

THE INNOVATION JOURNEY

Sirpa Kämäräinen and Katja Vira are sisters, who are running the second-generation family business Isokenkäisten Klubi (Club of the Big-Shoe People), a wilderness lodge and a wild food kitchen, located in remote Särkiluoma village, in Kuusamo. The family tourism business began in 1990's to earn additional income alongside agriculture.



The name of the business comes from the fact that the first customers were usually people from high-ranking positions in Finland, the so-called "big-shoe people". The sisters took over

the family business in 2004. They gave up keeping the farm livestock in 2006 but have continued with crop cultivation to this day. Each sister has contributed their individual strengths to develop the family tourism business. Sirpa's background of working in large kitchens and Katja's background of working in customer service laid the foundation to start offering home-made, wild food dishes, based on locally grown ingredients. In addition, their services include a "seven star" smoke sauna, various program services for tourists, along with accommodation, all based on Finnish nature. The sisters offer tailor-made services with which they wish to create the warm and cozy atmosphere that feels like "visiting one's grandmother's house"

(*mummola* in Finnish). As a testament to the sisters' hard work, about 97% of customers during the winter season are from abroad.

THE INNOVATION IMPACT

Environmental consciousness, respect towards nature, and locally grown, clean, homemade food are values that are driving the sisters' business, and which they themselves learned already at home on the family farm. Most furniture and materials they use are either recycled or made from Finnish wood, and they make sustainable choices all the way from toilet paper to cleaning products. They operate under Sustainable Travel Finland and Green Key certificates. Sirpa has been involved in developing the Wild Food Kuusamo Lapland brand since 2015, which brings together the local wild food producers and experience services from the area of Kuusamo and Taivalkoski. The business has generated seasonal employment, the sisters cooperate with local entrepreneurs through buying each other's services and their facilities and catering are used in local events.



USEFUL LINKS

<https://www.ikk.fi/en/>
<https://www.facebook.com/isokenkaistenklubi>
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCDf0w2yqjK2HZGZ73goZv9A>
<https://www.instagram.com/isokenkaistenklubi/>