



## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### Who are the partners involved in VILD MAD?

More than 100 foragers, rangers, chefs, designers, programmers, academics, and foundation experts have contributed to shaping VILD MAD.

We are particularly grateful to:

- **Nordea-fonden**, an independent and private Danish foundation, who awarded a grant of 8.5 million Danish kroner, around 1.25 million US dollars, to support the project in 2015.
- **Byhøst** (City Harvest,) a nonprofit organization focused on developing and disseminating knowledge of wild food. Byhøst has developed the educational framework, the majority of the content, and developed the design of the VILD MAD apps.
- **Friluftsrådet**, an independent and non-governmental umbrella organization that gathers over 90 associations whose activities pertain to outdoor activities and stewarding the environment.
- **Naturvejlederforeningen**, the Danish Rangers' association, which acts as a forum for over 400 "nature guides", equivalent to park rangers. Working in municipalities, community centers, schools, and museums, rangers foster understanding of Denmark's natural landscapes from a young age. 50 rangers have been certified to lead VILD MAD foraging trips and cooking demonstrations across the country.
- **Supertusch** is a creative digital agency based in Copenhagen, Denmark. Since 2008, Supertusch has been working with concept development, design and implementation of extraordinary digital solutions in collaboration with a broad range of both Danish and international brands and organizations.
- **Tombola** is a design agency in Copenhagen. Tombola has created VILD MAD's visual identity and designed all materials.
- **GoJoin** is a platform created by AOF Denmark, and creates a link between people organizing local events and attendees.

### What is wild food?

Wild food is the edible flora and fauna of our natural landscape. This includes herbs, berries, nuts, seaweed, fungi, fish and shellfish, and many other delicious foods. VILD MAD focuses on the edible plants, fruits, and fungi of Denmark. Exactly which edible plants are available will depend on where you are in the world, and may consist of both native and foreign species. Wild food differs from cultivated food in that the plant grows without any



preparation or tending. It can be hard to differentiate the two, though, as wild plants often flourish in cultivated spaces.

### **Where can I forage?**

Foraging can be done in urban, rural, and wild areas: cities, shorelines, grasslands, and forests are all potential sources of bounty. The type and amount of wild food available from place to place, with generally more diversity and abundance found in areas less curated by humans. Nevertheless, all types of landscape have something delicious to offer. It's worth checking local laws before foraging.

### **Is this dangerous? Aren't some plants poisonous? What about soil quality?**

If done correctly, foraging should be enjoyable and safe. There are harmful or even deadly species (plants, fungi, and animals) in every landscape. This is an important risk to consider when foraging for wild food, and we hope that anyone new to foraging will begin with an expert. You should strictly follow a foraging guide or app. The VILD MAD app and website thoroughly describe any look-alikes that might be dangerous. That said, if you are ever unsure, err on the side of safety, or consult with an authority.

Avoid foraging in areas with possible contaminants in the soil such as heavy metals. Check with municipalities, or see whether soil quality test results are available online. You can also send your own soil samples in for testing. Soil contamination is generally a bigger issue in urban spaces and near waterways (e.g. drainage ditches) than in rural landscapes.

### **Is this a solution to the shortcomings of our food systems?**

No. Foraging for wild food is not a panacea for problems such as climate change, hunger, invasive species, or food waste. But there is no silver bullet. Improving our food system will take multiple solutions.

Our hope is that, by introducing people to the landscape, and fostering understanding of and respect for what nature has to offer, we can integrate that understanding and respect into our lives and diets.

We believe that one of the biggest issues in dominant global food systems are their tendency to overlook the land, ecosystems, and hands that provide what we eat. There are no recipes for building new value systems. But we think one fundamental step is to establish a physical connection with where our food is from, and grasp the cycles of the natural world. Teaching foraging practices to children is one particularly fun and effective way to instill such knowledge and appreciation.



### **How can children be trained to forage safely and mindfully while exploring their surroundings?**

Children should ideally always forage with a guardian. It is critical that children are aware of potentially harmful species. If children wish to explore and forage independently, we strongly suggest that they bring all new plants to an experienced guardian or teacher for review before eating them. In addition to safety, it is important that all foragers learn how to respect the natural world around them and harvest sustainably.

### **Where does foraging fit into my everyday diet and schedule? How do I justify the time and effort?**

Depending on the season and geographic location, and amount of time an individual wishes to dedicate to foraging, wild food can make up a significant portion of someone's diet or can act as a fun embellishment. The role of wild food in someone's diet depends largely on individual interest and expectation. Some foraged foods must be eaten fresh, but many others may be dehydrated, pickled, or otherwise preserved.

Foraging can take a significant amount of time; however, it can also be a brief adventure outdoors. Foraging is not just about expending labor to acquire more calories and new tastes; rather, it is a way to connect to our food, to better understand the landscape and the flow of ecosystems, and to ultimately foster community.

### **What does wild food bring to the table that other types of food cannot?**

Wild food, whether plucked from a sandy shoreline or an unruly thicket, brings a sense of connection to the table that homogenous, cultivated food from a market or grocery store might not provide. Most importantly, foraging for wild food requires time, patience, and curiosity. Harvesting wild food employs all the senses. Adding wild food to your daily diet or to a special dish creates an eating experience that is unique in both flavors and memories. Wild food also has the potential to encourage children to try foods they wouldn't otherwise eat—bitter greens and herbs are more exciting if they found and picked the bounty themselves!

### **Is this legal?**

Legislation varies among countries and even within regions. It is advisable to inquire with your local municipality about their land legislation and foraging laws. When foraging on private property, always make sure you have permission from the owner before entering the grounds or harvesting anything. Be aware of any species protected by the government or requiring a license to harvest (e.g. those considered threatened or endangered).



### Is this sustainable?

Foraging is sustainable when people only take what they need, and are cognizant of what a particular species needs to thrive year after year. Otherwise, we risk pushing sensitive species to undesirable levels of endangerment or even extinction. Be sure to do research on sustainable foraging practices for both native and invasive species.

More broadly speaking, while a complete transferral to foraging would be unsustainable, foraging grouped with other sustainable food and agriculture initiatives and practices will help us move towards an ultimately sustainable food system.

### How will this program expand beyond Denmark?

VILD MAD guides are tailored to the natural landscape of Denmark. However, our guides and website can serve as an important foraging resource regardless of landscape or country. We hope that our program will inspire other wild food models around the world.

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