

## **The Catalanian Minister of Trade, Tourism and Consumer Affairs hopes that *“the quality of the Catalanian cuisine and of its products will prevail over any political issues”***

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Friday, 2 December 2005.— Josep Huguet, the Catalanian Minister of Trade, Tourism and Consumer Affairs, presided over the gastronomic presentation organised by *Turisme de Catalunya* in Madrid, a presentation that since the month of June has been visiting various cities in Europe and the United States. During this celebration, Minister Huguet said that ***“gastronomy contributes to show Catalonia to the world by means of the work of top-class professionals who, working from the root, construct quality creativity and help to promote the products of the earth and those that bear a Denomination of Origin”***.

Similarly, Minister Huguet advised that ***“both Turisme de Catalunya and the Catalanian Consumer Agency are strongly backing the consumption of products of proximity, of quality and with a denomination of origin, or those products that in Europe are starting to be known as ‘slow food’, which is nothing more than a sustainable, close and quality consumption”***.

On the other hand, Minister Huguet encouraged citizens of the Spanish state ***“not to mix commerce with politics”*** and showed himself to be quite convinced that ***“the well-known quality of the Catalanian cuisine and of its products will prevail over other questions”***.

The gastronomic presentation in Madrid was attended by institutional representatives, business persons, and professionals from the sector and media members from Madrid, who were given the chance to witness live the elaboration of a menu made of Catalanian quality products. The chefs in charge of offering this dinner were Josep M. ‘Xixo’ Castaño from Lleida, and Ramon Freixa from Barcelona.



This gastronomic tour has been round the world and has been through cities such as Chicago, Minneapolis, Rome, Aichi, Lyon, Moscow and Turin. Within the Spanish state, the tour visited Palma de Mallorca, San Sebastián/Donosti, Saragossa and Valencia. Those attending these gastronomic dinners were able to get to know in some detail and from the hand of its producers the Catalonian products themselves sorted into families – oil, wines and ‘caves’, cheese, garden and mountain produce, and sea produce. By means of these presentations an attempt was made at joining cuisine, products and tourism, linking them closely to the territory.

This gastronomic tour is part of the promotion actions plan by *Turisme de Catalunya* in order to promote gastronomy as a quality resource. The action is undertaken at a time in which Catalonian cuisine is undergoing a moment of international acclaim. The potential of this cuisine has become one of the leading tourist products that contributes to de-seasonalisation and has been acknowledged explicitly in guides and publications of international prestige, where it is clear that gastronomy is well worth a trip to Catalonia.