

Culture Days at the Aurora Farmers' Market and Artisan Fair



By Jan Freedman and Shirley Wiedemeyer

Whatever one's cultural heritage, food occupies a prominent role in their way of life and in their distinctive customs and celebrations.

Food is much more than mere sustenance; it is a source of pleasure, comfort and security.

Food also is symbolic of hospitality, social status and religious significance.

What we choose to eat, how we prepare and serve it and when we eat are all influenced by our cultural heritage.

In addition to nourishing our bodies, food is also evocative of time and place. We can all remember special family gatherings and celebrations which featured treasured family recipes. Most of us have fond memories of favourite foods such as Mom's roast chicken, Aunt Charlotte's stuffed peppers or Grandma's apple pie or honey cake. There are certain aromas from the kitchen guaranteed to tantalize the taste buds such as bread baking, coffee brewing, cinnamon or even bacon frying. Of course, everyone has his/her own favourite aromas reminiscent of times spent enjoying meals when travelling and with friends and family.

In celebration of Culture Days this year, the Aurora Farmers' Market and Artisan Fair will be hosting a Soup Fest on Saturday, September 26.

Amazingly, soup culture dates back to 6000 B.C. when soups featured hippopotamus. All cultures include soup in their culinary repertoire. Notable among them are Chinese Hot and Sour soup, Japanese Miso soup, Italian Minestrone, Eastern European Beet Borscht, Hungarian Goulash, American Gumbo and Eastern Canadian Fish Chowder. In different cultures soups are eaten at different times of the day. For example, in China and Myanmar, soup traditionally is eaten for breakfast.

Since Culture Days occurs during our harvest time, our six Market chefs/cooks will have an abundance of fresh, local fruits and vegetables to choose from to create their delicious soups. They have been asked to select their major ingredients from our farmers and to finish the soups in front of visitors to the market.

One exception this year will be the chef/cook who will be creating a soup from the Burmese culture to tie into our community's OneBookOneAurora initiative featuring 'Burmese Lessons' by author Karen Connelly.

Soup Fests are always a very popular event at the Farmers' Market so please mark your calendars to include a visit to the Market on your way to or from events at the other participating venues.

Look for your passport to fun and creativity in The Auroran and at participating venues. Take part in family-friendly activities, win prizes and celebrate food culture as part of your daily life.