
***Turisme de Catalunya* started on a gastronomic tour in Palma, Majorca, which will visit various cities, in Spain and abroad**

The Cuina del Bages cuisine association offered a gastronomic dinner last night presided over by the Head of *Turisme de Catalunya* and attended by some fifty participants, among them institutional representatives, business persons and specialists from the sector, as well as members from the Balearic Islands' media

Friday, 10 June 2005— Last night the city of Palma in Majorca hosted the first in a series of international gastronomic presentations organised by *Turisme de Catalunya*, coinciding with the celebration of the Year of the Gastronomy. The objective is to promote and consolidate the Catalan gastronomic product as a tourist attraction of the first order. After this first meeting with the Balearic tourist sector, there will be exhibitions in San Sebastian-Donostia, Madrid, Saragossa, Valencia, Rome, Chicago, Lyon, New York and Turin. The presentations will be attended by Catalan gastronomy associations and chefs of international prestige, and the central issues are the products, the territory and the cuisine.

The people attending yesterday's event at the *Cases de sa Font Seca* restaurant in Bunyola, Majorca, enjoyed a dinner prepared by chefs Montse Estruch (*El Cingle* restaurant) and Benvingut Aligué (*Aligué* restaurant), both of them members of the Cuina del Bages cuisine association. Rabbit, *ganxet* beans, and Montserrat *mató* were some of the products that formed part of the menu served, which was accompanied by wines and *caves* of the area.

The next event is scheduled for 13th June in Chicago, consisting of a dinner offered by chef Fermí Puig; and on 14th June there will be a dinner in San Sebastian-Donostia, with Joan Piqué, the chef at the *Cuina de l'Empordanet* restaurant.

These presentations form part of a plan of promotional activities launched by *Turisme de Catalunya* to further gastronomy as a quality resource, bringing it in with the rest of products that make up the Catalan tourist offer. In addition to these gastronomic exhibitions, *Turisme de Catalunya* has also launched four promotional programmes aimed at international tour operators with the objective of linking gastronomy to other tourist products. The first of these programmes, "Catalonia: Hiking and Gastronomy",



was launched during the month of April in the Girona regions, with the participation of some twenty German and Swiss tourist agents. For the coming months, *Turisme de Catalunya* has planned three new professional sessions linking the Catalanian gastronomic offer with golf, culture and wellness.

All these activities are framed within a moment in which the gastronomy of Catalonia is undergoing wide international acclaim. The potential of Catalanian cuisine has become one of the leading tourist products contributing to the de-seasonalisation, and has been explicitly acknowledged in guide books and publications of international prestige, where it becomes clear that the gastronomy justifies any trip to any Catalanian destination.