amount of organic products used in the kitchen. The label comes in three levels from 30-100% organic.

The innovative restaurant Hærvæk, for example, has earned a Green Michelin Star and a Gold Label for its use of 90-100% organic products. Thanks to the commitment of restaurateurs, organic ingredients are also associated with good flavour and high quality.

#### **High demand for organic products**

Danish consumers have an insatiable appetite for high-quality organic food and companies are following this demand. One Danish company with an impressive

success in recent years is Aarstiderne (The Seasons), which delivers organic meal boxes based on local produce to consumers all over the country. The Danish dairy company, Arla Foods, is also the world's biggest producer of organic milk.

#### **More chefs cook with organic produce**

While organic produce has played an important part in Denmark's rapidly developing restaurant scene, a quieter revolution has taken place in public canteens. In the capital Copenhagen, the city authority decided in 2007 that food purchases should be 90% organic by the end of 2020 – a goal that has both been reached and continues to be maintained by more than 900 kitchens.

**Our organic strength is the result of ongoing cooperation between many stakeholders, from grass-root lobbyists through industrial manufacturers and politicians**

Due to the limitations imposed by budgets, this transformation has not simply been achieved by replacing conventional ingredients with organic ones. It has required a major overhaul of the way food is purchased

#### **The Organic Cuisine Label**

The nationally controlled Organic Cuisine Label shows the percentage of food and beverages that are organic in a restaurant, canteen or other eating place.

The label has three levels:



and prepared. For example, canteens take pride in using every part of the animal when they buy meat and in buying a higher proportion of seasonal produce. This has a positive knock-on effect on food waste, which can be significantly reduced with an organic transformation.

Our organic strength is the result of ongoing cooperation between many stakeholders, from grassroot lobbyists through industrial manufacturers and politicians. Many innovative Danish food companies have experienced that a focus on high-quality organic products is good for business – both at home and abroad.

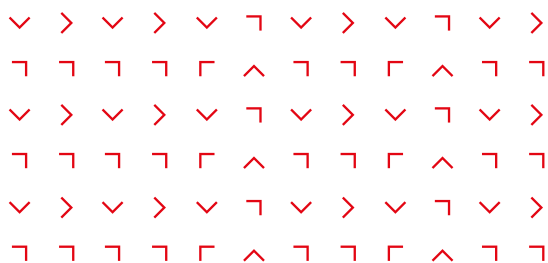
#### **Ø for organic**

A food product marked with the red Ø is state-certified organic. This means the authorities have audited the farm or company that has produced, processed, packed or labelled the product.



**The Danish export of organic products set a new record in 2022, doubling the numbers in nine years. Germany, Sweden, the Netherlands, and China are the biggest markets.**

Source: Statistics Denmark, 2024



# FRILAND HAM IS A FREE-RANGE SUCCESS



Photo: Friland

The story of Friland started with a group of farmers who wanted to create an organic alternative to intensive pig production. The piglets were to be born in huts on free-range pasture and raised with a strong focus on animal welfare and consideration for the pigs' natural behaviour.

Friland is now Europe's biggest organic meat company with responsibility, integrity and safety as the main values

More than 25 years later, Friland is now Europe's biggest organic meat company where responsibility, integrity and safety are still the main values.

Friland's organic pigs are exported all over the world. The population of one European country of conscious consumers has a particular fondness for them – and that's Germany, where Friland sends 46% of its exports.

The ham is especially popular among German consumers because of the high, state-controlled organic standard, the professionalism of the farmers and the reliable, uniform quality deliveries.



# A TRUE ENTREPRENEUR NEVER GIVES UP

Thise Dairy sold just 100 litres of milk in its first weeks on the market. But, with the spirit of a true entrepreneur, the little dairy was determined not to give up, even though consumers did not yet seem ready for its premium organic products.

That was in 1988. Today, the dairy is the second biggest in Denmark and exports all over the world.

Thise is still based in the small town in northern Denmark, where it all began with a handful of organic dairy farmers and a dairyman.

Their vision was to pour their milk into their own cartons rather than sell it off as conventional milk to the large dairy companies. They started with just two products – and unimpressive sales.

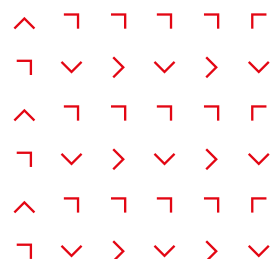
Life at Thise is very different nowadays. With 300 products in the range and 290 employees, Denmark's second largest dairy is not only successful on the home market. Around 30-35% of turnover comes from exports, primarily to neighbouring markets and, increasingly, to China.

## Case by Thise Dairy

It all began with a handful of organic dairy farmers and now they have more than 300 products



Photo: Thise



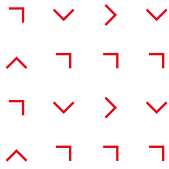




CHAPTER 3

# THE MATCHLESS TASTE OF THE DANISH TERROIR

EVERY SEASON, EVERY PLACE IS RIPE WITH NATURE'S  
SPECIALITIES



**The Danish terroir stretches far to the north and is something special. It's no secret that fish and seafood from the North Atlantic around Greenland and the Faroe Islands are widely regarded as some of the best in the world. In Denmark, the countryside provides more gastronomic opportunities.**

Danish farmers and food producers always operate to the limits of what is possible. Denmark's northern location has a strongly seasonal climate with lots of light in the summer but rarely intense heat. Because the country is surrounded by water, the winters are generally mild.

Many initiatives are underway to strengthen Denmark's growing terroir awareness

**Terroir** refers to the special conditions that give a food product its particular characteristics – the interaction between the soil, climate, genetics, production processes and the local food culture.

Both the climate and geographic location explain Denmark's many short, flavour-intense seasons, which the Danes look forward to every year. Where else in the world, for example, does the price of the first new potatoes always hit the headlines? Depending on the weather, the Danes can usually enjoy fresh Danish strawberries for four to eight weeks. The same goes for asparagus, wild garlic, lumpfish roe, berries and apples, which all grow under favourable conditions in the Danish terroir.

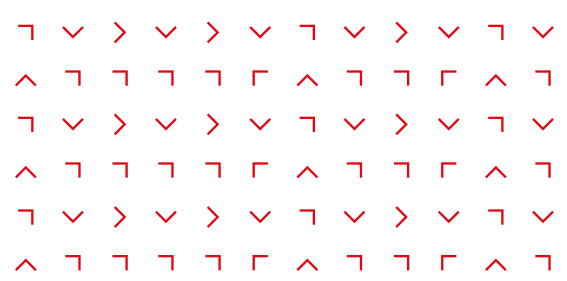
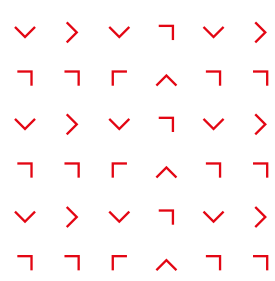
Many initiatives are underway to strengthen Denmark's growing terroir awareness and, through that, put more focus on products and produce with location-specific characteristics. The Slow Food movement, producer networks, farm shops, the relaunch of local foods and ancient grains and New Nordic cuisine all contribute. Exclusive terroir brands such as Thise Vesterhavssost (North Sea cheese) have also appeared on the market.

These conditions ensure the slow growth of Danish crops and their intense flavour development. The Stevns sour cherry is one example. Growing under optimal conditions in southern Denmark, it is known as the Nordic grape due to its characteristic complex flavour.

**Denmark's** northern location has a strongly seasonal climate with lots of light in the summer but rarely intense heat.







# BOTTLING THE TASTE OF A WILD ISLAND CHERRY



A very special cherry grows on the northern tip of the Danish island of Lolland – a sour cherry known as the Stevns cherry. It has grown wild here for as long as anyone can remember, nourished by the many hours of sunshine in this particular area, the mild climate of the Great Belt and a fresh wind that keeps the berries dry, reducing the risk of disease. All of this gives the Stevns cherry the optimal growing conditions.

**The outcome of the special cherry is an award-winning product**

The local Frederiksdal Estate has found a way to turn the unique acidity of the Stevns cherry into a sought-after wine. Once the cherries are picked, the natural wild yeast on their skin starts to ferment, bringing their flavour to its full intensity. The cherries are then pressed and the juice poured into steel, wood or glass tanks. Skins and stones are returned to the plantation to fertilise the soil. The outcome is an award-winning product, which is just as unrivalled as the cherries. There is quite simply nothing like it anywhere else in the world.

**Case by Frederiksdal**

# THE RESPONSIBLE BUSINESS OF DANISH BLUE GOLD

Mussel harvesting in Denmark's Limfjord is a long-standing tradition requiring responsible management. Businesses relying on this "blue gold" must protect it by preserving the seabed and harvesting only mature mussels.

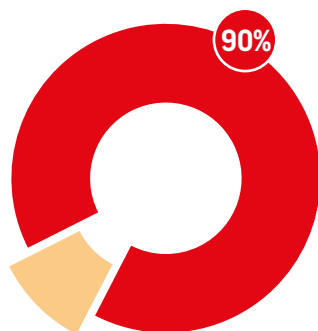
The mussel processing generates 20,000 tonnes of shells annually

Since 1986, Vilsund Blue has processed a large share of Limfjord's mussels, exporting 90% across Europe. Sustainability is key, and in 2010, it became the first mussel supplier awarded Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) certification. Similar certifications followed for oysters and rope-grown mussels.

Vilsund Blue carefully sorts its catch, returning undersized mussels to the water. Only mature ones are processed fresh or cooked for freezing, tins, or jars. Even left-over proteins from cooking are repurposed.

Mussel processing generates 20,000 tonnes of shells annually. Once discarded, these are now recycled into low-carbon materials, insulation, and equestrian surfaces. In 2018, the company and Fredsø Logistik launched Vilsund Shells, turning waste into a sustainable business. This zero-waste model ensures customers enjoy premium shellfish from a responsible source.

Case by Vilsund Blue



90% of Vilsund Blue's mussels are exported all over Europe.

Source: Vilsund Blue



A photograph of two chefs in a meat processing facility. The chef on the right, wearing a white chef's coat and a white hairnet, is holding a large, raw rack of ribs. He is looking at the ribs with a focused expression. The chef on the left, wearing a black chef's coat and a white hairnet, is looking at the ribs with a slight smile. In the background, several racks of meat are hanging from metal hooks. The floor is made of yellow tiles.

**CHAPTER 4**

# **COLLABORATING TO BUILD A CULINARY FUTURE**

**KNOWLEDGE SHARING IS INVALUABLE  
– AND THE DANISH WAY TO INNOVATION**



**When memorable gastronomy is served in the best restaurants, it is all down to the close cooperation in the kitchens. After the guests have left, the end-of-day evaluation in the kitchen is just as important. What went well, what didn't, and how can everything be improved? In this way, restaurants are under constant development.**

Outside the restaurants, there is also a strong desire for open, cross-disciplinary collaboration around gastronomy. Chefs, food artisans, farms, fisheries, food manufacturers, retailers and distributors, scientists and teachers, politicians and authorities come together around a shared goal to lift gastronomy to new heights. It's the Danish way of working.

**Collaboration that crosses cultural, national and philosophical borders is the future for gastronomy**

The knowledge sharing that takes place in collaborative projects is invaluable, such as when Carlsberg works with the non-profit open source organisation Nordic Food Lab to develop a new beer. Or when Thise Dairy cooperates with the COOP supermarket chain to develop organic products for their customers.

Multinational companies such as Danish Crown and Arla Foods invite chefs to inspire

them produce the best dry aged meat or develop new types of cheese. By listening to each other and profiting from each other's capabilities, they all strengthen Danish gastronomy.

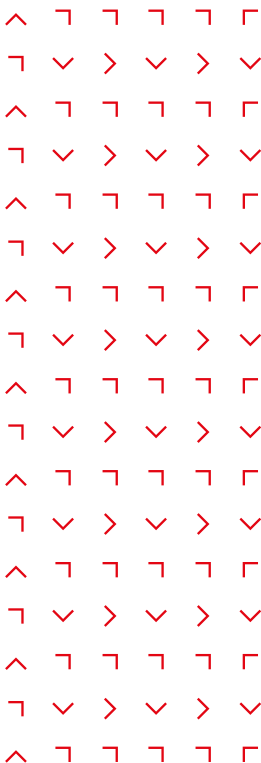
And then there are the local culinary associations that line up long tables in an apple orchard or along town streets and invite the neighbours to come together to make food, eat and celebrate the harvest.

Strong cooperation between many private and public stakeholders has also helped send Denmark's best chefs around the world as part of the national culinary team – and contributed to the prestigious gold, silver and bronze statuettes that Danish chefs have brought home from the Bocuse d'Or competition in Lyon.

Collaboration that crosses cultural, national and philosophical borders is the future for gastronomy. Thanks to a strong base of large and small production companies, local associations and one of the world's strongest chef scenes, Denmark has a natural leading place in this field.



**Bocuse d'Or** is the unofficial world championship in gastronomy, founded by the late French chef Paul Bocuse in 1983 and held every other year in Lyon, France. The Danish chef Rasmus Kofoed from the three-star Michelin restaurant Geranium won gold in 2011, silver in 2007 and bronze in 2005. In 2013, chef Jeppe Foldager earned silver, followed by chef Kenneth Toft-Hansen, who claimed gold in 2019. Most recently, in 2021, chef Ronni Mortensen brought home silver, and in 2023, chef Brian Mark Hansen proudly won gold once again for Denmark. Continuing Denmark's strong tradition at the competition, chef Sebastian Holberg Svendsgaard secured silver in 2025.



# A BARREL-AGED BREW FOR A STAR-STUDDED MEAL



Carlsberg's Jacobsen brewery never does anything by halves – especially when the project is a new generation of speciality beers. The Cellarium beer series is proof of that. Developed during a five-year collaboration with Nordic Food Lab, the beers are the outcome of innovative experimentation with new raw materials, methods and sensory profiles. The aim was to produce speciality beers that the very best restaurants would want to serve.

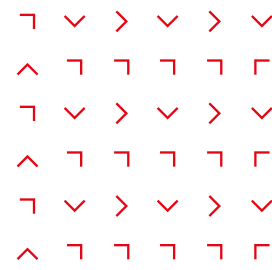
Nordic Food Lab has provided gastronomic knowledge and access to high-quality Nordic ingredients. In the Carlsberg laboratory, the research team has developed recipes and been responsible for preparing the raw materials for brewing, filling the wooden barrels in Jacobsen's cellars, and packaging into small champagne bottles.

The first two beers in the series are Jacobsen Chanterelle Lager and Jacobsen Sour Rye – the first flavoured with Swedish chanterelles and matured in mulberry wood barrels and the latter fermented by lactic acid and oak matured. Both contain more than 10% alcohol, making them suitable for aging.

The Michelin restaurant Ti Trin Ned (Ten Steps Down) in Central Jutland has tested the beers with great success.

The aim was to produce speciality beers that the very best restaurants would want to serve

**Case by Carlsberg**



# MATURED MASTERPIECES FROM THE COLD ROOM

Chefs worldwide are constantly exploring new ways to refine flavour and create memorable dining experiences. While traditional beef breeds dominate the premium segment, the full potential of older dairy cattle often goes unnoticed, despite offering rich marbling and deep flavour.

Each masterpiece is hand-selected, matured through hanging, dry ageing or vacuum techniques, and sorted by marbling to meet chefs' precise needs

Danish Crown's MASTERPIECE 1887 answers this need with a selection of premium beef that combines tradition, expertise, and exceptional taste. Drawing on more than a century of Danish meat craftsmanship, the range is based on carefully selected cuts from mature dairy cattle known for their flavour and texture.

As the world's leading exporter of pork, Europe's fifth largest beef exporter and the biggest global supplier of organic meat, Danish Crown has access to an exceptional variety of raw materials. This ensures that only the most outstanding cuts are chosen for the exceptional selection.

Each masterpiece is hand-selected, matured through hanging, dry ageing or vacuum techniques, and sorted by marbling to meet

chefs' precise needs. Traditional hanging methods and careful maturation enhance tenderness and bring out the full flavour potential of the meat.

MASTERPIECE 1887 is already used by top restaurants that value both taste and craftsmanship. With its rich character and consistent quality, it gives chefs the tools to express creativity and deliver truly elevated dining experiences.

## Case by Danish Crown



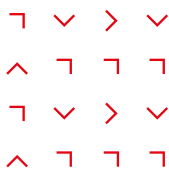




CHAPTER 5

# GASTRONOMY WITH A SUSTAINABLE MINDSET

SOLVING GLOBAL CHALLENGES IN THE KITCHEN  
AND BEYOND



## **Sustainable gastronomy is not only about reducing food waste, recycling and mapping CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. It is equally about having a gastronomical mindset. In other words, it is about how we use gastronomy to help solve global sustainability challenges, whether environmental, social or economic.**

According to the 2024 Sustainable Development Report, Denmark is ranked as the world's third most sustainable country. Gastronomy is just as important to that as having a green attitude towards energy, transport and other environmental matters.

The Danish food cluster has a long tradition for animal welfare, organic produce, minimisation of food waste and responsible working and production conditions. Restaurants in Denmark have been awarded 17 green Michelin stars which acknowledge the sustainable practices of Danish gastronomy.

**The Danish food cluster has a long tradition for animal welfare, organic produce, minimisation of food waste and responsible working and production conditions**

### **Initiatives that support a sustainable mindset**

Major public initiatives, such as the recurrent World Food Summit – Better Food for More People, brought together politicians, decision-makers, chefs, and CEOs from all over the world. Here, gastronomy was used to support the agenda for global sustainable development. The Danish government's Gastro 2025 plan had a similar objective to strengthen Danish gastronomy through sustainable efforts, for example by reducing food waste.

Another recurring discussion forum is the MAD community, where figures from the cooking world meet to discuss sustainable change in restaurants, in communities, and across the world.

Some of the biggest stakeholders on the restaurant scene have joined forces in the REGA initiative ([www.regadk.dk](http://www.regadk.dk)), which is committed to the principles of the UN Global Compact and to meeting the UN and OECD minimum standards for responsible business conduct.

The language of gastronomic sustainability is in constant development. In Denmark, we do our best to stay one step ahead by continuing to do what Danish business has always done – by taking responsibility.



Photo: Hans-Henrik Hoeg



# FROM APPLE BLOSSOM TO PRIZE-WINNING CIDER



Photo: Æblerov

For Danish fruit producers, Æblerov provides a welcome way to earn money for fruit that is otherwise hard to sell

The Copenhagen suburbs are full of apple trees that, year after year, are laden with fruit. Back in 2011, two students with a passion for gastronomy realised that most of that fruit went to waste – left to rot on the ground.

That was when they started going from door to door and asking garden owners if they could take some of their apples. Back at home in their parents' garage, their cider adventure began. From the first year's harvest, they produced 66 bottles. A Swedish Michelin restaurant bought the whole lot.

Today, their company is called Æblerov (Danish for apple scrumping) and produces most of its cider using fruit from organic plantations. Only the apples that are marked or otherwise unattractive to consumers are used. For Danish fruit producers, it is a welcome way to earn money for fruit that is otherwise hard to sell.

Æblerov now produces many thousands of bottles a year. Both production and exports are in rapid growth. The cider is enjoyed in the Scandinavian and German markets so far, and interest is growing from the rest of the world.

**Case by Æblerov**







CHAPTER 6

# A STRONG REPUTATION FOR SCIENCE AND EDUCATION

GROWING NEW OPPORTUNITIES THROUGH  
A SCIENTIFIC APPROACH

**The Danish culinary tradition is deeply rooted in high-quality education with a global reputation. This explains why many international students apply for a place on the food-related master's degree programmes at Danish universities.**



#### **High-quality food education**

A wide range of Danish educational institutions train people to produce and develop food products, to prepare and serve food and meals and to communicate food knowledge. Many other programmes train future experts in nutrition.

This is one of the reasons why Denmark has become a gastronomic leader – characterised by passionate entrepreneurs and innovative industry.

**Gastronomy and science go hand in hand to educate the food entrepreneurs of tomorrow**

Most of the people working as food professionals in Denmark have studied at one of our universities, colleges or academies. Dairy technologists, for example, spend five years learning the skills their job requires, while it

takes seven years to become a brewer. Most courses of study are at least bachelor's degree level.

Gastronomy and science go hand in hand. While tradition can get in the way of further developing a 100-year-old cheese recipe, new scientific knowledge creates opportunities. One of the Danish companies with a strong focus on science is Arla. Here, a scientific approach is enabling the development of high-quality Arla Unika cheeses, which take traditional cheese products to a new level of sophistication.

At the same time, science helps us find solutions for securing the future of Danish gastronomy. One way to do this is by mapping the Danish terroir to create knowledge of where specific raw materials have the best possible conditions for growth. This is an ongoing research area for the Danish Centre for Food and Agriculture at Aarhus University.



# SIRIUS – THE BRIGHT STAR IN THE ARLA DAIRY



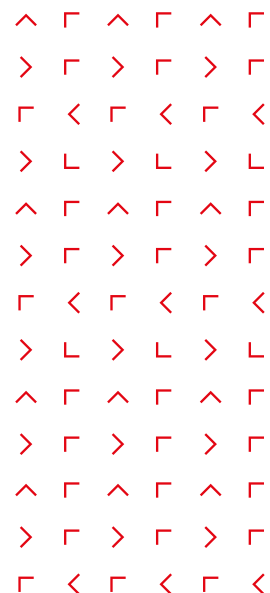
Arla Unika has grown out of a big idea – to develop experimental products in a collaboration between passionate dairy professionals, chefs and entrepreneurs. The starting point was artisanal skill, new knowledge and curiosity.

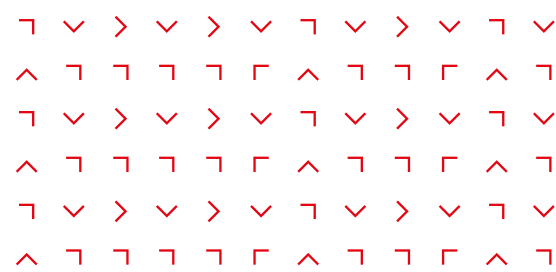
The outcome is a wide range of cheese and milk products that set new standards for high quality. One of them is Sirius, named after the brightest star in the northern sky – a cheese that cuts across the cheese processing tradition to resemble the methods used in the production of charcuterie products.

The outcome is a wide range  
of cheese and milk products  
that set new standards for high  
quality

Created as a white and blue mould cheese, it is dehydrated, washed in red rind culture, stored moist and then, finally, dehydrated again. The process results in a new type of cheese with a firm texture and well-balanced mould flavour, complementing the round butter and cream notes.

**Case by Arla**





# JOINT RESEARCH MAPS LOCAL GASTRONOMIC POTENTIAL

The ultimate goal is to identify opportunities for developing Danish food types



Photo: Nicolai Perjesi

The balance between financial and environmental sustainability is always a challenge for the food sector. Within the Danish food cluster, a new strategy is emerging to help overcome this challenge – a focus on high-value products that gain their characteristics from the specific location where they are grown.

At Aarhus University, the Department of Agroecology and Department of Management have joined forces with local authorities and private partners to map the Danish terroir. The ultimate goal is to identify opportunities for developing Danish food types – and terroir brands – with a location-specific personality.

The research team have produced a report drawing a Danish food atlas that show the potential for a specific product within a certain area. The research have also mapped business models for local foods and food networks.

**Case by Aarhus University,  
Department of Agroecology  
and Department of Management**









**CHAPTER 7**

# **DENMARK – A LEADING NATION FOR GASTRONOMY**

**LEARN MORE ABOUT THE DANISH FOOD CLUSTER  
AT FOOD NATION**



**Despite being a small country with a limited terroir, Denmark has grown into a gastronomic powerhouse in recent years. Today, an entire industry continues to develop innovative opportunities of benefit to the domestic market and to business partners abroad.**

It all started with a vision to create a new gastronomic adventure. Less than two decades since it began, New Nordic cuisine has made a lasting impact on global standards for modern gastronomy. Through sustainable innovation, collaboration and a strong tradition for education and science, we are now not only living the vision. We are also helping to solve the major challenges facing the global food supply.

For a small country like ours, that is quite an achievement.

#### **Food Nation Denmark**

Food Nation is a nonprofit partnership established by the Danish government and leading private organisations and companies. It is your gateway to information about the Danish food cluster and knowhow that can accelerate the growth of international businesses through better solutions, innovative products and trusting cooperation.

The Danish food cluster encompasses everything from primary production in agriculture and the fishing industry to the food products consumers buy in stores. Companies, universities, research institutes, local and national authorities and other private and public organisations belong to the extensive, collaborative network. Together, they work hand-in-hand with international partners to maintain and improve food quality and safety along the value chain.

#### **Take an interactive tour**

Food Nation's Visitor Centre in central Copenhagen welcomes international delegations, providing them with an introduction to Danish capabilities in agriculture and food. An interactive installation at the centre offers visitors an up-to-date overview of the food value chain based on their individual interests. It serves as the ideal starting point before visiting Danish food producers and production facilities.

An inspiring preview is also available on Food Nation's website. Here, you can explore inspirational publications, cases, webinars, podcasts, videos, and talks that provide insights into how Denmark contributes to the green transition. The website also features a virtual display of food value chains, where you can delve into solutions and products from Denmark's dairy, pig, and seafood sectors.

Food Nation is a great place to begin learning how Denmark supports sustainable development through collaboration. Find out more about our services, the Danish food sector, and how to arrange a visit to the Food Nation Visitor Centre at [www.foodnationdenmark.com](http://www.foodnationdenmark.com).



Photo: Niclas Jensen







## INGREDIENT INDUSTRY

Producers of enzymes,  
cultures and other ingredients

## PRIMARY PRODUCTION

Agriculture, fishing  
& horticulture

## PROCESSING INDUSTRY

Producers of food,  
beverages & animal feed

### The Danish agrifood sector

The Danish food and agricultural sector  
has a strong value chain, covering  
everything from primary and processed  
food production, food technology  
and ingredients industry, know-how  
and research to the wide range  
of products available to consumers  
all over the world.

## RESEARCH & INNOVATION

Research, education  
& counselling institutions

## INNOVATIVE TECHNOLOGY

Producers of machines,  
technology & equipment

## GASTRONOMY & THE CONSUMER

Retail, consumers, restaurant,  
authorities, tourism & other  
related industries

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[FOODNATIONDENMARK.COM](http://FOODNATIONDENMARK.COM)

