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SARGENTO INTRODUCES NEW ARTISAN BLENDS AUTHENTIC MEXICAN CHEESE

At-home chefs drive trend of incorporating authentic ingredients into ethnic-inspired dishes

PLYMOUTH, Wis. (September 8, 2008) – As Americans increasingly educate themselves on what is in their food, it is no surprise that they are seeking out more authentic ingredients for their dishes. This is why Sargento Foods Inc. is excited to announce the latest addition to their line of *Artisan Blends* cheeses – *Artisan Blends Authentic Mexican*.

“In the past few years, food enthusiasts have looked toward ethnic-inspired cuisine as their culinary adventure of choice,” said 2008 James Beard Award winner Chef Michelle Bernstein-Martinez. “This momentum can be attributed to at-home chefs’ desires to use more genuine ingredients, such as the new Sargento *Artisan Blends Authentic Mexican* cheese.”

As the most recent artisan partner with Sargento, the cheesemakers of El Regalo, which translates in English to “The Gift,” apply more than 24-years of experience by using traditional Latin cheese making methods, while maintaining the high-quality American standards.

“From empanadas with melting sweet corn to Latin-style Shepherd’s pie, cheese is one of the top ingredients in Mexican cuisine,” said Bernstein-Martinez. “Sargento is bringing authentic taste and traditions to those who want to create a genuine Mexican dining experience in their own kitchens.”

Sargento *Artisan Blends Authentic Mexican* combines El Regalo Manchego, a sweet and nutty cheese, and Anejo Enchilado, a firm, pressed cheese rolled in paprika, with Sargento high-quality Queso Quesadilla, Asadero and Queso Gallego cheeses.

“Latin cheeses have so much depth and complexity,” said Bernstein-Martinez. “I am excited to see Sargento bring both Latin and Artisanal cheeses to a broader audience, while maintaining their well-known high quality standards.”

While Americans continue to search for more authentic ingredients, ethnic inspired small plates also remain as one of the fastest growing food trends for the at-home chef.

“Antojitos, also known as ‘little plates of many,’ are a traditional Mexican cuisine often found in Latin restaurants nationwide,” said Bernstein-Martinez. “Creating authentic antojitos, such as mini open-faced plantain sandwiches with grilled steak, avocado, chilies and authentic Mexican cheeses are a great way to bring that Latin flair home for friends and family.”

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Sargento *Artisan Blends Authentic Mexican* cheese is currently available at retailers nationwide. Approximate retail price is \$3.99. Recipes featuring *Artisan Blends* varieties are available at www.ArtisanCheeseCenter.com and www.Sargento.com/artisan.

Additional information may be obtained by contacting Rory Swikle at 312-755-6207 or via email at rswikle@wheatleytimmons.com.

Sargento Foods Inc. has demonstrated its passion for cheese throughout its history. Founded in 1953 in Plymouth, Sargento is a leading manufacturer, packager and marketer of natural shredded, sliced and snack cheeses, cheese appetizers, ingredients and sauces. Sargento is owned and operated by the Gentine family, and has net sales of more than \$700 million.

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