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By Alison Arnett

When Will Herring Get Respect?

An email about Bar Harbor Foods herring has a plaintive note. “Herring often gets a bad rep,” the publicist writes. She goes on to argue its health advantages—omega rich and helpful in staving off some cancers in women—and the company’s all-natural, wild-caught products.

As I read, I was transported back to a visit to Helsinki many years ago. My sister and I stopped for lunch at a place advertising its salad bar. She was living in Sweden at the time and I had been in Scandinavia for more than a week visiting. We were ravenous for something green, something besides potatoes.

So we rushed to the salad bar, and stopped in amazement. Arranged attractively along a bed of ice were as many as 10 different salads—all composed of herring. Picked herring, herring in red wine sauce, herring with cucumbers in cream sauce, and so on. Not a leaf of green anywhere.

The salads were good, and probably food for us. But I got my fill. Maybe now is the time to give them another chance.