



Newsletter

February 2026



What is Slow Food?

"When I first became a Slow Food member, I thought it was just about growing and preparing healthy food for myself and my family and preserving my cultural culinary traditions. While those reasons remain true, my involvement has vastly expanded my horizons. Slow Food is not just about me, my family and the people I touch. Slow Food has connected me to a worldwide movement of people who share my values and beliefs. We are a voice. As our numbers grow, that voice grows louder!"

Marie Giacalone - a member since 2009

Savoring the Moment: A Guide to

Slow Living Around the Table

In our fast-paced world, the act of eating has often been reduced to a chore—something to be done quickly between meetings or while scrolling through a screen. However, the heart of the Slow Food movement lies in reclaiming our time and our relationship with what we consume. As we look ahead into 2026, slow living isn't just a trend; it's a vital strategy for personal well-being and planetary health.



Practice Mindful Consumption

Before a product reaches your pantry, it makes a long journey. Slow living starts with questioning that journey.

- The "Why" Behind the Buy: Before purchasing, ask yourself if the ingredient is seasonal and how it was produced. Choosing a single, high-quality artisanal cheese over several mass-produced snacks supports local biodiversity and reduces your carbon footprint.
- Shop with Intent: Transition from "convenience shopping" to "connection shopping." Visit your local [Farmers Market](#) to meet the producers. When you know the person who grew your carrots, you are less likely to let them wither in the crisper drawer.

Reduce Waste

In a slow kitchen, nothing is "trash"—everything is an ingredient in a different stage of its life.

- Root-to-Leaf Cooking: Experiment with parts of vegetables often discarded, like radish greens for pesto or broccoli stalks for a crunchy slaw.
- The Art of Preservation: Use the slower weekend hours to ferment, pickle, or dehydrate surplus produce. This not only prevents waste but adds complex flavors to your future meals. Looking for a class or to learn more? Check out [UC Master Food Preservers of Sonoma County](#).
- Resourceful Recipes: Participate in global movements like [World Disco Soup Day](#) by hosting a "fridge-clearing" dinner with friends to turn near-expired produce into a communal feast. Don't forget to save your vegetable peelings and left-over meat bones that can be stored in the freezer. They can be made into a tasty, healthful broth as the base for your soup.

Reclaim the "Joy of Eating" *

Slow Food is, at its core, about conviviality. Eating together is the ultimate social act.

- The Digital-Free Table: Make the dinner table a "phone-free zone." By removing distractions, you allow the flavors of the food and the depth of the conversation to take center stage.
- Shared Preparation: Invite friends over not just to eat, but to cook. The act of shelling beans or kneading dough together fosters a sense of community that is often lost in our isolated digital lives.
- Savor the Sensory: Take a moment before the first bite to appreciate the aroma, color, and texture of your meal. This "sensory education" helps us recognize the true value of "good, clean and fair" food.

By slowing down, we don't just eat better—we live better. This week, we challenge you to turn off your devices, invite a neighbor over, and enjoy one meal at a slower pace.

* Again this year, Slow Food USA will announce [The Joyful Dinners Series](#) – taking place in the Spring and another time in the Fall. Watch for more details.

Sonoma County North Calendar

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

February

4 Tastes & Tales of Italy, 5:30-8 pm, Healdsburg. [Ticket sales closed.]

14 Geyserville Valentine's Marketplace, 12-4 pm, Geyserville. [Tickets](#)

25 8th Annual Snail of Approval Awards Ceremony, 5:30-7:30 pm, Sebastopol. ([Wait List](#))

March

2 Slow Books, *The Physiology of Taste* by Brillat Savarin, translated by MFK Fisher, Cloverdale

3 Olive Tree Pruning at Tallgrass Ranch, 10 am-12 pm, Sonoma

25 Slow Cinema, *We Feed People*, 3-5 pm, Healdsburg

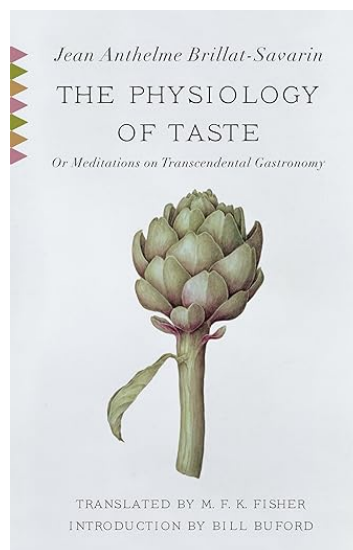
April

13 Slow Books, *Women in the Kitchen* by Anne Willan, Occidental

March Slow Books

The Physiology of Taste by Jean Anthelme Brillat-Savarin, translated by MFK Fisher

A delightful and hilarious classic about the joys of the table, *The Physiology of Taste* is the most famous book about food ever written. First published in France in 1825 and continuously in print ever since, Jean Anthelme Brillat-Savarin's masterpiece is a historical, philosophical, and epicurean collection of recipes, reflections, and anecdotes on everything and anything gastronomic. Brillat-Savarin—who famously stated “Tell me what you eat and I shall tell you what you are”—shrewdly expounds upon culinary matters that still resonate today, from the rise of the destination restaurant to matters of diet and weight, and in M. F. K. Fisher, whose commentary is both brilliant and amusing, he has an editor with a sensitivity and wit to match his own.



Spotlight on Sara McCamant, Ceres Community Project

Food as Medicine, Community as Healing: How Ceres Earned a Slow Food Snail

When the Slow Food in Sonoma County community gathers this month to honor our [2025 Snail of Approval](#) award recipients, one of the Supporting Organization Snails will go to a program that embodies the heart of the Slow Food movement in action: [Ceres Community Project](#).



For long-time Ceres staff member **Sara McCamant**, the recognition is more than symbolic. “Receiving a Snail is the external sign-off that we’re doing what we intend to,” she says. “We are very familiar with certifications because we’re an integral part of the [California Food is Medicine Coalition](#).” The Ceres team helped design a Food is Medicine accreditation to vet meal providers’ sourcing practices and nutritional quality, thus laying the groundwork for a system where good, clean and fair food is recognized as essential healthcare.

Where Slow Food and Ceres Meet

At its core, shares McCamant, Ceres asks a hard question: “*Why do we live in a world where food is killing us?*” The organization’s response is a place-based, community-rooted model that delivers medically tailored meals to people facing serious illness, while simultaneously nurturing the next generation of food leaders.

“What’s exciting about Ceres is that we take really high-quality food and make it accessible,” McCamant explains. “That’s what Slow Food is about. Food is never separate from culture and community and connection.”

Like Slow Food, Ceres insists that food must be connected to place. Their Food is Medicine model is intentionally local, grounded in Sonoma County farms, kitchens, youth, and neighbors. “What we’re really advocating for is that this model has to be place-based,” McCamant says. That advocacy includes pushing for Medi-Cal and other insurers to cover medically tailored meals, insisting that healthcare systems recognize what communities have long known: food is some of the best medicine.

Youth at Ceres

While Ceres is widely known for its meals, McCamant emphasizes that the organization offers “more than a meal.” As the Garden and Youth Program Manager, McCamant sees Ceres first and foremost as a **youth development program**. Teens are not treated as extra hands, but as essential participants in building a healthier food system. “We don’t see youth as just one more volunteer,” she says. “We have a whole larger program that’s looking at how you create healthy individuals, and how you help youth transition to becoming healthy adults.”

In Ceres’ gardens in Petaluma and Sebastopol, teens learn firsthand about organic and regenerative farming. The gardens may not produce most of the food used in Ceres’ home-delivered meals, but they serve as living classrooms, models that inspire McCamant and her students to explore “what nutrient-dense, soil-centered agriculture can look like.” Youth learn how soil health connects directly to community health, and why food grown with care matters.

Food, Connection, and Care

Ceres' work also addresses something harder to measure but deeply felt: social isolation. "How do you let people know that there's community support?" McCamant asks. "It makes a huge difference if people feel like they're coming to a place for help where they're not alone in what they're going through."

That sense of belonging is woven into every meal delivered and every youth shift in the kitchen. It's also shaping Ceres' future. In February 2026, the organization will open its **Center for Food, Youth & Community**, a resilient community resource hub equipped with a micro-grid system. During heat events, fires, or other emergencies, the center will activate as a place of refuge (another way that food, care, and preparedness come together).

Big Vision, Deep Roots

"Our team doesn't do things small," McCamant says. "We're always looking at how we can create the biggest impact with every resource that comes our way." While Ceres is not focused on scaling nationally, its influence already extends far beyond Sonoma County. Through an affiliate program, Ceres has trained more than a dozen communities across the U.S., Denmark, and New Zealand to replicate its model, proving that local food systems can inspire global change without losing their roots.

A Call to the Slow Food Community

Ceres Community Project's Supporting Organization Snail award recognizes what Slow Food members already know: good food can heal bodies, strengthen communities, and transform systems. But only when we fight for it.

You can be part of that work:

- [Volunteer with Ceres](#): Help prepare and deliver meals.
- [Refer someone](#) who could benefit from medically tailored meals: For people living with diabetes, heart disease, COPD, cancer, and more.
- [Celebrate Ceres](#) at the 2026 Snail of Approval Awards.

Snail of Approval

Honoring our
2025 Awardees

8th Annual Snail of Approval Awards



February 25, 2026 5:30-7:30pm Sebastopol Grange



8th Annual Snail of Approval Awards

Twenty-One Sonoma County Food Businesses Honored for Leadership in
Community-Centered Food

[Wait List](#)

On February 25, Slow Food in Sonoma County gathers at the Sebastopol Grange for our 8th Annual Snail of Approval Awards—an evening celebrating the people and businesses strengthening our local food community.

This year, we honor 21 Sonoma County food businesses, from regenerative farms and community markets to restaurants and artisan producers, whose work reflects Slow Food values every day. These awardees are caring for the land, supporting workers, and nourishing our community through food that is good, clean and fair.

The evening offers an opportunity to connect with farmers, chefs, and food makers, enjoy light bites and beverages highlighting local producers, and recognize our 2025 Snail of Approval awardees and renewal recipients.

More than an awards ceremony, the Snail of Approval is a chance to pause and celebrate what's working in our local food system—and the people making it happen.

Tidbits

Events from our Food Partners

Slow Food East Bay

February 8th, 2026: Cultural Food Traditions Project: Palestine

Date: Sunday February 8th

Time: 5:00pm - 8:00pm

Location: [Lakeside Park Garden Center, Oakland](#)

Get your tickets and RSVP [here](#).



Geyserville Valentine's Marketplace

Our chapter will have a booth in front of Peche Merle Winery. Come see us and buy a Bodega Red Potato cap!

[Go here for tickets and more information.](#)



Help Shape the Future of Slow Food Sonoma County North

As we plan for 2026, we'd love more of our members to be part of what's ahead. If you've ever thought about getting involved but weren't sure how, this is a great place to start.

Share Your Skills

Do you have a food-related skill you enjoy sharing—cooking, baking, farming, gardening, or food traditions? We're hoping to offer hands-on classes and demonstrations led by our members, and we'll help with planning and promotion.

Help Tell Our Story

We're also looking for a volunteer to help with Facebook and Instagram as part of our Communications Team. It's a flexible, creative way to support Slow Food and spread the word locally.

Interested or Just Curious?

Email slowfoodsonomacountynorth@gmail.com—even a simple “I might be interested” is perfect!

Membership

Welcome New Members!

Linda Bergman
Catherine Clark, Tenfold Farmstand
Daniel Formby, Jupiter Foods
Elizabeth Kaiser, Singing Frogs Farm
David Klein, Ambix Spirits
Mai Nguyen, Farmer Mai

[Join or Renew](#)

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