

fun with food





Savour the Flavour - Slow Food

Story and photos by Sandra Phinney

Do you tire of the endless hype about fast food, doubt the goodness of anything “instant” or cringe when you read the contents of a can or package?

There's a shift afoot to something wiser and saner called Slow Food—a movement that started in 1989 in Italy to counteract fast food and the disappearance of local food traditions. The movement has 100,000 members from 132 countries, including Canada.

The most active Canadian province is Nova Scotia, thanks to Brian Kienapple from Newport, NS, who discovered Slow Food in 2000 while traveling with his family in Italy. Brian was so taken with the concept that he returned the following year and met with farmers, wine producers and representatives of various traditions. That's when he decided that Slow Food was worth promoting in Nova Scotia. Currently, the NS convivium (www.slowfoodns.ca) has about 100 members.

“Every region of the world has its own taste experiences that are in jeopardy of being overrun as a result of globalization and industrialization. A prime example is the apple industry. We still have around 60 heritage varieties but most Nova Scotians have no idea they exist,” Brian says. In fact, most large

grocery stores don't carry them because they don't fit the dictates of the so-called modern food system.

Yet, for a growing number of people, it's more important to develop a connection with farmers and producers and to have a great taste experience. Result? Everybody wins. Consumers get better food, farmers get fair prices, communities hold onto values and traditions, mutual respect is fostered and the economy prospers.

Gary Arnett at the Yarmouth Natural Foods Market is an advocate for Whole Food and Slow Foods. “They both ask us to connect with the food we consume, and to be aware of whether the food is grown locally, or whether the food is grown fairly—both fair to the land and fair to the producer. Most importantly, the food is unprocessed, not industrialized,” he says.

Gary is well aware of the politics of food and how large, global, corporate and/or state money interests have altered production, transportation and distribution of food with no regard for the environment or the health of the consumer. He adds, “Slow Foods has given us new allies in this political fight for food integrity. Now we have joined forces with those who are just as interested in changing the politics of food as we have been, but they have added the need to defend the preservation of tastes and the social enjoyment of food.”

Madeleine and Gary Kent operate Southwest Nova Catering Co. and also host "The Sweet Life" on Eastlink television. Early on, although they are members of Slow Food Nova Scotia, getting to events around the province didn't always materialize.

Along with the Arnetts, they started a Pro-Slow group in this end of the province. "We went from four to 60 - and are still growing," Madeleine says. People gather at different homes for themed potlucks. Past themes have focused on everything from our local fall harvest to an authentic Italian Christmas dinner ... and "if you were stranded on an island, what dish could you not live without?"

Brian Kienapple's favourite way with Asparagus

1-1 1/2 lb local asparagus
2 Tb extra-virgin olive oil
1/2 tsp salt
1/4 tsp black pepper
1/2 C local feta cheese, crumbled

Put oven rack in lower third of oven and preheat oven to 450°F. Toss asparagus with oil, salt, and pepper in a large shallow baking pan. Roast, shaking pan once about halfway through roasting. Asparagus should be just tender when pierced with a fork (about 8-14 minutes, depending on freshness.) Serve sprinkled with feta cheese.

Moscow (Idaho) Salad (Gary and Elena Arnett)

1 lb Kale (pour boiling water over it and soak a few minutes, drain and chop finely)
4 carrots, shredded
1 C finely shredded cabbage
1/3 C sesame oil
1/2 C feta cheese, crumbled
1/3 C hoisin sauce made by simmering together for 10 minutes:
1/2 C soy sauce
1/2 C mirin or Riesling
2 Tb honey
2 Tb rice wine vinegar
2 tsp sesame chili oil
2 tsp fresh lime juice
3 garlic cloves, chopped
1/3 C fresh cilantro, chopped (or 1/4 C dry cilantro leaves)

Cool hoisin sauce, toss everything together and serve.

This January, participants were asked to bring a dish that their mother made that reminds them of home.

At the gatherings, recipes are copied and shared. Madeleine adds, "Our overall goal is simply to get together with like-minded folks who love to make and share good, wholesome food over good conversations and great wines. No fuss, no muss, no membership dues."

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Creamed Lobster on Easy-Make heart-smart Oatmeal Bread

(Gary and Madeleine Kent)

Homemade bread:

1 C rolled oats
2 C boiling water
1/2 C molasses
2 tsp olive oil
2 tsp sunflower oil
1/2 tsp salt
6 C all purpose white flour
1 tsp yeast (1 pkg)
1/4 C warm water

Preheat oven 350 F. In a small bowl, add the yeast to 1/4 cup warm water and let sit undisturbed for 5 minutes. In a large bowl, mix the oats, molasses, oils, salt and boiling water. Then add half the flour, followed by the yeast mixture then the remaining flour. On a floured surface, knead the dough for 5 minutes and then form into a ball. Let sit, covered, for 1 hour. Punch the dough to let the air out and then form 2 loaves in 2 greased loaf pans. Let sit for another hour and then bake for 50 minutes.

Creamed Lobster (4 servings):

Steam two 1 1/2 lb lobsters. Shell lobsters and cut the meat into small pieces. Warm up the lobster in a fry pan using 2 Tb butter. (For added flavour, fry some of the lobster shells in butter and remove before adding the lobster meat.) Add 1 C whipping cream and 1 C blend and simmer until the sauce sticks to the back of a spoon.
(Optional: add 1/2 tsp tarragon leaves and/or 1/4 cup dry white wine.) Toast some of your homemade bread then spoon creamed lobster over the toast. Serve with a side of salad and enjoy!