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CUISINE BASED ON SHEEP PRODUCTS

RESEARCH REPORT FOR ESTONIA

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Historical overview

In the development of Estonian sheep breeds, the following periods can be distinguished:

- 1) Until the beginning of the 19th century, Estonian landrace sheep with thick fur were grown for producing pelts and wool
- 2) 1824–1869 fine wool sheep farming and the establishment of baize factories
- 3) 1869–1924 sheep farming and breeding for mutton
- 4) 1924–1950s breeding and design of local Estonian breeds of mutton-wool sheep, Estonian black-headed and Estonian white-headed sheep

In 1863 it was decided to import different breeds of Estonian mutton-wool sheep to improve the local landrace sheep breeds and soon Merinos were replaced by mutton-wool sheep. In 1890 approximately a million sheep were living in the Baltic states, including both Merinos and mutton-wool sheep, but the majority consisted of local landrace sheep and their hybrids. As mutton-wool rams were also sold to peasants, the mutton value of local landrace sheep increased. The rise of mutton-wool sheep breeds continued until 1898, when the development of dairy cattle started in the place of sheep farming.

In 1916, 620,000 sheep were living in Estonia, in relation to the land reform and an increase in the number of farms a record-breaking 722,000 sheep lived in Estonia in 1922. Starting from 1925, the number of sheep starts to decrease because of the economic crisis, the priority development of dairy cattle, several wet summers and a wide spread of parasitic diseases. The lowest number of sheep was in 1930, when 467,200 sheep were counted; the number then started to increase yet again and reached 695,700 in 1939.

In 1937 sheep farming constituted 4% of the gross agricultural product and somewhat over 7% of livestock production. The biggest revenue came from mutton (70%), wool gave 27% and sheep skins 3% of the gross sheep farming product. The production of mutton in 1922/23 was 8752 tons and in 1930/31 5840 tons. 200–300 tons of mutton was exported to Sweden each year (Piirsalu, 2006).

During World War II, the number of sheep living in Estonia decreased from 322,900 in 1940 to 248,000 in 1945. In 1949 the formation of collective farms started in Estonia, where the state objective was to develop new breeds of sheep suitable for the natural conditions in

Estonia – Estonian black-headed and Estonian white-headed sheep. The Shropshire and Cheviot breeds of sheep were used as the basis. In the post-war years the number of sheep started to increase, reaching 265,800 in 1951. In the 1960s, collective farms started to specialise in swine and bovine animal production, and the majority of sheep farms were liquidated. About 95% of sheep were grown in households and most of the produced wool and mutton came from there. Because the number of sheep decreased and large sheep stocks were liquidated, the total production of wool and mutton also decreased (Piirsalu, 2007).

Table 1. Mutton production in Estonia between 1940 and 1990 (SE)

Year	Meat production in deadweight (th. t)
1940	6.5
1950	8.9
1960	5.7
1965	3.9
1970	2.6
1975	3.7
1980	3.5
1985	3.7
1990	2.5

After the re-declaration of independence by Estonia in the early 1990s, the number of sheep sharply decreased. The reasons were the overall decline in agricultural production, very low buying price of mutton, wool and sheep hides, which led to production losses in mutton and also problems with the realisation of mutton and wool. At the beginning of the 1990s, the number of sheep in Estonia was around 140,000 and it decreased below 30,000 over the course of the next ten years and mutton was no longer available for sale.

Table 2. The number of sheep and goats in Estonia, the produced mutton and goat meat (SE)

Year	Number of sheep and goats (th.)	Including sheep	Produced mutton and goat meat (deadweight, t)
1938/39	695.7		8100
2000	30.9	28.2	296
2001	32.2	29.0	267
2002	32.4	28.8	327
2003	33.8	29.9	407
2004	34.3	30.0	380
2005	41.0	41.5	373
2006	52.4	49.6	508
2007	66.0	62.7	600
2008	76.4	72.4	900
2009	80.4		800
2010	82.7		700

Beginning from 1999, state subsidies for ewe growing were established, subsidies by the European Union were added, the economic efficiency of sheep farming improved and the number of sheep started to grow from 2000 onwards. As the price of mutton increased, mutton production also started to increase and the consumers' demand for quality local mutton also started to grow (Piirsalu, 2009). In 2001, 29,000 sheep were grown in Estonia. Mutton constituted about 85%, wool 12% and sheep hides 3% of the annual income (Lammas ja Kits, 2010). As of the end of 31 December, 2010, there were 85 thousand sheep and goats living in Estonia and the production of mutton and goat meat (live weight) was 1866 tons. Despite the recent increase in the production of mutton, it is still very low compared to other types of meat; the per cent of dead weight of mutton and goat meat is only 1.7%.

Table 3. Meat consumption in Estonia 2002–2010, kg per capita in a year (SE).

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Total meat	65.8	67.3	69.5	70.1	70.3	71.3	75.6	73.4	61
Mutton and goat	0.2	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.4	0.6	0.5	0.7	0.5

According to recent years' statistics, the buying price of Estonian mutton is still 50% lower than the EU average, but the quality of mutton is on the increase because of continuous development. Estonian consumers lack the habit to consume mutton (according to statistics of the last 4 years, about 0.5 kg per capita in a year), which results in small demand. From that fact stem the difficulties of slaughtering sheep (there are few slaughterhouses and sheep industries who accept sheep) and problems in marketing (Pretke, 2011).

Presently, sheep farmers have mostly turned their attention to producing lamb meat, because nowadays sheep as wool animals have mainly become sources of meat. The demand for lamb in Estonia has increased year by year.

Today's agricultural policies favour organic farming and it is relatively easy to convert from ordinary sheep farming to organic sheep farming. Because of this the proportion of organic sheep is considerably larger compared to other species

(<http://www.pikk.ee/est/Loomakasvatus/>).

The following sheep breeds have been introduced in Estonia to improve mutton quality: Suffolk, Texel, Dala, Dorset, Oxforddawn, Gotland sheep etc. The local breeds, namely Estonian black-headed sheep and Estonian white-headed sheep are mutton-wool sheep and developed mainly for the purposes of producing mutton. There are no regional differences in sheep farming in Estonia, probably because our land is small and alike in all parts.

Mutton-based cuisine

Historical overview

The main foods in the 19th century and the first part of the 20th century in Estonia were bread and potatoes. In summer, milk and *kama* (mixture of rye, oat, barely and pease meal) were also important and there was fish on the table –herring or Baltic herring. Many different types of soups were prepared – potato, pea, pearl barley, bean and cabbage soup. In autumn, carrots, beets and yellow turnips were also used in addition to potatoes. The main meat consumption started in autumn. (EA 16: 27)

Meat was eaten in autumn and in winter. At the beginning of autumn – usually on Mihkclipäev (St. Michael's day) (29.09) – a sheep was slaughtered. The sheep in Urvaste, for example, were slaughtered even before that – on Lauritsapäev (St. Lawrence day) (EA 56: 129). Usually a ram or an older sheep was killed.

The first slaughtered animals were rams born in winter or early spring. From that stems the local threatening proverb, “Every ram has its Mihkclipäev...” Why were rams slaughtered first? It was believed on reasonable grounds that when the rutting of sheep takes place in autumn, the rams would become thinner. For that reason they had to be slaughtered before that, with the exception of the “overwinter ram”, who was slaughtered in the following year. (KV 104: 190)

From autumn to winter mutton was mostly eaten. A pig was slaughtered for Christmas and in relation to that pork was used more in food. Specific weekdays for eating meat had not developed (KV 104:121). Almost every part of sheep was used in cooking: meat, most of the internal organs and also blood. A variety of foods was produced from them (ERM, 2011).

Although the cuisine based on sheep farming consists in mutton, milk and dairy products, only mutton has been used in Estonian cuisine. Currently, an enthusiastic farmer is raising about twenty dairy sheep from Belgium and produces sheep cheese by hand. Imported sheep cheese can be bought in Estonia from some better equipped shops.

Products from sheep blood

Blood is a healthy product. It was a known fact already in the old days and because of this blood was used as human food in times long gone (KV 104: 190). Animal blood has been used to make various foods. On the day that the sheep was slaughtered, its blood was made into blood pudding, blood cake or blood bread (ERM, 2011).

Blood pudding

pudding is dough boiled thick in water that can be eaten with hands. Pudding could be brought along and stayed fresh for a long time. When all the sheep who were not held overwinter were slaughtered for Mihkkipäev (29.IX), all the blood was used as pudding dough and a large stockpile of pudding was produced. Raw pudding could be held in the cold of the storerooms; from there they were brought inside and boiled with soup or meat (Moora, 2007). The ingredients for blood pudding dough were animal blood, fat, water, sour cream, barley or wheat flour. Rarely also rye flour, when there was no barley or wheat flour available. In the old times, boiled groat porridge was also added to the dough. Chives, onion or oregano was also added for taste. Pudding was oblong by shape or roundish. Blood bread and blood cakes fried on a pan were commonly held to be a better food than boiled pudding.

Preparation:

3-4 cannikins of water were taken, one cannikin of blood added and then mixed. Chopped chives, later onions were added to the liquid, the blood had salt added into it at the time of the slaughter, flour was added and the dough kneaded until it became even. Water was heated in a cauldron and brought to a boil. Salt was also added to the water. The pudding was put into boiling water and boiled until it rose to the top, after that they it put onto a sieve or another vessel with a large spoon, some put their pudding on the table to drain. (EA 56: 301)

Pudding was eaten warm with sauce or butter. The pudding made was usually enough for up to four days. It was eaten for breakfast and dinner or brought along to engagement parties, grasslands or on a longer journey. To warm up the pudding, it was sliced lengthwise and fried in fat, either milk or cream was later added. It was served with cowberry, pumpkin or currant salad (ERM, 2011).

Blood cake

Blood cake was not made as often as blood pudding. The dough was similar to that of blood pudding – only somewhat more watery. Blood cake dough was made from blood, eggs, sour cream and rye or wheat flour. A little baking soda and salt were added. Blood cake was fried on a pan just like ordinary pancakes. By shape and size a blood cake was similar to a pancake as well (ERM, 2011).

Blood bread

Blood bread was made from fresh animal blood, to which barley or rye flour, pieces of meat and onions were added. The dough was not fermented. When the dough was ready, it was put on a pan and in the oven to cook. Blood cake is round in shape and size, as large as a shepherd's loaf. One or two loafs were made at the same time. There were no special occasions for making blood bread – it was made when an animal was slaughtered. It was eaten warm with meat or cold by itself. If blood bread was warmed up, it was fried in milk or fat. Blood bread was called *verikarask* on the islands (KV 14: 63).

When sheep farming started to decline in the 20th century, pudding was made more often from swine blood. Nowadays blood pudding is only made in very few places where animals are slaughtered, because old specific skills have disappeared with the passing away of older people; the making of food from blood is also pretty work-intensive and for many people making food from blood probably causes fear and apprehension. In a cookbook printed in the Soviet era in 1955, there are still recipes for blood pudding, blood bread, blood pancakes and blood sausage, but it is not mentioned what animal the blood should come from. Nowadays it is possible to buy several types of blood pudding at shops, but it is made from swine blood. Blood bread and blood pancakes are unknown these days.

Sausages

White sausages or *makid*

In Saaremaa thick sausages were made from sheep intestines, they were called *makid*. Boiled groats or barley flour was put in the intestines. It was also possible to add lard and back fat, rarely also meat. The dough that was put in intestines was left to stay overnight.

Preparation:

Intestinal pieces are up to 2 feet long. To put the filling in the sausages, there was a sausage mould made from horn. The sharp edge of an ox horn was chopped off, so it became a funnel. The thinner part of the mould was put into the intestine, the horn was filled with filling and put into the intestine with a wooden stick. To close the ends of the sausage, wooden pegs 4-5 inches long were used, they were called "makipahlad". They were usually made from birch by young boys. They had to be smooth, round, with one end sharper. The end of the intestine was tied several times around the peg and the peg then stuck through the intestine. (EA 18: 43)

Finished sausages were immediately boiled and then put on a table to cool. Cooled sausages were preserved in a cold place. Sausages lasted longer when the weather was colder, otherwise they lasted only for a short time. They were hung in the storeroom and eaten throughout the winter.

Sausages were usually made for St. Catherine's Day, St Martin's Day and for Christmas. At the same time other celebrations have been noted: New Year's Day, Epiphany and weddings (EA 18: 43).

Blood sausages

Blood sausages are basically prepared the same way as sausages without blood, except that blood is added to the cooked sausage mass. Finished sausages are boiled in lightly salted water and are set to cool after boiling. Before eating, the sausages are baked in the oven. Blood sausages are a traditional Christmas dish even in today's Estonia; instructions for making blood sausages can be found from Soviet-era and modern cookbooks alike. None of the currently available few dozen blood sausages produced by different companies contain sheep blood; however, they do use lamb intestines, and from 2008 blood sausages prepared with mutton are also available. Blood sausages are a national food in Estonia, always eaten during Christmas time with cowberry jam and marinated pumpkin.

Barbecue sausages

Fresh or thermally non-processed barbecue sausages in sheep intestines, also called natural shashlik sausages, are very popular in summer for barbecuing. The meat content of these thin sausages is higher than that of traditional barbecue sausages, depending on the sausage 80–90% on average. The sausages are produced industrially from minced pork or mutton, with spices, herbs, onion and vinegar added, which give the sausages their shashlik flavour. Natural sheep intestines are used. The sausages can be grilled for 15–20 minutes on a barbecue grill or over coal, or baked in the oven or on a pan. Nearly all Estonian meat plants offer natural barbecue sausages in sheep intestines during the summer barbecue season.

Meat jelly

Meat jelly used to be prepared as so-called chunky jelly. For that purpose, a sheep's head and legs were usually boiled, calling it "sheep's head-and-legs jelly". Neck bone, lungs, livers,

heart, stomach and sometimes intestines were added. It was seasoned with onion, bay leaves and pepper.

Preparation

A big pot of meat jelly was made, with so much liquid added from the start that the pot was full to the brim. Salt was put in right away as well, nothing could be added later, because otherwise the meat jelly wouldn't solidify. Meat was put into the pot, the lady of the house knew exactly, depending on the pot, how much meat should be taken and how much water added to have a proper amount of broth later. Once the meat and the water were in the pot, fire was made and the broth was brought to a boil until it had boiled through, with every tiniest bit of scum skimmed off. After no more scum rose to the top, the pot was covered with a lid and left to simmer on a low heat for another three to four hours. (EA 56: 411)

Meat was boiled with bones inside – boiled until the meat separated from the bones without any effort. The jelly meat was then driven through a grinder or finely chopped. After that, the meat was added to the pot. The meat was left to boil for some more time in the pot, after which it was spooned into bowls and other containers and put into the pantry to cool.

Originally, it was not customary to take the bones out. Older people thus still look down upon boneless meat jelly and say, “What kind of meat jelly is this, no bone to give to a child, even.” (KV 33 : 1123)

Meat jelly was typically prepared for festive occasions – weddings, birthdays, Christmas. (ERM, 2011)

From the beginning of the 20th century, meat jelly with bones was no longer made; instead, bones were removed after boiling. Also, internal organs were not added to the meat jelly any more and pork began to be used for making jelly. In the cookbook from 1955, mutton is no longer mentioned with meat jelly. The tradition of making meat jelly has survived up to this day, but nowadays it is made from pork, beef or chicken.

Pâté

Sheep's liver was used for making delicious pâté. It has been recorded in Abja that pâté started to be prepared only during the later years of the Republic of Estonia, but in manors it was made already much earlier. When making pâté, liver was boiled with (or without) back

fat. When boiled, it was put through the grinder, adding a bit of boiling liquid. Instead of back fat, butter or the fat of smoked and boiled meat could be added. Afterwards, everything was beaten until fluffy, resulting in pâté. (KV 104: 190) It is recommended to soak the sheep's liver in milk for an hour, which removes the bitter taste of liver. While boiling, bay leaves, black peppercorns, allspice, parsley, carrots and onions are added to the liquid. A bit of fatty pork is also added to the pâté. Once the meat has been minced with a grinder or food processor, butter and brandy or rum are added to it. The mixture is poured into bowls while hot and left to solidify. Pâté is eaten for breakfast with bread or as an appetiser during a festive dinner. In Soviet times, canned pâté "Maksapasteet", made with sheep's liver, was available in shops. Nowadays, fresh sheep's liver can only be obtained from sheep farmers.

Soups

In Urvaste, mutton has been used mainly for making soup (EA 56: 131). The animal's fat was added to soups and mashes as well.

Dried cabbage-leaf soup

Dried cabbage-leaf soup was made in late autumn and winter.

To make the soup, either a sheep or beef bone was boiled in a pot, adding groats later. Dried cabbage-leaves were rinsed briefly, chopped finely in a chopping vessel and added to the soup. Potatoes were boiled separately until half-tender and added to the soup. The soup was then simmered for some time. Salt was added while the pot was on the heat.

It has also been recorded that when such a soup was eaten with guests, the first bowl of soup was given to the master of the house, while the bottom of the pot went to the "other family". The meat bone was also given to the master, often leaving the rest with none. (EA 56: 345)

Offal soup

Offal soup was made from the internal organs (large intestine, stomach, lungs, heart, in some cases also liver) of a butchered animal (cow, sheep etc.). The liver and the intestine are cleaned and blanched with the rest of the internal organs. For blanching, all of the organs were placed into cold water and brought to a boil. Scum had to be skimmed from the top. The pot was not boiled for long. At the same time, groats or pearl barley was cooked in another pot until half-tender. Blanched and chopped internal organs were then added. Once the groats

and the meat were done, peeled potatoes were added. After that, the soup was simmered until everything was tender. (EA 56: 349-350)

In Urvaste, offal soup was prepared until the second decade of the 20th century. Later, the internal organs of an animal were used for making meat jelly or sausages. (ERM, 2011)

***Päädiku* soup**

The so-called *päädiku* soup was prepared from the head and legs of a sheep, calf or cow. The hair on the legs or on the head was burnt with fire either in the house or on the threshing-floor stove. A knife was then used for further cleaning in the kitchen, under the stove – legs were smashed and the head was chopped. After that, the meat was left to blanch in the pot. Groats were also cooked. Once the groats were done, the chopped and blanched head and legs were added. Salt was also added to the soup. Potatoes, originally also turnips, have been added as well. More water was added as necessary.

In the 20th century, when yellow turnips and carrots started to be grown in Urvaste, these vegetables were also added to the offal soup. Some have also added cabbage. (EA 56: 352)

Soups today

Using mutton in soups is quite common even today. The most traditional one is raw cabbage soup with stock made from sheep's bones, also containing potatoes, carrots and chopped raw cabbage. It is served with fresh herbs and sour cream. Mutton soup with apples and potatoes is even trendier. The so-called peasant soup is also made, by adding pearl barley or groats, yellow turnip and some potatoes and carrots to mutton stock. In the manor-house kitchen, mutton was used for making vegetable soup, which contained cabbage, parsley, yellow turnip, carrot and tomatoes, pressed through a sieve and was seasoned with sugar and vinegar before taking it off the heat. One of the most popular soups made with mutton is harcho, which reached Estonia from Caucasian cuisine during the Soviet era. To prepare harcho, one needs mutton on a bone, which is simmered on a low heat to make stock. Long-grain rice, some onions and carrots and tomato paste are then added, as well as garlic once the soup is almost ready. Raisins, prunes or apricots, as well as chilli pepper can also be added. Smoked mutton is used for making pea soup with pearl barley, carrots and onions. Pea soup has always been a food for joint working events, where a large number of people needed to be fed at once.

In the Soviet time

Sheep were raised in farms in the countryside during the Soviet period as well. Firstly, wool was needed and meat could be used for different kinds of food. Each family mostly had 5–10 sheep. Village sheep were kept together as people were not allowed to feed them on the land of a collective farm. Generally, mutton was used rarely. People preferred to use veal for cooking. The reason was probably that sheep were being farmed either for wool or for mutton. It seems that wool sheep farming was more reasonable and practical.

The selection of food has also changed compared to Soviet times. Shashlik and pilaff have been adopted from our fellow nations. These dishes mostly spread as recipes in cookery books. For example, recipes for lamb shashlik and chanakhi (Georgian national dish) as well as pilaff were referred to in the cookery book *Raamat maitsvast ja tervislikust toidust*, published in 1955.

Kidney or leg were used for making lamb shashlik. The pieces had to be washed and chopped into small pieces and put in a vessel. Salt, pepper, small onion pieces, vinegar had to be added to the meat. Lemon juice could be used instead of vinegar. Everything had to be mixed and the vessel had to be covered with a lid. The vessel had to be placed in a cold place for 2–3 hours to absorb flavour. When cooking, pieces of lamb and onion had to be placed on a metal skewer by turns. Shashlik had to be cooked on a glowing fire for 15–20 minutes (*Raamat maistvast ja tervislikust toidust* 1955: 165).

The cookery book points out that lamb shashlik was sold both unpacked and packed. The difference was that unpacked shashlik could be weighed; in case of packed shashlik, meat had been divided into different servings.

Making lamb shashlik was more of an exception – it was not a regular dish. For example, shashlik was not at all spread in Saare County during the Soviet period. Based on unwritten sources, shashlik was not made until the beginning of the 1990s. At the same time, it was more familiar to people on the mainland, but it was still rarely eaten and mostly made in summer.

Nevertheless, the following dishes have been pointed out in connection with sheep in Saare County: blood pudding, dried leg, fresh cabbage and dumpling soup.

When a sheep was killed, blood pudding was not missing from the table. Salt and seasonings were added to the blood and barley flour was stirred into the blood. Sometimes, wheat flour was added so that the pudding would not be “hairy”. The thick dough was put in boiling water

as dumplings. Blood pudding was especially tasty when warm. Later, they could be heated on a frying-pan.

Dried mutton leg was tasty as well. At first, it was salted, then drained and put on a hook by a warm wall where it was left to dry. Mutton legs were also smoked. Pieces were cut from them, put on bread and eaten with potatoes.

Fresh cabbage soup was also made with mutton. In Saare County, dumpling soup with mutton was the most popular dish. It was made as follows: meat was boiled and seasonings were added. The secret of the dish lied in dumplings. Two or three eggs, salt and flour were added to a packet of sour cream. And this is how the best soup was made (ERM, 2011).

Roasted and stewed mutton

In 19th century farms, the liver, lungs, heart, stomach and kidneys were cooked after butchering a sheep; no more of the fresh meat was eaten. Some bones together with breast meat were made into a soup, but no sooner than a few days after the butchering. In the manor-house kitchen, mutton roast was prepared, using the front or back thigh meat. The meat was roasted in the oven with carrots and parsley, while the generated broth was used to prepare a sauce. The next day, slices of meat cut from the cold roast could be heated up with white sauce; boiled potatoes were used as a side dish on both occasions. During the first years of the Soviet period, when sheep were still raised in collective farms and households and mutton was available, the following mutton dishes were proposed: boiled mutton in white sauce, mutton with rice (with tomato puree), mutton with kidney beans, mutton with green beans, mutton with vegetables, mutton ragout, braised meat covered with breadcrumbs or not, mutton roast, mutton slices. In those years, a great number of mutton dishes reached Estonia from Armenia, Georgia and Russia, the most popular ones being pilaf and shashlik, which Estonians love to this day and which have become part of our everyday menu, although the original mutton is often substituted with pork these days. Minced meat was used for making different patties and meatballs of various sizes; the most popular offal were liver, kidneys and heart, but recipes for dishes containing brains can also be found.

Nowadays, sheep farmers themselves prefer to consume fresh lamb meat, which is marinated in different spice mixes and stewed or roasted in the oven or over coals. The most popular herbs and spices for seasoning mutton are rosemary, garlic, juniper berries and black pepper, as well as peppermint, thyme, oregano, caraway, parsley and cilantro. Red wine, lemon,

tomato, onion, dark beer, apple or redcurrant juice, sometimes also vinegar, mustard or soy sauce are used for marinade. The meat is marinated in dry or liquid marinade for any length of time between a few hours and several days, the most typical marinating time being 24 hours. Sheep butchering and mutton-eating are these days no longer connected to specific seasons or holidays, except for Midsummer's Eve or *jaanipäev* (23. June), when a bonfire is lighted and shashlik is prepared. Mutton is a definite number one in the everyday menu of sheep farmers; ordinary Estonians, however, still prefer pork. Because the tradition of consuming mutton was interrupted in Estonia for some time, people don't know how to prepare mutton dishes; also, mutton is often unavailable in regular shops, it can be bought from markets and sheep farmers. The menus of finer restaurants include mutton dishes, mostly lamb cutlets or roast lamb. In the early 1990s, Estonian restaurants exclusively used mutton imported from New Zealand or elsewhere, while these days it is gradually being replaced with domestic mutton, which is considered tastier. Gourmet restaurants buy meat directly from sheep farmers, claiming that the meat of animals who have lived freely throughout the year and without concentrated fodder is better. The meat of sheep raised on the coast and by the seaside, who have eaten salty seaweeds and drunk salty seawater, is considered especially delicious. With the increase in the number of sheep in Estonia, the number of sheep farmers and advocates of mutton has also been growing year-by-year; mutton and mutton products are available in markets and fairs, more and more cookbooks are being published and new recipes are being developed. It is probably just a matter of time before mutton returns to our shops and to the everyday menus of Estonians.

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