

KOKS



Minimalist Nordic Cuisine at the Far End of the World

With his Michelin-starred restaurant Koks, chef Poul Andrias Ziska has turned the unique ingredients and taste of Faroese cuisine into a fine-dining experience, admired by food lovers worldwide.

Few places in Europe are as exposed to the forces of nature as the Faroe Islands, whose rocky cliffs and green mountains peek out of the Atlantic, halfway between Iceland and the Norwegian coast. At least once a year, a storm whips up both sea and air so ferociously that neither ship nor plane can reach the islands. This remoteness helps explain why its inhabitants have developed a cuisine over the centuries that relies solely on the what the island and the surrounding waters can provide. Especially the food preservation methods—most importantly *Raest*, which is what locals call the method of letting meat dry in the air until it is covered by a mold—can strike visitors as unusual. But young chef Poul Andrias Ziska has succeeded in making the local dishes covetable by international food enthusiasts. With his Michelin star awarded restaurant Koks, just a 25 minute drive away from the capital Tórshavn, he serves locally-sourced ingredients with a contemporary twist, treating his guests' taste buds to flavors that can't be experienced anywhere else.

Poul Andrias Ziska's introduction to Faroese cuisine is this: "We like it simple, using only very few ingredients, but aim to use every part of them. We eat different types of fermented meats—unsalted and unsmoked—, which is quite unique to the Faroe Islands. Almost all the locally-slaughtered meat is fermented and dried by the air, giving it a very particular flavor. Back in the days, conserving food like this was a matter of survival. So overall it's a protein-heavy diet, based on



Head chef POUL ANDRIAS ZISKA's basic assumption in the kitchen is: "Less is more basically."

seafood and sheep—we have between eighty and a hundred thousand of them on our islands." Fermenting is an essential practice on the Faroe Islands. "Some of it we do ourselves," says Poul Andrias Ziska's, "but most of the meat we like to buy from different parts of the islands. It's like sourcing wine. You can actually taste if the meat was fermented in the northern parts of Faroe or in the east or south. Its taste is not only influenced by the aging process, but also where a sheep was grazing and how it's been slaughtered. They say some farmers can even tell which island and which valley or mountain the sheep has lived on. And like with wine, we have good years and bad years." →