

Winter 2006

Speak of food and what do we think of, hamburgers, french fries, chicken wings or ice cream? In terms of food what would make anyone here in Whitehorse different from say, someone in New York? How would we define ourselves as being different or unique from anyone else in the world?

The Yukon has all of the Magic and Mystery as far as tourism goes and it has the draw because of our fairly recent history, in global speak, of the gold rush. What will it take to endure a longer period of time and how will it define the people and culture of the Yukon? The Yukon's population is a diverse collection of people with a truly recent history.

To exist and become a cultural identity for years to come the Yukon needs to define itself in terms of the foods it can produce. Go anywhere in the world and you can find specialties not found anywhere else but there. Speak of a country or region and you can define the culture there in terms of food. What is it here in the Yukon that makes us special? Define that in food and you have a piece of history to come, you have a starting point for the culture of the north.

When we all visit our relatives 'down south' we always look for something of a local flavor (pun intended) to take them. If we're feeling bold and rich we go for the gold otherwise we take a book on the goldrush or a wonderful CD of a local artist. What we should in fact be taking is some food. Something locally produced that can only be produced here in order to obtain that immensely flavorful rich taste that you'll always remember like grandma's homemade chocolate fudge.

Whether made from wild-crafted berries, fruits, flowers or vegetables grown in the virtually virgin soil of the north the real food here is like none other across North America. Where else can you find such a huge variety of jams and jellies all made from hand gathering? Go to Dawson and find the man who makes some of the best birch syrup ever and try some as a glaze on a fresh caught salmon or grayling. Buy some bison, elk or local beef and taste some of the best free range meat available. Talk to Brian and get your fresh Feta cheese for the seasonal organic salad you serve up along with the platter of Steve's superb potatoes. And never forget to try some of the fireweed honey that can only be found here, in the Yukon and no where else in the world.

In order to create the society we need and to be able to define the culture we want, talk real food. We need to support the local person who will ask our thoughts and mix them with a pinch of reality to create something that is incredible. Buying local, supporting local will build a food industry that can stand on its own and be recognized worldwide. So lets get into talking real food and what it is that makes us here in the Yukon so special. Let's get our teeth into some of the realities of mass produced food that's shipped thousands of miles to our doorstep. Let's see the cost of creating the food we eat and how nutritious that mass produced food really is. Go anywhere in the world and food will always dictate the viability of that country.

So talk to me about real food – Tom Rudge