

Pork and pikopiko to tempt the tastebuds

PORK and pikopiko pies, venison burgers and fresh seafood will be among the kai on offer at the Paku Kore Wild Food Festival in Ruatahuna tomorrow.

The drug, alcohol and smoke-free family event, organised by a group of Ruatahuna business students, will be held at Te Umuroa Marae beginning with a whakatau (welcome) at 9.30am and continuing throughout the day.

The people of this isolated Tuhoe community, in the middle of Te Urewera, have gathered together delicacies from the bush unique to Ruatahuna and hope to share them with around 300 residents of the valley and the surrounding Tuhoe communities of Ruatoki, Waiohau, Waimana and Waikaremoana.

They are also hoping to welcome back whanau who have left the district and other members of the public from around the Eastern Bay.

Janet Taiatini, of the Paku Kore Wild Food Festival committee, is promising plenty to see and do for all the family.

"There will be horse rides, egg and spoon races, bouncy castles and much, much more, as well as live music and speakers throughout the day," she said.

"There will also be plenty of



bush tucker like venison, possum and pikopiko, and each hapu in the valley will compete in a Master Chef-style cook-off over open fires, to be judged by our very own Joe McLeod, from Maori TV."

Mataatua marae, Uwhiarae, Tataahoata, Te Waiti, Kakanui, Te Umuroa and Te Ngawari have all registered for the cook-off.

There will be local crafts and produce on sale along with a range of koha-based therapeutic treatments including mirimiri and romiromi massage, reiki and readings.

Tent sites are available for those wanting to stay overnight.