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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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**Slow Food USA Promotes Regional Foods and Food Traditions for the Thanksgiving Table**

Twelve Endangered Foods (and One Endangered Salmon Harvesting Method) Boarded onto the US Ark of Taste

**New York, NY – November 19, 2008** As millions of families across the country prepare for Thanksgiving and the holiday season this year, Slow Food USA encourages them to look no further than their regional backyards to discover the flavors and traditions of their communities.

One of Slow Food USA's programs, the US Ark of Taste, is a catalog of more than two hundred regional foods and traditions that are in danger of extinction. Slow Food shares the histories of these foods on its website and encourages farmers, ranchers, fishers, chefs, retail grocers, educators and consumers to grow, prepare and celebrate the country's diverse foods and food traditions in their communities. With twelve new foods recently "boarded" to the Ark of Taste, like New England Boiled Cider and Cider Jelly, Thanksgiving is the perfect time for people to learn about place-based foods and enjoy them at the holiday table with friends and family.

To qualify for the US Ark of Taste, food products must be culturally or historically linked to a specific region, locality, ethnicity or traditional production practice; at risk biologically or as culinary traditions; sustainably produced in limited quantities; and taste delicious. Product categories include vegetables, fruits and berries, nuts, cereals, cheeses, fish, shellfish, game, livestock, poultry, beverages, honey, spices, syrups, vinegars and more.

Home cooks can source many ingredients listed on the Ark of Taste through a partnership between Slow Food USA and LocalHarvest, a food website that helps small farmers connect with cooks and eaters across the country. "LocalHarvest is pleased to promote Ark products and producers," says Erin Barnett, Director of LocalHarvest. "This partnership is generating a good deal of interest among our farmers—and increasingly among the public."

Today, people are spending less money in restaurants and more time in their kitchens where there is a growing awareness about eating local and sustainably produced food. It helps to keep small farmers on their land and dollars in the community. It means less greenhouse gas production and less fossil fuel use. But there is another reason to eat locally: it safeguards the diverse bounty of crops and breeds that are historically adapted to our lands. This biodiversity helps with resistance to pests and diseases, and is intimately linked to the traditional agricultural, culinary and cultural knowledge passed down from generation to generation.

"Place based foods are perfect for the Thanksgiving table as they give a sense of history and home," says US Ark of Taste Committee Member, Elissa Ruben-Mahon. Look for regional apple varieties for your apple pies; if you live in New England, glaze your turkey with Boiled Cider Jelly; make a pumpkin pie with Green-striped Cushaw if you live in Tennessee, Louisiana or Mississippi; or use the flavorful Datil pepper to spice up your stuffing if you live in Florida. "Instead of going for the usual Thanksgiving fare, think about expanding your menu to honor your local food community," says Jenny Trotter, Director of Programs at Slow Food USA.

“Don’t feel limited by the foods on the Ark list. Get out and explore other unique foods in your region and experiment with old family recipes. Maybe you’ll discover another unique food or food tradition that belongs on the Ark of Taste.”

Thanksgiving is a time to share a meal with friends and family and to honor the diverse bounty of our land across the country. This year, support local farmers while celebrating and learning about cultural foods and food traditions by seeking out regional, place-based foods on the Ark of Taste.

Recently “boarded” to the US Ark of Taste: Fuerte avocado, Black Republican cherry, Black Sphinx Date, Hatcher Mango, Datil Pepper, Randall Cattle, Cayuga Duck, Reefnet Salmon Fishing Method of the Northern Puget Sound, Piki Bread, Boiled Cider and Cider Jelly of New England, White Kiawe Honey of Hawai’i, Gallberry Honey and Sourwood Honey.

For more information, visit the Slow Food USA US Ark of Taste web page at [http://www.slowfoodusa.org/index.php/programs/details/ark\\_of\\_taste/](http://www.slowfoodusa.org/index.php/programs/details/ark_of_taste/).

To find Ark of Taste foods near you, visit LocalHarvest’s Ark of Taste listings at <http://www.localharvest.org/ark-of-taste.jsp>.

Slow Food USA is also a part of Renewing America’s Food Traditions (RAFT), an alliance of food, farming, environmental and culinary advocates who have joined together to identify, restore and celebrate America’s biologically and culturally diverse food traditions through conservation, education, promotion and regional networking. Learn more at: <http://www.slowfoodusa.org/index.php/programs/details/raft/>

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**About Slow Food USA:** Slow Food USA seeks to create dramatic and lasting change in the food system. We reconnect Americans with the people, traditions, plants, animals, fertile soils and waters that produce our food. We seek to inspire a transformation in food policy, production practices and market forces so that they ensure equity, sustainability and pleasure in the food we eat.

Our national programs include Ark of Taste and Presidia, RAFT (Renewing America’s Food Traditions), Slow Food in Schools, Slow Food on Campus and Terra Madre. Moving forward, Slow Food USA will also strengthen its work in two areas—youth and social justice—strategic priorities for the organization as we build on our work to date.

For more information visit <http://www.slowfoodusa.org>.

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