



VALTAKUNNAN VIRALLINEN
UNIKEKOTM
NAANTALI

NAANTALI SLEEPYHEAD DAY

"In the days when the Roman emperor Decius, who was the oppressor of the church of Christ, reigned, he built a temple in the city of Ephesus, that all his people should sacrifice to idols and worship them; he also commanded that the Christians should be taken there as bounded to worship his gods. All who did not obey his command would be killed. Then there was such terror in Ephesus, that one friend denied that they knew the other; so that the father gave up his son, and the son his father. In a word, no one dared to say he knew those who wanted to be Christians!"

This text was quoted from The Story of the Seven sleepers, translated by Isak Julin's publishing house and bookshop in Tampere in 1908.

This is the beginning of the event on which the whole celebration of Sleepyhead day is based on, the first Christian years. At that time, the new faith needed stories and legends to inspire its listeners. One such story tells of the incredibly long sleep of seven Ephesian men, persecuted for their piety, which lasted for hundreds of years.

In 1652, the sleepyhead day was added to the Finnish almanac. The tradition of celebrating the Sleepyhead day took on a whole new meaning with the establishment of spas and their recreational needs. It all started with the drinking of medicinal waters in the 1600s and 1700s; Naantali's Viluluoto got its own medicinal spring in 1723. Guests had to be entertained, just as spa guests were entertained later on. Gradually, the activities of the medicinal springs expanded into a spa and the leisure and social life took on new forms.

The growing number of spa guests, especially from the 1890s to the First World War, required the spa to develop a range of entertainment for its guests in addition to the treatments. As early as the 1830s, the spa building at the Viluluoto spring was used to hold balls, often attended not only by spa residents but also by Turku residents who travelled to Naantali harbour by steamship. In the 1860s, a new spa building was completed at Nunnamäki, and a new well room was later added to. When the old Viluluoto's well house and baths gradually fell into disrepair and were abandoned, the new Well House and the Sea salong, which replaced the old tavern on the shore of the old town harbour, became Naantali's centre of leisure and social life.

Naantali's Sleepyhead Day has been celebrated at least since the 1880s. The first newspaper article describing the day dates back to 1886, where it is stated that it was celebrated as it had been in earlier years. The celebration of Naantali's Sleepyhead day in the 1880s was more boisterous than today. On Sleepyhead day, morning sleepers were punished by being thrown with burdocks. The last of the sleepyheads who had kept dozing off in the town were awakened by ear deafening racket on their way to the Alppila gazebo on Kuparivuori. The dizzying decibel levels were created by loud singing, shouting, playing various instruments, and rattling the walls and windows of houses. Sometimes, someone even dared to wake the sleepyheads in their own homes. The 1880s Sleepyheads day celebrations culminated in a party in the evening at Merisali.



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Even then, according to a surviving description from the 1920s, the Sleepyheads day celebrations were mainly a party for summer and spa guests, usually attended by the town's own residents. However, the children and young people of the town did participate in the day's programme, at least by selling burdocks packed in paper bags. The price per bag was one Finnish mark. At least in the 1920s, the morning celebration of Sleepyhead day was often led by actors from Turku Swedish Theatre. One of those who led the morning party in the 1920s was Åke Svensson, who taught the Charleston dance, which was in vogue back then on the morning of Sleepyhead day in Merisali. After the dance, Mr Svensson led the noisy procession of Sleepyhead day to the Alppila gazebo with a frightening polar bear mask on his face.

Naantali's Sleepyhead day has not been celebrated uninterrupted into the 21st century. At least the World Wars had an effect on the waning of the summer celebration. In the 1950s, the day began to be celebrated again and a newer tradition of Naantali's Sleepyhead day was born. The event was revived in 1958 on a small scale at the initiative of restaurateur Lauri Virra. From the 1950s onwards, new features emerged in the celebration of Naantali's Sleepyhead day, the most prominent of which is the throwing of a pre-selected Sleepyhead into the sea. In the 1950s, the Sleepyhead probably quietly jumped into the sea by itself, and it was only in the 1960s that the throwing into the sea became a more festive ceremony, which is still known today.

In the late 1960s, the idea of a national Sleepyhead day for Naantali was launched in the media, based on its long history, and from 1969 onwards, people started talking about Naantali's "national Sleepyhead day" and the name "National Official Sleepyhead day" was registered for Naantali in the 2010s.

The quiet summer town attracted tourists with multicoloured advertisements and free bun with coffee. In the early 1970s, Sleepyhead day became a multi-day event, for which a competition was held to find a new name to. This gave birth to the Sleepyhead's feast, which were at their longest five days long. In the mid-1980s, the Sleepyhead day's celebrations brought unrest and disorder to the city. Towards the end of the 1980s and up to the 1990s, the Sleepyhead day programme was modified to be more peaceful and more suitable with Naantali's image as a family destination.

The 2024 Sleepyhead celebrations starts as the Sleepyhead will get her dew 8.00 a.m. The celebrations will already start on Friday with musical performances and the Sleepyhead market. On the actual Sleepyhead day, the programme will be non-stop in Kirkkopuisto (Church park) and the day will be crowned by a Sleepyhead concert with Neon 2.