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Cheese from France Served with Premium Beer Pairing: This Year's New "It" Dish for Super Bowl Sunday

PORTLAND, Maine (January 27, 2009) — Today's food and lifestyle news indicates that more and more diners today are moving away from standard Super Bowl Sunday dishes like processed cheese dips, and chips and salsa. Instead, consumers are increasingly drawn toward experimenting with authentic, memorable ingredients such as premium cheeses from France.

In particular, French cheeses that are perfectly paired with ideal beer selections are offering a tempting alternative to hosts and guests alike – of either gender. "I'm convinced that beer as a partner for cheese rarely stumbles," writes Janet Fletcher in *The San Francisco Chronicle*, who adds that beer excels with cheese due to the inherent harmonies and contrasts between the two.

To that end, acclaimed cheese expert and James Beard winner Max McCalman, considered an authority on cheeses, has assembled a unique Super Bowl Sunday cheese plate, which is as ideal for French cheese connoisseurs as for diners new to the "cheese world."

"I can't think of any occasion that wouldn't be enhanced by serving French cheeses, and Super Bowl Sunday definitely is no exception," McCalman noted. "The four cheeses from France that make up this flavorful Super Bowl Sunday Fromage Plate are incredibly 'beer friendly' and are bound to be a hit when served with beer."

National award-winning Chef Lee Skawinski of Portland, Maine's popular Cinque Terre and Vignola restaurants in Portland, Maine, offers ideal beer pairing suggestions for each selection on the Super Bowl Plate. McCalman begins the plate with French favorite Mimolette, a pasteurized cow's milk cheese that features robust, fruity, nutty flavors. "Mimolette is perfect when paired with wheat beers such as Hefeweizen, or with a classic stout, such as Guinness," advises Skawinski.

Epoisses is the next cheese on The Super Bowl Sunday Plate, an appealing cow's milk cheese with a soft, smooth texture and distinctive aroma. Skawinski suggests pairing Epoisses with a brown ale, such as Newcastle Brown Ale, Samuel Smith's Nut Brown Ale, or Pete's Wicked Ale.



The third recommended cheese is Cantal, a cheddar-like, semi-hard cow's milk cheese cured with salt. Cantal's sweet (when young) or sharper (when well-aged) flavor is an ideal match with pilsners such as Heineken, Amstel, or Pilsner Urquell, according to Skawinski.

Finally, the Super Bowl Sunday Plate features Cap Gris Nez, a rich, creamy, intensely flavor-filled cheese from France's northern coastal region. "Cap Gris Nez pairs incredibly well with browns or porters," said Skawinski, "such as Anchor Porter, Sierra Nevada Porter, and Smuttynose Robust Porter."

McCalman is quick to note, however, that there are no hard and fast rules, per se, for French cheese and beer pairings. "An endless variety of combinations are available," he points out. "It's always fun for hosts and hostesses to brainstorm their own great beer and French cheese combinations. Personal preferences vary widely, so it comes down to finding flavor combinations that you love, and that you think your guests will really savor during game time."

Cheeses from France continue to attract fans across the United States, not only during holidays and special events, but also as everyday alternatives at mealtime. "It has truly never been a better time to be a cheese lover," agrees Fiona Beckett in *Cheese: Discovering, Exploring, Enjoying*, who singles out Camemberts, Bries, Epoisses, and Roquefort as particular favorites.

Further information about the cheeses of France – including tips on serving, storing, and purchasing – can be found at www.cheesesoffrance.com.

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