



GOURMETS OF GANANOQUE

A Great Way to Whet Your Palate

By Lorraine Payette

Gourmets of Gananoque are a tasty little mouthful of diversity. No matter what your palate may think it knows it can always find something new and exciting during this outdoor festival of food.

"The emphasis is on highlighting local foods and the food service industry," said Lisa Bird of Gananoque's BIA. "Restaurants are invited to participate by highlighting a popular menu item or trying a food item not on their current menu to see what people think about it as a potential addition. We also invite local merchants to put out items for a sidewalk sale. We have an assortment of crafters tables and a section for Community Non-profit groups who can participate in some way."

The event started in 2012 with 25 assorted vendors, and nine food booths. A year later two more food vendors had joined the fun, and it just keeps growing. About 750 people visited the first event, while last year crowds swelled to 3,000.

Gourmets of Gananoque take over the main block of King Street East in the town, and are a mini-festival well worth exploring. In addition to foods from all over and exciting vendors, visitors are treated to live music and children's activities throughout the day. Admission is free and food can be tasted for a minimal fee.

"At the event our volunteers will sell food coupons to visitors at \$1.00 each for redemption at any food booth," said Bird. "Menu prices can be set anywhere from 1 to 5 \$1 coupons. Visitors can go to a booth/restaurant and purchase an item for the coupon amount indicated. Any money the BIA makes will then be put back into other community projects such as the Christmas Parade, Pumpkin Fest, Doors Open, and more. 'Gourmets of Gananoque' is an ideal way to generate good public relations and increase awareness of our restaurants, gain positive media exposure and have access to approximately 3,000 or more customers in our BIA area in just one day."

Top: A chance to taste all that Gananoque has to offer

Left: Great food and entertainment bring in the crowds

From its humble beginnings as a local-food only type of show, the event has spread to include ethnically diverse choices in both food and entertainment.

"We have tweaked the event over the past couple of years to give people what they want," said Bird. "Last year we were thrilled to have the Afro-Caribbean Association join us for some scrumptious Caribbean foods and island music. We are excited that they will be joining us once again.

"People loved the international choices. Therefore, we are urging our local restaurants to include an international flavour to their menu offerings. Aside from the Caribbean foods we have the Hot Roast Company serving not only their famous sliders but providing a sample of Haggis to present their Scottish Heritage. Here in Gananoque we have Greek, Chinese, French, and, of course, Canadian food vendors. People can try foods from all over the world right here in our little community – no passport required!" **LH**

Gourmets of Gananoque will be held Saturday August 9th from 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

For more information, please contact Lisa Bird, Executive Director, Downtown Gananoque BIA at 613-382-9900 or bia@downtowngananoque.com