



Slow Food Comes to the Table

Slow Food Nation 2008, a subsidiary of Slow Food and Slow Food USA, gathered in San Francisco to celebrate farmers, food and sustainable production.

10/3/2008

By Karen K. Acevedo

Photos Karen K. Acevedo

Where's Your Chapter

If you want to get involved in the Slow Food movement, one of the best ways is to find out more about a chapter near you.

The inaugural Slow Food Nation event was held August 29-September 1 in San Francisco. Based on our experience, it was a rousing success.

What is Slow Food Nation (SFN)?

It's a non-profit organization based in San Francisco whose mission is to organize the first-ever American collaborative gathering to catalyze the growing sustainable food movement and to celebrate that food is good, clean and fair.

SFN is a subsidiary of Slow Food USA and part of the Slow Food movement ([learn more](#)).

For four days, the city buzzed with folks from all walks of life with at least one thing in common—a passion for food. Not just food in the gourmand sense, but food that is produced sustainably, not dependent on commercial channels.

The Marketplace, situated in Civic Center Plaza (a giant park across from City Hall) was a farmers' market gone wild. Gorgeous produce (much of it heirloom varieties) overflowed booths with its producers on hand to chat. The "soap box"—a lively stage featuring music, speakers and entertainers.

An overwhelming line up of food vendors offering such items as roast chicken and heirloom tomato salad, strawberry balsamic ice cream, watermelon agua fresca, and Cuban pork sandwiches.

A "victory garden" demonstrating organic intensive planting methods.

A fantastic book booth offering dozens of books on agriculture and food completed the offerings. The aisles were packed and many vendors were sold out—a great sign of rising consumer awareness in this arena.

The Taste Pavilion, located at Fort Mason on the water overlooking Alcatraz, was a ticketed event that allowed guests to sample a wide range of "slow" food:

A garden on display during Slow Food Nation 2008 in San Francisco. Bread Cheese Pickled vegetables Charcuterie Seafood Coffee, Chocolate Ice cream Organic wines, spirits and handcrafted beer.

These artisan creations were exciting, but the long lines (in some cases, out the door) were not! (For \$60/ticket, we did not expect to wait an hour to taste cheese.)

Other happenings at SFN included: "Slow Food Rocks," a ticketed concert.

"Food for Thought" free films.

Slow hikes that explored the agricultural landscapes and green spaces surrounding the Bay Area.



The signs read: "Please don't take home these Black Gold bricks yet! This brick is for your garden or window box: add it to 2/3 of any soil you have ... think of it as a starter kit for your self-sustaining future." Slow journeys, one-day trips to local wineries, fisheries, ranches and farms.

There was also an impressive lineup of speakers including Michael Pollan, Marion Nestle, Alice Waters and other prominent authors in the field of sustainable agriculture.

Overall, the first-ever SFN was a great event, but next year, we'd like to see it held in a less-congested area that is more easily navigated, and ideally, all in one location (not spread out over a bustling city). But that's just one country girl's opinion.

Learn About....

For more information about Slow Food Nation and Slow Food USA, got to www.slowfoodusa.org

About the Author: Karen K. Acevedo is editor in chief of Hobby Farms, Hobby Farm Home and the Popular Farming Series. She and her husband Dennis care for their goats and raise a variety of heirloom vegetables on a small farm in Central Kentucky. She's also the author of *Cooking With Heirlooms*.

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