



**SLOW FOOD
SONOMA
COUNTY
:: NORTH ::**

FEBRUARY 2025 NEWSLETTER



What Is Slow Food?

Slow Food is everything fast food is not. It's about building relationships through food rather than making quick transactions, prioritizing flavor and origin over convenience, and treating the Earth with respect rather than exploiting its resources. (Slow Food USA)

A Brief History

The Slow Food movement started over 30 years ago as a protest against fast food. It began in Rome when a group of Italians, led by founder Carlo Petrini, gathered to protest the opening of a fast-food franchise near the Spanish Steps. They shared a bowl of pasta, chanting: "We don't want fast food. We want Slow Food!"

Slow Food spread to the U.S. in 2000 and, while initially seen as elitist, has become a respected part of efforts to improve the global food system—encompassing everything from food production to its availability to consumers.

Personal Responses to Slow Food

For many, Slow Food is a way to honor traditions, nurture local communities, and protect food diversity. One person shared: "Slow Food honors my grandparents and their way of living, preserving food that is alive with unique names, lineages, traditions, and stories." Another specified, "To me, Slow Food is educational events, farm tours, farmers markets, or simple potluck gatherings that feature locally grown, seasonal products and conviviality around the table." Others see it as a way to support sustainability, health, and social justice, believing in the power of food to connect us all in positive, meaningful ways.

What Does Slow Food Do?

Slow Food USA works to educate and inspire communities to advance policies that transform food systems. The organization focuses on addressing systemic inequities, such as the disproportionate effects of food policies on Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC), low-income communities, and women. Key issues include land theft, worker exploitation, and lack of access to nutritious food. Through advocacy and programs like the [Ark of Taste](#), [Snail of Approval](#), and [Slow Fish](#), Slow Food USA aims for good, clean, and fair food for all.

Who Is Involved?

Slow Food includes a global network of farmers, chefs, educators, and consumers working together for a more sustainable and just food system. The movement promotes local, seasonal foods, preserves culinary traditions, and builds connections between people, food, and the environment.

In Sonoma County, Slow Food is a growing community of people who care about where and how their food is grown. If you're interested in Slow Food, consider attending events or joining a local chapter to get involved and make a difference in the food system.

HEADS UP! What does Slow Food mean to you? Send your response to slowfoodsonomacountynorth@gmail.com. The winning entry will be published in our next newsletter and win a gift of a [Slow Food USA Tote](#) or [The Slow Wine Guide 2025](#). Let's hear from you!

Sonoma County North Calendar

Mark your calendars, and look for an invitation with details about a month before each event.

February

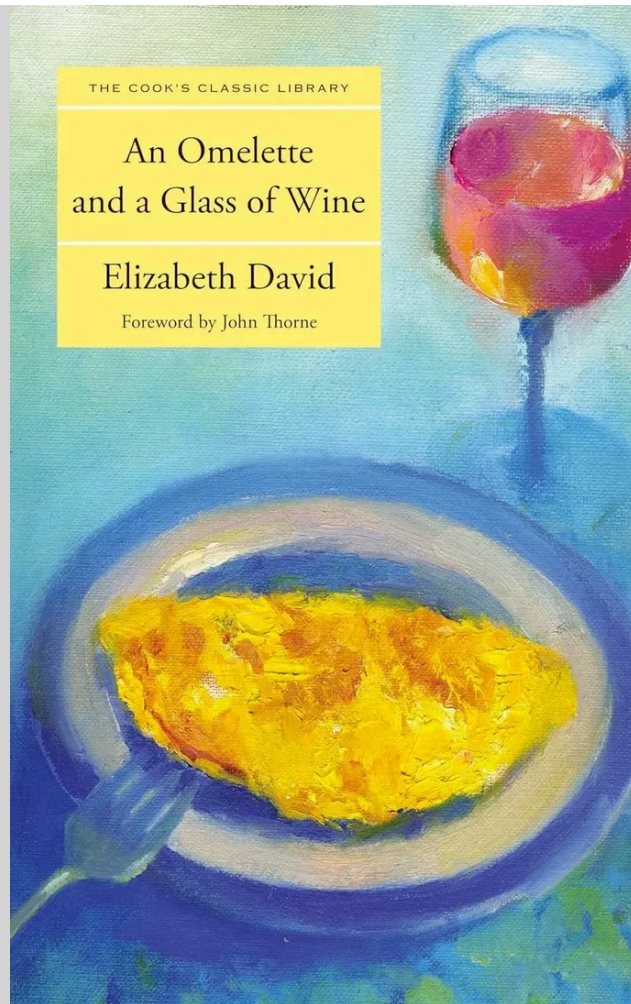
17 Slow Books: "An Omelette and a Glass of Wine" by Elizabeth David

19 Snail of Approval Awards, 5:30 pm, Sebastopol Grange (ticket link in Snail of Approval section below)

March

26 Tour of Volo Chocolate, Windsor

Slow Books



THE COOK'S CLASSIC LIBRARY
An Omelette
and a Glass of Wine

Elizabeth David
Foreword by John Thorne

Slow Books is an ongoing activity of our chapter. The group meets every 6 weeks to discuss a food-related book and enjoy a potluck dinner based on the book. We meet in people's homes which can usually only accommodate up to 8 people. For this reason, we are usually unable to invite others than our core group of participants.

But we're learning a lot from the books we've read, and thought you might want to enjoy the books as well. We will therefore let you know what we're reading each meeting through the newsletter and our [website](#).

FEBRUARY SELECTION: An Omelette and a Glass of Wine, by Elizabeth David

Learn more about this book [here](#).

Spotlight on Andzia and Jenay Hofftin



In each newsletter, contributor Allison Eckert spotlights a member of our Slow Food community. This month features a conversation with the co-owners of Occidental's [Altamont General Store](#).

A Community Hub Rooted in Hospitality

Nestled in the heart of Occidental, the Altamont General Store is far more than a spot to grab a quick bite or a jar of housemade pickles—it's a lively community hub where food, creativity, and connection come together. Owned and operated by business partners Andzia and Jenay Hofftin, the Altamont embodies the perfect blend of heartfelt hospitality and the bohemian charm of small-town Sonoma County.

During the store's winter closure, I had the chance to sit down with a revitalized Andzia to learn more about the Altamont's journey and their exciting plans for the new year. With a background in agroecology from UC Santa Cruz and herbalism studies in Sonoma County, Andzia left the hustle and bustle of San Francisco's restaurant industry to bring a shared dream with Jenay to life: creating a community-centered space where her hospitality expertise and Jenay's experience as a wellness teacher and retreat facilitator could thrive. Despite launching in March 2020 amid the challenges of the pandemic, the Altamont has flourished into a vibrant mixed-use venue. It's a place where local ingredients, ethical sourcing, and genuine human connection shine.

A Space for Creativity and Connection

But the Altamont isn't just about food—it's about the people and the experiences it fosters. With nearly 20 staff members, Jenay and Andzia cultivate a "seed-to-service" ethos, ensuring every guest feels warmly welcomed. The space itself invites creativity and connection, featuring a [ceramics studio](#) and a marketplace showcasing [local makers](#). From artisans and farmers to diners, the Altamont brings together a diverse community in one stylish and inviting location.

For Jenay and Andzia, building a food business isn't just about meals—it's about creating a sustainable, joyful ecosystem from farm to fork. Their passion for fairness and sustainability shines through in every detail, and they encourage us all to support local restaurants that provide the spaces where we gather, celebrate, and connect. After all, without our support, these cherished places may not always be there to give character to our neighborhoods.

Your Next Destination

Whether you're heading to the coast or planning a beach day, the Altamont General Store is the perfect stop for grab-and-go fare on your way west. Add a touch of flavor to your home cooking with their curated selection of spice mixes and dry goods, or consider hosting [your next private event in their beautiful space](#).

Mark your calendar—The Altamont General Store reopens after its winter break on February 5th. Stop by, support local, and experience the magic of this local treasure for yourself.

Snail of Approval

7th Annual Snail of Approval-Slow Food in Sonoma County Awards



When: Wednesday, February 19, 2025

Where: The Sebastopol Grange

Time: 5:30 to 7:30 pm

Who: 2024 Snail awardees and renewals, Slow Food members and enthusiasts!



Tickets

New Awardees



Congratulations to our final group of Snail Awardees for 2024! [FEED Cooperative](#), our first awardee in our new category "Supporting Organization." [Sarmentine](#) for their newer Petaluma and Sebastopol locations. [Kibo Farm](#) in conjunction with [Belden Barns](#). We honor them for producing good, clean and fair food in Sonoma County and beyond.

For a full listing and map of Snail of Approval-Slow Food in Sonoma County awardees, visit our [webpage](#).

Membership

Welcome New Chapter Members!

- Cristelle Blackford
- Barbara Hom
- Don Landis

[Join or renew your membership online](#) and list Sonoma County North-CA as your chapter. If you prefer to renew locally by check, please download our [membership form](#) and follow the instructions. Several times a year, Slow Food USA promotes a **Give What You Can Day** where you can join or renew for any amount on one day only. Watch your email for these promotions.

Newsletter: Carol Diaz, Allison Eckert, Kate Hendricks, Lisa Hunter



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