



Slow Food®

VADEMECUM

Starting a Convivium

Make Slow Food philosophy real at the local level!

As a *member*-based organization, Slow Food would mean very little without people like you, who support and further our work to bring pleasure back to the table, educate consumers, defend biodiversity, build strong food communities and create a system that makes good, clean and fair food available to everyone.

By joining Slow Food, you become a member of a convivium, a local chapter of the organization and a community of food producers, artisans, co-producers, scholars and researchers, students, families, journalists, activists and many others. Opening a convivium is a way to share Slow Food philosophy in your local community by cultivating the appreciation for pleasure and quality in daily life.

Each convivium is as unique as the region it's in and the people, culture and food traditions there. What they all have in common is their desire to bring Slow Food to their communities, whether by seeking out local food producers and supporting them through projects, events or partnerships; starting up school gardens and educational programs; organizing workshops, lectures, classes and conferences; or bringing together people to celebrate the joys and pleasures that food offers us.

This document is intended to explain what a convivium is and how to start up your own as well as to answer any questions you might have about the process. That said, you're more than welcome to contact us if you need more information.

Welcome!

Slow Food International Headquarters



What is a Convivium?

The word *convivium* is Latin from *con* (with) + *vivere* (live) and highlights the conviviality that is at the very core of what Slow Food is about. Convivia are local Slow Food chapters, and each is made up of individual Slow Food members. Each new member is assigned to the convivium nearest to him or her.

Convivium structure and organization are explained in detail in the ***Slow Food Convivium Protocol***, a document you will receive from the International Headquarters if you want to take the next step to start a convivium. Each convivium has a committee headed by a convivium leader (or co-leaders), one or more vice-leaders, a secretary and a treasurer. These positions are all voluntary. At the outset, an individual can serve as convivium leader, treasurer and secretary. When the convivium grows beyond a certain number of members, these roles should be divided among committee members.

The Slow Food International Statute defines the role of a convivium as follows:

- a) to promote the philosophy of the Association;
- b) to develop around itself a local network of individuals who share the principles of Slow Food and work for their diffusion; this network is the local community of Slow Food;
- c) to extend the Association's organizational presence by recruiting more members;
- d) to establish relationships and collaborations with public bodies, gastronomic associations, protective consortia, producer associations and communication media, in order to contribute to the development of sustainable food systems and awareness about food production;
- e) to collaborate with other associations or entities for the protection of the environment and respect for nature, a necessary condition for the safeguarding of gastronomic heritage, as well as the defense and the promotion of traditional knowledge and diverse forms of popular culture;
- f) to establish and maintain collaborative and convivial relationships with other convivia;
- g) to implement activities of promotion and support for the Association's international and national projects and programs.

As far as Slow Food's convivia make the philosophy real at the local level, it is important that they be inclusive and based on equal-opportunity, welcoming anyone and everyone to participate in their events and activities (not least to encourage more people to become acquainted with the Slow Food philosophy in practice). Convivia are not meant to be tools for personal or professional gain, promotional or otherwise.



Starting a Convivium

1) Assemble the founding members.

As convivium leader you must assemble a group of at least five people to start a convivium. These must be individuals – not companies or other kinds of entities – that support Slow Food and what it stands for. Selection can take place at the first meeting of the group before you start the convivium, or you can contact people directly. These people will most likely form your first committee and fill in the treasurer, secretary and other leadership roles, all of which are voluntary.

Only paying members may be one of the founding members. If you or any person in the founding-five are a not paid-up members, then you must renew membership or join Slow Food when submitting the signed copy of the form to open a convivium. This form is included among the start-up documents you will receive from Slow Food.

2) Hold your first meeting.

Your first meeting can be held whenever and in whatever setting you choose with anyone that is interested in participating. They do not have to be Slow Food members but should be interested in setting up and being part of a Slow Food convivium.

Issues to discuss at this initial meeting:

- What is the purpose of your convivium?
- What do you hope to achieve?
- What type of activities, programs and events are you interested in doing?
- What particular food interests are there among the group and in the area?
- What local producers, restaurants and organizations can you partner with?

The name of your convivium should contain a geographical reference, an adaptation of a popular name for your area or a reference to a particular feature of your area. If you open a convivium in a big city (more than 300,000 inhabitants) you are required to add something to the name of your city (i.e. “Convivium Bordeaux-Aquitane” and “Convivium Les Bitourges Vivisques-Bordeaux”), as there may be existing convivia or other convivia opening there in the future.

The other task of this first meeting will be to officially select a committee and a convivium leader. The leader is the driving force behind the convivium. Responsibilities include coordinating convivium activities and maintaining communication with Slow Food. The structure of the committee is outlined in the ***Slow Food Convivium Protocol***.

Now you're ready to contact Slow Food and to formalize the opening of your convivium.



Slow Food®

Contact the International Headquarters:

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In the following countries* there is a toll-free number:

Australia	1800 009 684
Austria	0800 28 11 41
Belgium	0800 79 329
Canada	1 866 266 6661
Ireland	1800 553 930
Spain	900 986 946
The Netherlands	0800 02 27 794

*Calls are answered during business hours, Central European Time (GMT+1).

Area coordinators (based in Slow Food Headquarters in Bra, Italy) for countries where no national office exists:

<i>Africa and Middle East</i>	Velia Lucidi – v.lucidi@slowfood.it
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Your reference person in the International Headquarters will want to know the name of your new convivium and the geographical area it covers. He or she is there to help with any concerns or questions you may have. If, during the first meeting, the founding group produces a plan about the initiatives you would like to set, you are welcome to share that as well.



Once you advise the International Headquarters that you are interested in opening a convivium, the International Headquarters will email you the Slow Food Convivium Protocol and attachments – the documentation required for opening and approving the convivium – along with the International Statute and the Code of Use for Slow Food Logos.

Check the list of Slow Food convivia close to you on Slow Food web site:
http://www.slowfood.com/about_us/eng/where.lasso

Sample convivium activities

Convivium activities are very important for the Slow Food movement because they allow members to meet and share the passion that binds them together. The following are types of activities that contribute to making the Slow Food philosophy a local reality.

Possible convivium activities:

- School Gardens in primary schools
- Field trips with kids to farmer's markets, farms, stables;
- Local gastronomic tours: visits to local farms, food artisans, food bookstores and wineries;
- Taste Workshops with school children;
- Charity Events: Auctions, dinners, lotteries, etc, to raise funds for Presidia in developing countries;
- Tastings and dinners with Ark and Presidia products. Inviting the producers to meet with members and/or local press; organizing buffets for members;
- Cooking classes and taste education courses
- Exchanges with other convivia
- Conferences or lectures on food

I. **Canada's Prince Edward County Convivium: 100 Mile Barbeque**

In Canada, the Prince Edward County Convivium hosts an annual camp-out barbeque party and music festival. It serves primarily as a social event, but also provides a platform for fundraising and gathering new members. In 2008, the theme is set on eating local, with chefs from across the province competing to create the best dishes they can using only food grown or raised within 100 miles of the site.

II. **Kenya's Central Rift Valley Convivium: Exchanges and Education**

The Central Rift Valley Convivium in Kenya is active locally and internationally: participating in exchanges, promoting organic agriculture in schools and holding regular events to celebrate traditional dishes. Their largest gathering to date attracted over 200 people, who came to eat, exchange farming tips and recipes, and award local producers for the quality of their goods.



- III. **Ireland's Tipperary Convivium: Spring Festival of Local Products**
In Nenagh, Ireland the Slow Food Tipperary Convivium runs an annual Spring Festival. The event features an abundant mix of local products, from foraged greens to a host of local cheeses, and always attracts a diverse range of speakers and demonstrators. A main focus of the convivium is spreading the message that food is a crucial part of society, both past and future, and includes visits to Neolithic and Celtic cooking sites throughout the week to compliment the festivities.
- IV. **Argentina's Mar de Plate Convivium: Film Festival**
Drawing inspiration from Slow Food on film, the Mar de Plate Convivium in Argentina staged their own film festival. Utilizing contacts in the media and hospitality trade, the convivium was able to show films at a local hotel and host a market to showcase the work of "mujeres del abasto," women who helped feed the destitute after the collapse of the Argentine economy.
- V. **Indonesia's Lippo Karawaci Convivium in Jakarta: Taste Workshops**
To combat childhood obesity, the Lippo Karawaci Convivium has been running taste education workshops at the Slow Food Festival in Jakarta for the past three years. These 20 minute sessions are designed to be as fun and interactive as possible, with the children playing games, followed by a short discussion to learn about taste, sensible eating and a balanced diet. When they're done, the kids have the chance to explore a 'Slow Food Village', an extensive selection of growing plants with the products derived from them arrayed all around. By adopting this approach, the convivium hopes to show students the link between plant and plate and start an appreciation of origin and flavor that will last a lifetime.
- VI. **Republic of Côte d'Ivoire's Chinata Convivium: Co-operative Farming**
On the Ivory Coast, Slow Food Chigata promotes co-operative farming and brings women together to enjoy healthy and tasty local food. Convivium leader Mariam Ouattara has created several groups, each around 100 women strong, who offer mutual support in the fields to improve the quality of the food they produce and eat. At first glance building a barn together may not seem like a convivium activity, but the food security provided is an integral part of spreading the message of good, clean and fair worldwide.

Once you become a convivium leader, you will have Convivial Pursuits Guide, written by leaders from all over the world describing their best practices, at your disposal.