

## A pace for taste: Slow Food Santa Fe

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On Wednesday, Aug. 21, Slow Food Santa Fe hosts a self-guided, self-paced tour of three farms, two wineries, and a seed library in Dixon, a largely traditional agricultural community on the banks of the Embudo River, just under 50 miles north of Santa Fe.

Founded in about 2003 by chef/author Deborah Madison, Slow Food Santa Fe is one of 150 local chapters of Slow Food USA, which is, in turn, an affiliate of Slow Food International. Now a network of 100,000 members in 160 countries around the globe, Slow Food began in Italy in the late '80s when journalist Carlo Petrini responded to the opening of a McDonald's on Rome's Piazza di Spagna by serving plates of pasta to protesters on the Spanish Steps. While the movement's initial goals included "defending regional traditions, good food, gastronomic pleasure and a slow pace of life," its mission has evolved to embrace a comprehensive approach that connects "the pleasures of the table with a commitment to the communities, cultures, knowledge, and environment that makes this pleasure possible."

The Farms, Food, Drink, and Community Tour in Dixon is in line with Slow Food principles, said Santa Fe Slow Food executive board member Lissa Johnson, who organized the group's first farm tour with fellow board member Nina Rosenberg. "Good, clean, fair food for all," Slow Food's current mantra, "is what these farmers provide."

Organizers of the Santa Fe Farmers' Market decided not to host a farm tour this summer, which left an opening for another organization to step up. Johnson credits food activist and author Pam Walker with suggesting that Slow Food Santa Fe put together its own tour.

Walker suggested locations and set up the initial contacts with farmers for Johnson and Rosenberg. "We went on a farm tour in February to check out what might be a good grouping of farms," Johnson said. They settled on six locations

in close proximity to each other in the community of Dixon, home to the largest concentration of organic farmers in the state. Originally settled by Spanish colonists in the 18th century, about 70 percent of Dixon's residents still identified as Hispanic on the 2010 census.

The tour costs \$25, a portion of which will be donated to the Embudo Valley Library and Community Center. Participants, who must pre-register for the event at [slowfoodsantafe.org](http://slowfoodsantafe.org) by Monday, Aug. 19, will receive maps and other tour information when they sign up.

Farmers participating in the tour include Loretta Sandoval of Zulu's Petals, a longtime seed-saver who sells a wide range of heirloom fruits, vegetables, certified organic locally adapted seeds, and apple cider vinegar; author/farmer Stanley Crawford of El Bosque Garlic Farm, who moved to the community around 1969 and has been selling garlic at the Santa Fe Farmers' Market since the early '70s; and Mesa and Molly Ruiz of La Mesa Organic Farms, who specialize in blue corn and unpasteurized apple cider, both of which will be available for tasting and purchase during the tour. The farmers will give brief introductions to their farms on the hour for the duration of the tour, which runs from 1 to 4:30 p.m.

Visitors to the two wineries — La Chiripada, at 42 years old New Mexico's oldest winery, and Vivac, established in 1998 by two Dixon-born brothers on family land — can show up at any time between 1 and 4:30 p.m. for tastings. La Chiripada is offering an additional one-time 45-minute tour at 3:30 p.m. for an additional \$6, paid directly to the winery. The full tour can only accommodate 10 people, so it's first-come, first-served for that event.

A stop at the Embudo Valley Library and Community Center introduces visitors to the seed library established in 2018 by volunteer Jessie Emerson, a registered nurse, herbalist, and owner of Oso Herbals. Emerson will give a tour and talk about how a seed library works and why the only way to save seeds is to grow them.

Walking the fields and talking about all that food can make you hungry, so lunch and snacks will be available at Zuly's Café (234 NM 75, 505-579-4001) and the Dixon Co-Op (215 NM 75, 505-579-9625, [dixonmarket.com](http://dixonmarket.com)) during tour hours. A visit to the Dixon Farmers' Market, which is held in front of the co-op between 3 and 6 p.m. on Wednesdays, is a great way to see what's in season and end the day with an overflowing shopping bag — and a deeper understanding of the value of small farms and locally grown food.