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Slow on the Go

Slow Food Nation serves up street food of the highest order.

By Jeanne Hodesh

Mas Masumoto, author of *Epitaph for a Peach*, and panelist for the discussion "The Future of Farming" at **Slow Food Nation's Changemaker's Day**, started out by reading an excerpt from his book on the marvelous sensory experience of biting into a ripe peach. The crowd all but grunted and moaned in agreement as he described leaning over the sink to let the peach juice dribble down his chin. "Now," he said to the audience and his fellow panelists, "think of a food you ate recently that gave *you* a food orgasm. And," he added, "does your food orgasm include a farm story?" The panelists went down the line: Fred Kirschenmann of **Stone Barns Center for Food and Agriculture** said he has one every month when he eats at **Blue Hill** and Zoe Ida Bradbury of Groundswell Farm described a dinner she and her fiancé had cooked the night before using ingredients that had all been grown on her farm. "We grew everything but the bison, which we shot." Betty Fussell, author and moderator of the discussion, quickly exclaimed "I had my food orgasm at lunch!"

She was referring to the tlacoyos made by **Primavera Tamales**, a vendor at the Ferry Plaza Farmers Market that is stationed for the weekend at **Slow on the Go**, a collection of ethnic street food vendors serving up fare to Slow Food Nation attendees and San Francisco city employees alike, as well as anyone else who happens to follow their senses to good food. While enthusiastic eaters waited in line for the highly recommended tamales (I caught *Saveur* editor-in-chief, James Oseland, mid-tamale, just long enough for him to tell me to go get one myself), roasted chicken and potatoes, or ice cream with hot fudge and toasted walnuts, they read descriptions of where the traditional street food snacks originated and checked out maps tracing where the key ingredients had been

sourced from.

I took James's advice and got my own tamale, but arrived after the lunch crowd had already gobbled up the Yucatan-style tamales steamed in banana leaves with chard, pumpkin seeds, and hard-boiled egg that everyone was talking about. By the time I made it to the front of the line, I was told they only had chicken tamales left. "I'll take one!" Soon I was seated beneath the trees of Civic Center Plaza, trying not to eat too fast. The warm cornmeal was sweet and light alongside chicken so tender it barely had to be chewed. And the heat from the piquant tomato sauce on top didn't slow me down one bit. Did I experience my own food orgasm? Perhaps. But since the vendors, many of whom, like Masumoto, champion farm-to-fork stories, will be serving food through Sunday, I might have to sample a few more dishes just to make sure.

Additional Slow on the Go highlights:

Roast Potato and Chicken or tomato salad from **Roli Roti** in Berkeley, CA

Chicken from **Soul Food Farm**, Vacaville, CA

Potatoes from **Full Belly Farm**, Riverdog Farm, Guinda, CA

Chicken Biryani and Dahi Batat Puris from **Vik's Chaat Corner** in Berkeley, CA

Yogurt from **Straus Farm Creamery**, Point Reyes, CA

Chicken from **Soul Food Farm**, Valeville, CA

Grilled Sausage with Pepper and Onion from Fatted Cow in Napa, CA

Pork from **Newman Farm**, Myrtle, Missouri

Peppers from **Full Belly Farm**, Riverdog Farm in Guinda, CA

Tamales Yucatecos from **Primavera Tamales** in San Francisco, CA

Poblano peppers from **Oat Hill Farm**, Glen Ellen, CA

Eggs from **Field of Greens**, Sonoma, CA