

## World Cheese Awards 2016 opens for entry!

The 29<sup>th</sup> annual World Cheese Awards will **open for entry** from Wednesday 17 August, with organisers, the Guild of Fine Food, expecting more cheese-makers than ever to enter as the competition heads to San Sebastián this year, during the city's tenure as European Capital of Culture. Dedicated only to cheese, with no other dairy products able to enter, the World Cheese Awards, supported by Artzai Gazta and the Basque Country Government, will be the showpiece event at the inaugural International Cheese Festival. Being held between 16-18 November 2016, this global celebration of cheese will be open to consumers and tourists, as well as food professionals, buyers, and retailers.

Cheeses from over 30 different countries are expected to line up in front of 250 judges from every corner of the globe, including international buyers, retailers, writers and cheesemakers, providing a golden opportunity for small artisan producers to spotlight their cheese on a world stage. With all tasting, nosing and conferring taking place within a single day, thousands of entries will be judged in order to identify any cheeses worthy of a Bronze, Silver or Gold award, before the World Champion Cheese is crowned later in the afternoon.

John Farrand, Managing Director of the Guild of Fine Food, organisers of the World Cheese Awards, explains; "Our experts were presented with the mammoth task of judging 2,727 individual cheeses in 2015, but with so much excitement about the awards heading to Europe's unofficial culinary capital this year, we're expecting record numbers. I can't think of a better time to be taking the world's largest cheese-only awards scheme to San Sebastián, as it enjoys its moment as European Capital of Culture. We're all delighted to be giving cheese such a prominent place in the celebrations, alongside San Sebastián's world class cuisine, which is only fitting given the exceptional artisan cheese-making of the Basque Country that brought us here in the first place."

**The World Cheese Awards judging will commence on Wednesday 16 November.** All entries will be judged and whittled down to the top 60 in just one day. Then the best 16 cheeses will be voted for by a final judging panel later in the afternoon, when the 2016 World Champion Cheese will be crowned.

With the World Cheese Awards at its heart, the International Cheese Festival will be held at the Kursaal Congress Centre on San Sebastián's spectacular beachfront. In partnership with the Guild of Fine Food, Artzai Gazta will stage this truly global cheese event, open to food professionals, buyers, retailers, consumers and tourists. Major figures in the cheese world will come together to discuss dairy industry issues in a conference environment, whilst consumers will have the opportunity to learn about cheeses from all over the globe through talks surrounding the World Cheese Awards, in the process raising awareness of local artisan cheese production and helping to promote the region's culture, gastronomy and tourism.

**The World Cheese Awards is open for entry from Wednesday 17 August until Tuesday 11 October, unless the entry cap is reached before this date – early entry is recommended. Producers can enter online at [www.gff.co.uk/wca](http://www.gff.co.uk/wca).**