

# Paella

Paella is a typical Spanish dish and is traditionally cooked in a "paellera" - a round flat pan with two handles - which is then put on the table. It is normally made using shellfish but can also be made with chicken or rabbit. In many Spanish villages, especially in coastal areas, they use a giant paellera to cook a paella on festival days which is big enough to feed everybody. A paella is very flexible so if you don't have the exact ingredients or if you find some of them hard to get hold of, substitute them for something similar. Getting fresh shellfish can be a problem, but you can always use frozen fish and use fish stock instead of water to increase the flavour. There are literally hundreds of ways to cook a paella and every cook has their own favourite recipe. Here's mine (it will serve 6 people depending on how hungry you are):

## INGREDIENTS:

1 small onion, finely chopped  
1 green pepper, finely chopped  
½ red pepper, boiled until soft and then cut into long thin strips  
2 medium-sized tomatoes, skinned and finely chopped  
2 carrots, finely chopped  
100g (3.5 ounces) peas, cooked  
200g (7 ounces) prawns (if using cooked prawns substitute fish stock for the water)  
200g (7 ounces) small clams  
200g (7 ounces) squid  
12 mussels  
350g (12 ounces) rice  
(traditionally short grain rice is used but I prefer to use long grain)  
2 cloves of garlic, coarsely chopped  
a pinch of saffron strands  
(if you can't get saffron, use yellow food colouring instead and add it once you have added the liquid)  
a sprig of parsley, finely chopped  
olive oil  
about 800ml (3 ½ cups) water

## PREPARATION:

### MUSSELS:

Wash the mussels, removing the beards. Throw away any that don't shut on contact with water.

### FRESH SQUID:

Rub off the outer dark skin. Pull out the insides (including the transparent back bone) and pinch the eye away from the tentacles. Save the tentacles. Cut the squid into rings.

### CLAMS:

Wash in water and then put in a bowl with some salt so that the grit comes out. Throw away any that are open.

### PRAWNS:

Whether you peel them or not is up to you. If you decide to peel them, save the shells and boil in water for about ten minutes. Save the liquid and add later instead of water.

### **GARLIC:**

In a pestle and mortar, grind the garlic, saffron (if using), parsley and a pinch of salt.

### **RECIPE:**

Heat some olive oil in a large frying pan.

Add the onion, green pepper and carrot and fry gently for about five minutes.

Add the chopped tomato and squid (with the tentacles) and fry on a low heat for another ten minutes.

Add the rice and stir well to make sure that it is thoroughly coated.

Add water (or the water from boiling the prawn shells or fish stock if using frozen fish), clams and the garlic/saffron/parsley mixture and bring to the boil.

Season with salt.

Put a lid on it, turn the heat right down and cook very slowly for about ten minutes.

Add the prawns and peas and give it a stir.

Arrange the mussels and strips of red pepper artistically on top, put the lid back on and leave for another ten minutes - checking that it has enough water.

If you think it is getting too dry, add more water, but shake the handle of the pan rather than stir so as not to upset the pattern.

Once the rice is cooked and the mussels have opened, it is ready to eat.

¡Qué aproveche!