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For Immediate Release

**Savor the Holidays
With The Cheeses Of France**

PORTLAND, Maine (October, 2008) - Make your holiday gathering memorable with a scrumptious selection of unique cheeses from France. A fromage plate is a mouth-watering and easy way to entertain with style this holiday season.

France produces a broad variety of cheeses made from goat, sheep and cow's milk. Brie, Camembert, Comté and Roquefort are just a few of the most recognized names in fromage, but there are literally hundreds of French cheeses to choose from, making it easy to find a crowd-pleasing selection for the most discerning of guests.

“The fromage plate is a celebration of the remarkable diversity of French cheeses—the abundant variety of flavors, textures, colors and aromas that characterize the ‘taste of place,’ or ‘terroir,’ unique to each region in France,” said acclaimed cheese expert and James Beard winner

Max McCalman, author of “The Cheese Plate,” the definitive book on the art of creating the perfect cheese course, and “Cheese, a Connoisseur’s Guide to the World’s Best.” “It’s easy to create your own distinctive combination and pairings for the holidays,” said McCalman.

“Making a fromage plate is a great way to express your personality and style, and it makes a wonderful conversation piece.”

According to McCalman, major grocery stores, specialty cheese shops and many on-line cheese purveyors offer wonderful selections of superb French cheeses all year round, but will also have special seasonal selections for the holidays. “Just make sure you buy only what you need for a short time, because it’s best to serve cheese at its peak of freshness. Also, don’t be shy in asking for a taste or for a fresh cut. Fromagers love cheese and want to share their passion for cheese with you so ask away!”

How to Make A Memorable Holiday Fromage Plate

Selection. Look for special holiday cheeses. Ask for a taste or a fresh cut, and buy what you need serving cheese at its peak of freshness and flavor.

Presentation. Showcase three to five cheeses, around 2 ounces per cheese per person. Bring cheese to room temperature before serving. Vary your cheese styles, from creamy soft to hard, and milk types, from cow to goat to sheep’s milk. Experiment with different shapes and textures for a stunning visual presentation. Arrange your tasting order from mildest to most pungent and complex. For an elegant holiday cheese plate, McCalman recommends this tasting order: Chabichou du Poitou, Ossau-Iraty, Camembert, Beaufort, Bleu d’Auvergne.

Pairings. Wine is a favorite pairing for cheese. Coffee, cognac, beer and other spirits also make creative pairings. When it comes to food pairings keep it simple. Fruit, nuts, plain crackers, baguettes, or toast points are all great options.

For more information about The Cheeses of France and to get more fromage plate suggestions, visit www.cheesesoffrance.com.

Photo Caption The Holiday Plate: Pictured from left to right; Back Row: Beaufort (AOC), Bleu d’Auvergne (AOC), Ossau-Iraty Front Row: Chabichou du Poitou (AOC), Camembert
Courtesy of Family Features