



## **Ruby Plate**

The arid plains of France's southern Rhône Valley are mostly known as red wine country, primarily the wines of the Côtes du Rhône appellation. These famously drinkable reds meet their match with the delicious, varied selection of cheeses on this Fromage Plate.

Recommended tasting order: Saint-Marcellin, Ossau-Iraty, Camembert, Comté, Cantal.

### *The Cheeses*

**Saint-Marcellin.** A legendary farmhouse cheese made from the milk of cows that graze in the mountainous Dauphiné Province in southeastern France. Small rounds with natural rind that turns from white to brown as it ages. Inside, the pâte is soft and mild, but rich. If you can't find it, ask for: Saint Félicien, Vache de Chalais.

**Camembert.** Camembert is a world-renowned cow's milk cheese from the Normandy region in northern France. This quintessential French cheese has a soft, white, bloomy rind; luxurious ivory pâte; and buttery, grassy flavor. The taste of a ripe Camembert is reminiscent of wild mushrooms. If you can't find it, ask for: Brie.

**Ossau-Iraty (AOC).** A classic sheep's milk cheese made with the milk of the Manech and Basco-Bearnaise ewes. Aged for at least 90 days, the shape of each wheel can vary from region to region, with an ivory pâte, an aroma of toasted hazelnuts and a sweet, buttery flavor. If you can't find it, ask for: Another recommended sheep's milk cheese that is made in the French Pyrénées.

**Cantal (AOC).** A distinguished, semi-hard cheese from the central mountainous region of Auvergne, Cantal is a cheddar-like cow's milk cheese cured with salt, which brings out its full flavor. Heavy and moist, young Cantal has a sweet, milk flavor; well aged, it has a sharper flavor. If you can't find it, ask for: Laguiole or Salers.

**Comté (AOC).** One of the most popular cheeses in France, Comté is produced in the rich mountain pastures of the Jura. Its firm and supple pâte, with holes, or "eyes," has a nutty, slightly salty yet sweet taste. Comté is produced year-round by small, cooperative dairies known as fruitières. If you can't find it, ask for: Beaufort.