

Sámi cuisine has been developed from several thousand years of knowledge. The characteristic local ingredients are taken and refined in order to create the dishes. Through the *Sámi food - threats and opportunities* project, we have explored the opportunities and threats that the global interest in indigenous peoples food traditions creates, as well as how the state prioritises food production and whether the quality system makes a difference.



Sámi food

threats and opportunities



Slow Food[®] Sápmi



Páwanka Funná

The project

How well-prepared are the Sámi regarding commercial interests that want to make quick money from traditional food, health and medicine? Slow Food Sápmi has several times acted to protect against the abuse of Sámi food traditions. Through the project we have investigated threats and opportunities, and also whether quality systems can make a difference. We have collected documents and conducted out in-depth interviews with seniors, interested parties and entrepreneurs. We have talked to researchers, looked at what is being written in the Sámi media, and we have filmed traditional methods of producing foods. The material needs some further processing that could not be done in the project. Here is a summary.

Conclusions

There is an interest in producing and consuming Sámi food, a secured primary production requires secure access to land and water. Quality systems are useful but need to be able to accommodate local methods. Sámi food production can contribute to a stronger economy and culture, benefit biodiversity, women and entrepreneurship in sparsely populated areas. But individuals cannot drive development alone - the sami entrepreneurs need relief in getting structural conditions such as logistics, quality systems and other things in place. The status of indigenous knowledge must be raised, Sámi should be involved in how research issues are selected. Research is mostly done in relation to the reindeer herding it needs to be broadened. Research, education and information are needed.

The documents we have found indicate an imbalance, the amount of documents about exploitative industries is large compared to what there is about the Sámi's own business. Nowhere is the starting point that nature is an arena for Sámi food production. International reports support that the Sámi influence is weak. The forest is needed for reindeer husbandry, game, fish, berries and wild plants. But in national and regional forest programs, aspects of forestry dominate. The imagery shows that felling is the starting point; multi-use and forestry are shaped by a chainsaw, a garment symbolizes innovations in consumption and a moose represents the forest's wildlife. Reindeer herding appears along with texts about recreation, the hospitality industry as well as ancient and cultural relics.

General opportunities to keep in mind can be found in global environmental goals, documents on food sovereignty, and in research. The Reindeer Herding Act provides protection for reindeer husbandry with associated hunting and fishing. We have the Sámi food vision from 2012, but most of the needs that it pointed out are still issues today. Since 2017, Sweden has had a national food strategy, it mentions reindeer herding and it applies until 2030, with associated local strategies. The government has commissioned the Swedish Agency for Economic and Regional Growth is to coordinate the strategies, but since there is no Sámi food strategy, a large part of the Sámi foods falls through the cracks.

Focus areas

Gathering material from far and wide was part of the method, the focus was on ingredients, food sovereignty, health, women, traditional knowledge, gender equality, climate change, quality systems and development potential for food production regarding reindeer meat, wild berries, herbs and wild-caught fish. Three areas were of particular interest for us to continue working on: opportunities for women, biodiversity, and entrepreneurship in sparsely populated areas. Rural areas?

Dokumentgijssá – our bank of documents – at slowfoodsapmi.com

We have gone through a lot of documents as part of the project, over 90 of these can be found in Dokumentgijssá. The document bank is an approach to food from a socio-anthropological and ecological justice perspective. The content is related to food sovereignty, which is one of Slow Food Sápmi's most prioritised issues. Food sovereignty is making a claim for a process among social movements wherein people organise production based on local and cultural traditions. Food sovereignty is a path towards a fairer world, where solidarity outweighs competition. Via the document bank, we want to make it easier for other people to find information for research or development purposes.

Visit Dokumentgijssá. Let us know if you have any content we should add!

Gijssá is the Lule Sámi word for a transporting chest. In the gijssá, supplies and household utensils were transported by the pack reindeer. Noaddegiisá/beassegiisá (Northern Sámi), tjimkeme-gæjsä (Southern Sámi).

Slow Food Presidia

Presidia is a quality label issued by Slow Food, it's intended to protect endangered products for the future. Presidia products have to maintain excellent taste and quality as well as being produced organically and on a small scale in line with traditional methods in accordance with the Slow Food Movement's ideology; Good, Clean, and Fair. Suovas, smoked reindeer meat, was the first product in Sweden to receive the award. Slow Food's Ark and Presidia products, together with Renlyckasigillet (a mark of quality reindeer meat), are among the very few labels based on Sámi food traditions.





Slow Food Sápmi

Slow Food Sápmi was established in 2009, bringing together food producers and customers. We strengthen bonds with other indigenous groups and small food producers through our work for local influence, biodiversity, and food sovereignty. Slow Food is a global movement with locally-produced foods at its centre. Good, Clean, and Fair are our watchwords. Good - because food and drinks should be enjoyed, not just fill you up. Clean - because food and drink should be free from toxins and not harmful to the environment. Fair - because good food is a right for both consumers and producers. Slow Food runs the campaign Food For Change and we work locally under the banner of *Förändring Genom Mat*.

Interested to find out more?

The work was carried out between 2018 and 2020. The project report can be found under Projects on our website. The project is financed by the Pawanka Fund.

Victoria Harnesk, project manager, victoria@slowfoodsapmi.com.



@slowfoodsapmi



@slowfoodsapmi



slowfoodsapmi.com



Slow Food Sápmi



Pawanka Fund