

KUHNAPATO – BON APPÉTIT WASHINGTON DC

Tasty Slovenian heritage

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PHOTO: KUHNAPATO ARCHIVES

Zala Gruntar, Urška Vidmar, Tanaja Odar, Taša Ličen and their teacher Petra Ušaj with creator of the project Kuhnapato Anka Peljhan.



Food brings together or connects the most diverse groups – and even continents. Slovenian primary school children have been reviving the exceptional treasure trove of traditional, typical local or regional dishes through the Kuhnapato (“Cooking and That”) project for the last seven years. Now they are sharing Slovenian heritage in direct, edible form to children of public schools in Washington DC, and indirectly to a much wider audience.

These young people are first-rate ambassadors, presenting the diversity of Slovenia’s regions to the world, along with the cultural and culinary customs of their homeland. Their dishes speak of our geographical and climatic characteristics, and consequently the natural resources we work to preserve and share.

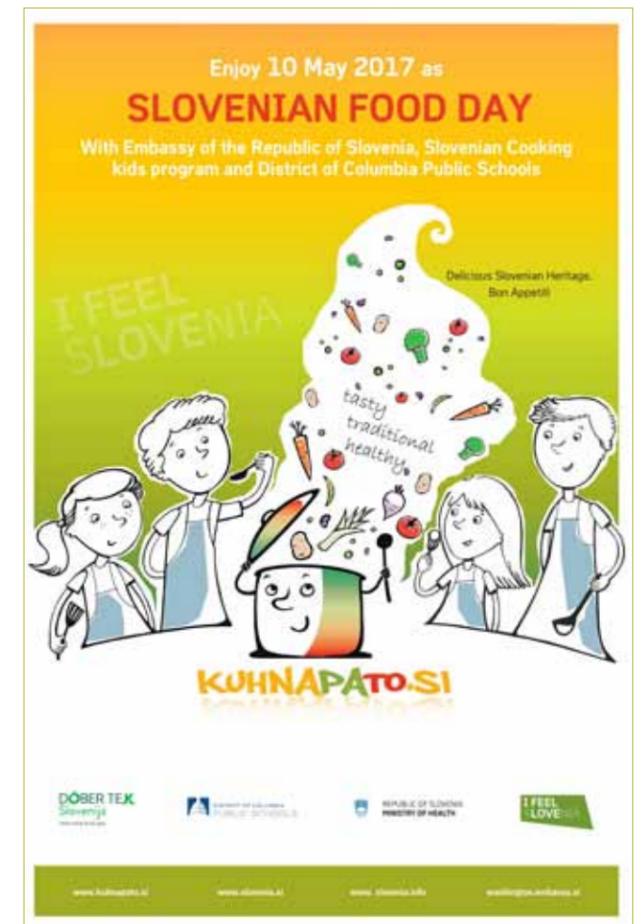
INTERNATIONAL FOOD DAY

Washington DC has celebrated an International Food Day for the last four years.

This year, DC Mayor Muriel Bowser officially proclaimed 10 May 2017 “Slovenian Food Day”.

At the initiative of the Slovenian Embassy in Washington, and in cooperation with the DC Public Schools Global Education team and a local nutritionist organisation, we offered a Slovenian menu consisting of breakfast, lunch and an afternoon snack to a total of 50,000 children at 113 local public schools. With the help of DC Central Kitchen and Sodexo Magic, on that day school cafeterias served *frtalja* omelette, celery and polenta and a meat and egg salad. There was a Slovenian flavour to everything, including at Harriet Tubman Elementary School, which this year is part of the Embassy Adoption Program and where we officially celebrated the day.

In the morning celebration and opening of the Slovenian promotion and its traditional meals, the Slovenian Ambassador to the USA, Mr Božo Cerar, spoke to those present. Ms Delbar, principal of the school, added her own words of greeting and encourage-



ment. After singing the US national anthem, the children also sang Slovenia's and raised the Slovenian flag. Together we watched a film about Slovenia, and schoolchildren from Ajdovščina gave a presentation on the features of Slovenia and its culinary specialties. We were also honoured with a visit by Ms Kate Ireland, director of the DCPS global education programme, and her associates.

The participants in the Kuhnpatato project were accorded special honour and confidence by the Slovenian Prime Minister, Miro Cerar, who issued an official letter of greeting.

Prompted and assisted by the Slovenian Government Communication Office, we presented all the local Washington schools with English copies of a book containing recipes that was published

based on several years' research into Slovenia's culinary heritage. The book, which will now enrich American elementary schools, will also encourage the young people who have now learned about these traditions to build on their knowledge of food preparation and get to know Slovenian culture from the dinner table.

In order for a little part of Slovenian cuisine – in fact that of Primorska, since we were accompanied by a group of children from Šturje Primary School in Ajdovščina – to take root in their memories, we also gave a cooking workshop for a local class.

Alongside the fun of mixing polenta, cutting fruit and vegetables, and kneading dough, the children exchanged their knowledge and skills and established invaluable contacts between our two nations.



Egg herbal omelet

FROM PLATE TO COUNTRYSIDE

For the third year running, the Kuhnpatato project has given us the opportunity and honour of enlivening events in Washington DC. On 13 May 2017, the EU Delegation to the USA and the embassies of the EU member states in Washington held their 11th open day, called the EU Embassies' Open House Day. This is when each country tries, in as attractive way as possible, to encourage more tourists to visit them.

In the premises of the Slovenian Embassy in Washington we thus gave an outstanding presentation of part of Slovenia's culture related to traditional food, and thrilled nearly 3,000 visitors.

Traditional Primorska snacks in modern form were presented and promoted by Zala Gruntar, Urška Vidmar, Tanaja Odar and Taša Ličen, along with their mentor Petra Ušaj, from Šturje Primary School in Ajdovščina. We should note that this school has been involved in the Kuhnpatato project for six years now, and has carried out its mission with distinction, since over this time the participants have come to know a considerable number of the most interesting and delicious dishes of their grandmas, which may otherwise have been forgotten. Just as important, the presentations of these dishes have inspired numerous local food establishments which, thanks to the efforts of the children, are now once again offering polenta, celery, various Primorska stews and minestrone.



Children from Šturje Primary School in Ajdovščina gave a cooking workshop for a local class.