



Slow Food®

Irish Smoked Wild Atlantic Salmon



Presidium Protocol Prepared For Slow Food

By Mark Boyden

& The Irish Smoked Wild Atlantic Salmon Presidium



FEVRE

What is Slow Food?

What are “Presidia”?

Why a Protocol?

In the late 1980's, the eminent Italian food critic and journalist, Carlo Petrini, was walking through Rome when he came upon a multi-national fast food outlet packed with youngsters. It struck him that if they were aware of the rich tradition of artisan food production which abounded in the Italian countryside, they at least would be able to have a wider choice in what they ingested. Slow Food was born, to first and foremost educate people about this wonderful culinary resource, in the face of the over-commercialisation and homogenisation of our diet.

Through education, and what Petrini termed the “eco-gastronomique” intervention, Slow seeks to conserve endangered seed, breed, cultivar, and process. Slow Food functions through “Convivia” and “Presidia”. Convivia are the local and regional Chapters that disseminate Slow's educational functions through tastings, lectures, and awareness raising exercises for its 100,000 members in 40 countries.

Presidia are the support structures which gather about an endangered artisan food. Presidia link like-minded producers to develop a Protocol such as this document, which seeks to:

- Identify and describe the food
- Verify the authenticity of ingredients
- Define the parameters of the production process
- Ascertain the means by which the food's ingredients and habitats of production may be perpetually sustainable
- Develop relevant and diverse interventions to protect the food's future
- Advise on marketing channels to vouchsafe both the widespread enjoyment of the food, as well as the socio-economy of the producers' guild

In the development of this Protocol for the Irish Smoked Wild Atlantic Salmon Presidium, the authors have added another aspect to Protocol development, and that is the environment of joy and celebration which must attend efforts like these. This joy, like the taste of their smoked salmon, is indelible and unforgettable, and will surely hasten their efforts for success.

Introductory Notes

- ★ This document has been prepared by Mark Boyden, StreamScapes Project Director with the Coomhola Salmon Trust, Ltd., Bantry, County Cork, Ireland, in collaboration with the four producers and founder-members of the Irish Smoked Wild Atlantic Salmon Presidium (ISWAS); Sally Barnes (Woodcock Smokery, Castletownshend, County Cork), Anthony Creswell (Ummera Smoked Products, Ltd., Timoleague, County Cork), Peter Dunn (Dunn's Seafare, Dublin), and Frank Hederman (Hederman Belvelly Smokehouse, Cobh, County Cork), to whom appreciation is expressed.
- ★ Gracious acknowledgement is extended to Regina Sexton for use of her historical and recipe notes on Irish wild smoked salmon as published in *Slow Food Magazine*, October 2002. Regina Sexton is a food historian, food writer and cook based in County Cork, Ireland. She has published widely at both an academic and popular level. She is author of *A Little History of Irish Food*, which has been made into an eight-part television series by RTÉ in 2002. Currently she is food writer with the *Irish Examiner*.
- ★ Appreciation is extended to Febvre & Company, Sandymount, Dublin, for financial support in the publication of this Protocol, and to Monica Murphy of Febvre for contributing the Appendix on matching wines with wild Irish smoked salmon.
- ★ ISWAS furthermore wishes to thank John McKenna for contributing Tasting Notes in the section on smoked salmon Organoleptics. Together with Darina Allen and Carmel Somers, they constituted the inaugural Slow Food Ireland Tasting Panel, convened at Carmel's "Good Things" Restaurant in Durrus, County Cork, to sample the four artisans' product.
- ★ Production of this Protocol would not have been possible without the good counsel and support of Anya Fernald of Slow Food International.
- ★ The production aspects of this document conform to the Slow Food template "Presidia Protocol for Fish Products".
- ★ Design by Axis Digital Media Ltd. www.axisdm.com
- ★ Cover photo by Mike Brown (www.mikebrownphotography.com)
- ★ Coomhola Salmon Trust, Ltd., of Bantry, County Cork, Republic of Ireland, is the creator of the "*StreamScapes*" salmon and aquatic environmental education programme (www.streamscapes.org).
- ★ All otherwise uncredited material © Mark Boyden and ISWAS Producer-Members 2002, 2003, 2004.

~ To Dr Ken Whelan, President, North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organisation -
the Compleat Salmon Guru ~

~ For Carlo Petrini, Patron extraordinaire ~

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Foreword

I think that the greatest potential benefit of Slow Food Presidia lies in the opportunity to change the language in which artisan food production is discussed by the authorities. This first completed Irish Presidia Protocol, on Irish wild smoked salmon, has been used by Mark Boyden to discuss, consider and celebrate the wild fish and the skills of the fish smokers in a most eulogistic fashion. I believe that this is the first vital step towards commencing a new attitude, a new vision, on the part of the authorities. With this document we have begun the task of redefinition; remove the language that creates the perception of a problem, and you begin to remove the attitude that insists there is a problem. I congratulate Mark Boyden and the producer members of the Irish Smoked Wild Atlantic Salmon Presidium on the production of this Protocol, and wish them all the best in their efforts to conserve their beloved species, and in their pursuit of gastronomic excellence.

*John McKenna
Durrus, County Cork
2004*

Introduction

As with all fruit, salmon is not there to pluck on just any day of the year. She gathers and schools off of the coasts of Ireland in June and July, homeward bound from frigid north Atlantic waters. Then she disperses, each to find the stream out of which she arose several years before. Along the coastline, in estuaries, and up into the rivers she moves during summer, to alternately lay contemplative in pools during low water, and then to uncoil her immense power and move upstream during floods, vaulting cascades on her way to spawn when winter comes again.

In June and July also, according to their nature, people catch a portion of the salmon along its journey. Fresh salmon on the plate is one thing, but to conserve this passing bounty, to serve in another season, represents the origins of the salmon smoker's art.

Here we concern ourselves with the produce of four principle Irish wild salmon smokers who have developed and contributed their own individual efforts in the natural evolution of their living tradition, and pay tribute to the wondrous salmon resource upon which they depend. It is somehow fitting and proper that Slow Food is now celebrating their craft with the inclusion of Irish Smoked Wild Atlantic Salmon in the wider context of International Presidia. Elevation of this product to the Slow Food "Ark of Taste" offers producers, consumers and lovers of wild salmon new hope that Slow Food's focus upon this resource will assist in the wider efforts to conserve this magnificent creature, and vouchsafe the enjoyment of wild smoked salmon as an archetype of Slow principles.

Mark Boyden

Pol a Mhuilin

Coomhola

Bantry, County Cork

October 2004

Irish Smoked Wild Atlantic Salmon - Background on the Resource

This Protocol celebrates the work of the producers of the wild smoked salmon delicacy in Ireland. Though only several in number, it is a tradition that rests in the safe hands of people like Sally, Anthony, Peter, and Frank, and there is no immediate fear that the discipline and method of their craft will disappear in the foreseeable future. However, this is in contrast with the status of the wild resource upon which they depend. Hence the following serves as an introduction to the miracle and wonder of the salmon and her life cycle, and a glimpse into the challenges that have rendered her extinct in many continental rivers and now threaten her in Ireland.

In winter, hail and snow whiten the mountains and hills of Ireland. With water temperatures hovering near 0°C, ice may be found around calm eddies in upland streams. At this time, when migratory birds have flown south, and trees stand dormant in the northwest wind, there is a quickening in the gravels in the depths of these streams, which sows the seeds for years to come. Larval aquatic insects (such as mayfly, stonefly, and caddis) are busy eating the woody debris (rotting leaves, bark, etc.), which lies on the stream floor, preparing for emergence (and source of juvenile salmon nutrition!) the following summer. But now, in the cold current, salmon pair off, moving up into the riffle from the pools in which they have lain. The female salmon, nose to the current, twists onto her side. With great thrusts of her tail, she draws gravel from the streambed up into the flow which, as it is swept to the downstream side, opens a furrow in the gravel, creating a most unlikely nest. Then, with the male swimming slowly beside and upstream of her, he releases his milt and this mixes with and fertilises the pinkish orange pea-sized ova that she is depositing in the cold hard gravel. Finally, she returns to lift gravel once again with her tail, just upstream of the furrow, to fill it in, burying the eggs and completing the *redd*, or salmon's nest.

The fertilised ova rest in the gravel bed of the stream, incubating through the short days and long nights of the winter. As the days lengthen (traditionally around St. Patrick's Day, 17th March), the tiny *alevins* (baby salmon) emerge from their shell

but remain sheltered in the gravel, slowly absorbing the embryonic sac with which they are born. By May, they have formed into recognisably tiny fish (*fry*), with developed fins and the appearance of scales. As the water warms, the season opens and life emerges. The juvenile salmon *fry* dart in and out from the stony streambed and begin sampling larval and adult insects, crustaceans and zooplankton. *Fry* are themselves subject to heavy predation, and many of them become food for other aquatic and riparian species, including eels, heron, otters, kingfishers, as well as other salmon and trout. As the survivors grow, they spread out along the river, and by autumn they have become parr (5-7cm long), occupying any suitable habitat that offers them sheltered concealment (under instream *woody debris*, or within the *bubble curtains* of waterfalls), and access to food. In winter their metabolism slows, and with it their appetite and activity. If the *parr* has found enough to eat during the summer months, it will become a *smolt* by the following Spring. Rivers have varying capacities to produce feeding for young salmon...smoltification may take one to three years; the rule of thumb is that salmon smoltify in the Spring after they reach 10cm in length. During *smoltification* young salmon become silvery and undergo physiological changes that prepare them for life in salt water. Over several nights in the Spring, all of a river's smolts run down to the tide, to spend some days in the estuary until they become fully adjusted to the saline environment. They then begin their journey through the seas to access nutritional resources which far exceed those found in the river. In the north Atlantic, as far as the coast of Greenland, they feed upon oil-rich, smaller species such as capelin, krill and sand eel. After one or two years in this marine environment, they answer the inner call that compels them to undertake the return journey to the Irish coast and to enter the mouth of their river of origin. As they travel, predators, including seals and man, diminish their numbers.

Re-entering fresh water, an anorexic mechanism sets in and, though they may be in the river for months before spawning, they will fast and survive off of their stored fat reserves. This is nature's way of avoiding the territorial competition and predation of younger fish which hungry mature salmon would present in the river. Over the summer and autumn, the salmon move upstream in times of higher flow, resting in deep pools when water levels slacken. Winter fastens the Salmon in to shivering dance, sowing seed in endless circle, often in the very gravel beds where they themselves hatched. This moment, of salmon spawning in the coldest and

darkest of days, is the end, and the beginning, of another cycle; a cycle that has happened annually in streams since salmon moved back into Ireland as the last Ice Age ended ten to twelve thousand years ago.

In our time, the numbers of salmon have greatly diminished. Humans eventually followed salmon to Ireland after the ice receded. Over millennia, salmon came to figure widely in society in terms of nutrition and economics, and the salmon's perennial wisdom (and *anadromous* nature: knowledge of the river and the sea) became a powerful symbol for poets and philosophers. A balance was struck, and though salmon were exploited, salmon populations (given normal swings) are presumed to have remained stable until the advent of the Industrial Age. However, these populations have been diminishing at an accelerating rate since that time they have been decimated from their former range in Britain and on the Continent from the Baltic to the Bay of Biscay, and they are nearly extinct in North America. Salmon are very fussy about their homes (*habitats*)...they favour sparkling water tumbling over crisp gravels in the dappled light of a diverse riparian zone. For nutrition, they depend upon a suite of organisms that share their requirement for pristine environment. But, without knowing it, many of our activities alter salmon habitats (both fresh and marine) beyond recognition, and she leaves us.

Hence the salmon today remains a symbol, a proof of the status of its inland and marine environments. There are poets who suggest that *salmon* represents the soul of our landscape. If we lose our salmon, do we lose our soul? If not our soul, we would certainly lose the joy of knowing that these magical creatures share our land- and sea-scapes, and there would furthermore be no more access to the exquisite taste of the Irish smoked wild Atlantic salmon as created by the four Irish producers whose art we celebrate in the development of this protocol.

Presidia Protocol for Irish Smoked Wild Atlantic Salmon

[From the Slow Food template "Presidia Protocol for Fish Products"]

Section A: General Data

- I. Name of Product: IRISH SMOKED WILD ATLANTIC SALMON
- II. Name of Product in Regional Dialect(s): BRÁDAN DEATAITHE
- III. Commercial Classification: Scientific Name of Primary Material:
SALMO SALAR
- IV. Association that Promotes the Presidium:
IRISH SMOKED WILD ATLANTIC SALMON PRESIDUM
COOMHOLA SALMON TRUST, LTD., BANTRY, CO. CORK, IRELAND
- V. Zone or Region of Production:
IRELAND
- VI. Presidium Reference Person:
MARK BOYDEN (STREAMSCAPES)
- VII. Local Slow Food Convivium Leaders:
CLODAGH MCKENNA, ALAN & VALERIE KINGSTON,
WEST CORK CONVIVUM
SLOW FOOD IRELAND

Section B: Product Description

1. Historical Background:

Salmon and Ireland easily reside in the same sentence. Though depending upon some conjecture, it is safe to assume that smoking surplus salmon catch is an Irish tradition that reaches back at least hundreds, if not thousands of years. Regina Sexton, the food historian and writer, has written of the salmon smoking tradition in Ireland. She refers to evidence and anecdote which indicate the antiquarian origins of the practice, commencing with "the earliest site for the settlement of people in Ireland is Mount Sandal in County Derry on the north eastern tip of the country, and it is highly probable that its early Mesolithic inhabitants were smoking their surplus stocks of salmon from as early as 7000BC. Professor Peter Woodman, who excavated the site in the 1970's, has suggested that the glut of salmon taken from the spring and summer runs were such that not all could be consumed fresh and so successful preservation techniques must have been employed to keep this oily and nutritious fish for the hungry winter months. In the absence of salt or any trade in salt, he concludes that surplus salmon stocks were smoke-dried over wood fires thus making smoked salmon one of Ireland's oldest and most important food resources." Regina continues, "By the Late Medieval Period, Ireland had developed a thriving export industry in cured fish supplying both English and Continental markets. Both wet and dry-cured salmon, hake, ling, cod, haddock and whiting together with heavily-smoked red herrings and smoked sardines were leaving the country in staggering quantities." In homesteads, Regina refers to salmon being "smoked to achieve additional flavour", and "suspended from the kitchen rafters, in the same fashion as salted bacon or else hung in the chimney where it was incidentally smoked from turf or wood burning fires." Regina quotes from the 1829 diary of Humphrey O'Sullivan: "We had for dinner fresh cod's head, salt ling softened by steeping, smoke-dried salmon and fresh trout with fragrant cheese and green cabbage." Finally, she cites Monica Sheridan's account of the resourcefulness of fishermen smoking a salmon over a pot containing a smouldering sod of turf while at sea: "Eaten straight from the pot it was quite delicious, but left to get cold and set, it was without peer..."

II. Description of the connection between the product and the area of production:

One of the features of salmon which makes it unique is the connection that it has with both freshwater and the sea. Hatching in freshwater, it spends its juvenile life (1-3 years) in rivers (which may even run past salmon smoker's premises!) before heading to the sea to commence an epic journey (taking in several thousand miles) up into the north Atlantic, before returning to the Irish coast. The salmon smokers, who naturally reside near the sea, purchase a portion of the catch. The connection therefore is based on the fact that salmon, being a wild creature, arises from and returns to the area of production.

III. Role that the Presidium Product has in the socio-economy of the region of production:

Smoked wild salmon plays a direct economic role in the livelihoods of:

- a) fisherfolk who catch them, by being paid for their catch by the salmon smokers,
- b) salmon smokers themselves, who earn their livelihoods from the sale of their product;
- c) retailing victuallers;
- d) discerning restaurateurs who specify the wild. artisan product.

By being closely associated with the romance and cuisine of the Irish coast, the smoked wild salmon product furthermore plays a wider, indirect socio-economic role within the region of production. Though perhaps difficult to quantify, these properties, and the reputation of the product, would contribute to regional tourism, promoting widespread local benefit.

IV. Rapport between those who procure primary materials and those who prepare and package product:

As with any liaison between primary producer/supplier and processor, there exists a dynamic interdependent relationship linking salmon fisherman with salmon

smoker. The one wishes to charge the maximum, the other wants to pay the minimum, with the final price & handshake reflecting the wonders of human transaction. Apart from this bartering, the modern Irish salmon fisherman is largely responsive to the raw product quality specification that is prescribed by the salmon smoker (e.g., bleeding and icing of freshly caught fish, etc.).

V. Product traceability:

Commercial salmon fishermen are licensed. Licensed fishermen are issued with coded tags which must be affixed to every salmon caught. Log books must be kept to record the weights of each boat's daily landings. Dealers must also keep logs, recording each tag number and the date of processing/ removal of tags, ensuring direct traceability back to the boat which caught any given salmon.

Section C: Fish Type & Fishing

I. Exact Type of Fish:

Wild Atlantic Salmon (*salmo salar*)

II. Method used for fishing:

The two principle methods for the commercial catch of salmon are:

- a) Drift-Netting: this involves the setting of nets in the sea, within six miles of the coastline (determined by law), with minimal or no anchoring to the sea bed (hence *drift*). The nets depend upon a weighted line upon the bottom of the net and floats along the top line to give it shape. Salmon become enmeshed in the net, the nets are emptied of their catch into the boat and the catch landed.
- b) Draft-Netting: This is undertaken in estuaries and river mouths as the salmon prepare to "run" into the river. With one end on the shore, a boat is often used in assisting to "pay" out the net and to leave it for

some time. When activity is spotted (motion in the net) it is hauled ashore (sometimes in a "Seine", or circular motion) and the catch is removed from the net.

III. Natural habitat of fish:

The Atlantic Salmon occupies several niche habitats in both fresh water and marine environments during the course of its life-cycle (see above for salmon life-cycle). All share the same underlying conditions of oxygen-rich, nutrient-poor, cold (0° - 15°C) waters (*oligotrophic*). For this reason the status of *salmon* populations serves as an extremely useful *bio-indicator* of local environmental quality (i.e., if environment deteriorates, salmon perish quickly). Over the course of their lives, salmon depend on the following chronologically sequenced habitats:

A) Freshwater Habitats

During the freshwater side of the Atlantic Salmon's lifecycle, she depends upon distinct habitat variations which are present in all, natural-run streams and rivers. She does not require a surfeit of feeding; she will turn to the sea to seek resources sufficient to gain the bodyweight necessary to reproduce. What she absolutely requires, and the key ingredients of suitable freshwater salmon habitat, include: cool water unpolluted by nutrients, chemicals, toxins, or silts; banks stabilised by mature native deciduous riparian trees (which provide shade/shelter and contribute leaf-fall and "woody debris", which are the primary energy source for instream food webs - at the "top" of which is *salmon*); natural stream continuum vertically (changing depths) and laterally (meander); and, diversity and integrity of gravel/stone/boulder substrates (for sheltering as a juvenile, and spawning as an adult).

- 1) High quality "*Riffle*": After spawning, salmon ova incubate and hatch out in silt-free, stream substrate gravels (2cm - 9cm diameter) in c. 30cm-75cm depth of pristine (oligotrophic) waters with a flow of 30cm - 50cm/second.
- 2) "*Glide*": After absorbing embryonic sac and growing through their first Spring and Summer, salmon *fry* (3cm - 5cm) and parr (5cm - 12cm),

become ever more territorial in their feeding and sheltering stations, and begin to spread out into *glide* areas neighbouring their riffle nurseries. *Glides* may be characterised as being somewhat deeper (60cm – 150cm) and having a slower flow (20cm – 40cm/sec) than *riffles*.

- 3) "*Pool*": As pre-smolts (c. 10cm – 15cm), before heading to sea, juvenile salmon may move into pools, which are the deepest areas and have the slowest currents in any given river. Here, as they are now larger and very attractive prey to their range of predators (which include otters, herons, and cormorants) they may find shelter and feed opportunistically off of larval invertebrates which are swept into the pool by the flow and, when they are confident, perhaps leap into the air to snare a fly passing over the water.

B) Marine Habitats

The evolution of the *anadromous* (fish which live in both fresh and salt water, breeding in freshwater) nature of salmon may be viewed as a survival strategy. Freshwater offers the calmer, sheltered breeding and nursery environment but lacks sufficient nutrition to achieve the fat reserves that enable copious breeding. Salmon head to the sea to source this nutrition.

- 1) Estuarine and Coastal Waters; moving out of the river and into the sea, juvenile salmon spend some time in the brackish mix, adjusting to the new saline environment. Here they also commence sampling marine food resource, including shrimp.
- 2) Open Ocean: As a salmon leaves the Irish coast behind, she swims up along the Faeroes and into the North Atlantic as far as the coast of Greenland to avail of the rich fish resources, including capelin, krill, sand eel, and shrimp (the latter's carotene content imparts the pinkish-orange colour to the mature salmon). She is as dependent upon the integrity of this deep marine environment as she is upon the tiny mountain stream she may have hatched in. It is here where she acquires the nutritional value (lacking in freshwater) that will enable her to grow to between 3kg and 15kg and support her as she is moved to return to her coastline and her river on becoming gravid.

IV. Fishing Season

The Irish Atlantic Salmon sea fishing season is currently limited to Monday through Thursday, inclusive, between 1st June and 31st July. The hours of fishing permitted are Monday, 06:00 – 21:00; Tuesday through Thursday, 04:00 – 21:00. If the boats cannot go out to sea due to bad weather on any of these days, they are permitted one 'safety' day per week. Regional quotas have been introduced (in 2002) around the Irish coastline in the interests of conservation of the resource, which mean that a limited number of tags are issued for each region. When tags are exhausted, the region's season is effectively over. (Note: These byelaws, and their implications for salmon stocks and coastal zone socio-economy, are under constant review and subject to change).

V. Conservation of fish after catching (how fish are conserved when it is on the boat, and how long they are kept that way):

With Drift netting, after the nets have drifted for a period of time (depending on how tidal flow affects them, the possible threat of seal predation, and the skill of the skipper), the nets are hauled into the boats, and the fish are removed from the nets. They are immediately placed into containers of ice and the fish are landed each evening. The fish are therefore less than 12 hours dead when they are delivered/collected by the dealer or processor, hence in the best possible condition. In the interests of promoting higher quality (and added value) for the primary resource, Bord Iascaigh Mhëara (BIM, the Irish State Agency for developing and promoting marine fisheries) and the Regional Fisheries Boards have published guidelines for the bleeding and icing of salmon at point of capture.

VI. Conservation of fish on land (how fish is conserved once it is off boat, and how long it is kept that way):

The fish are landed in ice, delivered to the dealer/processor in ice, and either held in cool rooms until processed, or blast-frozen for processing later in the year. Some salmon smokers, faced with a large number of fish (requiring several days work to process) also 'glaze' the fish after the initial blast-freezing, which further helps to conserve it safely (the glazing process involves the whole, ungutted fish being dipped in or sprayed with fresh water after blast-freezing to form a coating of ice, protecting the fish from dehydration whilst in cold storage). If the fish is to be frozen before smoking, the freezing takes place within 24 hours of landing.

VII. Laws and regulations that specifically affect the procurement of the primary materials:

All commercial fishermen and dealers are licensed under the Fisheries Acts (of the Republic of Ireland) 1959 to 2000, which furthermore allow for the enactment of byelaws that are deemed necessary from time to time.

Section D: Production (& Organoleptic)

1. Specific identifying characteristics of the primary materials:

- a. Physical: A fresh sea-run salmon may be recognised by the pristine condition and the bright silver flanks (see illustration below). Fish straight from salt water have loose, easily detached scales and many carry sea lice. Male salmon have a more developed lower jaw (kype) than the females. For further salmo salar identification see:

<http://www.streamscapes.org/site/streamscape/river/salmon/recog/recog.html>



A fresh sea run Atlantic Salmon (image from www.streamscapes.org).

- b. **Organoleptic:** Here we hint at the organoleptic properties of Irish Smoked Wild Atlantic Salmon. First the eminent Irish food critic and journalist John McKenna describes a tasting by the Slow Food Ireland Taste Panel. This is followed by a collection of terms which trace the parameters of the taste experience of wild smoked salmon. It is not intended to be exhaustive, but rather indicative of the broad spectrum of sensations evoked by the wild product. The reader is encouraged to sample the product and add to this list.

ISWAS Organoleptic Assessment, 24th June 2003: The tasting panel of Carmel Somers, chef-proprietor, Good Things Café, Durrus, County Cork, Ireland; Darina Allen, principal, Ballymaloe Cookery School; John McKenna, Slow Food Presidia co-ordinator, author of the Bridgestone Guides, was abetted by Stephen Markwick, formerly chef-proprietor, Markwick's Restaurant, Bristol, and Mark Boyden, Co-ordinator of the ISWAS Presidia:

Ummera Smokehouse (Anthony Creswell)

Ummera salmon is brined, rather than dry-salted. The smoking system uses a variant of the Torry kiln. The wood used by the smokehouse is oak. Raw cane sugar is used in the cure. The colour was described as peachy, and pale-orange. The veining was very regular, with no hint of fattiness in the veins. The smoke aroma was faint, with a suggestion of kipper and oak wood. The texture was described as moist and soft, somewhat creamy. The taste was described as sweet, mild, buttery, and the salmon was praised by three tasters for its long aftertaste.

Woodcock Smokery (Sally Barnes)

Woodcock salmon is dry-salted. The smoking system uses a variant of the Torry kiln. The wood used by the smokehouse is oak. The fish had a pale, coral-orange colour, with a glossy sheen. The veining had no fat and was consistent and uniform. The smell exhibited notes of floral character, with a subdued smoke character underpinned by a note of oak. The texture was described as meaty and tightly-knit, yet soft in the mouth. The taste was described as smooth, with a suggestion of whiskey cask, along with sea salt, and melting butter. The aftertaste was long and elegant.

Dunn's of Dublin (Peter Dunn)

Dunn's salmon is dry-salted. The smoking system uses a variant of the Torry kiln. The wood used by the smokehouse is oak. The fish had a shiny, orangey colour, with smoke-darkening at the edges. Aromas of smoke were more pronounced than with the other fish, and there were petrol-like notes suggestive of Riesling wine aromas. Veining was perfect and regular. The texture was distinctly dry, firm, and yet soft in the mouth. The taste had a vaguely asparagus-like, slightly green note; others suggested a prevalent nuttiness, mainly hazelnuts, with a note of lemon zest.

Belvelly Smokehouse (Frank Hederman)

Belvelly salmon is dry-salted. The smoking system is a hand built smokehouse, with the salmon sides hanging in the circulating smoke. The wood used by the smokehouse is beech. The colour was deep orange, almost tangerine. The veining was consistent and uniform, the white veins contrasting against the dark colour of the fish. The smoke aromas were also the most pronounced, with a kippery forcefulness and a beech wood sweetness. The texture was described as creamy, yet firm, with a muscularity that gave a toothy resistance. The taste was mineral-rich, with mushroom and woodland notes and a hint of tar from the smoking-method.



Carmel Somers, Darina Allen, John McKenna, and Mark Boyden tasting smoked wild Irish salmon in Carmel's "Good Things" Restaurant in Durrus, County Cork, in July 2003.

WILD SMOKED ATLANTIC SALMON ORGANOLEPTIC PARAMETERS

Colour / Appearance	Smell	Texture	Taste
Coral	Oak	Firm	Salty
Pink	Kippers	Bite	Mineral
Pale	Sea	Flabby	Oak
Peachy	Beech	Melting	Nutty
Dull	Wood	Soft	Sweet
Shiny	Rancid	Creamy	Smooth
Fat veins	Petrol	Flaky	Fruity
Coral red	Fishy	Buttery	Fishy
Rose pink	Light	Moist	Oily
Translucent	Strong	Dry	Fungi/Mushroomy
Opaque	Smoke	Tough	Acidic
Day Glow Orange	Nutty	Slimy	Metallic
Mouldy	Oily		
Pleasing	Tough		
Disagreeable	Chewy		
	Floral		
	Metallic		
	Sweet		

II. Specific identifying characteristics of the product:

- a. Objective characteristics that add value to the product:

The smoking process adds value to the salmon product by the enhancement of flavour (or rather, the creation of an entirely new flavour), and increased shelf life.

- b. Nutritional aspects:

It is widely acknowledged that fish are an extremely beneficial element in human diet. Wild Atlantic Salmon is acknowledged as containing significant levels of the important Omega-3 constituent.

- c. Nutritional Analysis: Salmon is an excellent and nutritional product. It is protein-rich and contains plenty of omega-3 fatty acids and is rich in the fat-soluble vitamins A and D. It also has a high content of the water-soluble vitamins B12 and pyridoxine (please refer to Nutritional Chart following).

SALMON - NUTRITIONAL VALUE

VITAMINS		µg/100 g	MINERALS AND TRACE ELEMENTS		mg/100 g
Vitamin A		22	Sodium (Na)		57
Vitamin D		8	Potassium (K)		441
Vitamin B12		4	Calcium (Ca)		12
		mg/100 g	Iron (Fe)		0.4
Vitamin E		0.6–4.0	Selenium (Se)		0.03
Thiamine		0.21	Zinc (Zn)		0.4
Riboflavin		0.14	Manganese (Mn)		0.01
Niacin		8.2	Magnesium (Mg)		28
Pantothenic acid		1.3	Phosphorus (P)		245
Pyridoxine		0.9	Copper (Cu)		0.04
			Cholesterol		66
			.		.
AMINO ACIDS		g/100 g	FATTY ACIDS		%
Aspartic acid (ASP)		1.9	14:0		4.0–7.0
Threonine (Thr)		0.9	16:0		12.0–14.0
Serine (Ser)		0.8	16:1*		4.0–7.0
Glutamic acid (Glu)		3.0	18:0		2.0–3.0
Proline (Pro)		0.7	18:1*		15.0–18.0
Glycine (Gly)		0.9	18:2 omega 6		4.4
Alanine (Ala)		1.4	18:3 omega 3		0.5–2.5
Valine (Val)		1.1	18:4 omega 3		0.5–2.5
Methionine (Met)		0.6	20:1*		5.0–14.0
Isoleucine (Ile)		1.1	20:4 omega 3		1.0–2.0
Leucine (Leu)		1.7	20:4 omega 6		0.2–1.0
Tyrosine (Tyr)		0.7	20:5 omega 3		4.0–10.0
Phenylalanine (Phe)		1.0	22:1*		4.0–15.0
Lysine (Lys)		1.7	22:5 omega 3		1.5–5.0
Histidine (His)		0.8	22:6 omega 3		7.0–15.0
Arginine (Arg)		1.3	Total saturated		18,0-24,0
Tryptophan (Trp)		0.2	Total mono-saturated		28,0-54,0
.			Total omega 3		12,5-37,0
			Total omega 6		2,2,-17,0
			g omega 3/100g		1,0-4,0

[Source: <http://www.seafood.no>]

III. Specific identifying characteristics of production:

a. Description of the production process:

All preparation for the smoking of the salmon carcass is by hand, and it is the variation in practice from one smoker to another that lifts the process into the status of a craft, enabling us to savour the pleasing distinctions of taste between producers. The essential preparatory tasks are the filleting and salting of the salmon. Some producers dry-salt the sides, some use a brine. One adds a small amount of raw cane sugar to the brine as an ameliorator. Salting bestows firmer texture and, along with the smoking itself, acts as a preservative, thus increasing shelf life. The processor closely observes each individual fish. Fats in the flesh inhibit the speed of salt uptake, hence each individual salmon is treated differently. The sides are removed in rotation depending on their size and fat content, and rinsed in fresh clean water to remove excess salt.

After salting and filleting, the salmon are placed on racks or trays, or hung through the "lug bone" (operculum), and gently smoked at temperatures between 20°C and 30°C. Care must be taken not to exceed the latter value, as the flesh will be cooked, which not alone denatures the proteins but furthermore introduces the possibility of stimulating bacterial growth. *Cold smoking*, as this process is called, assists in giving a longer shelf life for the product, compared to hot smoking, which is effectively cooking. There is no hard and fast time of process at the smoking stage, as the ambient humidity affects the drying of the pellicle (surface) and the entire side (though temperature-controlled kilns regulate this variable with some smokers). Again, the length of smoking time is determined by the judgement of the smoker and the nature of each fish. The smoke is produced by a low-aerobic combustion of hardwoods. Some producers prefer oak (various Irish *quercus*), others prefer beech (*fagus sylvatica*). Following several hours in the smoke, sides of salmon are removed. Some producers pin-bone them by hand at this stage (others have done this before), and trim the skin edges back, to make it easier for the customer to slice their own sides. If pin-boning has been done at this stage, the sides are returned to the kilns to dry off the surfaces where small holes have been made by the boning process.

b. Techniques and processes that make this product 'traditional':

The origins of salting and smoking game and meat lie in the desire to preserve food into another season when its fresh counterpart is unavailable. It is a long-standing tradition in Ireland and indeed in many parts of the world (see Section B, Part 1). Salt and smoke (together with the low-moisture environment in the smoked salmon) combine to inhibit bacterial growth (and therefore spoilage) and impart the extraordinary flavours of smoked salmon. The "handmade" techniques employed by the producers who are cited by this Protocol represent a further conservation of traditional method.

c. Specific production techniques that define this Presidium:

- Exclusive use of sea-caught Wild Atlantic Salmon for the process
- Additives restricted to the use of salt, hardwood smoke, and, occasionally, raw cane sugar
- All operations within the process undertaken by hand (as opposed to machinery) and subject to the eye and judgement of the producer

d. Temperature:

20°C to 30°C

e. Times of smoking, ageing, storing:

Varies with individual producer.

f. Drying:

Varies with individual producer.

g. Salting:

Varies with individual producer (either dry-salted or brine-soaked).

- h. Use of vinegar, salt, fats, or marinades:

Added ingredients restricted to salt, woodsmoke, and raw cane sugar.

- i. Detailed description of the materials and tools that come into contact with the product:

Stainless steel and food grade plastics surfaces and containers. Stainless steel knives.

- j. Rooms and spaces important to the various phases of the process: production, preparation, conservation, and packaging :

As required by various European Union directives and Irish laws (including EU 493/94, I.S No. 170/1996, and I.S. 342/1997) smokeries should have the following distinct areas (rooms):

Goods inwards (raw product)	Packing room
Cool room	Dispatching room
Heading and gutting area	Goods out cool room
Filleting area	Dry Store room for Salt & Sawdust
Preparation area	Chemical cleaners store room
Smoking room	Packaging store

There is further requirement for hand washing facilities, insectocutors, zones of separation (raw and finished), changing rooms and facilities for staff, and fire safety

certificates in place for the premises. All materials are to be of food grade stainless steel or plastic. Working room temperature should be 10°C, with Chill Rooms to be kept between 1°C and 4°C.

Section E: Sale

a. Commercialisation (packaging, labelling, and sale):

Once smoked, the Smoked Salmon is chilled prior to either slicing or vacuum packing. If the product is to be sliced, it is trimmed and all bones such as pin bones are removed. It can be sliced and laid back onto the skin, or packed into specific size packs either by the number of slices or by weight.

After Vacuum packing, a process which removes the air from within the bag or pouch before sealing the bag, the smoked salmon is weighed and labelled and held in a chill room until required for despatch. Each side will carry a code which will enable the side to be traced back to a particular batch, and from there back to the day it was smoked and even the boat which caught it.

The labelling laws require the producers to state that the salmon is "Caught in the sea" and requires the location of the catch. The Best before Date is normally 21 days from smoking, though this of course may be extended by freezing the smoked product.

b. Different types of products:

This protocol refers exclusively to wild smoked salmon.

c. Production potential:

As a wild resource, salmon catch can go through a wide variation in numbers of fish caught annually. Threatened freshwater and marine habitats have produced a downward trend in the numbers of salmon available. The quota for 2002 was a total of 220,000 fish, but only a small percentage is destined for smoking.

d. Availability of products in local market:

Wild smoked salmon is available throughout Ireland in Restaurants, Hotels, Shops and Country Markets.

e. Market (local, foreign):

Smoked wild salmon may be sourced internationally through specialty dealers, distributors, and direct from the producers by direct mail or the Internet (see Producer Contacts Appendix).

f. Dishes based on product:

Regina Sexton comments:

"High quality Irish smoked wild salmon needs little in the way of adornment to deliver in taste and fine flavour. The golden rule for maximum enjoyment lies in the simple treatment of this delicate product. To begin with, the fish must never be served direct from the fridge because this cold environment will blur and distort the flavour. Allow a chilled glass of white wine to provide in terms of coolness. Always serve the fish at room temperature and slice as thinly as possible, or to taste, cutting across the grain, with your longest sharpest working knife. Opinions vary, but many recommend cutting from the tail in the direction of the head while holding your knife at an acute angle.

Carefully produced smoked salmon should bring a firm and dry feel to the palate together with a melt-in-the-mouth quality. On any plate smoked salmon is really the star of the show and it hates to be up-staged by superfluous additions. It makes a good partnership with equally traditional simple Irish products – brown soda bread spread with creamy Irish butter. A squeeze of lemon will coax the flavours further and some opt for a twist of freshly ground black pepper.

Smoked salmon as an accompaniment to a salad of new season baby potatoes moistened with good olive oil and piqued with a dash of wine vinegar is heaven food. Decorate with a scattering of wood sorrel, if to hand in summer. Take on a

seaside or riverside picnic and you can wonder at the incredible story behind the source for this majestic product. On cold winter nights, when you want to look at a fire, smoked salmon makes a choosy pairing with a baked floury potato. Natural yoghurt seasoned with salt and black pepper and flavoured with a handful of chopped chives is good to soak through the floury ball of potato. Serve with pink slivers of wild smoked salmon.

Egg and smoked salmon dishes, for example baked egg tarts and quiches enlivened with smoked salmon, have also found favour while a dish of scrambled egg and smoked salmon slivers is almost a classic. This creamy flavoursome delight, when made with free-range, and, if possible, organic eggs, has the pleasant soothing appeal of uniting complimentary hues of colour, which sees the combination of the orange-pink of the salmon with the golden hue of the eggs – a sensual treat for both the eye and palate.

For something of a regional and location-specific dish nothing beats the combined tastes of the sea and the shore. Here's my simple Cork Seafood Combination: choose smoked wild salmon from one of the Cork producers, arrange as a central curl on the plate and surround with choice shellfish. Garnish with thin strips of dulce seaweed and lightly steamed and roughly chopped rock samphire. Serve with lemon wedges, homemade mayonnaise and brown soda bread.”

Appendix 1: Proposed Interventions

Slow Food, internationally and nationally, is concerned with the defence of biodiversity and, by extension, the conservation *of endangered artisan foods as well as the micro-economies and –ecologies within which they are produced.*

‘Presidia’ are the support structures devised by Slow Food to gather about a given endangered food, to determine interventions that will assist in securing its eco-friendly production in perpetuity. These interventions assume many shapes, chiefly in the form of various supports to producers including access to markets through wider publicity, Convivia-sponsored Tastings, and the focus of the biannual *Salone del Gusto*. Within the ISWAS Presidium, apart from wishing to see the highest gastronomic standards achieved for the continuing excellence of Irish Smoked Wild Atlantic Salmon, we are further concerned with:

- 1) The continuing decline of a unique wild species whose status reflects the quality of several aquatic environments and the manner in which we manage our landscapes;
- 2) The lack of a comprehensive commercial salmon fishing plan, which would secure a rational future for fisherfolk, smokehouses, and the many other salmon-related activities (restaurants, angling, eco-tourism, etc.) which hold such potential to revive Irish coastal communities.
- 3) The importance of relevant authorities, such as the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development and the Food Safety Authority of Ireland, working constructively with artisan producers to assist in delivering quality product with economically-feasible production infrastructure.

As indicated in this document, the Irish Wild Atlantic Salmon, upon which the smoked product depends, is a unique creature whose existence is dependent upon the widest possible range of environmental elements (across terrestrial freshwater, and extensive marine habitats). The enjoyment of Irish Smoked Wild Atlantic Salmon within the compass of our diets enables us to partake of and ponder this wonder. Furthermore, apart from assuming its place in the Slow Ark of Taste, the

socio-economic factors underlying its production have played a historic and integral role in the welfare of Irish coastal communities. In living memory there existed such a return of mature salmon to Irish shores that they were considered "uncountable". Now, as with so many other fish species, they have succumbed to environmental and over-fishing problems that have led to a decimation of their former numbers, with an enormous impact upon these coastal communities. A portion of the source of this problem has been the ongoing degradation of her freshwater habitats through a myriad of landscape management malpractices, too numerous to enumerate here. The other principle reason for diminishing salmon numbers is that, until recently, salmon harvest has been upon an *ad hoc* basis, with little true Planning and Management of the resource. At the heart of all of these challenges to salmon's sustainability is the widespread lack of general awareness about how our activities impact upon the salmon. Dr. Ken Whelan, of Ireland's Marine Institute, has called salmon "the canary in the mine" and, indeed, one would be hard pressed to find a better touchstone as proof of environmental quality...when your environment suffers, your salmon disappear; as you conserve and restore your environment, salmon return. The overriding concern here is that salmon are available to harvest by the grandchildren of the fisher folk of today, and that all of our grandchildren might enjoy the nutritional and organoleptic properties of artisan-smoked Irish Smoked Wild Atlantic Salmon.

Therefore, the Irish Smoked Wild Atlantic Salmon Presidium, concerned at the dwindling wild Atlantic Salmon resource, seek the following interventions as a codicil to this Protocol. Namely, that;

- 1) As the salmon is living proof of the integrity of multiple environments, and, as the quality of these several environments improves or deteriorates by the actions of all citizens, the Irish Government actively promotes widespread, general aquatic environmental education to equip citizens with knowledge of 'best-practice' principles in pursuit of livelihood, recreation, and domestic management, which would further assist in minimising our impacts upon salmon and in securing their perpetual existence.

- 2) To guarantee the sustainability of wild Atlantic Salmon for its own sake and furthermore as a commercial fishery in Ireland, the Irish Government:

- a) Realises the urgent need for investment in the development *and implementation* of a comprehensive salmon resource management plan which will secure perpetual prosperity across the wild salmon-related sector;
 - b) For the purposes of restoring water quality within the context of its obligations under the European Water Framework Directive (2000) and distinct River Basin District implementation, that Ireland resolve to achieve *salmonid-status, oligotrophic* waters as the standard for all of its inland and coastal waters as a matter of priority.
- 3) To promote the viability of artisan producers, the Department of Agriculture and Food, together with the Food Safety Authority Ireland and other competent bodies, work to develop economically achievable production safeguards appropriate for small producers.

Appendix 2: ISWAS Contacts

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Appendix 3: Choosing wines to accompany Irish Wild Smoked Salmon

(Contributed by Monica Murphy of Febvre & Co., Wine Importers, Dublin)

Smoked salmon, in general, is usually paired with the classic wines of France, such as Chablis, Meursault or other white Burgundies and Sancerre or Pouilly Fume from the Loire. Occasionally, especially when teamed with shellfish like crab or prawns, a young, zippy Muscadet sur Lie will please, with it's somewhat leesy character picking up the oak in the fish. Another French classic that works well is a very dry Savennieres, Chenin Blanc from the Loire, especially one that has some age. By the time the wine is four or five years old it begins to develop, instead of floral, honeysuckle and red apple characters, some apricot, nuts, orange-blossom and peach aromas, allied with a honeyed richness that could be intriguing. The one over-riding necessity is for the character of the wine to be assertive enough to overcome the strongish aromas and flavours of the salmon, but yet subtle enough to complement it rather than overpower it, especially the milder styles of Wild Atlantic Smoked Salmon. The second most important factor is acidity. There should be a generous helping of acidity, without being too sharp, in order to cut through the somewhat oily texture of the fish and leave the palate feeling fresh and clean. Certainly those classic wines will never come amiss with smoked salmon, but there are other, fascinating choices that can be made.

One example is the Sauvignon Gris, a very rare grape variety, which only grows in tiny patches in Bordeaux and here and there in Chile, where it is often mistaken for Sauvignonasse. It has all the crispness and aromatic directness of Sauvignon Blanc from Europe but to this can be added a distinctly spicy character giving it a special character of its own. At the Slow Food National weekend it was tasted with Irish Wild Atlantic Smoked Salmon and was a big talking point among the diners. Another wine that might well work in harmony with the stronger, more fleshy smoked salmon is the Conde de Valdemar White Rioja, fermented in new barriques. This wine has a smoky nuttiness and a smooth buttery mouth-feel, which will stand up well to the powerful flavours of the more robust styles of fish. The touch of oak and spice will match the oak and spice in the fish, with neither getting the upper hand. The grape variety here is 100% Viura.

A smooth, unoaked Chardonnay from the cool Pyrenees slopes in Somontano, Northern Spain, is a good match for the lighter, more delicate style of Salmon. Here, the undoubted smoothness, bright fruit, yet round, soft mouthfeel will set off the subtle flavours of the salmon to perfection...Enate 234 is just such a wine. Riesling is a wonderful and versatile variety which can be experimented with as a food match with endless possibilities. It is great fun, try it! Whether is a bone dry Trocken from the Mosel or a halb-trocken from the more earthy Rheingau, German Riesling will give a whole new salmon experience. Riesling works well with smoked food. An Alsace Riesling is a classic match but also try a Pinot Gris with its faintly rose-petal aromas for a real taste conundrum. However, Gewurztraminer is probably a no-no as its heavy, oily, perfumed character will fight like hell with the texture of the salmon and the acidity is too soft.

Rieslings from Australia or New Zealand will provide a zingy, condiment-like foil to the fish. Try Lawsons' Dry Hills from Marlborough or Gulf Station from De Bortoli in Australia.

And then there is Italy! The wonderful dry, unoaked styles from the Trentino-Alto Adige or Friuli-Venezia-Giulia are made to go with smoked fish. Alois Lageder in Alto Adige has some fine oaked and unoaked chardonnays as well a very full-bodied Pinot Grigio. Or there is the Verdicchio dei Castelli Jesi, Podium or the lighter Macrina, just begging to be paired with fish.

Rosés (France), Rosados (Spain) or Rosatos (Italy) are a natural partner for smoked salmon with the lovely bright pinky-orange hues perfectly reflecting the delectable flesh of the salmon. However, they should not be sweet like Rosé d'Anjou for instance and should be fairly well-endowed with alcohol. A rosé from Provence will fit the bill, as will the Enate Rosado from Spain which is 100% Cabernet Sauvignon.

And red? There is nothing to say that red wine does not go with smoked salmon but apart from a few light reds like Beaujolais crus or delicate reds like Bardolino, the oiliness of the salmon will fight with the tannins in a red-wine, jarring the senses somewhat. Ideally, a wine to go with Irish Smoked Wild Atlantic Salmon should perform the same function as the slice of lemon but of course adding a whole exciting and enjoyable experience as well.

From the above general rules, the following are some matches for the four members of the Irish Smoked Wild Atlantic Salmon Presidium:

Ummera Smokehouse: Here I would be inclined to use the unoaked Chardonnays, perhaps the Savennieres (Chenin Blanc) with a hint of oak, a fine Meursault or a bone-dry Sancerre.

Woodcock Smokery: A Pinot Grigio from Italy here, or the Verdicchio dei Castelli di Jesi to match the floral notes of the salmon. Also, unoaked Chardonnay should melt into the soft, buttery flavours of the fish. Also, a fine Pouilly Fume such as Chateau De Tracy would knife through the tightly-knit flesh.

Dunn's of Dublin: Possibly take up the Riesling theme here, but better still, the oak-fermented Rioja will stand up well to the more pronounced smokiness. Also, the Spanish Rosado could work very well here. The Chenin Blanc from the Loire, being honeyed, nutty and quite high in acidity would mirror those characteristics in the fish.

Belvelly Smokehouse: This is the one for the Sauvignon Gris from Chile, from Casa Silva, but equally, Loire or Bordeaux Sauvignon could work its magic with the crispness and definition so typical of Sauvignon from this region. Riesling, especially from the Southern Hemisphere with its richness and steely strength is another option.

Above all, be prepared to experiment, find what you like and pass on the tip!

Note: Febvre Et Company, of Sandyford, Dublin, are the primary sponsors of the Slow Food Irish Smoked Wild Atlantic Salmon (ISWAS) Presidium. Febvre is an Irish owned family business well known for their commitment to providing palates with an unrivalled range of excellent wines. These wines come from a large array of grower-producers, both big and small, who all share an unswerving desire to uphold the traditions of good taste and cultured lifestyle for which family-owned vineyards are renowned. The Febvre philosophy centres around building strong relationships with both their suppliers and their customers.



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Appendix 4: Salmon Life - Cycle

In Ireland, the salmon is referred to as the "Salmon of Knowledge", and holds a revered place in the mythology and folklore of the island. This is partly due to the salmon's anadromous nature, meaning that she has knowledge of both the fresh-water and marine worlds in the course of her life.

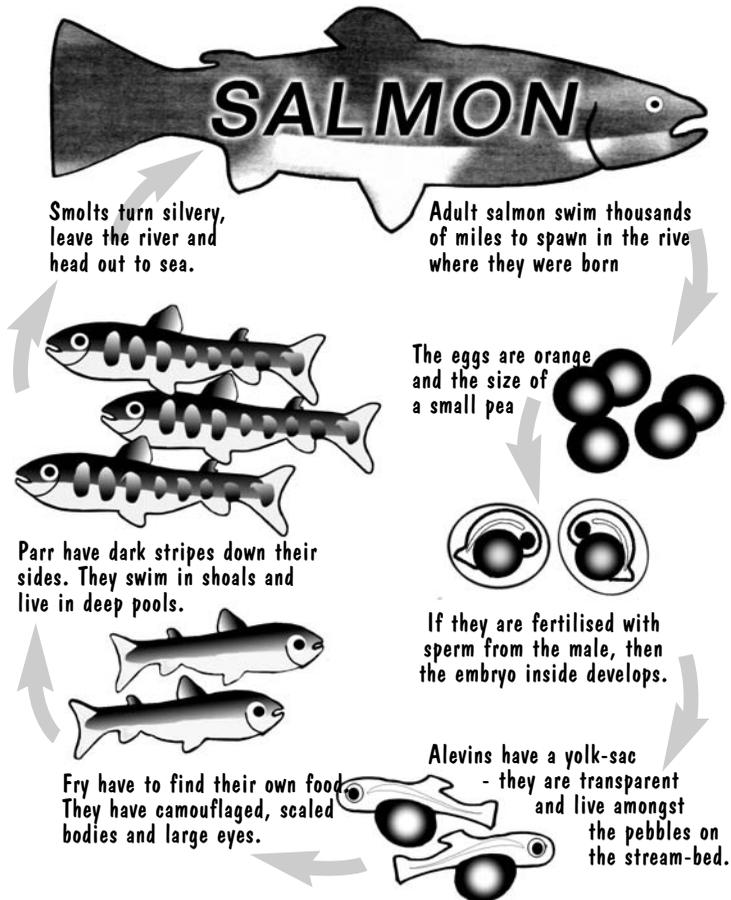


Illustration from "StreamScapes Basic - The WaterCourse" © 1997 Coomhola Salmon Trust, Ltd

Appendix 5: Salmon Survival

In every respect, a taste of wild smoked salmon on one's plate must be considered a miracle. From the moment of spawning, when the female salmon deposits her ova into a stony streambed, offspring are faced with a myriad of obstacles to overcome in the course of their journey. The illustration below serves as indication of the toll which is exacted by predation and other causes on the way to complete salmon lifecycle.

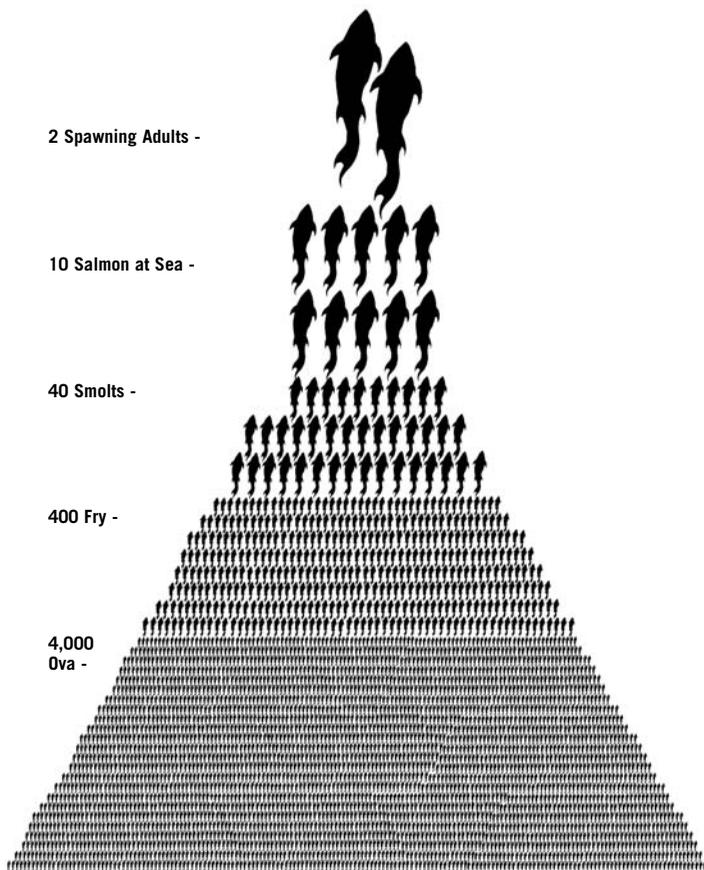


Illustration from "StreamScapes Advanced" © 2000 Coomhola Salmon Trust, Ltd

Terra Madre – 2004

The inaugural Slow Food Terra Madre conference is being held 20-23 October 2004, in parallel with Saloné del Gusto 2004 in Turin.

The Terra Madre (Earth Mother) concept represents the evolution of Slow thinking on how to conserve endangered artisan foods in a day and age which witnesses loss of food variety and widespread homogenisation of taste and food culture. It furthermore casts an eye on sustainable and eco-friendly means of food production, and asserts, as a natural right, the preservation of global bio-diversity.

Terra Madre seeks to be a solution-based conference for a communion of international food producers, to pool their experiences, trials, tribulations, and successes.

Terra Madre consciously aims to mark and celebrate the notion of the Community which naturally arises in support of artisan producers, and to understand the strength which is manifest from the participation and cooperation of the following actors:

- the primary producer
- the processor
- the marketer
- the retailer
- the discerning chef
- the appreciative consumer
- the educationalist
- the environmentalist

The Irish Wild Atlantic Smoked Salmon Presidium salutes this Slow Food initiative and looks forward to contributing to this inaugural Terra Madre conference.

Producer Aims

Peter Dunn, Dunns' Seafare:

"I look for a nice clean side free of fins, with the collarbone and ventral fin on for the very traditional whole side presentation, discarding the collar bone and ventral fin with a trim along the belly wall for the trimmed and pre-sliced presentation. I look for a thin smoke crust and a firm feel to the fingers in the shoulder area of the Side. I like a Side that slices thinly and holds together without falling apart or gaping. I like it to be slightly moist without being wet. I like the brown fat to be left on because the fat is easy to digest- a very distinctive feature of the Wild Salmon- and as well as that, it contains much of the flavour. Wild Irish Smoked Salmon can vary in colour from a bright red to a dull brown, depending on what the fish feeds on at sea. I don't mind the colour as I don't eat with my eyes only and all shades of colour have a good taste. I look for a taste that is smooth, light in salt and not too smoky. I like the taste and the smell of the Oak smoke. The taste of Irish Wild Smoked Salmon is unique and has to be compared with others to be fully appreciated. It is more digestible than other Smoked Salmon and therefore the 'after taste' can be enjoyed and appreciated for a much longer time."

Sally Barnes, Woodcock Smokery:

"I seek to find a balance on the palate of salt, smoke and fish. It might be firmish in texture, with a fine sheen or gloss on the pellicle, a subtle scent of wood smoke. Sometimes, there might be a mineral taste, earthy...a depth and breadth to the flavours. It can be raunchy sometimes too. As these are wild creatures, there is variability between fish anyway, some drier than others, and most of the fish which we process are hens...there is a sweetness about the flavour from the beech wood smoke."

Anthony Creswell, Ummera Smoke House:

"At Ummera we endeavour to achieve the perfect balance of the three essential flavours in the smoked salmon; the subtle flavour of the wild Atlantic salmon enhanced by the elegant aromas of Oak smoke combined with purest sea salt to bring the taste of the sea. Our art is to ensure that each complements the other without any one flavour being overwhelming."

Frank Herderman, Belvelly Smokehouse:

"The distinctive quality of Belvelly smoked salmon depends on the very unique natural environment of the smokehouse, and on the skill, knowledge, experience and instincts of the smoker, who controls the numerous variables affecting the taste and texture of the smoked fish. We cure using dry salt to promote the lean, supple tone of the wild fish. We only use beech wood, which produces a soft, subtle smoke. We ensure a unique and consistent density of smoke, by paying great attention to the specifics of the woodchips used. The key qualities in the final product are achieved by the conditions in the traditional smokehouse and the influence of the smoker. The sides are hung tail down from tenterhooks allowing effective absorption of the smoke. The smoke naturally drifts up from the floor, which permits an even penetration of the smoke. The fish is ready when it looks, feels and smells ready to the expert artisan smoker, rather than when a machine says so. Ultimately we are aiming for a distinctive, delicate equilibrium between the salmon, salt and smoke - so that no one flavour dominates, and all are deliciously intertwined. The smoked salmon should also have a lively, lasting, memorable quality and an exquisite, rich texture, literally melting in your mouth."



Slow Food®

ISWAS – Irish Smoked Wild Atlantic Salmon Presidium

It all started one day in July, 2002, at Otto and Hilda Kunze's magnificent restaurant and guest-house in Dunworley on the south coast of Ireland. Anya Fernald and Paolo di Croce of Slow Food International, eager to commission Ireland's first Slow Food Presidium around the delicate wild Irish smoked salmon, invited four of the premier Irish salmon-smokers to discuss the prospect. They also invited Mark Boyden, a well-known salmon-biologist and –poet, and Director of the StreamScapes Salmon Education Programme, who was asked to convene the Presidium and develop a Protocol to assist in conserving this very special artisan tradition

The four producers, Peter Dunn of Dunn's Seafare, Anthony Creswell of Ummera Smokehouse, Sally Barnes of Woodcock Smokehouse, and Frank Hederman of Belvelly Smokehouse, together with Mark, set off on an incredible journey to record the parameters of production for wild Irish smoked Atlantic salmon, and to determine interventions which would assist in reversing the decline of the "King of Fish".

The Irish Smoked Wild Atlantic Salmon (ISWAS) Presidium was launched to great acclaim at the Salone del Gusto in October 2002, and featured at the first Slow Food Ireland gala weekend in April 2003. The Presidium is furthermore a participant in the inaugural Terra Madre conference being held in Turin in October 2004.

With the publication of this Protocol, ISWAS seeks to promote their craft, the wonders they achieve in the smokehouse, and to call attention to the majesty of the wild Atlantic salmon. This document will interest chefs, food distributors, and discerning consumers who wish to learn about the origins, history, and method behind this incomparable food.

The Irish Smoked Wild Atlantic Salmon (ISWAS) Presidium is the first Slow Food International Presidia Project in Ireland, celebrating the majesty of the species and the artisan produce of its members.

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*ISWAS is graciously sponsored by
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BIM
Bord Iascaigh Mhara
Irish Sea Fisheries Board

*ISWAS has been supported in its Slow Food
involvement by Bord Iascaigh Mhara.*