

Day of Slowness and Slowness Festival

Natasha Lardera (January 25, 2008)



February 25th, 2008 is the Worldwide Day of Slowness, are you going to be there?

There are a couple of dates that you should mark on your calendar. But take it easy, don't rush, there's no need to. February 25th, 2008 is the [Worldwide Day of Slowness](#). [2] and on that same date, until the 27th, the Slowness Festival takes over New York City. Definitely not the first city that comes to mind when one thinks of slowness but this is the point.

"Yes, New York is a fast-paced city," Bruno Contigiani, a Milanese who, tired of running around thought of this new philosophy of living, has confessed to me "but it is also a kind city where there



are some brief moments of personal relations. You see people holding the door open for others, or simply greeting you when you get on the bus, something you just don't see in Milan, for example." I actually am from Milan as well, and I must say that people would rather slam the door in your face than keeping it open for you! And no, I am not exaggerating. And one time I dared cross the street with a red light and a car actually started going faster just to scare me. But this is another story.

"We hope that the attendance will be great, with many people with new ideas, willing to spread the benefits of slowing down to anybody, as slowing down means to be able to control our own time. Slow down to wonder and think, to appreciate small things that daily life offers," Bruno continues.

The Associazione [L'Arte del Vivere con Lentezza](#) [3] on February 15th, 2007 launched the first day of Slowness, a day that was welcomed with enthusiasm by citizens and the media. The initiatives were numerous, more than 100 held nationwide at the same moment, and varied: from walking around on a mule in Tuscany to the "Slow Marathon" in Rome, to the symbolic fines to the hurried Milanese.

During the second day of slowness, scheduled on February 25th, 2008, different events will be spontaneously organized in many Italian cities, depending on the creativity of those people sharing our own idea of a voluntary and convivial choice to live better. "The 25th is a Monday," Mr. Contigiani continues, "a day when slowing down is extremely difficult as it is the beginning of a new week."

On the occasion of the second anniversary, the desire to slow down will overcome Italian and European Borders, the event has attracted fans in France and other countries, to land in New York, not only for a day but with a three day long festival.

Many different events will be organized in cooperation with the City Administration, with the Cultural Association Slow Lab, The Italian Cultural Institute, and the Italy-America Chamber of Commerce.

Union Square will welcome Passovelo and the Slowness Guards, guards that will be fining New York people who are excessively in a hurry. If they stop and have time, they can also enjoy ancient street games organized and energetically animated by Giorgio Reali of the Associazione dei Giochi Dimenticati.

Furthermore, restaurants around the city will hold the so-called Slow Dialogues where the new concept of time is discussed while tasting special menus. "The meal is a sacred moment, a moment where food and company are protagonists," admits Mr. Contigiani, "There is no room for cell phones nor newspapers, but only for concentration on what you are there to do, just enjoy your meal. Don't you notice that when one person at the table gets on the phone all the others get to do the same? It's contagious."

The food presented at the dialogues must be in its purest form, not elaborate, in order to be genuine and simply delicious. Also, portions should be of a normal size in order to give prevalence of quality over quantity. And let's not forget, everything must be served with a smile.

Shows will make the table experience even more pleasant with Baroque music played by Erasmus or contemporary music performed by the improvisational duo, Fabio Sorani and Giuliano Prada.

"We need to discuss and find out why time is such a unique value and the one and only real richness of our society," concludes Mr. Contigiani. All right, let's check it out.

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