

ALIMENTARIUM

PRESS RELEASE

Vevey, 18 February 2011

ALIMENTARIUM Food Museum, Vevey, Switzerland

Tout un plat! An exhibition you can relate to

The Alimentarium's new exhibition **Tout un plat! Cook-eat-communicate** examines the multiple verbal, social and religious messages conveyed during a meal, whether a picnic, business dinner or family gathering. Meals play a lead role in all human society, as an opportunity to absorb flavours, emotions, family values and social rituals, to take in so much more than just the food itself. Whether we eat alone, with a friend, family or colleagues, each meal is a unique and personal experience for every one of us. An exhibition to savour from 11 March 2011 to 26 February 2012 in Vevey, Switzerland.

In the first century AD, the Greek historian Plutarchus acknowledged that we do not come to the table to eat but to eat together. Whereas animals eat to survive, man has made eating an art in itself. The new exhibition at the Alimentarium Food Museum observes all that we share in a meal, not just the food on the table. The exhibition originates from the Museum of Communication in Frankfurt and has already met with success in Berlin. It has since been specially adapted for the Food Museum, with the original recipe enriched with added ingredients such as the many activities organised by the Alimentarium throughout the year (activities available in French only, see following page).

The exhibition presents a palette of meals under five themes - Eating at Home, Eating Outdoors, Eating Out, Eating in Public and Eating Knowledgeably. It reveals that no two meals are the same and no meal is the same for two people. Every meal conveys emotions, an inherent history and certain behaviour making each meal unique to each culture, each family and each individual.

Eating and communicating are closely linked as the primary ways in which we interact with the world around us. Communication varies according to where we share the act of eating and with whom, ranging from stilted conversation to abundant small talk, from philosophical debates to total silence, whether over dinner in front of the TV or during a wedding feast, picnic or rest stop on a journey. The exhibition looks at the variety of messages meals have disseminated over the years, from the symposia of Ancient civilisations to a nineteenth century bourgeois meal, the factory canteen at the beginning of the twentieth century to today's fast food stalls.

The list of ingredients of Tout un plat! is as extensive as it is varied. Genuine menus from eras past, crockery from prestigious hotels, cookbooks and handbooks on table etiquette, cutlery for travellers, photos, historical artefacts, paintings, videos, excerpts from films and documentaries all blend together to create a delicious adventure. Now it is up to the visitors to add their special touch!

TOUT UN PLAT! Cook-eat-communicate

Exhibition texts and audiovisuals in French and German,
From 11 March 2011 to 26 February 2012

Inauguration open to the public

Thursday 10 March 2011, from 18:00

MEALS IN SWITZERLAND: photography exhibition

The German photographer Roger Mandt caught several Swiss mealtime scenes on camera. Some of his photographs are displayed on the walls of the Museum restaurant as an integral part of the Tout un plat! exhibition. Available for viewing until 26 February 2012.

SPECIAL EVENTS DURING 2011

The Alimentarium has planned a variety of special events throughout 2011, though essentially catering for a French-speaking public. In brief:

- **La Nuit des Musées** - 14 May: Museum open from 17:00 to midnight, offering a buffet of tales and entertaining readings
- **Journée internationale des musées** - 15 May: Writing workshops with the exhibition Tout un plat! as the main theme
- **Déjeuner sur l'herbe** - 21 August: Giant picnic to celebrate the end of the school holidays
- **Silence! On mange** - 14-20 September: Screening of films where meals play the lead role plus guided tours of the Tout un plat! exhibition
- **La crème des palaces** - 20 November: Guided tour of the Tout un plat! exhibition and of two local prestigious hotels from the Belle Epoque

Not forgetting the **Meals of Discovery** in the Museum restaurant, an opportunity to eat and communicate just as the Tout un plat! exhibition suggests! Served from 12 noon to 13:30, Tuesday to Sunday.

The Alimentarium

A MUSEUM ABREAST WITH TOPICAL CONCERNS IN FOOD AND NUTRITION

Vevey, Switzerland, is home to the only museum of its kind in the world: the Alimentarium Food Museum. Though founded by the Nestlé company, the Alimentarium was mandated to explore and inform on all aspects of food and nutrition. Its multidisciplinary approach, with

a penchant for pedagogy, has enabled the Museum to make an important contribution to the Swiss cultural scene. Since opening its doors in 1985, the Alimentarium has welcomed almost 1.4 million visitors, two thirds of whom were under 18 years old. Visitors come from the four diverse linguistic regions of Switzerland and from many other countries. Over the years, visitors have enjoyed both the permanent exhibits and some 32 temporary exhibitions presenting food and nutrition from many different angles, yet always in tune with what is new and topical.

After exhibitions on health, natural resources and research, 2011 has seen the Museum focus on action words, on verbs. The new temporary exhibition *Tout un plat! Cook-eat-communicate* takes a close look at how we act when eating and specifically at how we communicate during a meal.

The Alimentarium is part of the industrial adventure Henri Nestlé initiated 145 years ago. Though founded by a business enterprise, the Museum depicts food and nutrition of the past, present and future from an open, critical and general viewpoint. It does not simply serve as a showcase for Nestlé or solely represent its brands and philosophy. In fact, the founding deeds decree a certain intellectual independence, giving the Alimentarium the freedom to move with the times and promote the enormous diversity of food and its culture around the world.

Madeleine Betschart has been director of the Food Museum since March 2010. She previously worked as assistant archaeologist for the Canton of Jura. In 1998, she took over directorship of the Schwab Museum of Archaeology in Bienne, where she led the entire renovation and restructuring of the museum in 2003. She was able to realise her concept of a wide-reaching museum through various innovative exhibitions, some of which went on to be presented in other towns in Switzerland and in other countries. The Alimentarium lives and breathes the notion of a wide-reaching museum on a daily basis. It allows Madeleine Betschart to put her interest in networking and transfer of knowledge into practice, to better explore themes in light of today's globalisation and multiculturalism. Such is the role of the Museum within a multinational company such as Nestlé.

ALIMENTARIUM
Food Museum
A Nestlé Foundation

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Opening hours: Tuesday to Friday, from 10:00 to 17:00;
Saturday and Sunday, from 10:00 to 18:00

Alimentarium spokesperson
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