

Spain



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 provecho!

Arroz con Pollo (Spanish-Caribbean chicken with rice)

Yield: 4-6 servings

Ingredients:

Chicken, whole cut into serving pieces 2 1/2 to 3 lbs
Lemon or lime juice only 1 each
Garlic minced 3-5 cloves
Olive oil 3 T
Salt & pepper to season
Onion chopped 1 each
Pepper, green seeded, chopped 1 each
Garlic minced 3-5 cloves
Oregano, dried 2 t
Rice 3 cups
Ham (opt.) chopped 1 cup
Tomato seeded, chopped 1 cup
Olives, green 10-15 each
Peas 1 cup
Stock or water 3 1/2 cups
Salt & pepper to taste
Pimentos (opt.) 1/2 cup
Capers (opt.) 1 T
Saffron (opt.) pinch
Cilantro stemmed, chopped 1/2 bunch

Directions:

1. Toss chicken pieces with first set of ingredients and marinate at least 1 hour or overnight.
2. Pat chicken pieces dry, and sauté in small batches in a large, heavy bottomed pot over medium-high heat to brown. Remove pieces to a platter and reserve.
3. Add a little more oil to the pot, and sauté the onion, pepper and garlic till wilted but not browned.
4. Stir in the rice and sauté 1-2 minutes. Add the ham, and sauté 1-2 more minutes.
5. Add rest of ingredients and stir well. Add the chicken pieces back in.
6. Bring to a boil and reduce heat to a simmer. Cover pot and simmer on low heat 30 minutes.

Arròs al Forn

Oven-Baked Rice

Ingredients:

1/2 cup dried or 1 1/4 cup canned garbanzo beans
2 1/2 teaspoons salt
1 tablespoon olive oil
2 oz. salt pork, sliced
4 whole sausages
(such as Italian sweet, white Spanish butifarra or other savory sausage)
1 medium baking potato, cut into 1/4 inch-thick slices
1 cup short-grain (Arborio) rice
1 teaspoon paprika
Pinch saffron
1 tomato, cut into 8 wedges
2 cups beef broth or water
1 head garlic

Directions:

1. If using dried garbanzo beans, soak overnight in water to cover.
Drain; cook in water to cover with 1 teaspoon of the salt for 45 to 60 minutes or until tender.
Drain; cool.
2. Heat oven to 325°F.
Heat oil in large cazuela (a wide, shallow earthenware casserole) or ovenproof skillet over low heat until hot.
Add salt pork and whole sausages;
cook until sausages are browned but not thoroughly cooked.
Remove sausages from cazuela; drain on paper towels.
3. Increase heat to medium; add potato slices to cazuela; cook until browned.
Add garbanzo beans, rice, paprika and saffron; sauté several minutes.
4. Stir in tomato, beef broth and remaining 1 1/2 teaspoons salt.
Bring to a boil.
Return sausages to cazuela; place head of garlic in center of mixture.
5. Bake 20 minutes or until rice is almost done but still chewy.
Remove from oven; cover lightly with foil.
Let stand 5 to 10 minutes before serving to finish cooking.

4 to 6 servings

Gazpacho Andaluz

Classic Gazpacho from Andalucía

Gazpacho

Ingredients:

3 (1-inch-thick) slices French bread
4-5 medium tomatoes, peeled, seeded and cut in pieces
1 medium cucumber, peeled, seeded and cut in pieces
1 medium red or green bell pepper, cut in pieces
2 garlic cloves, chopped
1/3 cup olive oil
2 tablespoons white wine vinegar
1 teaspoon salt
1/2 teaspoon cumin

Garnishes:

Diced cucumber
Diced green bell pepper
Diced tomato
Chopped onion
Chopped hard-cooked egg

Directions:

1. Soak bread in 1 cup water for about 30 minutes.
2. Meanwhile, in food processor or blender, process tomatoes, cucumber, bell pepper and garlic until no large pieces remain.
3. Squeeze bread dry; crumble.
Mix bread with oil, vinegar, salt and cumin.
Add to vegetable mixture; blend.
If gazpacho is too thick, add a little water.
Taste for seasoning; if desired, add more salt and cumin.
4. Force gazpacho through strainer or food mill.
Refrigerate 2 to 4 hours or until very well chilled before serving.
5. Serve in glasses as a beverage or in bowls as a soup with desired garnishes.

4 servings

Sopa Castellana

Castilian Garlic Soup

Ingredients:

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 4 garlic cloves, chopped
- 2 chorizos, sliced
- 4 cups water
- 3 to 4 oz. prosciutto or serrano ham, cubed
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon paprika
- 4 eggs
- 4 (1/2-inch-thick) slices toasted day-old bread, cubed

Directions:

1. Heat oil in large saucepan over medium heat until hot.
Add garlic; sauté slowly until golden.
2. Add chorizo; brown.
Add water, ham, salt and paprika.
Bring to a boil.
Reduce heat; cover and simmer 5 minutes.
3. Break eggs, one by one, into saucer.
Slide eggs gently into soup; arrange bread cubes around eggs.
Cover; simmer an additional 5 minutes or until eggs are poached.
Remove bay leaf before serving.
Divide eggs, bread cubes and soup into individual soup bowls.

4 servings