

Summer 2006

When I first decided to write this column I knew a discussion about Slow Food would have to come up. It's a really tough topic though, trying to describe how a movement based upon thousands of years of history half a world away affects us here in the Yukon. And, better yet, how we might learn to incorporate the principles of slow food into our lives.

In a country and society as affluent and young as Canada is, it requires an effort to see outside of ourselves and acknowledge that there is an international food movement that can change our lives for the better.

In 2004, my children and I went to Turin Italy and witnessed Slow Food's, first ever, Terra Madre, a gathering of food communities that brought together over 5000 people from 120 countries around the world. The only topic of discussion for 4 days was food. It was a humbling experience.

We were awed by the presence of people who knew how food could maintain a culture and build a sustainable future for our children. As the only two children at the event, Claire and Graham's ideas about food will be forever changed and I couldn't be happier.

Carlo Petrini introduced Slow Food to the world in 1986 in Barolo, Italy. Carlo and his group of friends were at their wit's end over industrialized food and a tasteless culture of food that was beginning to dominate society. Slow Food was their response to this fast food culture and multinational agro-business. Now, 20 years later, there are over 83,000 members in more than 100 countries. Here in Whitehorse there is a small vibrant group of food advocates who formed a local Slow Food group called a convivium.

Slow Food is not just about food but is about the whole culture that is created by the growing, processing, marketing and eating of local food. As the name suggests, there is a need to spend more time put into the culture of food and less time and effort devoted to the realm of fast food joints, factory farms and box stores.

Slow Food promotes local production, biodiversity, heritage breeds of crops and animals, food preparation techniques that have been handed down through generations and most of all, the education and appreciation of taste.

Slow Food adores a simple meal that's enjoyed slowly and with a passion for the work that went into growing the food and preparing the meal.

In the Yukon, the First Nations have a tradition of food culture that predates the Slow Food movement and we are proud of it. As is true with all of Canada, people in the Yukon consist of a diverse collection of heritages from around the world. We've brought our food cultures to this pristine environment we now call home. Although we don't have the thousands of years of history that Italy has, we've brought our individual history with us. Combining that history with locally available fare has created some of the most tasteful dishes you can imagine. Looking through the eyes of Slow Food we have a food culture richer than many countries. Support the

ideals of slow food by enjoying local products and supporting local producers whenever possible.

Talk to me about Real Food – Tom Rudge