





# *A Taste of Spain*

100 Favourites



*Randolph Riecker*

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First Edition

## **CAMPUS ELYSIUM – COOKBOOK SERIES**

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## DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to the natives of the Balearic islands of Menorca and Mallorca, where I often spend my holidays. I've eaten so many different Spanish dishes that it's high time I made an effort to tell the world about my favourites.



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## INTRODUCTION

Food is an integral part of Spanish culture, similar to its rich history. Each of Spain's regions is home to a range of unique cuisines and flavours. I've been quite a consumer of Spanish food over the last 17 years, ever since I've had the opportunity to travel to Spain and its beautiful islands. Each regional speciality is well worth trying. Restaurants serving regional dishes can be found in most major cities. Just as you would choose to go out for a Chinese or Japanese meal, you may instead choose to dine at an Andalusian, Catalan, Murcian, Valencian, Galician, or Mallorcan restaurant.

Even though I haven't spent all that much time in Spain, I've managed to gather quite a collection of Spanish recipes and cookbooks, because I enjoy the Spanish food so much. I've attempted quite a number of the recipes I've come across and I've tried out my efforts on friends and family. However, to be said in my defence, I've eaten at a lot of Spanish restaurants while in Spain, as I've preferred to taste the local foods rather than the fare provided for the tourists.

During the last 17 years I've been exploring the cuisine quite a lot. Whether it's paella, tapas, fish or meat dishes, I love them all. Even if you venture outside of Spain, there are so many places in the world where there are Spanish restaurants. In London alone, there are over one hundred Spanish restaurants - doesn't that tell you something ?

This book is a journey of discovery about the different Spanish foods that I've enjoyed over the years. I really have to thank Andalusia, Menorca and Mallorca for my wonderful gastronomic experiences.

It doesn't really matter where the dishes originated from, they all taste great just as long as they're made according to the

### *A Taste of Spain*

original recipes that have been passed down from generation to generation.

Spaniards absolutely love their food ! The typical Spaniard probably eats more food than any of their counterparts in other countries. However, they take their time eating. They spread their meals throughout the day and walk between their meals.

The midday meal, “la comida” as it's known in Spain, is the largest meal of the day. It usually has multiple courses. Traditionally, Spaniards have had a 2 to 3 hour break from work in order to enjoy *la comida* and to take a short nap or *siesta*. The entire country closes up shop from about 2pm to about 5pm. The *siesta* has been a tradition that goes back a number of centuries. In the past, when most people worked in farming or in the fields, air conditioning didn't exist. It's easy to understand why the farm workers needed the energy from a large meal, and a rest from the blazing hot Spanish sun before returning to work out in the fields. Generally, everyone in Spain enjoyed this afternoon break.

Most Spaniards still enjoy a break and a large meal, but life in Spain is changing. In larger cities like Madrid and Barcelona, many people spend over an hour commuting to and from their place of work, making it impossible to go home for a meal and *siesta*. As a result, many Spanish employees in Madrid now work a standard 8 hour day with an hour lunch break.

Many large supermarket and retail chains in large cities don't close for a short time during the day anymore. Most small shops still close to enjoy their meal and a break before re-opening for business in the late afternoon. A typical Spanish “la comida” meal is outlined in the stages listed below :

- Vegetable, Bean or Seafood Soup (of rice, potato or pasta)
- Fresh Fish or Seafood with fried Potatoes, Rabbit Stew, etc.



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- Green Salad or Vegetables
- Dessert - Flan, light pastry, fresh fruit or ice cream
- Coffee and Liqueur or Brandy

Bread is always available at the Spanish dining table. It's plentiful and fresh, and regularly used to soak up sauces left on the plate. Since Spanish lunches are always large, and courses come one at a time, you should pace yourself during your eating ! Just like the Italians, Spaniards believe in taking their time and enjoying their meals, so it's no surprise that ***la comida*** can last for anything up to 2 hours.

Since Spaniards love eggs and dairy foods, you'll find that many desserts are made from fresh milk or cream. It's quite typical to see fresh fruit on the dessert menu, and this may be served with a soft cheese. Don't forget an espresso shot afterwards because you'll probably need it to keep awake after your big lunch !

Spain has so many regional variations in its cuisine that we've decided to cover each of the regions and give a brief overview of them.

### **Andalusia**

Andalusian cuisine is both rural and coastal. This region uses the most olive oil in its cuisine. The most famous international dish from Andalusia is *gazpacho*, a cold soup made with 5 vegetables and bread, vinegar, water, salt and olive oil. Snacks made with olives are common to Andalusia. Favourite meat dishes include *flamenquin*, *pringa*, oxtail and Andalusian tripe). Among the hot soups are cat soup (made with bread), dog stew (fish soup with orange juice) and *Migas Cañas*. Fish dishes include fried fish, cod *pavias*, and *parpandas*. The Andalusian breakfast is quite popular and is considered to be a favourite of labourers throughout Spain. Cured meats include

*Serrano Ham* and *Jabugo*. Typical drinks from this region are aniseed liqueurs, wines and sherry brandies.

## **Aragon**

The cuisine from Aragon has a rural and mountainous origin. The central part of Aragon, which is the flattest, is the richest in culinary specialties. This is a region of sheep raised on the slopes of the Pyrenees. One of its most famous dishes is roast lamb (*asado de ternasco*) with garlic, salt and bacon fat. Pork dishes are also very popular, and among them are *Margas con tamate*, roasted pork leg and *Almojabañas de Cerdo*. Among the recipes made using bread are *migas de Pastor*, *migas con chocolate*, *Regañaos* (cakes with sardines or herrings), and *goguera*. The most notable condiment is garlic oil. *Legumes* are very important and the most popular vegetables are *borage* and *thistle*. In terms of cured meats, ham from Teruel and Huesca are famous. *Tronchon* is one of the popular cheeses to come from Aragon. Fruit-based cuisine includes the very popular *Frutas de Aragón* and Maraschino cherries.

## **Asturias**

The cuisine of Asturias has a long and rich history which is deeply rooted in the Celtic traditions of northern Europe. One of its most famous dishes is the traditional Asturian bean stew, made with white beans, pork, and sausages such as *chorizo* and *morcilla*. Another well-known recipe is beans with clams, hare and partridge. Other well-known stews are Asturian stew and *vigil*. Pork-based foods such as *chosco*, *tripe Asturias* and *bollos preñaos* are also popular. Common meat dishes include *carne gobernada*, *cachopo* and stew. Asturian cheeses are very popular throughout the rest of Spain. Among them, the most notable is *Cabrales*, a strong-smelling cheese developed in the regions near the *Picos de Europa*. This can be enjoyed with the local cider. Some well-known desserts from Asturias

are *frisuelos*, rice pudding and *carbayones*.

### **The Balearic Islands**

The Balearic islands have a cuisine that is similar to other Mediterranean cuisines. They have been conquered several times throughout history by the French and the English. Both of these countries have left some influence on the local cuisine. The current, well-known items are the spicy sausage and rice brut, *cheese Mahon*, *Mahon Gin* (also known as “*pellofa*”) and *mayonnaise*. Among the dishes are *tumbet*, *variati frit* and roast suckling pig. Among the favourite desserts are *Ensaïmadas*, drum almond, and *sighs of Manacor*.

### **The Basque Country**

The cuisine of the Basque Country is wide and varied, in terms of the range of ingredients and preparation. The Basque people love their food, and there's a high concentration of meat and fish dishes in their native cuisine. Among the fish, cod is produced in various ways, such as *bacalao al pil pil* and *cod Bilbao*. Other common fish dishes consist of anchovy, bream and bonito. Among the most famous fish dishes is the seafood *changurro*. Among the most famous of the meat dishes are the beef steaks, pork loin with milk, fig leaf quail, and marinated goose.

### **The Canary Islands**

These islands have a unique cuisine because of their insular nature and their remote location in the Atlantic ocean. It's based on the *gofio* food of the *Guanches*, the result of different toasted grains. Among the most typical fruits are yams, bananas, mangoes and persimmons. The fish dishes are usually accompanied by a sauce called *mojo picon*. Stews are also one of many similarly-prepared dishes. The Canary

islands also have the following : wrinkled potatoes, *almogrote*, *frangollo*, rabbit in *salmorejo*, stewed goat, etc. The most popular desserts are trout with potato or pumpkin and roasted maize meal nougat. *Malvasia* wine is the best known of the local wines.

## **Cantabria**

A popular Cantabrian dish is *cocido montañés*, a rich stew that is made with cabbage, beans and pork. Seafood abounds in Cantabria and *bonito* is found in dishes such as the typical *sorropotún*. Recognized quality meats are *Tudanca* veal and game meat. Cantabrian pastries consist of *sobaos* and *quesadas pasiegas*. Dairy products include Cantabrian cream cheese, smoked cheeses, *picón Bejes-Tresviso* and *quesucos de Liébana*. *Orujo* is the popular Cantabrian brandy. Cider (*sidra*) and *chacoli* wine are increasing in popularity. Cantabria also has two DOC wines - *Costa de Cantabria* and *Liébana*.

## **Castile-La Mancha**

The culinary habits of Castile-La Mancha are reflected in the origins of the foods eaten by the shepherds and the peasants. The region has arid lands and this is reflected in the quality of its dishes. It's been said that the best La Mancha cuisine cookbook is the novel *Don Quixote* by *Miguel de Cervantes* ! Wheat and grains dominate. They are used in breads, soups, *gazpacho manchego*, crumbs and porridge. Garlic is one of the most common ingredients in Manchego cuisine. This has given rise to such dishes as *ajoarriero*, *ajopuerco* and garlic marinade. Some traditional recipes are *gazpacho manchego*, *pisto manchego* and *migas ruleras*. *Morteruelo*, a kind of foie gras manchego, is also quite popular. *Manchego* cheese is also well-renowned. Because its lands are dry, an abundance of small animals, such as rabbit, and birds (such as (pheasant,

quail and partridge) can be found. This has led to game meat being included in their traditional dishes, such as *Conejo al Ajillo* (rabbit in garlic sauce), *Perdiz Escabechada* (marinated partridge) or *Huevos de Codorniz* (quail's eggs).

## **Castile and León**

Tradition dishes from this region are *morcilla*, *Valladolid* (a black pudding made with special spices), *judión de la granja*, *sopa de ajo* (garlic soup), *Cochinillo asado* (roast piglet), *lechazo* (roast lamb), *botillo del Bierzo*, *hornazo* from Salamanca, *Jamón de Guijuelo* (a cured ham from Guijuelo, Salamanca), *Salchichas de Zaratán* and other sausages, Serrada cheese, Burgos's soft cheese, and *Ribera del Duero* wines. Major wines from this region include the robust wine of *Toro*, reds from *Ribera del Duero*, whites from *Rueda*, and clarets from *Cigales*.

## **Catalonia**

The Catalan cuisine is based in a rural culture, and Catalonia was where the first Spanish cookbook originated. This province is noted for having the best restaurant in the world at one stage, El Bulli, which has now become a gastronomic foundation. The region has 3 types of cuisine - seafood, mountain and rural. Some of the most popular Catalan dishes are *escudella* and tomato bread, *bean tortilla*, *Coca de recapte*, *farigola soup* and snails. Special sauces from here are *romesco sauce*, *aioli*, *bouillabaisse* of Catalan origin, *samfaina* and *picada*. Cured pork cuisine boasts of sausage (white and black) and types of salami and pepperoni. The best fish dishes are *suquet*, stewed cod and black rice. The more famous vegetable dishes are *calçots* and the *Escalivada* (roasted vegetables). Top of the desserts are *Crema Catalan*, *carquiñoles*, *panellets*, *Kings Tortel* and *neulas*.

## **La Rioja**

This part of Spain is recognised for its meats such as pork, and the cold cuts made after the traditional slaughter. Lamb is the second most popular meat from La Rioja (*Sarmiento chops*) and finally, veal is common in the mountain regions. The most famous dishes from here are *Rioja potatoes* and *fritada*, and the *Rioja stew*. Lesser known dishes are *Holy lunch* and *Ajo huevo* (garlic eggs). *Pimientos asados* (roasted peppers) is a popular vegetable dish. La Rioja is extremely well-known for its wines and the region has a designated status of origin (DOC).

## **Extremadura**

This cuisine is austere, with traditional dishes originating from the shepherds. Its cuisine is very similar to the cuisine of the region of Castilla. Pork is abundant in this region, and Extremadura is one of the best regions for breeding pigs, due to the acorns that grow in the fields. Iberian pigs raised in the fields of *Montánchez* are notable for their dark skin and thin, black legs. This breed of pig can only be found in Spain and Portugal, nowhere else. Iberian pork sausages are common. Pork stews (*cocido extremeño*) are very popular here. Another great meat dish is lamb stew. Lizards (!) are also known to be cooked in Extremadura. Finally, highlights of the cuisine include game meats such as wild boar, partridge, pheasant or venison. Famous cheeses are *Torta de la Serena* and *Torta de casar*. Famous desserts are *Leche frita*, *perrunillas* and fritters. Many of the local sweets have originated from convents.

## **Galicia**

Galician cuisine is known in Spanish colonies because of the emigration of its inhabitants during the course of history. One of the most noted is the Galician soup. Pork with turnip tops, a

popular component of the Galician Carnival meal *laconadas* is also popular. A chestnut broth called *Caldo de castañas* is also remarkable, and is commonly consumed during the harsh winters. Pork products are also very popular here. The seafood dishes are very famous and are rich in variety. Amongst these are the Galician *empanada*, Galician octopus, scallops, crab and barnacles. Amongst the many dairy products is *queso de tetilla*. *Orujo* is one of Galicia's popular alcoholic drinks. Famous sweets throughout the Iberian Peninsula are the *Tarta de Santiago* and *Filloas* (pancakes made with blood !).

## **Madrid**

Since 1561, due to immigration, many of Madrid's culinary dishes have been made from variations to dishes from other regions of Spain. Madrid, due to the influx of visitors from the 19<sup>th</sup> century onwards, was one of the first cities to introduce the concept of a restaurant. Notable dairy products from Madrid are rice pudding, *meringue milk*, cheese and curd. Some important fruits and vegetables grown here are *Aranjuez* strawberries and melons. Madrid is also quite rich in religious confectionery, with sweets such as *chocolate con churros* and *buñuelos*.

## **Murcia**

The cuisine of the region of Murcia has two sides to it with the influence of the Manchego cuisine. The region of Murcia is also famous for its varied production of fruit. Amongst the most outstanding food dishes are *Murcia tortilla*, *zarangollo*, *mojete*, eggplants cream, *pipirrana*, etc. A typical sauce from this region is the *cabañil garlic*, which is used to accompany meat dishes. Another famous culinary dish is *michirones* (dried beans cooked with bay leaves, hot peppers and garlic). Amongst the cooked dishes are the gypsy pot and *mondongo*. Amongst the Murcian meat products you'll be able to find

black pudding, flavoured with oregano, and *Murcia cake* that is made with ground beef. Amongst the fish and seafood are the golden salt, the *Mar Menor* prawns and baked octopus. Varieties of rice that can be found here are the *cauldron*, the *pavement rice*, rice with rabbit and snails, *rice scribe*, and the *widower rice*. The desserts from Murcia are very abundant, and consist of *paparajotes*, and various different stuffed pastries. This region also has wines of origin (DOC), as can be seen from the wines of *Jumilla*, *Bullas* and *Yecla*.

## **Navarre**

The gastronomy of *Navarra* has many similarities with that of the region of *Aragon*. Two of the flagship dishes are *trout to Navarre* and *cochifrito*, although you shouldn't forget the *lamb chilindrón*. Another famous dish is the *Garbure*. There are very strange recipes also such as the *Carlists eggs*. Salted products are common and include *chorizo de Pamplona*, stuffing and sausage. The lamb and beef are also designated as "of origin". Popular dairy products are the *Roncal* and *Idiazabal* cheese. Amongst the alcoholic drinks are the *claret* and *pacharán*.

## **Valencia**

The cuisine of *Valencia* comes from 2 basic regions - the rural (products of the field) and the other coastal (seafood). One of the most popular dishes is *paella*, but there are many other rice dishes, such as *arroz con costra*, *fideuá* and throw rice, *arroz al horno*, and rice with beans and turnips. Coastal towns supply the region with fish, leading to popular dishes such as *all i pebre* which is typical of the *Albufera of Valencia*, or fish stew. Amongst the desserts are *coffee liqueur*, chocolate *Alicante*, *arnadí* and *horchata*. Notably, during Christmas, *nougat* is made in *Alicante* and *Jijona*. Also well-known are *peladillas* which are almonds wrapped in a thick layer of



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caramel). Finally, another famous dish from here is the *Salchichón*.

All the weighted measures listed in these recipes are according to the metric scale, and all the heating measures are in degrees Celsius (centigrade). If you'd prefer to use other measures, you may need a conversion chart, which you'll quite easily find on the internet. Enjoy !

## **My Spanish menu**

- |                |                                       |
|----------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1. TAPAS       | - my favourite top 10 tapas dishes    |
| 2. SALADS      | - my choice of the 10 best salads     |
| 3. PAELLAS     | - my top 10 favourite paellas         |
| 4. MEAT DISHES | - my top 10 favourite meat dishes     |
| 5. FISH DISHES | - my top 10 best fish dishes          |
| 6. DESSERTS    | - my top 10 best desserts             |
| 7. WINES       | - my top 10 best Spanish wines        |
| 8. DRINKS      | - my top 10 Spanish liqueurs          |
| 9. COFFEES     | - my top 10 favourite Spanish coffees |
| 10. BONUS      | - a few extra favourite food items    |

..... and a GLOSSARY

Below is a map of Spain and it's provinces and islands.



## 1 TAPAS

To enjoy Spanish food you'll have to first experience a few taps eating sessions at a local Spanish tapas bar or restaurant. Tapas are a wide variety of snacks or appetisers. They can be hot (such as battered, fried baby squids) or cold (such as mixed cheese and olives). In certain bars in Spain, tapas have become quite a sophisticated cuisine. When you eat in a tapas bar you can order many different tapas dishes and make a full meal out of them. The purpose of serving tapas is to encourage conversation. In some places it's quite normal for diners to stand and move about while eating tapas.

In Spanish, the word “tapas” means “to cover”. The original tapas were slices of bread or meat which sherry drinkers in Andalusian taverns used to cover their glasses in between sips. This was to prevent fruit flies from hovering over the sweet sherry. The meat used to cover the sherry was normally ham or chorizo. Both are very salty and are meant to develop a thirst. Having made this observation, bartenders and restaurant owners started creating a variety of snacks to serve with sherry to increase their alcohol sales. Eventually, tapas became as important as sherry.

Tapas have evolved through Spanish history by including ingredients and influences from many different cultures. Most of the Iberian Peninsula was invaded by the Romans, who introduced olives to Spain. When the Moors invaded Spain in the 8<sup>th</sup> century, they brought almonds, citrus fruits and fragrant spices. Their influence remains today, especially in Andalusia. Later on, through more voyages of discovery, tomatoes, corn, potatoes and peppers were introduced into tapas dishes. They were readily accepted and easily grown in Spain. Here's a shortlist of my top 10 favourite tapas dishes. I've had to narrow the list down because there have been so many to choose from. I do hope that you enjoy them !

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- 1.1 BACALAO A LA TRANCA
- 1.2 CALAMARES FRITOS
- 1.3 PINCHOS MORUNOS
- 1.4 TIGRES DE MARI
- 1.5 CHORIZO AL VINO
- 1.6 GAMBAS AL AJILLO
- 1.7 BOQUERONES EN VINAGRE
- 1.8 CARNE MECHADA
- 1.9 PATATAS BRAVAS
- 1.10 ALBONDIGAS EN SALSA



## **1.1 BACALAO A LA TRANCA**

Bacalao is the Spanish word for cod fish. Salt cod is a staple of the Spanish diet, even though these days there's no need to preserve cod by salting it because of refrigeration. Salt cod is especially popular in central and northern Spain, and is often served in Spanish homes and restaurants, especially during Lent and Christmas. For thousands of years, fish was caught and preserved with salt to keep for a later date. Salty, dry cod must be soaked in water for a day and a half before cooking to get the best results. The water should be changed 2 or 3 times over this period. After rinsing the salt out, the cod can be cooked in many ways, either fried, boiled, or simmered in sauce to name but a few. After this process, the pieces of salt cod are fried, then drizzled with olive oil and slices of sauteed garlic. The recipe below is that of my favourite salt cod dish, "Bacalao a la tranca". It's a traditional dish from Zamora in the province of Castile and Leon. Although it is inland, Castile and Leon's cuisine includes a wide variety of fish and seafood dishes. Bacalao a la tranca is popular all year round, but is especially popular on Good Friday.

**SERVES 4**

### **INGREDIENTS**

½kg of boneless salt cod  
4 x large potatoes  
4 x large eggs  
1 x head of garlic  
½ a cup of unbleached white flour  
1 x tablespoon of sweet smoked paprika  
1 x tablespoon of wine vinegar  
¼ x cup of virgin olive oil

## THE RECIPE

Rinse the salt cod under cold water to remove any caked salt from the outside of the fish. Cut the cod into squares of about 2½cm. Place the fish in a glass baking dish, cover with water, put in the refrigerator and soak for at least a day, changing the water at least 2 or 3 times. Soaking the salt cod for so long will remove the very salty taste. Afterwards, pour out the water and place the fish in a colander, rinsing under the tap. Allow this to drain for 5 minutes. Then pat the fish dry with a paper towel and place the pieces on a plate. Peel and cut each of the potatoes into 4 pieces. Peel the garlic cloves and cut them into thin slices. Place the potato pieces in a medium sauce pan and cover with water. Boil the potatoes until they're cooked. This should take about 15 minutes. At the same time, place the eggs into a pan, cover with water and boil the eggs until they're hard, once again taking about 10 minutes. When the potatoes and eggs are cooked, drain the water from the pans and set them aside. Pour the extra virgin olive oil into a large heavy-bottomed frying pan and place on medium heat. While the oil is heating, put the flour into a large bowl and coat each piece of cod with it. Fry each piece of fish on both sides until it is golden brown on each side. Add the olive oil to the pan if necessary. Remove the fish from the pan and set on a plate. Put the slices of garlic in the same frying pan and sauté. Then add the paprika and the vinegar. Stir slowly to mix. Place the fish back into the pan and cook on low heat for another 5 minutes. Peel the eggs and cut them into quarters while the fish cooks. Remove the fish from the pan and then place on a serving platter. Lightly drizzle the paprika-olive oil sauce over the fish, scattering the garlic slices evenly over fish. Finally, place the potatoes and egg around the platter. You are now ready to serve.

## **1.2 CALAMARES FRITOS**

Fried squid (*calamares fritos* in Spanish) is a very popular tapas dish in Spain. Fresh squid should be purchased at a local market for this recipe. Calamares fritos is originally from the Mediterranean, but the recipe below is used in the provinces of Cantabria, Navarra and the Basque country. It's prepared from squid breaded in flour and fried. This tapas dish can be found in many bars and restaurants in Spain. It's best to enjoy the dish with a slice of lemon and some alioli (Spanish garlic mayonnaise).

**SERVES 4**

### **INGREDIENTS**

1kg of cleaned squid  
1 x small dish of alioli  
1 x lemon  
extra virgin olive oil  
2 x teaspoons of salt

### **THE RECIPE**

The squid needs to be cleaned before cooking. The spines, ink sacks and heads should be removed. If you're cleaning the squid yourself, keep the tentacles because they're also good to eat ! Cleaned, frozen squid bodies are great for making large calamari rings. Once the squid is cleaned, dry them thoroughly. Cut the bodies into rings.

Pour 1cm of extra virgin olive oil into a large open frying pan and put on high heat. Be careful that the oil doesn't smoke. Place a couple of handfuls of flour and a bit of salt into a large plastic bag. Then put a few calamari rings into the bag and shake to cover with flour. Remove the rings one at a time with

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your hands and carefully place in the hot olive oil. Continue to cover the pieces in flour and add them to the frying pan. Leave enough room in the pan to turn over the pieces if necessary. Fry them until the rings turn golden. When done, remove from pan and allow to drain on a paper towel. Serve hot with lemon and alioli ! Enjoy !





### 1.3 PINCHOS MORUNOS

At village fiestas throughout Spain, *pinchos morunos* (pork skewers), are grilled and sold as street food. This dish is a spicy legacy of the Moors and my version of this classic tapas dish uses pork. There are other versions that use chicken, but I prefer the pork version because of the tastier, and definitely not leaner, meat !

SERVES 6

#### INGREDIENTS

900g x loin of pork (cut into 2cm cubes)  
1 x teaspoon of hot smoked paprika  
1 x teaspoon of chilli powder  
2 x teaspoons of chopped fresh thyme  
2 x lemons (quartered)  
3 x large cloves of garlic (crushed)  
½ x bay leaf (crumbled)  
salt and freshly ground black pepper  
50ml x white wine  
50ml x extra virgin olive oil

#### THE RECIPE

Arrange the meat in a wide, shallow, non-metallic dish. Mix all the other ingredients, except the lemons, and season. Pour the mixture over the meat, cover and leave to marinade, preferably in the fridge, for at least 8 hours, turning over once or twice. Put 3 cubes of meat onto each skewer and cook on a very hot griddle or grill, turning over once or twice, for about 8 minutes. The meat will be slightly charred, but still juicy. Squeeze the juice of the lemon wedges over it and serve hot.

## 1.4 TIGRES DE MARI

*Tigres de Mari* are one of the most popular tapas dishes from northern Spain. The mussels are finely chopped and mixed with onions, peppers, and tomato sauce to form a really delicious filling. They are then breaded and fried lightly. This version of *Tigres de Mari* keeps the filling separate from the béchamel sauce, instead of being mixed in with it. Although it does take a bit more time, the filling is much tastier, it has more flavour, and the crust is crispier, because of the two layers of breadcrumbs.

SERVES 6

### INGREDIENTS

36 x raw mussels in their shells  
½ x medium white onion  
¼ x green bell pepper  
2 x eggs (hard-boiled)  
1 x leek  
60ml x white wine  
2 x tablespoons of tomato sauce  
8 x tablespoons of extra virgin olive oil

#### ***Béchamel Sauce :***

3 x heaped tablespoons of unbleached white flour  
125 ml x milk (at room temperature)  
1 x teaspoon of salt  
1 x teaspoon of pepper  
6 x tablespoons of extra virgin olive oil

#### ***Crumbing :***

Bread crumbs for breading  
2 x large eggs  
750 ml x extra virgin olive oil (for frying)

## THE RECIPE

This recipe makes some tapas of approximately 24 tiges. Boil the eggs until they're hard. Then put them in cold water to cool off. After a short while, peel them and cut them in half. Chop them up finely and set them aside. As a guide, to finely chop up the hard-boiled eggs without making a mess, place the hard-boiled eggs into a wide-mouthed glass. Holding the knife vertically, cut the eggs into small pieces. Turn the glass every 3 to 4 cuts and the eggs will quickly be chopped into tiny pieces, perfect for your filling. Set them aside.

Clean the mussels of any debris on the outer shells and rinse them thoroughly. Pour about 1½ cups of cold water and a pinch of salt into a medium saucepan and bring to the boil. Add the mussels and cover with a lid. Steam them until the shells open. This should take about 3 to 5 minutes. Discard any mussels that don't open their shells. Pour the broth into a bowl and keep aside later use. Allow the mussels to cool for almost 10 minutes, or until the shells are cool enough to touch.

Then remove the mussel flesh from the shells. Keep the shells aside to fill. Finely chop the mussel flesh. Finely chop the white portion only of the leek. Finely chop the onion and the green pepper. Place a medium frying pan on low heat. Sauté the vegetables in a few tablespoons of extra virgin olive oil until they are clear and soft. Then add the chopped mussels and a few teaspoons of white wine. Stir, continuing to sauté for almost 2 minutes. Add the boiled egg, a few tablespoons of tomato sauce and some salt to taste. Mix thoroughly. Remove from the heat and allow to cool for between 5 and 10 minutes.

Once the filling has cooled, fill the mussel shells with the mixture. Spoon off approximately 1½ tablespoons of the mixture onto each shell, filling them completely.

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Pour 4 tablespoons of extra virgin olive oil into a small saucepan and put on medium heat. When it's hot, add approximately 3 heaped tablespoons of the flour into the pan and stir, frying the flour. Continue to stir the mixture with a fork, so that sauce doesn't form lumps. While stirring constantly, add the broth that was earlier kept aside. When the broth has been absorbed, the sauce should thicken. Slowly pour in the milk, stirring all the while. Add the pepper and mix thoroughly. Please note that the béchamel sauce shouldn't be too thick for this recipe.

Before the béchamel sauce cools, spoon it over the filled mussel shells, covering the mixture completely. Don't worry too much if the sauce drips off the shells. Set them on a platter or large plate and sprinkle each filled shell with the breadcrumbs before the béchamel cools. Once it's cooled, a thin film will form on top and the bread crumbs won't stick. Allow the tigrés to cool completely, then refrigerate or freeze them if they're not going to be fried immediately.

Beat two eggs in a small baking dish. Pour the breadcrumbs into the small bowl. Place both bowls near the stove. Pour the extra virgin olive oil into a large heavy-bottomed frying pan to a depth of about 2½cm. Heat on medium level. While waiting for the oil to heat, quickly dip the filled side of the shells into the beaten egg, and then roll them in the breadcrumbs. Fry them in the frying pan until the upper crust is golden. Finally, remove them and allow them to drain on a paper towel. Serve warm when ready !

## **1.5 CHORIZO AL VINO**

The Spanish chorizo sausage is so savoury that it has to rate as my favourite sausage of all time. It makes a great tapas dish just on it's own. However, if you want to do something a bit special with it, you can make it even better by cooking it and marinating it in red wine. This creates a gorgeous, smoky, spicy sausage with luscious juices to dip pieces of bread into. It's worth preparing a few cured chorizos at once, even if there aren't that many of you eating. This recipe holds well if you keep it in the fridge. The flavours get deeper and richer. You can also use it in a few days' time when it will be even better. However, don't use your best wine for this dish. A standard Spanish red wine will do the trick.

**SERVES 4**

### **INGREDIENTS**

2 x cured spicy chorizo sausages  
1 x bottle of red wine

### **THE RECIPE**

Prick the chorizo sausages all over with a fork. Put them in a small saucepan and cover them with all the red wine from the bottle. The saucepan should be small to cover both sausages with the red wine. Bring to the boil gently and allow to simmer for about 20 minutes with the lid kept on.

Remove the wine and chorizo from the heat. Set aside with the lid on overnight at room temperature for the flavours to infuse.

When ready to serve, remove the chorizo from the pan, keeping the wine, and chop the sausage angularly into chunks

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about 1½cm thick. Put the pieces into a large frying pan with half the wine, and cook over high heat, turning the pieces often, until the wine has reduced to a few tablespoons and the chorizo is crisp from the heat and dark from the wine.

Pour the chorizo, the wine reduction and the savoury oil released by the cooking into a dish and serve with plenty of crusty bread to soak up the delicious juices.



## **1.6 GAMBAS AL AJILLO**

Garlic prawns, better known as “Gambas al Ajillo” in Spain, are another one of the most popular tapas dishes that I have come across. This quick and easy dish is so simple to prepare that you've got to try it sometime ! It's bursting with wonderful flavours and aromas ! If you love prawns and you love garlic and you've never tried Gambas al Ajillo before, then you're in for a real treat. The best place I ever ate this dish was when I visited a tapas bar on the beach in Canyamel on Mallorca. The smell of garlic prawns that came from this tapas bar was so strong that it got me gravitating towards it every time I pass near it !

SERVES 4

### **INGREDIENTS**

24 x prawns  
10 x large garlic cloves (minced)  
1 x teaspoon sweet paprika  
2 x dried cayenne chilli peppers  
1 x small glass of dry sherry  
2 x teaspoons of parsley (chopped)  
1 x French stick (for serving)  
½ x lemon  
extra virgin olive oil (to completely cover the prawns)

### **THE RECIPE**

Peel the prawns carefully and remove the veins. Using an earthenware dish, heat the olive oil over medium heat and then add the chillies and the minced garlic.

Fry this for a couple of minutes, taking care not to burn the

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garlic. If the garlic does burn, discard the oil and start again. Turn the heat up to high and add the prawns, paprika and dry sherry. Squeeze the lemon to add lemon juice to the combination. Cook this for 3 to 4 minutes until the prawns turn pink. Remove from the heat and sprinkle with parsley.

Splash the olive oil with some iced water causing the prawns to sizzle. Cover immediately with an upturned dinner plate.

Serve as soon as possible. You'll impress your guests with the sizzling prawns when you remove the dinner plate at the table. Allow everyone to help themselves. Ensure that there's plenty of bread to soak up the leftover garlic olive oil. Wash the prawns down with either a chilled white wine or an ice cold beer. Definitely one for the summer !





## **1.7 BOQUERONES EN VINAGRE**

*Boquerones en vinagre* is a tapas dish that is commonly found in southern Spain. The main ingredient of the dish are the fresh anchovies. The fillets are marinated in vinegar or a mixture of olive oil and vinegar, and seasoned with garlic and parsley. It is generally accompanied by a chilled beer or a soft drink, but not wine.

SERVES 4

### **INGREDIENTS**

1 x kg of large fresh anchovies  
2 x water glasses of sherry vinegar  
4 x teaspoons of salt  
3 x garlic cloves  
well-cut parsley  
extra virgin olive oil

### **THE RECIPE**

Wash the anchovies removing the head and any bones. Then wash both sides of them again. Remove the water and prepare in a bowl with the vinegar, fresh water and salt, stirring well until the salt has dissolved. Then place one of the slices of the anchovies into the liquid. If it floats into the middle it means that the mixture of salt and vinegar is well done. If it floats on the surface it has too much salt. If it sinks to the bottom it has too much vinegar. When the mixture is well done, put all the anchovies in the bowl and cover it. Put it in the fridge for 24 to 48 hours. Before serving, wash them in cold water, place in a dish and cover with lots of small pieces of garlic, the chopped parsley and the olive oil. They also can be served in slices of toast bread with some garlic rubbed on the top.

## 1.8 CARNE MECHADA

Shredded beef, or “carne mechada” is a key dish in Latin American cooking, but it actually originated from Seville. It's not often you will find this as a tapas dish, but where I have found it, I have found it extremely well-prepared and very tasty ! The name comes from the long strands you get when you pull the boiled meat apart. In Spanish, *mechar* or *desmechar*, literally means to separate hair into strands. The real secret to this dish is in the beef. Try to get the best cut, mainly from the flank of the animal. It's customary to boil and shred the beef the day before, and then leave it overnight in the fridge. Shredding is easy and can be done with a knife or with two forks. The strands don't have to be the same size and you can experiment with different thicknesses of strands until you get the consistency levels that you want. Make sure you keep the water used to boil the meat as it will add extra flavour to the final sauce. As a tapas dish, it should be served as a small portion with rice and beans, covered by the sauce.

SERVES 4

### INGREDIENTS

½kg x beef  
3 x cloves of garlic  
2 tablespoons of tomato puree  
1 x small onion  
½ x red bell pepper  
salsa inglesa  
a pinch of cumin  
black pepper  
sea salt  
extra virgin olive oil

## THE RECIPE

### **Boiling the Beef**

Place the beef in a large saucepan with enough water to cover it. Bring to the boil, cover it and simmer for 2 hours. Then remove it from the heat and allow it to cool. Set aside the water. Shred the beef into strands with a knife or two forks until all the beef is shredded.

### **Making the Sofrito**

Chop and dice the onion and the bell pepper. Crush the garlic using a garlic crusher. Heat 2 tablespoons of extra virgin olive oil in a large frying pan. Add the onions and when they start to brown, add the garlic and the bell peppers, a pinch of salt, some black pepper and a pinch of cumin. Add the shredded beef and stir, allowing it to brown a little. Add some of the water the beef was boiled in. Then add the tomato puree and a dash of *salsa inglesa* (you can use Worcestershire sauce). Stir frequently as you bring this to the boil and then lower the heat and simmer for 15 minutes.

Put a small portion of cooked rice and some beans in a tapas dish and add the shredded beef on top. Now ready to serve !

## **1.9 PATATAS BRAVAS**

There are so many different variations to this famous Spanish tapas dish, that I had to sit back and think which is the one that I had enjoyed the most. When I finally made my choice, I realised that this recipe was given to me by a friend who now lives near Santa Ponsa on Mallorca. The recipe originated from Madrid, though, and I'm not sure how my friend came to get hold of it ! I particularly enjoy the fact that the potatoes are baked in the oven, making it easier to prepare. In Spain, patatas bravas are often served with alioli, but however you choose to serve it, this is a definite for your tapas collection !

**SERVES 10**

### **INGREDIENTS**

900g x potatoes  
220g x chopped tomatoes  
1 x large onion (chopped)  
4 x garlic cloves (chopped)  
1 x tablespoon of tomato puree  
2 x teaspoons sweet paprika  
1 x teaspoon hot smoked paprika  
1 x pinch of chilli powder  
1 x teaspoon of sugar  
5 x tablespoons of extra virgin olive oil  
1 x tablespoon of chopped fresh parsley (to garnish)

### **THE RECIPE**

Prepare in advance by heating the olive oil in a frying pan. Add the onion and fry for about 5 minutes until soft. Add the garlic, tomatoes, tomato purée, both paprikas, chilli powder, sugar and salt and bring to the boil, stirring consistently. Simmer for 10 minutes until the mixture forms a sort of pulp.

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Then set aside for up to 24 hours.

To serve, pre-heat your oven to 200°C. Cut the potatoes into small cubes and pat dry with some kitchen paper. Spread them over a roasting tin and toss in the olive oil, and then season. Roast for about 45 minutes, until the potatoes are crisp and golden. Then put the potatoes into tapas dishes and spoon over the reheated sauce. Sprinkle with the parsley and serve with cocktail sticks. Buen provecho !



## **1.10      ALBONDIGAS EN SALSA**

Spanish meatballs, better known as “albondigas” in Spain, is a very popular dish that is usually served at tapas bars up and down Spain. It is usually served with fresh bread on the side, for dipping into the tomato sauce. The origins of albondigas date back to the 6<sup>th</sup> century, where the Islamic influence dominated the region of southwestern Europe, especially Spain. Then in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, the Spanish King Ferdinand conquered the region. Many of the culinary traditions were integrated into the Spanish community.

**SERVES 4**

### **INGREDIENTS**

#### **Meatballs**

500g x minced beef or lamb  
¼ x Spanish onion (chopped)  
1 x garlic clove  
1 x pinch salt and black pepper  
1 x sprig of flat parsley  
1 x slice of white bread  
100ml x milk  
1 x egg

#### **Sauce**

4 x tablespoons of Spanish olive oil  
¾ x Spanish onion  
4 x garlic cloves  
1 x small carrot  
1 x small tin of green peas  
1 x glass of Spanish red wine  
1 x sprig of thyme  
1 x sprig of rosemary  
1 x pinch of salt

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1 x tin of chopped plum tomatoes

1 x teaspoon of sugar

## THE RECIPE

Soak the bread in the milk. Finely chop the garlic, Spanish onion and parsley. Whisk the egg and mix all the ingredients together in a baking tray, and knead the dough with clean hands for 2 minutes only. Make the meatballs by rolling the mince between your hands and put them on a baking tray. Roast them in the oven with a drizzle of Spanish olive oil for about 10 minutes at 180°C.

Heat a large frying pan over a medium heat with some Spanish olive oil. Fry the finely chopped garlic, carrot and Spanish onion until transparent. Add the thyme, rosemary, salt, sugar, pepper and the glass of Spanish red wine and then flambé. Let the wine reduce by half and add the chopped tomatoes. Cook for 5 minutes, add the green peas and meatballs and cook all together for another 5 minutes until the meatballs are fully cooked.

Finally, serve in tapas dishes at your leisure.

## 2 SALADS

A recent study found that a Mediterranean diet and healthy lifestyle was associated with a much longer life. They also found that it reduced the risk of heart disease when compared with people on a low fat diet. The Mediterranean region just abounds with fresh vibrant fruits and vegetables, just what is needed for an extended life ! Many of the ingredients of Spanish salads are from this region, and so, as you can see, a Mediterranean salad is very good for you !

During the summer in Spain refreshing dishes such as salads feature prominently at every meal. Spanish salads are often dressed with olive oil and sherry vinegar, or with vinaigrette. You'll find a variety of different salads throughout the land, from the traditional green salad made with lettuce, asparagus, onion to others featuring potatoes or tomatoes. They're often served with tuna or anchovies.

The list below consists of the top 10 favourite Spanish salads that I have discovered over the years.

- 2.1   SALPICON DE MARISCO
- 2.2   ENSALADA DE AHUMADOS
- 2.3   ENSALADA PIPIRRANA
- 2.4   ENSALADA VERDE
- 2.5   ENSALADA MIXTA
- 2.6   ENSALADA DE PIMIENTOS
- 2.7   ENSALADILLA RUSA
- 2.8   ENSALADA DE PULPO
- 2.9   ENSALADA TROPICAL
- 2.10  ENSALADA MURCIANA



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## **2.1        SALPICON DE MARISCO**

*Salpicón* is a term referring to a combination of ingredients mixed in a type of salad. Literally, it means “hodgepodge”. This seafood salad is a combination of mussels, crab, shrimps, octopus and squids, but can also contain other additional ingredients such as fish like monkfish or hake, vegetables such as onions, red and green peppers, pickles, olives, etc., and eggs, all dressed with a vinaigrette and oil. This salad could also be served with mayonnaise. You can vary the recipe to your taste. You can use the ingredients you like the most. This type of salad is a very typical starter in Spain, especially in summer, as it is served cold.

SERVES 6

### **INGREDIENTS**

300g x octopus/squid (boiled)  
300g x hake/monkfish tail  
300g x shrimp (boiled)  
300g x crab meat  
300g x mussels  
3 x eggs (hard-boiled)  
1 x green bell pepper  
1 x red bell pepper  
1 x medium onion  
100g x pickles (optional)  
100g x green olives (stuffed with anchovies)  
2 x bay leaves  
extra virgin olive oil  
white vinegar  
salt  
pepper

## THE RECIPE

Pour a sufficient quantity of water into a large pan. Add the fresh octopus and boil it for about an hour, until it's tender. You can also use an octopus that's already been boiled. If you prefer, you could also use squid instead. In this case, boil the clean squids for 10 minutes. When the octopus or squids are cooked, set aside on a plate and let them cool.

In the meantime, using another pan, pour water and salt into it and cook the hake or monkfish tail for about 5 to 10 minutes. When the fish is ready, remove from the pan and set aside. Let it cool as well.

Using the same pan and water, cook the shrimps. Bring the water to the boil, and then add the shrimps with the shells on and cook for about 5 minutes. Remove the shrimps from the pan and place them in a bowl with cold water, preferably one with ice cubes. When the shrimps are cool enough, peel them, drain the remaining water, and set aside.

If you're using fresh crabs, add some water into another pan, along with some bay leaves. Bring to the boil and add the crabs. Cook the crabs for about 15 to 20 minutes, depending on the size of them. Then take them out of the pan and put them on a plate and cover them with a moist lid to let them cool. When the crabs are cool enough, open them and remove the flesh and set the flesh aside. If you're using imitation crab meat, cut the meat into small cubes and set aside too.

Using a small pan, boil the eggs for 15 minutes. Then remove them from the pan and put them into a bowl of cold water. Once they're cool enough to handle with your bare hands, remove the shells and set them aside.

To open fresh mussels, pour a glass of water into a pan. Then

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add the mussels and bring to the boil. Cook them with the steam and when they're all open remove them from the pan. Then set them aside and let them cool.

Slice the octopus or squids and cut the fish and shrimps into pieces. Rinse the red and green peppers and remove the seeds. Chop the peppers, onion and eggs into small pieces and cut the pickles in half or smaller. Using a serving bowl, pour the ingredients and the olives. Add the octopus, fish, shrimps and mussels. Then dress with white vinegar and extra virgin olive oil, preferably a part of vinegar to 2 parts of olive oil. Add salt and pepper, to add taste. Mix well. Finally, serve cold and with mayonnaise !



## **2.2            ENSALADA DE AHUMADOS**

This smoked salmon and cod salad with anchovies is a definite favourite of mine. I've often ordered it as a starter before a delicious main course of meat. I've enjoyed this salad in mainland Spain and the Balearic islands.

SERVES 4

### **INGREDIENTS**

100g x smoked salmon  
100g x smoked cod  
4 x anchovies  
4 x tomatoes  
1 x spring onion  
1 x red pepper  
12 x asparagus tips  
2 x tablespoons extra virgin olive oil  
a splash of balsamic vinegar  
1 x boiled egg  
salt

### **THE RECIPE**

To prepare this salad, cut the tomatoes into strips and place them upside down to drain. Chop the onion and the egg into small pieces. Clean the tips of the asparagus and sauté in a little extra virgin olive oil. Peel the red pepper and cut into strips and fry. Then mix everything in a serving bowl. Cover the tomatoes with the mixture, and use the sauce from the tomatoes on the anchovies, salmon and cod. Add vinegar and salt. Garnish with the asparagus tips. Serve when ready.

## 2.3

## ENSALADA PIPIRRANA

There are a number of different versions of this salad, depending on which region it comes from. In Spain's southern regions of Jaen and Malaga, it is called *Porra Antequerana*, and is blended with stale bread and eaten as a cold soup. However, this diced vegetable salad called *Ensalada Pipirrana* is a traditional peasant food eaten all over the south and south-central regions of Spain, including Andalusia, Murcia and la Mancha. In the Murcia region it also goes by the name of *mojete*, and is often prepared with roasted tomatoes and red peppers, rather than with raw vegetables. Traditionally, Spanish workers in the fields would have prepared *ensalada pipirrana* with only fresh vegetables, and would have splurged to include olives, tuna and hard-boiled eggs on festival days or other special occasions. However, these days tuna and eggs are commonly added to the salad.

SERVES 4

### INGREDIENTS

1 x green pepper  
½ x sweet red bell pepper  
1 x cucumber  
2 x medium cloves garlic  
2 x ripe salad tomatoes  
½ x white onion  
salt and pepper to taste  
4 x tablespoons of sherry vinegar  
6 x tablespoons of extra virgin olive oil  
12 x pitted black olives (drained)

## THE RECIPE

Rinse the peppers and remove the stems, seeds and veins. Cut them into small square pieces. Peel and mince the garlic. Peel the cucumber and cut into reasonably small squares. Cut the tomatoes and onion into small cubes. Mix all the ingredients together in a glass or ceramic bowl. Add the vinegar and oil. Mix this very well. Add salt to taste. Put in the fridge and allow the salad to marinate and chill for at least 30 minutes before serving. If the salad must be served before marinating/chilling, quickly chill the salad by placing ice cubes in a large bowl, and then placing the salad bowl into the ice and turning to chill all sides of the bowl for about 5 to 10 minutes. Remove to serve, or allow the salad to continue to chill in the ice during the course of the meal.



## **2.4 ENSALADA VERDE**

This green salad is known as “Ensalada Verde” in Spain. It's meant to prepare your appetite for your following courses of food. This basic salad can be served with quite a variety of dressings, and each person should choose their favourite one. This type of salad is best served on a hot summer's day.

**SERVES 4**

### **INGREDIENTS**

1 x medium-sized tomato (washed, sliced & halved)  
½ x head of leaf lettuce (chopped)  
½ x cucumber (finely sliced)  
2 x hard boiled eggs (peeled and quartered)

### **THE RECIPE**

Wash the lettuce and chop it into tiny pieces. Then place it on a plate. Wash and cut the tomatoes and the cucumber into fine slices. Peel and quarter the hard boiled eggs. Lightly toss the tomatoes, cucumber and lettuce. Then place the egg quarters on top. Serve the salad with a light wine vinaigrette or fruity vinaigrette. Other vegetables can be also be added to this basic salad to give it more bulk. You can use green onions, red onions, shredded carrots, shredded cheese, sweet peppers, nuts, etc.



## 2.5 ENSALADA MIXTA

At just about any Spanish restaurant you can get an *Ensalada Mixta*. It's a mixed salad, as the name says, but there is something special about the way the fresh produce is used and presented. Like most of the salads in Spain, this salad is simply dressed with salt, olive oil and vinegar. All these flavours combine well to create a lovely fresh taste. You can also serve a smaller version of this salad as a tapas meal. Enjoy !

SERVES 4 - 6

### INGREDIENTS

1 x head iceberg lettuce  
3 x carrots (grated)  
3 x tomatoes (cut into eighths)  
½ x onion (cut into slices)  
10 x white asparagus  
12 x Spanish green olives  
1 x can tuna (packed in olive oil)  
extra virgin olive oil  
vinegar (from Jerez)  
salt

### THE RECIPE

Wash the lettuce and chop it up. Then place it in the middle of a large plate. Now place the tomato pieces along the outside edge of the plate, and add the onion in the center. Place the asparagus diagonally across from the center. Add the grated carrot over the center. Then put the olives around the edge of the plate. Add salt and a little vinegar to taste. Finally, add a drizzle of extra virgin olive oil before serving. Enjoy !

## **2.6 ENSALADA DE PIMIENTOS**

This is a simple, colourful salad consisting of roasted bell peppers and a touch of fresh seasoning. This easy Spanish salad recipe is perfect as it is or served on toasted bread for a light tapas snack. The key ingredients to make this recipe exceptional are the high-quality olive oil, sherry vinegar, and assortment of fresh herbs. Spanish olives are also necessary to give it a nice salty element and a buttery, nutty flavour. This salad can be made in advance and served chilled with other small tapas plates. You can also serve it on grilled or baked fish for a colourful presentation, or as a healthy side dish.

**SERVES 4**

### **INGREDIENTS**

5 x large assorted bell peppers (yellow,red,orange,green)  
½ x cup of olives (pitted and roughly chopped)  
1 x small lemon (zest and juice)  
1 x small orange (zest and juice)  
1 x tablespoon of sherry vinegar  
1 x teaspoon of fresh oregano (minced)  
½ x teaspoon of smoked paprika  
3 x cloves of garlic (minced)  
1½ x teaspoons of honey  
1 x teaspoon of salt  
½ x teaspoon of cracked black pepper  
5 x tablespoons of extra virgin olive oil

### **THE RECIPE**

Heat your oven to broil. Arrange the bell peppers on a baking sheet and place in the oven. Broil the peppers for 5 minutes on one side, then turn them over, and broil them for another 5

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minutes. They should just start to char on both sides. When they do, remove them from the oven. Transfer the peppers to a large bowl, cover them with a plastic wrap, and set aside for 5 minutes. Charring the peppers softens the flesh and makes removing the skins a lot easier. This salad will keep for up to 5 days in the fridge and the flavours will blend very well over that time.

Using a small mixing bowl, whisk the lemon zest, orange zest, sherry vinegar, fresh oregano, honey, olive oil, garlic, paprika, salt, and pepper together. Add a tablespoon of juice from each citrus fruit and set aside.

Remove the plastic wrap from the bowl containing the peppers. You'll see that the peppers have shrunk and that their skins are starting to peel. Gently remove the skins from them and discard the stems and the seeds. Transfer the peppers to a cutting board and slice them thinly length-ways.

You can easily double or triple this recipe for larger parties.

Using a serving bowl, add the bell peppers, olives, and salad dressing. Toss the ingredients to coat them with the dressing. Taste to see whether salt and pepper is necessary. If so, add them. Serve along with toasted baguettes as a light appetizer. Enjoy !

## **2.7 ENSALADILLA RUSA**

Ensaladilla Rusa is typically from Russia, but has become so popular in Spain. These days it is a potato salad, sometimes mixed with tuna and mayonnaise as well as other vegetables. It can be served small as a tapas dish, and is found in most Spanish bars and typically Spanish restaurants. However, it's original ingredients were very different in that it barely contained any potatoes.

Ensaladilla Rusa was invented in 1860 by a chef called Lucien Olivier who was co-owner of the restaurant Hermitage in Trubnaya Square in Moscow. It was one of the best known restaurants in Moscow at the time and this salad soon become it's hallmark dish. Lucien Olivier kept the ingredients of his salad as a secret, as well as the dressings he used.

There were many people that tried to steal his recipe, and the only one who got close was his own cook. Lucien would always go into a room on his own to prepare this salad. Legend has it that on one occasion he was called out of this room on an urgent matter. The cook took advantage of this to go into the room and take a record of the ingredients.

Later the cook was fired, and he began working for a less notorious restaurant. He tried to emulate his ex-boss' formula unsuccessfully. Those who tried it said the dressing was different and it seems as if Lucien took his secret to the grave. This salad is a firm favourite in Andalusian restaurants and tapas bars.

**SERVES 4**

## INGREDIENTS

4 x medium potatoes  
3 x carrots (peeled)  
75g x fresh or frozen shelled peas  
2 x piquillo peppers (chopped)  
1 x hard-boiled egg (chopped)  
1 x spring onion (finely chopped)  
3 x tablespoons of pickle (chopped)  
1 x teaspoon of Dijon mustard  
3 x tablespoons of chopped flat-leaf parsley  
120ml x mayonnaise  
1 x teaspoon of salt  
3 x tablespoons of white wine vinegar  
2 x tablespoons of extra virgin olive oil

## THE RECIPE

Cook the potatoes and carrots in boiling water, until tender. Keep them covered with a lid. The carrots should take about 12 minutes to cook, and the potatoes should take about 20 minutes. Cook the peas until tender, normally taking about 10 minutes. Drain vegetables and chill them.

Peel the potatoes and dice them into about 12mm cubes. Cut the carrots lengthwise into quarters and then slice crosswise into small cubes. Combine the potatoes, carrots and peas in a bowl. Add the salt, olive oil, chopped piquillo peppers, egg and onion.

Using a small bowl, combine the pickle, mustard, parsley, mayonnaise and vinegar. Whisk until smooth and then stir into the potatoes. Let the potatoes stand for about 2 hours at room temperature. Serve cold !

## **2.8 ENSALADA DE PULPO**

Octopus tastes a lot like calamari, just meatier. One of my favourite salads is the octopus salad, or “ensalada de pulpo”, which has fresh tomatoes, cucumbers, coriander, and chillies. It’s great as a side or topped over tostadas. This salad is often made like a ceviche dish. The octopus is cooked in an acidic marinade, without heat. The octopus has to be blanched first, then slow cooked in its own juices over a bed of aromatic herbs. The slow cooking without added liquid concentrates the flavour, so that the octopus absorbs the rich flavours from the herbs. The slow cooking also helps to tenderise the octopus meat. When done, the meat is chopped and tossed with the other salad ingredients. Lime juice, cider vinegar, and an olive oil marinade is then added. Finally, and it is chilled for several hours before serving.

**SERVES 4**

### **INGREDIENTS**

1 x large octopus (cleaned)  
4 x large sprigs of fresh oregano  
4 x large sprigs of fresh parsley  
4 x large sprigs of fresh coriander  
1 x cup of seeded, chopped cucumber  
½ x cup of finely chopped red onion  
3 x green onions (sliced)  
1 x fresh jalapeno (seeded and minced)  
2 x tablespoons of lime juice  
2 x tablespoons of cider vinegar  
¼ x cup of extra virgin olive oil  
2 x cups chopped, seeded tomatoes  
salt

## THE RECIPE

We will assume that the octopus has already been cleaned. Heat a large pot of lightly salted water and bring to the boil. Place the raw octopus in the boiling water. Return the water to the boil for a further 2 minutes. Then remove the octopus place it on a sheet pan to cool. Discard the cooking water.

Prepare a bed of the herbs in a casserole dish. Cut the octopus into large pieces and discard anything that doesn't look like meat, such as the innards or the beak. Place the pieces of the octopus on the bed of herbs. Cover and bake at 120°C in your oven for 1¾ hours, until tender.

Remove the pieces of octopus. Place them on a sheet pan to cool. When they are cool to touch, remove any gelatinous bits that you don't want to eat. You should also notice small round pieces of meat that look like eyeballs, but they're not. They are pieces from the octopus' suction cups on the tentacles. They taste good as well, just the same as the rest of the octopus. Cut the octopus meat into 1cm pieces. This should give you about 2 cups of chopped octopus meat.

Put the chopped octopus into a large bowl. Add the cucumbers, red onion, dried oregano, and jalapeño. Next, add the lime juice, cider vinegar, olive oil, and a sprinkle of salt. Stir to combine. Cover this and chill for about 2 hours or overnight. When ready to serve, stir in the chopped tomatoes. Enjoy !

## **2.9 ENSALADA TROPICAL**

This deliciously fruity salad recipe actually originates from the provinces of Granada and Malaga, which make up the Costa Tropical on the southern coast of Spain. I've tried this salad a few times and love the infusion of the fruits into the mix, as it gives the meaning of salad a whole new dimension !

**SERVES 4**

### **INGREDIENTS**

1 x apple  
1 x mango  
1 x kiwi fruit  
1 x avocado  
3 x anchovies (rinsed)  
2 x slices of smoked salmon  
1 x piece of fresh soft mozzarella cheese  
some sugar cane honey  
½ x cup of extra virgin olive oil  
¼ x cup of vinegar  
salt  
1 x sweet paprika or cinnamon (for decoration)

### **THE RECIPE**

First of all, peel all the fruit. Slice the mango at the widest part of the fruit, into about 8 pieces. Slice the kiwi fruit into about ½cm thick pieces. Cut the apple into ½cm slices. Slice the avocado in half lengthwise. Then peel it and slice it lengthwise into ¼cm pieces and open it out into a fan. Retain a slice of each fruit to make the vinaigrette.

Cut the mozzarella cheese into small slices to put on the salad



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or around the platter. Slice the anchovies into 2 or 3 pieces each. Cut the smoked salmon into several pieces and make the pieces small enough. Place the reserved fruit into a food processor, add extra virgin olive oil, vinegar and a pinch of salt to give some taste. It should get to be about the consistency of canned tomato sauce, when blended.

Place the mango in the centre of the platter and the rest of the fruit and cheese around. Put the pieces of salmon and anchovies on top. Finally, top it off with the slices of mango. Drizzle the vinaigrette over the salad and the plate. Ready to serve !



## **2.10      ENSALADA MURCIANA**

The ensalada Murciana salad is a traditional salad from the region of Murcia in southern Spain. It's a very healthy salad and has traces of potassium, vitamin A and phosphorus. This is such an easy salad to prepare, that you'll whip it up in no time !

**SERVES 6**

### **INGREDIENTS**

2 x heads of lettuce  
2 x medium green peppers  
2 x medium cucumbers  
3 x large tomatoes  
½ x medium onion  
9 x tablespoons of extra virgin olive oil  
3 x tablespoons of vinegar  
½ x teaspoon of salt

### **THE RECIPE**

Dice the washed lettuce, peppers, tomatoes, onions and peeled cucumbers. Keep them all separate. Place a layer of chopped lettuce in a flat-bottomed serving dish that has fairly high sides. Cover it with a layer of chopped peppers. Then add a layer of cucumbers, topped by the onions. Finally, add the tomatoes.

Mix the olive oil, vinegar and salt in a bowl and pour it over the salad. Cover the dish and keep it in a cool place for at least 2 hours. Serve in the dish in which it was made to retain the juices.

### 3 PAELLAS

Paella is a rice dish that originated in the Valencian region of Spain. Its modern form originated in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century from near the Albufera lagoon, a coastal lagoon in Valencia, on the east coast of Spain. Paella is widely regarded as Spain's national dish, but most Spaniards consider it to be a regional Valencian dish. Natives of Valencia regard paella as one of their identifying symbols.

There are generally 3 basic types of paella. They are Valencian paella (*paella Valenciana*), Seafood paella (*paella de marisco*), and Mixed paella (*paella mixta*). However, there are many other variations as well.

Valencian paella is widely believed to be the original. It consists of white rice, green vegetables, meat (such as chicken and rabbit), beans and spices such as saffron and rosemary. Optional ingredients include artichokes, peppers and chicken livers.

Seafood paella replaces meats with seafood and leaves out beans and green vegetables.

Mixed paella is a free-style combination of land animals, seafood, vegetables, and sometimes beans.

Most of the paella chefs use calasparra or bomba rices. All types of paellas use olive oil. Extra virgin olive is preferred as it is generally healthier.

Our selection of paellas below covers the 3 basic types and some of the different selections may vary only slightly. However, we have added all the different variations that we have managed to find !

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We'd also suggest that you invest in a solid, long-lasting paella pan or dish, preferably one that is about 36cm in diameter and is suitable for all hobs. It should be made of stainless steel and be teflon coated. It should also be able to handle a heat of 375°C and should be dishwasher safe. Ensure that the base of your paella pan is no smaller than the hob 'ring' on your cooker.

Our 10 most popular paellas are :

- 3.1 PAELLA MARINARA
- 3.2 PAELLA HUERTANA
- 3.3 PAELLA MIXTA
- 3.4 PAELLA VALENCIANA
- 3.5 PAELLA DE CARNE
- 3.6 PAELLA DE VERDURAS
- 3.7 PAELLA DE MARISCOS
- 3.8 PAELLA DE COSTILLAS
- 3.9 PAELLA ARROZ NEGRE
- 3.10 PAELLA A LA ALICANTINA



### **3.1 PAELLA MARINARA**

This paella is commonly known in Spain as “Paella Marinara” and is a fisherman's paella. It generally consists of saffron, rice and seafood components. There are some basic principles to making the perfect fisherman's paella. They are :

- steep the saffron at the very beginning
- sauté the seafood in hot oil to build a strong flavour
- the rice needs to be cooked al dente

SERVES 4

#### **INGREDIENTS**

1kg x small clams (cleaned)  
1kg x extra-large shrimps (in the shells with heads)  
½kg x cuttlefish or small squid (cleaned and cut into pieces)  
25 x threads of saffron (crushed)  
1 x tablespoon of smoked paprika  
4 x medium-sized tomatoes (minced)  
3 x cloves of garlic (minced)  
1 x red bell pepper (cleaned and chopped)  
1 x small onion (minced)  
7 x cups of chicken broth  
2½ x cups of short-grain rice  
salt and freshly ground black pepper (to add taste)  
½ x cup of extra virgin olive oil

#### **THE RECIPE**

Put the saffron and ¼ cup of hot water in a small bowl. Let it sit for 15 minutes. Heat the olive oil in a paella pan over a medium-high heat. Add the shrimps. Lightly salt them and then cook, turning occasionally, until they are golden brown. This should take about 5 minutes. Then transfer them to a plate and set aside.

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Add the cuttlefish, paprika, tomatoes, garlic, peppers, and onions to the paella pan and cook, stirring often, until the onions are soft, taking about 6 minutes. Add the saffron mixture that has been set aside and broth. Season with salt, and bring to a boil over a high heat. Sprinkle in the rice and distribute evenly with a spoon. Cook, without stirring, until the rice has absorbed most of the liquid, taking about 10 minutes. If your paella pan is larger than the burner, rotate it every 2 minutes to ensure that different parts are over the heat. This also makes sure that the rice cooks evenly. Reduce the heat to low, add the shrimps that have been set aside, and nestle in the clams hinge side down. Cook, without stirring, until the clams have opened and the rice has absorbed the liquid and is al dente. This should normally take from about 5 to 10 minutes. Remove the paella pan from the heat, cover with some aluminum foil, and let it sit for 5 minutes before serving.



### **3.2 PAELLA HUERTANA**

This paella originates from the province of Murcia in southern Spain and is known for its tender, sweet vegetables. It is an excellent and colourful meal without any meat and includes peas, limas, carrots, artichokes, red peppers, tomatoes, and a wonderful touch of ground almonds. This paella is very suitable for vegetarians, and is very healthy indeed.

SERVES 4

#### **INGREDIENTS**

450g x green beans  
8 x artichoke hearts  
8 x blanched almonds  
2 x carrots (scraped and sliced)  
2 x tomatoes (skinned and chopped)  
2 x cloves of garlic (peeled and coarsely chopped)  
½ x cup of fresh peas  
¾ x cup of lima beans  
1 x large onion (chopped)  
1 x pimiento (chopped)  
4 x tablespoons of minced parsley  
2 x cups of short-grain rice  
3 x cups of strong chicken broth  
¼ x teaspoon of saffron  
2 x hard-boiled eggs (cut into wedges)  
1 x lemon (cut into wedges)  
6 x tablespoons of extra virgin olive oil  
salt

## THE RECIPE

Cook the green beans, peas, lima beans, carrots, and artichoke hearts in salted water until they are just tender. The vegetables, of course, all have different cooking times. It's best to cook them in separate pots. Drain the vegetables and keep a cup of the juices.

Using your metal paella pan, heat the olive oil. Sauté the onion and pimienta until the onion starts to wilt. Add the tomatoes and cook for nearly 10 minutes, stirring frequently. During this time, using a food processor or food blender, mix the almonds, garlic, and the 2 tablespoons of parsley until they are very finely chopped. Then add the rice to the tomato mixture and stir to coat. Next, stir in the garlic mixture, then the green beans, peas, lima beans, and carrots.

Pour in the broth, boiling hot, and the previously reserved cooking juices from the vegetables. Add the saffron and some salt. Bring to the boil, then lower the heat to medium, and cook for 7 minutes on top of the stove, uncovered, stirring frequently. Do this until the rice is no longer soupy and some liquid remains.

Transfer to an oven and bake at an uncovered temperature of 160°C for 10 minutes. Check that the liquid has been absorbed, but that the rice is not quite done. Decorate this with the egg wedges and artichoke hearts, then bake for 5 minutes more. Remove, cover loosely with some kitchen foil, and let stand for about 10 minutes before serving. Decorate with some lemon wedges and sprinkle it with the remaining parsley. Serve with a light red wine from the region.



### 3.3 PAELLA MIXTA

*Paella Mixta* is probably one of the most common paella dishes. Some paellas only have meat or fish, but, as the name says, this recipe combines the best of both worlds. This paella dish can be quite intimidating to make, but isn't really that hard using this easy recipe. This recipe is for using a *paellera* pan that measures 36cm in diameter, but if you don't have such a pan, you can make it in a large shallow skillet pan. It would be advisable to halve the ingredient quantities for that method as you'll need to ensure that the ingredients are really no more than 2cm thick for proper cooking. Another useful tip for the *paella mixta*, is to be aware that the fish and the meat are there to complement the rice and to give the rice some extra flavour. Spaniards always look at the flavour of the rice first, when evaluating the quality of a paella. This means that it is best to do everything to get as much flavour into the rice as possible. The traditional rice for this paella is callaspara rice or bomba rice. If you can't find these, use a smaller rounded Mediterranean rice. If all else fails, use a risotto rice. This paella is a special dish that everyone will love !



SERVES 4

## INGREDIENTS

2 x cups of callaspara or bomba rice  
2 x squid (cleaned with the bodies cut into rings)  
15 x shrimps (uncooked and unpeeled)  
12 x fresh mussels  
450g x chicken wings and drumsticks  
230g x fresh clams  
1 x onion (chopped)  
1 x red pepper (chopped)  
1 x green pepper (chopped)  
2 x cloves of garlic (chopped)  
¼ x teaspoon of saffron  
6 x cups of fish or chicken stock  
½ x cup of dry white wine  
5 x tablespoons of extra virgin olive oil  
salt and pepper (to add taste)  
lemon wedges (for garnish)

## THE RECIPE

Let's start off by preparing all of the ingredients for this paella. Chop all of the vegetables and prepare the fish or chicken stock. Clean and prepare the chicken. Add a little salt and pepper for seasoning. Clean the seafood. Then add the olive oil to the pan spread around to cover the entire pan.

If you're using a very large paella pan, you may have to straddle the paella pan over two burners on your stove. This complicates the process as you'll have to constantly rotate the pan to avoid the hot spots.

Historically, the best paella was cooked over a wooden fire.

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When the oil is hot over a medium-high heat, add the onion and garlic, and cook for a couple of minutes. Now add the chicken and begin to brown it for another few minutes. Then add the chopped peppers and cook for another few minutes.

Now add the rice and the white wine. Spread the rice around and let the alcohol burn off while flavouring the rice for a few minutes. Next, add about half of the stock and the saffron.

Stir everything together very well and let it cook for about 10 minutes. Add the seafood and another 2 cups of the stock liquid. Also add some salt and pepper, but remember that the stock is already reasonably salty. Stir everything together and distribute it evenly. Leave the rice to cook over a medium heat without touching it again.

Check on it from time to time. Check the stock liquid. Add more if the rice seems a bit dry. It shouldn't be dry during the cooking process. The rice will probably take about half an hour to fully cook after you've added the seafood in the step above.

When you're getting close to finishing, taste a bit of the rice from different areas of the pan to see if it's done and to see if you've got enough liquid. The rice should be soft but should still have just the slightest bite to it. Once cooked, remove the paella from the heat and cover it. Let it rest for about 5 minutes. Serve and garnish with the lemon ! Enjoy !

### **3.4 PAELLA VALENCIANA**

Paella Valenciana is the first and most original of all the paella dishes. This is where it all started, in the coastal city of Valencia on the southern coast of Spain. Valencia is especially popular with the Germans, the French and the Americans, first and foremost for the gastronomy of the city and region. The paella is the main draw-card.

In the dim and distant past, the invading Moors planted rice in the marshlands of what is now known as Albufera Natural Park and is on the outskirts of the city. The workers cooked that rice, in the fields, over an open fire with whatever ingredients came to hand, such as snails, rabbits, backyard vegetables, and an occasional chicken. Eventually farm-style paella was joined by seafood paella. Valencia is overflowing with seafood because it is located on the Mediterranean at the mouth of the Turia River and is just a few minutes away from a large freshwater lagoon.

Today Valencians produce the purest form of paella, and the recipe does not deviate much from the centuries-old tradition. The Valencians still do serve two versions of the dish, a meat version and a seafood version. It's considered bad to mix meat and seafood in the same paella. Valencians generally cook paella outdoors over an open fire for a family lunch, not dinner, on Sundays. They've done this for generations. Traditionally, the cooks are the men, who are strong enough to carry the large pans, endure the heat of the outdoor fire and prefer cooking to going to church !

**SERVES 4**

## INGREDIENTS

8 x small pieces of free-range chicken (with the skin on)  
8 x small pieces of rabbit (skinned)  
3 x large cloves of garlic (mashed)  
2 x ripe tomatoes (peeled, seeded and finely diced)  
½ x teaspoon of pulverized saffron threads  
1 x teaspoon of sweet paprika  
2 x cups of fresh green beans (cut into 5cm pieces, blanched)  
1 x cup of fresh lima beans (blanched)  
8 x cups of purified water or chicken broth  
3 x cups of short-grained rice (calasparra or bomba)  
extra virgin olive oil  
black pepper  
cracked sea salt

## THE RECIPE

Season the chicken and rabbit with salt, pepper and mashed garlic. Then set aside. Build a wood fire. The wood adds a smoky flavour and keeps the temperature high and even. When the fire is hot, set a grate over it and place a paella pan on the grate.

Sprinkle some coarse salt in the bottom of pan. This will prevent the rice from burning. Add a thin layer of olive oil. When the olive oil is hot, add the seasoned chicken and rabbit and then sauté, turning the pieces until they're golden brown and beginning to crisp, but not fully cooked. This should take about 8 minutes.

Add tomato, saffron, paprika and beans. Cook briefly, stirring gently, then add enough liquid to reach the rivets that are attached to the handles of your paella pan.

Build up the fire with twigs or wood. This creates enough heat

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to give the liquid a steady rolling boil over the whole pan. Add the rice to the pan in a cross-like pattern, about 2cm wide and ½cm deep. Using a spatula, spread the rice evenly over the pan. From this point on, the liquid should remain at an even gentle boil and the rice shouldn't be stirred. You can control the fire by spreading it to the edges of the pan, away from the centre.

Let the mixture simmer until the liquid is absorbed, taking about 20 minutes. When the rice absorbs all of the liquid, remove the paella from the fire. Cover it lightly with some kitchen towels, and then let it rest for about 5 to 10 minutes before serving it directly from pan. Enjoy ! Enjoy ! Enjoy !



### **3.5 PAELLA DE CARNE**

Paella de Carne (or meat paella) is a typical Sunday lunch dish for the whole family to enjoy. It originates from Andalusia, where there is an abundance of meat, especially pork and beef. It's very important to add a decent amount of paprika and black pepper so that the meat will absorb the flavour. If you order this paella when in Spain, ensure you also order a good portion of olives as a side dish to complement the paella.

**SERVES 4**

#### **INGREDIENTS**

125g x beef tenderloin tip (cut into small pieces)  
125g x boneless skinless chicken breast (cut into small pieces)  
100g x chorizo sausage (cut into 1cm cubes)  
½ x green bell pepper (seeded and cut long into narrow strips)  
½ x red bell pepper (seeded and cut long into narrow strips)  
1½ x cups of calasparra rice  
1 x lemon (cut into 4 wedges)  
2 x cloves of garlic (unpeeled)  
3½ x cups of chicken stock  
1½ x teaspoons of sweet paprika  
a pinch of saffron threads  
½ x cup of extra virgin olive oil  
cracked sea salt

#### **THE RECIPE**

Preheat your oven to 260°C. Put the garlic cloves in a small baking pan or dish and roast in the oven for about 10 to 15 minutes, or until the skin is brown. During this time, using a small saucepan, bring the stock to the boil. Add the paprika and a few of the saffron threads and reduce the heat to a

simmer.

When the garlic is ready, take it out of the oven, leaving the oven on. When the garlic is cool enough to handle, peel it, put it in a food processor, and add ½ cup of the simmering stock along with the rest of the saffron. Process this until it is well blended. Then set it aside.

Using a large paella pan, heat the olive oil over a medium-high heat. Then add the bell pepper strips and cook, stirring often, until tender. This should take about 10 minutes.

Sprinkle salt onto the beef and chicken pieces. Then add them, along with the chorizo, to the paella pan. Cook, stirring often, for about 5 minutes, or until the meats are lightly brown, but still under-cooked. Add the rice and stir to blend well with the remaining ingredients. Allow the rice to absorb a little of the olive oil. Evenly spread the mixture in the paella pan. Pour the hot stock into the pan. Increase the heat to high. Bring the mixture to the boil. Add the garlic mixture. Stir gently to incorporate, and continue to boil for almost 5 minutes without stirring. Reduce the heat to medium and cook for 5 minutes longer.

Because the bottom of the paella pan is probably wider than the reach of the burner's heat, shift the pan from side to side on the burner to evenly distribute the heat. Do not stir the mixture. Check by tasting the stock and season with some salt if necessary. Transfer the pan to the oven and cook for another 7 minutes. The liquid should be absorbed and the rice should be tender. Remove from the oven. Cover with a lid or kitchen towel. Let it rest about 7 minutes before serving with the lemon wedges on the side. *Apetit buena !*



### **3.6 PAELLA DE VERDURAS**

Vegetarian paella was originally made by farm labourers, who cooked the mixture of rice and vegetables in a pan over an open fire in the fields. At first it was a communal dish, eaten directly from the pan with wooden spoons. The reason it had such humble beginnings was that the labourers were so poor so they only used the very basic ingredients that they could muster. This recipe showcases summer vegetables such as courgettes and fresh peas. Saffron and sweet pimentón are essential ingredients for any authentic paella dish.

**SERVES 4**

#### **INGREDIENTS**

- ½ x teaspoon of saffron strands
- 1 x litre of vegetable stock
- 240g x shelled broadbeans
- 100g x fine green beans (topped and tailed and halved)
- 100g x fine asparagus (cut into 5cm pieces)
- 3 x tablespoons of extra virgin olive oil
- 200g x small courgettes (cut into thick slices)
- 1 x medium onion (finely chopped)
- 1 x large red pepper (de-seeded, chopped into 1cm pieces)
- 1 x large green pepper (de-seeded, chopped into 1cm pieces)
- 3 x garlic cloves (finely chopped)
- 1 x teaspoon of sweet pimentón (or paprika)
- 200g x fresh tomatoes (skinned and chopped)
- 400g x short-grain calasparra or bomba rice
- 2 x tablespoons of freshly chopped flat-leaf parsley
- 100g x shelled peas
- 280g x chargrilled artichokes (in olive oil, drained)
- 1 x pinch fine sea salt
- 1 pinch x freshly ground black pepper

## THE RECIPE

Shake the saffron strands around in a slightly hot frying pan for a few seconds until they are dry but not coloured. Then tip them into a small mortar or coffee cup and grind to a fine powder with a pestle or a wooden spoon. Add a splash of the stock liquid and set aside.

Bring a pan of salted water to the boil. Drop in the broadbeans, bring back to the boil and cook for about 2 minutes. Lift out with a slotted spoon into a colander. Leave to drain, then tip into a bowl. Bring the pan of water back to the boil, adding the green beans and cook for 3 minutes. Then remove with the slotted spoon to the colander and refresh under some cold water. Tip onto a plate. Bring the water back to the boil once more, adding the asparagus, and bringing back to the boil. Drain and then refresh under some cold water. Pop the broadbeans out of their skins and add them to the plate of green beans with the asparagus.

Heat 2 tablespoons of the olive oil, using a large non-stick frying pan or a shallow flame-proof casserole dish over a medium-high heat. Add the courgettes and fry them for 2 to 3 minutes until they are a light golden brown. Then lift them out onto a plate.

Add the remaining tablespoon of olive oil and the onion to the pan and fry gently for 5 minutes. Then add the red and green pepper and continue frying until the onion is soft and lightly golden. Next, stir in the garlic and pimentón and fry for a minute more. Add the tomatoes and fry for 2 to 3 minutes until softened. Then stir in the rest of the stock, the saffron mixture and some seasoning to taste and bring to the boil. Sprinkle in the rice and the parsley. Stir lightly to evenly distribute the rice around the pan. Then scatter over the cooked beans, asparagus, courgettes, peas and artichokes and

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shake the pan gently so that they all bed down slightly into the rice.

Lower the heat and leave to simmer vigorously for about 6 minutes, then lower the heat again and leave to simmer gently for a further 14 minutes, until all the liquid has been absorbed and the rice is tender, but still has a little bit of a bite to it.

Remove the pan from the heat and cover with a large lid or a clean tea towel and leave to rest for 5 minutes before serving.



### **3.7 PAELLA DE MARISCOS**

Paella de Marisco is another delicious variation of the seafood paella. This recipe makes use of mussels, clams, shrimp, and fish fillet. The clams and mussels are boiled in water. The water used to boil the shellfish becomes the juice for the clams, and adds flavour to the paella rice. We use calasparra rice for this recipe because it is the best type of rice to use for making paella. Bomba rice is also a decent choice alternative. This paella is always best eaten with a squeezed lemon. It can be paired with a good local Spanish white wine.

**SERVES 8**

#### **INGREDIENTS**

15 x pieces of cooked mussels  
15 x pieces of cooked clams  
10 x pieces of shrimp  
1¾ x cups of calasparra rice  
4½ x cups of clam juice  
2 x teaspoons paprika  
½ x small red bell pepper (roasted and sliced into strips)  
½ x small red bell pepper (chopped)  
1 x head of garlic  
3 x tablespoons of chopped parsley  
½ x cup of scallions (chopped)  
1 x medium tomato (chopped)  
85g x fish fillet  
2 x teaspoons of saffron  
1 x medium onion (chopped)  
5 tablespoons olive oil (for sautéing)  
1½ x tablespoons of olive oil (for the garlic paste)  
2 x teaspoons of salt

## THE RECIPE

Crush the garlic and pound it until it is smooth. Then add the parsley and continue to pound until a desired consistency is reached. Pour in your olive oil and add paprika. Mix well and then set aside. Heat the olive oil in a paellera (paella pan) using a medium to high heat.

Pan-fry the fish fillet until both sides turn light brown. Remove the fish from the pan and then chop it into small pieces. Set aside.

Meanwhile, fry both sides of the shrimp until the colour turns orange. Remove the shrimp from the pan and set aside.

Sauté the onion, scallion, and the red bell pepper. Add the tomato and cook it until it becomes soft. Pour in the clam juice and let it boil. Add the garlic, parsley, paprika mixture, and the saffron. Stir gently. Put into the paella rice. Allow the liquid to re-boil. Add the chopped pan fried fish fillet and salt and then stir.

Adjust the heat to low. Let the rice cook for about 20 to 25 minutes. You can cover the pan if the rice is taking too long to cook.

Arrange the mussels, clams, shrimp, and roasted red bell pepper on top of the rice. Cover the paellera with some kitchen aluminum foil and then turn the heat off. Serve with lemon wedges on the side and enjoy !

### **3.8 PAELLA DE COSTILLAS**

The basic recipe for any type of paella is always the same. It's only the additional ingredients that give way to the different variations. Paella should always be made with high quality ingredients. This doesn't mean they have to be expensive, just seasonal. This paella is made with the addition of Iberian pork ribs ! It's tough for those who don't live in Spain because they won't get the chance to taste these ribs and paella as they should be done. I've had this once and was amazed by how tasty and beautiful the dish was crafted. It will blow your mind and tease your palate !

SERVES 4

#### **INGREDIENTS**

800g x minced pork ribs  
150g x green beans  
2 x ripe tomatoes  
1 x red pepper  
2 x cloves of garlic  
5 x mushrooms  
9 x cloves of young garlic  
1 x medium onion  
4 x dried tomatoes  
2 x litres of chicken stock  
500g x calasparra or bomba rice  
15 x strands of saffron  
extra virgin olive oil  
fine sea salt  
turmeric  
water

## THE RECIPE

Wash and chop the vegetables. Chop half of the onion into tiny pieces. Mince the 2 cloves of garlic. Shred and soak the the tomatoes for about 25 minutes.

Place the paella pan on the fire. Add 5 tablespoons of olive oil and bring it to a high heat. Add the ribs with a little salt. Then add the onion, garlic and fry lightly, adding the beans, garlic and dried tomatoes we have previously put to soak for about 25 minutes. Then add the mushrooms and fry them along with the shredded tomatoes. Add the saffron and roast for a minute, along with the other ingredients. Cook slowly for a few minutes, then add the broth and water to cover the ingredients. Put some food colouring and cook for 25 minutes, adding salt if necessary.

Finally put the paella rice into the pan. Cook over a medium to high heat for 5 minutes. After this, lower the heat and cook for another 15 minutes. Then let it stand for 5 after turning off the fire. This is now ready to serve.



### **3.9 PAELLA ARROZ NEGRE**

If I'm not mistaken, this paella originated in Catalonia, which borders Valencia. Normally I'm the type to go for fresh and familiar ingredients, rather than the strange and exotic. However, there are exceptions to everything in life, and here's one of them. I love to eat but not really look at inky squid. I'd never had it before, but after giving it a try recently, I think that I'll try it more often. To me, there are few more intriguing foods than black paella. In Catalonia it's called "arroz negro," or black rice. It's not really like any other rice dish you're likely to come up against.

Fleshy pieces of squid or cuttlefish are cooked deep into the rice, and then it is tinted black with a healthy dose of squid ink. Where a normal paella is bright with a flashy riot of meats and vegetables, this is something completely different. It is subtler with a rich dark flavour. The ink stains the outside of the rice with a deep grayish-black colour. The squid pieces settle into tender nuggets when scattered throughout the rice. There's also a hint of tomato and pepper, and a little smoked paprika.

The squid ink adds, similar to turmeric, to the colour and flavour of the dish. It gives off a slight iodine-like tang, with a little dark rustiness. The flavour is a little bit like saffron, but heavier and just little saltier. It takes a fair amount of ink for that flavour to come through. It suits rice and other starches particularly well. This paella is definitely something to make when you want to impress your guests. Spanish rice dishes like this one must be eaten directly from the pan.

**SERVES 6**



## INGREDIENTS

450g x squid (cleaned)  
230 g x large shrimps (peeled, de-veined, cut into 2cm pieces)  
230g x bay scallops  
1 x tablespoon of squid ink  
3 x cups of bomba or calasparra rice  
2 x teaspoons of sweet smoked paprika  
6 x cups of seafood stock or vegetable broth  
1 x cup of crushed tomatoes  
1 x small yellow onion (diced)  
1 x small green bell pepper (diced)  
4 x small garlic cloves (minced)  
3 x tablespoons of extra virgin olive oil  
salt (to add taste)  
chopped fresh parsley for serving

## THE RECIPE

If your squid still has tentacles, gently detach them from the bodies. Cut the squid bodies and tentacles into 2cm pieces.

Pour the stock or broth into a medium saucepan and place on a medium-low heat. Let the stock warm up while you start cooking the paella. Using a large skillet, heat the olive oil over medium heat. Add the squid and cook, stirring frequently, for about 5 minutes, or until the juices from the squid have gone and the pieces of squid are firm.

Add the tomatoes, onion, pepper, garlic, and paprika. Cook, stirring occasionally, for 5 to 10 minutes until the liquid from the tomatoes has gone and the mixture is thick.

Add the rice to the paella pan, stirring until it's fully coated with the tomato mixture. Season generously with some salt.

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Add the squid ink to the hot stock and stir it to combine, then slowly pour the hot stock into the skillet, stirring all the while.

Give the pan a final stir, then increase the heat to medium-high. Let it cook undisturbed for 10 minutes, or until the rice swells up and begins to reach the surface. Reduce the heat to low and simmer for another 5 minutes, or until the liquid is almost gone.

Add the shrimp and scallops, nestling them into the rice to absorb the heat. Let the paella cook for another 5 minutes, or until the liquid is totally absorbed and the rice is cooked but is still a tiny bit firm.

Remove the skillet from the heat and cover loosely with a clean towel or a piece of aluminum kitchen foil. Then let the paella rest, covered, for about 20 minutes. When ready, uncover and sprinkle with parsley. Serve at room temperature.



### **3.10 PAELLA A LA ALICANTINA**

This paella originated from the region of Alicante, as the name implies. For those who don't know, the province of Alicante also borders on the province of Valencia, where the original paella dishes were invented. This is a great paella, and if you happen to be anywhere on the Costa Blanca, you should be able to order this paella in any of the authentic Spanish restaurants that permeate the region. I love this paella because it's got quite a bit of pork in it, a meat that I thoroughly enjoy !

**SERVES 6**

#### **INGREDIENTS**

7 x tablespoons of extra virgin olive oil  
3 x medium green peppers (de-seeded and chopped)  
3 x cloves of garlic (peeled and minced)  
3 x tomatoes (peeled and chopped)  
8 x young, tender artichokes (chopped)  
450g x of bomba or calasparra rice  
15 x strands of saffron  
2 x teaspoons of sweet smoked paprika  
450g x pork (diced)  
1 x litre of water  
salt

#### **THE RECIPE**

Heat the oil in a large skillet. Fry the peppers lightly and quickly to avoid burning them. Set them aside.

Using the same oil, fry the garlic, tomatoes and artichokes over a low heat. Add the rice and stir, then add the saffron and paprika. Add the water and salt to taste.

When it starts to boil, add the pork and let the mixture cook

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vigorously. Puree the fried peppers using a little water and add them to the rice. Continue cooking, without stirring, until the rice is half done, then reduce the heat and cook slowly until finished. You are now ready to serve !



## **4 MEAT DISHES**

You cannot really get by in Spain without eating some of their famous meat dishes somewhere along the line. We've avoided including any chicken dishes, as the paellas listed in the previous chapter have chicken in most of them.

Here is a list of my top 10 favourite Spanish meat dishes – not in any particular order.

- 4.1 BISTEC DE LOMO
- 4.2 BISTEC SALTEADO
- 4.3 CHULETAS FRITAS
- 4.4 CHULETAS DE TERNERA
- 4.5 COSTILLAS ASADAS
- 4.6 CHILINDRON DE CORDERO
- 4.7 ROSTIDERA VALENCIANA
- 4.8 CAZUELA ENMIGADA
- 4.9 CORDEROS ASADOS
- 4.10 RABO GUISADO



## **4.1 BISTEC DE LOMO**

This is a recipe for juicy sirloin steaks cooked in garlic and white wine sauce. It takes about 15 minutes to prepare and about 15 minutes to cook – what a treat !

SERVES 4

### **INGREDIENTS**

4 x sirloin steaks  
3 x large cloves garlic  
1 x wine-glass of fino sherry  
extra virgin olive oil  
salt

### **THE RECIPE**

Cut the sirloin steaks into bite-sized pieces and marinate them in a mixture of salt and a chopped clove of garlic. Peel the remaining garlic cloves and cut them into thin slices. Cook them gently in the olive oil in a frying pan over a medium heat until they are golden. Then add the meat, turn up the heat, and fry for 2 minutes. When the steak pieces are almost done, add the wine and allow the liquid to reduce slightly. Serve hot, along with a bowl of freshly cooked vegetables.

## **4.2 BISTEC SALTEADO**

This is a really tasty fillet steak made in the Spanish style. It takes about half an hour to make, but is well worth the wait ! I've had this steak in a few restaurants in mainland Spain, and can't complain !

SERVES 2

### **INGREDIENTS**

450g x tenderloin fillet (cut into 2½cm cubes)

1 x spanish onion (chopped)

2 x cloves of garlic (chopped)

1 x chorizo sausage (sliced)

½ x cup of slice mushrooms

2 x potatoes (peeled and diced)

1 x green pepper (chopped)

vegetable oil (for frying)

¼ x cup of extra virgin olive oil

salt and pepper (to add taste)

⅓ x cup of red wine

### **THE RECIPE**

Sauté the diced tenderloin in hot olive oil. When the meat is brown, add the chopped garlic, onion, and green pepper. Set aside. Deep-fry the diced potatoes in vegetable oil for about 10 minutes or until they are brown. Then drain onto some paper towels. Add the chorizo, mushrooms, salt, pepper and potatoes to the meat. Add the wine and slowly bring to the boil. This steak is best served with a portion of french fries or chips and some green vegetables. You are now ready to eat !

### **4.3 CHULETAS FRITAS**

This is a great recipe for fried pork chops, and you can find it on the menu of many restaurants throughout mainland Spain. I absolutely love this dish, and would have it every week if I could, but I wouldn't be able to keep my weight down !

**SERVES 2**

#### **INGREDIENTS**

900g x pork chops  
¼ x teaspoon of oregano  
1½ x teaspoon of Adobo sauce  
2 x cloves of garlic (minced)  
1 packet Sazon Goya (salt replacement)  
1 x teaspoon of extra virgin olive oil  
4 x tablespoons frying oil

#### **THE RECIPE**

Wash and dry the pork chops thoroughly. Mix the Adobo sauce, garlic, oregano and oil and then season the chops with this mixture. Heat the frying oil at a medium to high heat. Brown the pork chops for about 3 minutes for each side. Reduce the heat to medium and then cook by turning over once or twice, for another 10 minutes or until golden brown. The pork chops are now ready for serving along with an accompaniment of cooked vegetables.



## **4.4 CHULETAS DE TERNERA**

This is a famous dish of veal chops that takes about 20 minutes to make. As veal is one of my favourite meats, I thought that I would include this recipe along with the others in this section. It's best to make this recipe in such a way that the chops remain juicy yet still well done.

SERVES 2

### **INGREDIENTS**

4 x large veal chops  
6 x dehydrated tomatoes  
garlic  
parsley  
extra virgin olive oil  
some margarine  
salt

### **RECIPE**

Put a little olive oil and a tablespoon of margarine in the pan and place on a medium heat. Coat the veal chops on both sides with a mixture of garlic, salt and parsley. When the margarine has melted and is bubbling, add the veal chops and fry them for about a minute until they're half done on one side. Then turn them over and fry the other side. When there is only a little pink meat visible, pour the remaining sauce left in the pan into a cup. Put two dried tomatoes on top of each veal chop. You can also add some spices if you prefer, such as Provencal herbs for meat and fish. Put the chops on the grill in the oven and bake slowly for about 12 minutes at 200°C. Then pour the reserved sauce over the meat and cook for another minute. Serve with a jacket potato.

## 4.5 COSTILLAS ASADAS

This Spanish recipe is for slow-grilled pork spare-ribs. Firstly you'll have to thoroughly marinate the ribs in an Adobo sauce (a Spanish marinade). Then very slowly grill them in your oven until they are ready. They're absolutely delicious when done !

SERVES 4

### INGREDIENTS

1kg x spare-ribs

#### ***For the Adobo Spanish marinade :***

1 x clove of garlic (finely chopped)

1 x red hot chilli pepper (finely chopped)

1 x oregano (finely chopped)

1 x sprig of rosemary (finely chopped)

1 x squeezed lemon (or lime)

some coarsely ground black pepper

sugar

seasalt

### RECIPE

Remove the tough skin membrane from the inside of the rib slab. Cut the spare-ribs from the slab so that you end up with individual ribs. Remove any excess fat and loose pieces. Thoroughly mix the ingredients of the Adobo and marinate the spareribs for at least an hour. A whole night is a lot better, of course. Pre-heat your oven to 150°C. Slow-grill the spare-ribs from 2 to 4 hours until they are done. The slower the better. Turn the ribs around every hour or so. Serve with french fries when they are ready !

## **4.6 CHILINDRON DE CORDERO**

This lamb stew recipe uses Spanish roasted, sweet red peppers. If you can't find them in your grocery store, you can substitute any roasted red pepper. This recipe takes about an hour and a half and creates a wonderful succulent lamb stew !

SERVES 4

### **INGREDIENTS**

1 x tablespoon of extra virgin olive oil  
1¼kg x lamb shoulder  
1 x cup of onions (diced)  
4 x cloves of garlic (minced)  
30g x Serrano ham (sliced)  
1 x cup of piquillo peppers (chopped)  
1 x cup of dry sherry  
1 x cup of ruby port wine  
1 x cup of dry white wine  
300g x whole tomatoes  
1 x bay leaf  
2 x sprigs of rosemary

### **RECIPE**

Heat the olive oil in a large saucepan. Add the lamb shoulder and brown it on all sides. Remove the lamb and set aside. Add the onions, garlic, and ham to the pan. Cook until the onions and garlic are soft. Stir occasionally to prevent sticking. Add the piquillo peppers. De-glaze the pan by adding the sherry, port, and white wine. Bring to the boil, then reduce the heat and simmer the liquid until it's reduced by half. Put the lamb shoulder into the pan. Add the tomatoes, bay leaf, and rosemary. Simmer for 3 hours. Serve with rice and beans.

## **4.7 ROSTIDERA VALENCIANA**

This is a lamb shank dish cooked in a special Valencian way. I've had it once and would definitely have it again !

SERVES 2

### **INGREDIENTS**

6 x lamb shanks  
¼ x cup of flour  
1 x teaspoon of salt  
1 x teaspoon of paprika  
½ x teaspoon of pepper  
¼ x cup of extra virgin olive oil  
1 x teaspoon of crushed rosemary  
3 x slices of orange (cut in half)  
12 x oven-baked jacket potatoes

### **RECIPE**

Coat the lamb shanks with a mixture of flour, salt, paprika and pepper. Place them in a shallow baking pan. Pour some olive oil over all and sprinkle with rosemary. Bake, uncovered, in an oven at 350°C for 2½ to 3 hours, turning occasionally, until crisp on the outside. If you want gravy, then mix a tablespoon of the drippings with a tablespoon of flour. Stir in ½ teaspoon of salt and a cup of water. Cook and stir over a medium heat until thickened. Serve the meat with the gravy, orange slices and the baked jacket potatoes.

## 4.8

## CAZUELA ENMIGADA

*Cazuela enmigada* is a traditional lamb stew dish from the region of Aragon in the northeast of Spain. Aragon consists of three provinces - Huesca, Teruel and Zaragoza. Teruel is well-known for its lamb and high quality cured ham. Baby lamb is known as *ternasco* in Aragon, and is a rather large part of the local cuisine. Since the climate is cold and snows in most of the region, stews and soups are popular. This lamb stew is quite simple to prepare. Small pieces of lamb are browned, then cooked in a mixture of onions, garlic, tomatoes, white wine and nutmeg, and bread crumbs are used to thicken the sauce, which is a deep, dark brown colour and has a rich flavour. Serve with the traditional side dish of home-fried potatoes.

SERVES 4

### INGREDIENTS

1kg x boneless lamb (shoulder or leg)  
6 x cloves of garlic  
4 x tablespoons of extra virgin olive oil  
2 x white medium-sized onions  
3 x ripe, firm tomatoes  
1 x cup of white table wine  
¼ x cup of dry breadcrumbs  
¼ x teaspoon of ground nutmeg  
salt and pepper to taste

### RECIPÉ

Cut the lamb and marinate. Remove the excess fat. Cut into cubes about 4cm thick. Peel and finely mince 3 of the garlic cloves. Place the lamb and the garlic in a large bowl or ceramic dish. Add a pinch of salt and pepper and mix

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together. Set aside while preparing the rest of the ingredients.

Peel and julienne the onions. Rinse and grate the tomatoes, using a cheese grater. Pour a few tablespoons of the olive oil into a large, heavy-bottomed frying pan. Spread the olive oil evenly over the bottom of the pan and heat on a medium heat. Add the lamb to the pan and brown on all sides. Add the onions to the lamb and saute until translucent. Then add the grated tomatoes and cook for almost 5 minutes. Pour in the white wine and add a  $\frac{1}{4}$  to  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup of water. Simmer on a low heat.

Prepare the *picada*, which is a mixture of the bread crumbs and spices in a mortar. Peel and halve the remaining 3 garlic cloves, the bread crumbs and place in the mortar. Add a bit of the sauce from the pan, or a touch of white wine, and mash with the pestle to create a smooth paste. Add the paste to the lamb and mix well. Add the nutmeg and adjust with some salt and pepper to taste. Simmer the lamb until tender, adding white wine or water if too much sauce evaporates. Ready to serve !



## **4.9 CORDEROS ASADOS**

This recipe is for one whole leg of lamb and works equally as well with individual legs or shoulders. Usually this recipe involves cooking the lamb on a bed of sliced potatoes, onions and garlic. It's a typical Castillian dish originating from the north of Madrid. The Spanish enjoy this meal when going out for Sunday lunch and during Christmas. I love lamb and have had this one a few times !

SERVES 4 - 6

### **INGREDIENTS**

1½kg x leg of lamb  
2 x tablespoons of olive oil  
1 x teaspoon of fresh thyme  
2 x cloves of garlic (finely sliced)  
1 x wineglass of dry white wine  
300ml x water  
2 x tablespoons of wine vinegar  
1 x juice of a lemon  
12 x potatoes  
2 x large onions  
4 whole garlic cloves (for flavouring the onions and potatoes)  
salt  
freshly ground black pepper

### **RECIPE**

Rub the lamb with half of the olive oil. Season it with salt and pepper and rub the thyme over the surface. Let it sit for an hour to absorb the flavours. Peel and cut the potatoes into slices about 1cm thick and place them on the bottom of a roasting tin. Slice the onions and mix them with the potatoes and peel the garlic but leave the cloves whole and add to the

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potatoes and onions. Put the white wine, water, vinegar and lemon juice into a pan and bring to the boil. Then cut some slits in the leg of the lamb and put some slices of garlic into them. Then rub the lamb with the rest of the olive oil. Place the lamb on top of the potatoes, onions and garlic and pour about half of the liquid over the meat. Place in a pre-heated oven at 230°C for 15 minutes. Then turn the heat down to 190°C and continue to roast it. Baste with the remaining liquid from time to time. If the potatoes soak up too much liquid you can make more. For cooking time allow 15 minutes per 450g if you like your lamb pink and 25 minutes per 450g if you like it well done in the way that the Spanish like it ! Traditionally in Spain this would be served along with the potato that's cooked with it but you might choose to serve it with some roast potatoes and vegetables of your choosing.





## **4.10 RABO GUISADO**

This is a spicy Spanish oxtail stew that I've enjoyed from time to time.

SERVES 6 - 8

### **INGREDIENTS**

1½kg x oxtail (trimmed of fat, disjointed, cut into 5cm pieces)  
4 x medium-sized all-purpose potatoes (peeled and quartered)  
½ x cup of extra virgin olive oil  
1 x large onion (finely chopped)  
1 x large green pepper (seeded and finely chopped)  
4 x cloves of garlic (finely chopped)  
1 x cup of drained and chopped tomatoes  
2 x cups of canned beef broth  
¼ x teaspoon of dried oregano  
½ x teaspoon of freshly ground black pepper (to taste)  
¼ x teaspoon of ground cumin  
2 x medium-sized chorizos (sliced 2cm thick)  
1 x bay leaf  
1 x juice of 2 limes  
½ x cup of dry sherry  
1 x cup of dry red wine  
salt and freshly ground black pepper (to add some taste)

### **RECIPE**

Sprinkle the oxtail with the salt, pepper, and lime juice. Using a large soup kettle over a medium heat, heat ¼ cup of the olive oil until it's fragrant, then brown the oxtail on all sides.

Transfer them to a platter and discard the oil. In the same kettle, heat the remaining olive oil over a low heat until fragrant, then cook the onion, bell pepper, and garlic, stirring,

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until tender, for 6 to 8 minutes.

Return the oxtail to the kettle and add everything except the potatoes. Stir well and bring to the boil over a medium heat.

Reduce the heat to low, cover, and simmer for 2 hours. Add additional stock if necessary. Add the potatoes and cook for another 30 minutes, until the oxtail and the potatoes are done. Serve hot and enjoy !



## **5 SEAFOOD DISHES**

Spain has hundreds of miles of coastline on the Cantabrian, the Atlantic and the Mediterranean Sea. It just seems to make sense that the Spanish eat more fish and seafood per person than any other European nation. Spanish cuisine has dozens of seafood main dishes that are delicious and enticing !

Here are my ten favourite seafood dishes from Spain.

- 5.1 SUQUET
- 5.2 BACALAO AL PIL PIL
- 5.3 CEVICHE
- 5.4 GAMBAS A LA PLANCHA
- 5.5 PULPO A FEIRA
- 5.6 DORADA A LA SAL
- 5.7 BOQUERONES EN ESCABECHE
- 5.8 CALDERETA DE LANGOSTA
- 5.9 FRITURA ANDALUZA
- 5.10 MERLUZA A LA VASCA



## 5.1 SUQUET

In the Catalan language, *suquet* is the diminutive form of *suc*, or “juice”, which means that this lovely dish is more correctly called juicy fish stew. The fish and shellfish used vary from chef to chef, and so does the amount of liquid. Some people call this a stew, while others call it a soup. In all cases, saffron and almonds are typically part of the mix. This dish can be found on just about any restaurant menu in Barcelona !

SERVES 6

### INGREDIENTS

12 x small littleneck clams or cherrystone clams  
1kg x monkfish fillet (cut into small pieces)  
450g x hake fillet (cut into small pieces)  
450g x squid (cleaned and cut into thin rings)  
6 x large shrimp (in the shell with heads intact)  
12 x medium shrimp (peeled)  
230g x mussels (scrubbed and de-bearded)  
6 x cups of fish stock  
1 x tablespoon of coarse salt  
½ x cup of extra virgin olive oil  
2 x cloves of garlic (peeled but kept whole)  
8 x blanched almonds  
1 x tablespoon of chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley  
1 x tablespoon water  
1 x yellow onion (finely chopped)  
1 x tomato (with skin discarded and grated)  
1 x pinch of saffron threads  
½ x cup of cava

## RECIPÉ

Scrub the clams under a tap of cold running water. Discard any that fail to close to the touch. Using a large bowl, combine the clams, coarse salt, and water. Cover and let stand for at least 2 hours so that the clams release any sand trapped in their shells.

In the meantime, using a deep cazuela, heat the olive oil over a high heat. Add the garlic cloves and fry, stirring often, for about a minute, or until golden. Transfer the garlic to a mortar, using a slotted spoon. Keep the oil in the cazuela off the heat.

Add the almonds, parsley, and water to the mortar and pound with a pestle until a smooth paste forms. Then set aside.

Return the cazuela to a medium heat, add the onion, and sauté for almost 5 minutes, or until soft. Add the tomato and saffron, mix well, and cook for another 5 minutes to blend the flavours. During this time, using a saucepan, bring the stock to the boil. Then decrease the heat to maintain a gentle simmer.

Next, add the hake, monkfish, and large and medium shrimp to the cazuela and mix well with onion and tomato. Stir in a cup of the hot stock and cook for half an hour, adding the remaining stock a cup at a time with 5-minute intervals. At the end of this time, all the fish should be cooked and the flavours should have blended.

Add salt for seasoning. Drain the clams and add them to the cazuela along with the mussels. Discard any that fail to close to the touch. Add the cava. Cook for another 5 minutes, or until the clams and mussels open. Discard any mussels or clams that failed to open. Serve immediately.

## 5.2 BACALAO AL PIL PIL

*Bacalao al pil pil* is a classic seafood dish from the Basque country. After the garnish is prepared and the cod is simmered for several minutes, a sauce is made by engaging the cod with the olive oil. This creates something that slightly resembles mayonnaise. This is not without its challenges, yet even the patient, novice chef can produce an excellent dish. To get the best results, only use olive oil because other fats will not produce the superior emulsion this dish requires. Use the best salt cod you can find. Use a cazuela or earthenware cooking dish that can be used on the stove top. Finally, when you're ready to place the fish in the cazuela to start the sauce, make sure the salt cod, olive oil, and cazuela are all kept lukewarm.

SERVES 4

### INGREDIENTS

1kg x salt cod (de-salted)  
1½ x cups of olive oil  
3 x cloves of garlic (thinly sliced)  
1 x small dried hot chilli (de-seeded and cut into rings)

### RECIPE

Drain the salt cod and pat dry using paper towels. Then cut the fish into 7cm squares, keeping the skin intact. When cooking the cod later, the skin will release some gelatin to help emulsify the sauce.

Using a 30cm cazuela, heat the olive oil over a medium heat. When the olive oil is hot, add the garlic and the chilli and fry, stirring occasionally, for about 2 to 3 minutes, or until the garlic starts to turn golden. Using a slotted spoon, transfer the garlic and the chilli to a small bowl and keep aside as garnish.

Keep the olive oil in the cazuela.

Reduce the heat to medium-low and add the pieces of cod to the olive oil. Then simmer for about 10 minutes, being careful not to let the oil get too hot. The olive oil should barely sizzle around the edges of the pieces of fish. Using a slotted spoon, transfer the cod to a plate. Then pour the olive oil into a wide heatproof bowl to cool. When the cod's cool enough to handle, remove any bones, leaving the pieces as intact as possible.

Return the cod pieces, with the skin side up and in a single layer, to the cazuela. At this point, ensure that the cazuela, the cod, and the reserved olive oil are all lukewarm.

Place the cazuela over a medium heat and start by spooning 2 or 3 tablespoons of the olive oil over the cod. It's here that the emulsification starts. Using both hands, rotate the cazuela in circular motions over the burner. Continue this motion until the first drops of oil start to emulsify. You'll know that the emulsion is starting when the oil drops turn pale and cling to one another. Eventually the whole sauce should turn pale white.

Continue to rotate the cazuela, only interrupting to add the olive oil gradually, spoonful by spoonful, until it's all included in the emulsion. Depending on the quality of the cod and the gelatin content of its skin, it should take anywhere from 15 to 30 minutes to make the sauce.

Divide the cod evenly among separate plates and spoon the sauce over the top. Garnish with the reserved garlic and chilli. Serve hot or warm. Enjoy !

### **5.3 CEVICHE**

You can use almost any firm-fleshed fish, provided that it is perfectly fresh, for this Spanish dish. The fish is “cooked” by the action of the acidic lime juice. Adjust the amount of chilli according to your taste.

SERVES 6

#### **INGREDIENTS**

750g x sea bass or salmon fillets (skinned)  
1 x juice of 3 limes  
2 x fresh red chillies (de-seeded and very finely chopped)  
1 x tablespoon of olive oil  
salt (to add taste)

#### ***For the Garnish***

4 x large firm tomatoes (peeled, de-seeded and diced)  
1 x ripe advocado (peeled and diced)  
1 x tablespoon of lemon juice  
2 x tablespoons of olive oil  
2 x tablespoons of fresh coriander leaves

#### **RECIPE**

Cut the fish into 5cm strips. Lay them in a shallow dish and pour the lime juice over them, turning the strips to ensure that they're coated all over with the juice. Then cover with a clear plastic wrap film and leave for an hour.

Mix all the ingredients for the garnish, except the coriander. Set aside.

Season the fish with salt and scatter over the chillies. Drizzle



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with the oil. Toss the fish into the mixture, and then replace the cover. Leave to marinate in the fridge for about 15 to 30 minutes more.

To serve, divide the garnish among six plates. Spoon the ceviche, sprinkle with coriander, and serve.



## **5.4 GAMBAS A LA PLANCHA**

Spaniards love to eat some grilled shrimp at the counter of their local tapas bar while sipping a glass of chilled fino sherry or cold beer. The bars are often crowded., which doesn't leave much space for proper eating. Its fascinating to see the locals skillfully eating shrimp with one hand while holding a drink in the other hand. For this recipe, use large whole shrimp and keep the heads on for cooking. Sucking the juices from the flavour-packed heads of the cooked shrimp is considered the best part of the meal. When done as a main course, these shrimp go best with fries and green peas.

**SERVES 6**

### **INGREDIENTS**

24 x large shrimp (in the shell with heads intact)  
½ x cup of olive oil  
1 x juice of a lemon  
2 x teaspoons of sea salt

### **RECIPE**

Using a bowl, whisk the olive oil, lemon juice, and salt until it's well blended. Briefly dip the shrimps into the mixture to coat lightly. Heat a dry skillet over high heat. When the pan's very hot, add the shrimps in a single layer without crowding, working in batches. Sear for a minute. Reduce the heat to medium and continue cooking for another minute. Turn the shrimps, increase the heat to high, and sear for 2 more minutes, until golden. Put the shrimps on an oven-proof platter in a low oven to keep it warm. Cook the rest of the shrimps in the same manner. When all the shrimps are cooked, arrange on a platter and serve immediately..

## 5.5 PULPO A FEIRA

Although its supposed to have originated in Galicia or Leon, *pulpo a feira*, is now quite popular throughout Spain. Its usually served on wooden plates with *cachelos* (potatoes that have been boiled or roasted in embers with their skins on). The recommendation here is to only use frozen octopus because the freezing process tenderises the otherwise quite tough meat. The size of a commonly available octopus is about 1½kg. Smaller ones, although more tender, aren't really suitable for this preparation, since the tentacles are too small when cut into rings.

SERVES 6

### INGREDIENTS

1 x frozen octopus (the bigger, the better)  
1¼ litre x water  
450g x new potatoes (boiled with skins on and kept warm)  
6 x tablespoons of coarse sea salt  
1 x cup of extra virgin olive oil  
2 x tablespoons of hot paprika

### RECIPE

Using a large stockpot, combine the water and 5 of the tablespoons of salt and bring to the boil. While the water's heating up in the stockpot, rinse the octopus under a tap of cold running water. Using some sharp kitchen scissors, cut out the mouth and the eyes.

Using a long fork, pierce the octopus in order to get a good grip on it and dip it into the boiling water. Lift it out immediately and, when the water returns to the boil, dip it briefly in again.

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Repeat this dipping process until the tentacles have curled. Dipping the octopus into boiling water helps to tenderise it. Submerge the octopus in the water and let it boil over a medium heat for about 2 hours, or until it's tender when pierced with a knife.

Turn off the heat and let the octopus stand in the hot water for about 10 minutes. Lift the octopus from the water and, using the scissors, cut the tentacles into 2cm thick rings. Also cut the body into small chunks. Divide the octopus pieces evenly amongst 6 plates.

Cut the potatoes crosswise in 2cm thick slices and surround the octopus pieces with the potato slices. Drizzle the octopus and potatoes with some of the olive oil and sprinkle with hot paprika and the last tablespoon of salt. Serve the dish while the octopus and potatoes are still warm.



## **5.6 DORADA A LA SAL**

Dorada, also known as gilt-head bream, is generally prepared by baking it in a salt crust. Most experts believe that this recipe originated in Murcia, but it is now common to the region of Andalusia as well. The large amount of salt seals in the juices of the fish, resulting in a succulent meal that gives a pure fish flavour without a trace of saltiness. Ensure that your fish has had the viscera cleaned without cutting the belly open. This can be usually done by pulling them through the gills. Also, ensure that the fish is not scaled. During the baking, the salt forms a hard crust that sticks to the scales, so that when you break the crust off before serving, the skin stays attached to the crust, peeling away easily to expose the juicy, succulent flesh beneath. The salt should be coarse as well. Some chefs prefer to sparkle the salt with some water. However, it seems as if the water prevents the crust from getting nice and hard. Other fish, such as sea bass and snapper can also be baked in salt with excellent results. Serve the fish with boiled potatoes.

**SERVES 4**

### **INGREDIENTS**

1.8kg x gilt-head bream, snapper, or sea bass  
1.8kg x coarse salt  
225g x potatoes (boiled and kept hot)

### **RECIPE**

Pre-heat your oven to 230°C. Use a baking pan only slightly larger than the fish. Cover the bottom of the pan with a layer of salt 4cm deep. Place the fish on top of the salt and cover completely with the rest of the salt. Using your fingers, press the salt against the fish to confirm that it is completely enclosed.

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Bake the fish for an hour. Then take it out of the oven and let it stand aside for 5 minutes.

Using a chef's knife, crack the salt crust open lengthwise along the centre of the fish. First lift one half of the crust in one piece, and then the other. The skin should be sticking to the crust. Gently remove any other skin that's still on the fish. Using a spatula, lift the top fillet of the fish and divide it between 2 warm plates. Remove the central backbone of the fish and discard it. Carefully lift the bottom fillet and divide between 2 additional warm plates. Serve the fish immediately with the boiled potatoes.



## **5.7 BOQUERONES EN ESCABECHE**

This is a very old way of preserving small fish that has survived into modern times because it is so delicious. The coast round Nerja is known for its shoals of fresh anchovies, and I think that this is where the recipe originates from. In the city of Malaga the fish are pressed together into a little fan, four tails together, for frying, but this is not really essential to the recipe. I love anchovies and this recipe is right up my street !

SERVES 8

### **INGREDIENTS**

1kg x of fresh anchovies or sardines  
4 x bay leaves  
55g x flour  
6 x cloves of garlic (finely chopped)  
1 x small pinch of saffron strands  
1 x teaspoon of cumin seeds  
1 x teaspoon of ground ginger  
30ml x sherry vinegar  
1 x lemon (thinly sliced)  
salt and freshly ground black pepper  
6 x tablespoons of olive oil

### **RECIPE**

Cut off the heads of the fish, pulling out their innards. Slit them down the belly as far as the tail, and wash the insides under a tap. Then place each fish down on a board, black back upwards, and press a thumb firmly down on it. This opens it out like a book and makes it easy to rip out the backbone and tail.

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Heat 4 tablespoons of olive oil in a big frying pan. Dust the fish with seasoned flour on a baking tray and fry immediately. There should be about 4 of these to a tray. Put them in skin-side down and turn after 2 minutes. Use some paper towel to drain them. Take the pan off the heat between batches and add more olive oil as and when necessary.

Fry the garlic in the remaining olive oil, and then put it in a mortar. Using a pinch of salt, the saffron, the cumin seeds and the ginger, grind it to a paste. Work in the vinegar.

Arrange the fish in an earthenware dish with the skin up. This can be shallow if you're planning to serve them within 24 hours, but should be smaller and deeper if you want to keep them. Mix the water component into the spicy mixture and pour this over the fish. Add more vinegar and water to cover them completely if you're keeping them. Lay the bay leaves and very thinly sliced lemon over the top. Refrigerate for half a day before consuming. They can be served straight from the dish, and eaten within a week.





## **5.8 CALDERETA DE LANGOSTA**

There are two types of lobster from the Balearic Islands that can be used for this recipe. Menorca has blue spiny lobsters. Mallorca has light red lobsters. Both islands claim that there lobsters are the best. These lobsters are known as the spiny lobster or rock lobster. Either will do for this recipe.

SERVES 4

### **INGREDIENTS**

1kg x live lobsters  
1/3 x cup of olive oil  
1kg x tomatoes (de-cored and cut into 1/8's)  
1 x can of tomato paste  
2 x yellow onions (chopped)  
1 x small green bell pepper (de-seeded and chopped)  
1 x pinch of sugar  
3 x cloves of garlic (peeled but kept whole)  
1 x tablespoon of chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley  
4 x thin slices whole-grain country-style bread (toasted)  
4 x teaspoons of Alioli  
2 x tablespoons of extra virgin olive oil  
salt

### **RECIPE**

Put the live lobsters in ice water for an hour. The lobsters need to be alive to make this dish great, but they shouldn't suffer when they're terminated. Putting them in the ice water will help numb them.

Using a skillet, heat the 1/3 x cup of olive oil over high heat. Add the tomatoes, tomato paste, onions, and bell pepper and cook, stirring often, for 10 minutes, or until the vegetables

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begin to soften. Reduce the heat to medium, season with salt and the sugar, and cook for 20 minutes, or until the mixture has thickened. Pass the mixture through a food mill fitted with the medium plate held over a large saucepan. Place on the stove top over the lowest heat setting possible. Keep an eye on the sauce, as you don't want it to get scorched.

While the vegetables are cooking, take the lobsters from the ice water and put them, belly down, on a cutting board. Working with a lobster at a time, and using a sharp knife, separate the head from the tail and remove the legs. Remove and discard the insides, but keep the liver (the green mass inside the head) and the roe (the red mass, also called the coral, found in females). Place the liver and roe in the refrigerator. Crack the legs open a bit with a small hammer, so that they'll release more flavour when they're broiled.

Using a small saucepan, combine the heads and legs with water to cover and bring to the boil over high heat. Reduce the heat to medium and simmer for half an hour to create a flavourful stock. Strain the stock and set aside.

Using a wooden spoon, turn the lobster, mixing it well with the tomato sauce. Add the reserved stock, which should just cover the lobster. Season with salt, increase the heat to medium, and bring to the boil. Cover and cook for 20 minutes. Using a mortar, combine the garlic, parsley, the 2 tablespoons of extra virgin olive oil, and the lobster liver and roe. Pound with a pestle until you get a smooth paste. Then add the paste to the lobster and tomato sauce, mix well and cook for 5 minutes longer to blend the flavours. To serve, spread each slice of bread with a teaspoon of Alioli and place in the bottom of a soup plate. Ladle the lobster pieces and plenty of liquid on top. Use an empty dish for the shells.

## **5.9 FRITURA ANDALUZA**

In Spain this dish is known as “Fritura Andaluza”. It's a fried fish dish from Andalusia and can be found on the menu of all the good fish restaurants in Spain, not just in the south.

**SERVES 4**

### **INGREDIENTS**

4 x slices of fresh hake  
8 x fresh anchovies  
16 x peeled prawns  
2 x lemons  
1 x flour  
1 x portion of olive oil  
salt

### **RECIPE**

Wash and dry the seafood pieces before covering them with flour. Heat a large amount of olive oil for deep frying. Add the seafood to the hot oil. There should be enough oil to cover it. Remove the seafood from the oil as it turns golden. Then place the seafood on a plate and sprinkle with salt. When all of it is done, serve with the fresh lemon cut into wedges. Add a chilled Andalusian white wine and a red pepper salad !

## **5.10      MERLUZA A LA VASCA**

The Basque region in northern Spain offers exceptional food, and in particular, seafood dishes such as “Merluza a la Vasca”. This is hake, done Basque style. Known as “koskera” in the Basque country, this is a typical seafood dish from the region. This simple recipe offers the opportunity to add your own individual stamp on the recipe by adding other ingredients, such as clams, shrimps, tomatoes or string beans. It's entirely up to you. Traditionally, this is cooked in a clay dish in the oven, but a standard glass casserole bowl will do.

**SERVES 4**

### **INGREDIENTS**

1 x cup of extra virgin olive oil  
1 x flour  
8 x cloves of garlic (thinly sliced)  
4 x hake steaks  
½ x cup of dry white wine  
1 x cup of water or stock such as clam broth  
8 x tablespoons of chopped parsley  
1 x packet of cooked peas  
24 x asparagus tips  
3 x hard boiled eggs (quartered)  
black pepper  
salt

### **RECIPE**

Use fairly thick cut hake steaks. You can also substitute cod, salmon or swordfish steaks for the hake steaks. Salt the fish and let stand for about 15 minutes. Then dredge in flour. Pour the olive oil into a heat-proof casserole dish and place it over a medium heat. Add the pieces of fish and quickly brown the

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fish on both sides. Add in the chopped garlic and immediately add the white wine.

Don't stir but shake the casserole while adding water until the sauce has the consistency of a thick cream. Add the cooked peas and garnish with the cooked asparagus tips and hard boiled eggs. Season with salt, pepper and parsley and serve.



## **6 DESSERTS**

The best part of a Spanish meal is topping it off with a great dessert. Here I select my top 10. The recipes for them follow on the next few pages.

- 6.1 CREMA CATALANA
- 6.2 FLAN DE ALMENDRAS
- 6.3 HORCHATA DE CHUFA
- 6.4 PAPARAJOTES
- 6.5 TARTA DE MELOCOTON
- 6.6 TARTA DE SANTIAGO
- 6.7 TARTA DE ALMENDRAS
- 6.8 TARTA DE MANZANA
- 6.9 CHURROS CON CHOCOLATE
- 6.10 CREPES DE PLATANO



## **6.1 CREMA CATALANA**

This popular Catalan cold custard recipe with a crispy caramel coating is surprisingly very easy to make.

SERVES 1

### **INGREDIENTS**

6 x egg yolks  
200g x sugar  
 $\frac{3}{4}$ litre x milk  
1 x cinnamon stick  
1 x piece of lemon peel  
3 x tablespoons of corn flour

### **RECIPE**

Beat the egg yolks until they're light. Then whisk in 150g of the sugar. Place the milk in a saucepan along with lemon peel and the cinnamon. Bring to the boil and then remove from the heat and strain. Whisk the milk along with the egg mixture. Dissolve the cornflour with a little milk and whisk it into the mixture. Put the mixture over a low heat and cook, stirring constantly until it begins to boil. Put the custard into a pudding bowl and allow to cool before putting it in the fridge. Before serving, sprinkle a little sugar on top and caramelize it by placing it under a hot grill briefly until the sugar melts and turns brown.

## 6.2 FLAN DE ALMENDRAS

The *Flan de Almendras* is the national dessert of Spain. The flan is simple and easy to make and is a nice, light alternative to ice creams and cakes.

SERVES 1

### INGREDIENTS

6 x eggs  
1¾ x cups of sugar  
1 x tablespoon of water  
½ x cup of ground almonds  
3 x cups of milk  
1 x teaspoon of grated lemon peel  
½ x teaspoon of salt  
1 x thinly sliced orange (for garnish)

### RECIPÉ

Using a 22cm baking pan, caramelize the sugar and water over some low heat. When the sugar turns a golden colour, remove it from the heat and coat the bottom of the pan with the caramel. Mix the rest of the ingredients, except the orange, in a blender, until smooth. Pour the mixture into the caramelised baking pan, and put it in a larger pan containing about 2½cm of water. Bake at 180°C for about an hour until the top has set and is golden. Remove the pan from the water and allow it to cool. Place a serving plate over the pan and flip it over. Remove the pan. Chill for at least an hour before serving with the orange slices as a garnish. Wow !



### **6.3            HORCHATA DE CHUFA**

*Horchata de chufa* is the signature drink of Valencia. It's a refreshing cool shake made from chufa nuts. Blended with sugar and flavoured with cinnamon and lemon, the chufa has a rich, creamy flavour. This recipe has to have genuine chufa nuts and should be frozen for later or can be consumed within a day.

SERVES 1

#### **INGREDIENTS**

250g x dried chufa nuts  
1liter x water  
1 x cinnamon stick  
1 x teaspoon of grated lemon peel  
 $\frac{3}{4}$  x cup of sugar

#### **RECIPE**

Soak the chufa nuts in water for a day, and then drain. Using a blender, grind the nuts, water, cinnamon, sugar and lemon until you've got a smooth mixture. Let it settle for about half an hour. Press the paste through a strainer to get the fresh horchata. Refrigerate for just over an hour. Finish off in the freezer compartment for 20 minutes until it's slightly slushy. Then serve and enjoy !

## **6.4 PAPAROJOTES**

This delicious recipe makes 30 fritters and can be enjoyed by a number of people. Best to only eat a few and keep some aside for another occasion !

SERVES 8 or more

### **INGREDIENTS**

6 x eggs  
1 x lemon zest  
½ x cup of sugar  
1 x lemon leaves  
1 x stick of cinnamon  
1 x sunflower oil (for frying)  
550ml x milk  
550ml x water  
400g x flour

### **RECIPE**

Beat the milk along with the water and egg yolks. Gradually add the flour. While doing the beating, add the lemon zest, sugar, cinnamon, and the four beaten egg whites. When this is well mixed, leave it to rest for half an hour. Heat some oil in a frying pan, dip the lemon leaves in the batter and fry quite carefully. To serve, arrange the fritters on a napkin and sprinkle with confectioner's sugar and add a little cinnamon. Eat the coating only, not the leaves !

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## 6.5 TARTA DE MELOCOTON

This recipe is best made with Calanda peaches. However, if you can't get them then use another sweet, fleshy variety.

SERVES 8

### INGREDIENTS

1 x jar of Calanda peaches

#### ***For the Pastry :***

3 x egg yolks

1 x teaspoon of baking powder

1 x portion of butter (for greasing the tin)

1 x portion of flour (for the tin)

130g x butter

85g x sugar

110g x flour

#### ***For the Filling :***

3 x egg whites

1 x zest of a lemon

200g x sugar

250g x peeled, ground almonds

### RECIPE

#### ***For the Pastry :***

Work the butter with the sugar to form a smooth paste. Add the egg yolks one at a time. Then finally add the flour mixed with the baking powder. Grease a 22cm tart pan with a removable base and sprinkle with flour. Line the base and walls with the pastry.

***For the Filling :***

Beat the egg whites with the sugar until it's stiff. Add the lemon zest and then gently fold in the ground almonds. Drain the peaches and slice. Put half of the slices on the pastry base and cover them with the almond meringue. Bake in the oven at 180°C for half an hour. Remove and arrange the rest of the peach slices on top. Bake for another half an hour. Then cover with a sheet of aluminum foil or greased paper to prevent any burning. Serve warm with a little table cream. Go on ! You know you want a slice !



## 6.6

## TARTA DE SANTIAGO

This almond cake was named after the apostle St. James of Santiago de Compostela. For centuries the cake's been marked with the cross of the knights of Santiago. This delicious cake is packed with ground almonds and coated in powdered sugar to create a beautiful cake that's perfect for any occasion.

SERVES 6

### INGREDIENTS

1 x cup of sugar (plus ¼ teaspoon for topping)  
¼ x teaspoon of grated lemon rind  
¼ x teaspoon of cinnamon  
7 x eggs (separated)  
225g x of almonds (finely ground)  
285ml x whipping cream  
1 x teaspoon of brandy  
1 x chopped or ground toasted almonds (for garnish)

### RECIPE

Mix the cup of sugar, lemon rind, and egg yolks until the mixture is light and fluffy. Stir in the almonds and cinnamon. Beat the egg whites until they're stiff. Stir a few tablespoons of the egg white into the almond mixture, then fold in the rest of the egg whites. Pour into 2 greased 20cm layer pans and bake at 180°C for ¾ hour. Cool them briefly, then take out the cakes. For the topping, whip the cream, ¼ teaspoon of sugar and a teaspoon of very strong brandy, until stiff. Spread between the cake layers, then coat the top and sides of the cake. Garnish with chopped almonds. An alternative is to use the filling inside and sprinkle the top with powdered sugar after placing a 10cm Cross of Santiago in the middle.

## **6.7 TARTA DE ALMENDRAS**

I absolutely love this almond tart dessert !!!

SERVES 6

### **INGREDIENTS**

6 x eggs  
250 x ground almonds  
280g x butter  
280g x sugar  
150g x flour  
1 x tablespoon of icing sugar

### **RECIPE**

Cream the butter and sugar together, using a large mixing bowl. Separate the eggs. Add the yolks to the butter and sugar and mix well. Then stir in the ground almonds. Beat the egg whites until they're light and fluffy and add to the mixture little by little. Add the flour and mix all the ingredients together with a wooden spoon. Grease a cake tin with a little butter and pour the cake mixture into the tin. Place in a pre-heated oven at 180°C for almost 40 minutes, or until the cake has browned on top. Prick with a fork to see if the mixture sticks, and if it does, then leave it for a little longer. Remove from the cake tin and sprinkle with icing sugar and a few whole almonds. Ready to serve !

## **6.8 TARTA DE MANZANA**

This quite simple Spanish pastry makes a great dessert, but can also accompany an afternoon cup of coffee or tea. For best results, use the type of apples called “reineta”. Don't use cooking apples. They won't give you the right taste. Serve with fresh cream or vanilla ice cream.

**SERVES 4**

### **INGREDIENTS**

300g x apples  
1 x ready made puff pastry  
50g x apricot jam

### **RECIPE**

Roll out the pastry and place in a greased pie dish that is about 20cm wide. Prick it all over with a fork. Peel and thinly slice the apples. Cover the pastry with the apple slices and place in a pre-heated oven (180°C) for approximately half an hour. Remove from the oven and spread the apricot jam over the apple. Set aside to cool before serving.

## **6.9 CHURROS CON CHOCOLATE**

Churros are coil-shaped, fritter-like pastries that are eaten plain or covered with cinnamon and sugar. When prepared, they should be crisp and have a lovely golden-brown color, crunchy on the outside and soft on the inside. This pastry can be enjoyed any time of the day as long as it's made fresh. Throughout most of Spain they are either straight, curled or spirally twisted. However, in Andalucía in Southern Spain, the churro is sold in spirals or wheels, which are then cut into manageable portions after frying. Traditionally, churros are consumed for breakfast or as a snack in Spain, as chocolate and churros is a common breakfast for Spaniards, but churros are also available throughout the day and into the night. Today, when you walk down the center of any Spanish city, especially Madrid, on any morning, and you will see the churrerías filled with people. According to the Spanish people, churros and chocolate are an especially good remedy for hangovers.

**SERVES 6**

### **INGREDIENTS**

3 x eggs  
300g x flour  
150g x sugar  
100g x butter or margarine  
1 x glass of milk  
100g x cocoa powder  
1 x pinch of salt  
2 x teaspoons of baking powder



## RECIPE

Sieve the flour and cocoa together into a large mixing bowl. Add the eggs followed by the rest of the ingredients. Mix all the ingredients together with a fork for 2 to 3 minutes. Grease a baking tin with butter and pour the mixture into the tin. Place in a pre-heated oven (180°C ) and bake for approximately 25 to 30 minutes. Remove the cake from the tin and leave to cool on a wire tray. This recipe is delicious with melted chocolate poured on top and fresh whipped cream added.



## **6.10      CREPES DE PLATANO**

This is a typical, classical dessert from Spain which I love !

SERVES 6

### **INGREDIENTS**

½kg x bananas  
6 x eggs  
100ml x milk  
1 x pinch of salt  
1 x teaspoon of cinnamon  
1 x grated rind of a lemon  
1 x teaspoon of baking powder  
1 x pinch of baking soda  
130g x flour  
2 x tablespoon of brandy  
1 x butter for frying

### **RECIPE**

Using a mixing bowl, peel and mash the bananas. Then add the eggs, milk, pinch of salt, cinnamon and lemon rind. Sieve the flour, baking powder and baking soda together and add to the banana mixture. Beat all ingredients together for 2 to 3 minutes and then set aside for half an hour. Heat enough butter in a frying pan to cover the base. Put 2 tablespoons of the mixture into the frying pan and cook until golden brown. Then flip or turn and cook on the other side place on a plate. Repeat this process until you have used all all the batter. Drain the pancakes on some kitchen paper towel to get rid of any excess oil. Ready to serve !

## 7 WINES

You cannot enjoy a great Spanish meal without at least complementing it with a great Spanish wine. Spain has over 2.9 million acres planted, making it the most widely planted wine producing nation. However, it is the 3<sup>rd</sup> largest producer of wine in the world, following closely behind France and Italy. This is due to the very low yields and wide spacing of the old vines planted on the dry, infertile soil found in many of the regions.

In Spain, wineries are commonly referred to as *bodegas*, although this term may also refer to a wine cellar or a wine warehouse. The Rioja wine industry has been dominated by local family vineyards and co-operatives that buy the grapes and make the wine. Some bodegas buy fermented wine from the co-operatives and age the wine to sell under their own label. In recent times there has been more emphasis on securing vineyard land and making estate bottled wines from the bodegas.

The country has an abundance of native grape varieties, with over 400 varieties planted throughout Spain. However, about 80% of the country's wine production is from only 20 grapes. These include the reds such as Tempranillo, Garnacha, and Monastrell. The whites include Albarino, Palomino, Airen and Macabeo. There are also 3 cava grapes – Paradella, Carinera, and Xarel-lo. The major Spanish wine regions include the Rioja and the Ribero del Duero, which is known for their Tempranillo production. Jerez is the home of the sherries. Catalonia is well known for its cavas.

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Here's a list of my favourite categories, with a brief description of each.

- 7.1 RIOJA
- 7.2 TEMPRANILLO
- 7.3 GARNACHA
- 7.4 MONASTRELL
- 7.5 JUMILLA
- 7.6 YECLA
- 7.7 VALDEPENAS
- 7.8 ALBARINO
- 7.9 CAVA
- 7.10 JEREZ



## **7.1 RIOJA**

The *Rioja* is a wine region, with *Denominación de Origen Calificada* (DOC). This means that it is a qualified designation of origin. Rioja wine is made from grapes grown not only in the region of La Rioja, but also in parts of Navarre and the Basque province of Alava. Rioja is further subdivided into three zones - Rioja Alta, Rioja Baja and Rioja Alavesa. Many wines have traditionally been blended from grapes from all 3 regions, although there is a slow growth in single-zone wines.

The 3 principal regions of La Rioja are Rioja Alavesa, Rioja Alta and Rioja Baja. Each area produces its own unique expression of Rioja wine. Most of the territory subjected to the Rioja DOC status is in the La Rioja region. There's a narrow strip in the left bank of the Ebro river lying in the southernmost part of Alava included in the La Rioja wine region, whereas the south-southwestern part of the La Rioja region is not a part of this protected designation of origin.

### **Rioja Alta**

Located on the western edge of the region and at higher elevations than the other areas, the Rioja Alta is more well known for its “old world” style of wine. A higher elevation means a shorter growing season. This in turn produces brighter fruit flavours and a wine that's lighter on the palate.

### **Rioja Alavesa**

Despite sharing a similar climate as the Alta region, the Rioja Alavesa produces wines with a fuller body and a higher acidity. Vineyards in this area have got a low vine density with large spacing between the rows of vines. This is due to the relatively poor soil conditions. The vines need to be more

apart from each other so that there is less competition for the nutrients in the surrounding soil.

## **Rioja Baja**

Unlike the more continental climate of the Rioja Alta and Rioja Alavesa, the Rioja Baja is strongly influenced by a Mediterranean climate that makes this area the warmest and the driest of the 3 Rioja regions. During the summer months, drought can be a significant viticultural hazard, but since the late 1990s irrigation has been allowed. Temperatures in the summer typically reach 35°C. A number of the vineyards are actually located in nearby Navarra, but the wine produced from those grapes belongs to the Rioja denomination. Unlike the typically pale Rioja wine, Baja wines are very deeply coloured and can be highly alcoholic with some wines coming in at 18%abv. Typically, they don't have much acidity or aroma, and are generally used for blending with wines from other parts of the Rioja. My 10 favourite Riojas are :

Vina Tondonia, Reserva, Bodegas R Lopez de Heredia, Haro (1999)

Faustino I - Gran Reserva (2001)

Vina Ardanza Reserva - La Rioja Alta (2004)

Luis Canas Rioja Reserva Selecccion Familla (2006)

Campo Viejo - Gran Reserva (2007)

Anares Crianza, Bodegas Olarra (2008)

Muga Rioja Tinto Reserva Muga (2008)

Beronia - Rioja Reserva (2009)

Marques de Caceres Reserva Rioja (2009)

Marques de Riscal Rioja (2010)

## 7.2 TEMPRANILLO

*Tempranillo* is a variety of black grape that is widely grown in Spain to make full-bodied red wines. Its name is the diminutive form of the Spanish word *temprano*, meaning “early”. This is a reference to the fact that it ripens several weeks earlier than most Spanish red grapes. Tempranillo has been grown on the Iberian Peninsula for hundreds of years. It's the main grape used in Rioja, and is often referred to as Spain's noble grape. Tempranillo has a relatively neutral profile so it's often blended with other varieties, such as Grenach (*Garnacha*) and Carignan (better known in Rioja as *Mazuelo*). It's aged for extended periods in oak where the wine easily takes on the flavour of the barrel. Tempranillo usually exhibits flavours of plum and strawberries. This grape is an early ripening grape, as we have said before. It's a variety that tends to thrive in chalky vineyard soils such as those of the Ribero del Duero region of Spain. In Portugal, the grape is known as *Tinto Roriz* and *Aragonez*, and it's blended with others to produce Port. Tempranillo wines are ruby red in colour. It's aromas and flavours can include berries, plum, tobacco, vanilla, leather and herbs. Often constituting as much as up to 90% of a blend, Tempranillo is less frequently bottled as a single varietal. Blending the grape with Carignan makes a brighter and more acidic wine. My top 10 choices in this category are :

La Rioja Alta - Gran Reserva 904 (2004)  
Bodegas Beronia Gran Reserva (2006)  
Coto de Imaz Reserva Rioja (2008)  
La Rioja Alta - Vina Alberdi Reserva (2008)  
Baron De Ley, Reserva, Rioja (2008)  
Bodegas Marques De Caceres (2009)  
Viña Eguía - Rioja Reserva (2009)  
Dinastia Vivanco - Rioja Crianza (2010)  
Torres Ibericos Crianza (2010)  
Viñas de Gain, Artadi, Rioja (2012)

## 7.3 GARNACHA

*Garnacha* is the second most planted red wine grape variety in Spain, behind its modern blending partner, Tempranillo. It's grown in almost every region of Spain, but is most notably grown in the north and east. The arrival of the grapevine pest phylloxera, in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, brought unexpected benefits to Garnacha. As the native vines, such as Rioja, were devastated, it was the robust Garnacha that replenished the vineyards and re-energized the wine industry. In the 1980s and 1990s, its status was lowered, but it survived efforts to eradicate it, and returned to international favour in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Garnacha is a vigorous and hardy vine with a strong wooden frame, often grown as free-standing bush vines. It's resistant to wind and drought, making it suitable for use in arid climates. Because it's often grown in hot environments, the alcohol levels of Garnacha-based wines can be very high, often surpassing 15%abv. Garnacha berries have thin skins and ripen late in the growing season. Acid and tannins can be variable, depending on growing conditions and cropping levels, but are generally at the low-medium end. However, old-vine Garnacha grown in schist or stone, can produce profoundly concentrated wines capable of aging over many decades. Garnacha has many guises. Combined with Monastrell, it creates a great blend that is of historical importance. My top 10 choices are :

[El Bombero – Carinena \(2006\)](#)  
[Las Rocas, Garnacha DO Calatayud \(2009\)](#)  
[Las Rocas, Garnacha 'Viñas Viejas' DO Calatayud \(2009\)](#)  
[Centenaria Garnacha Coto De Hayas Campo de Borja \(2011\)](#)  
[Artadi Artazuri Garnacha \(2012\)](#)  
[Bodegas Borsao Tres Picos \(2012\)](#)  
[Espelt Old Vines Garnacha Tinto \(2012\)](#)  
[Garnacha de Fuego \(2012\)](#)  
[Borsao Garnacha Monte Oton \(2013\)](#)  
[Castillo de Monseran Garnacha, Carinena \(2013\)](#)



## 7.4 MONASTRELL

*Monastrell* is a black-skinned variety of grape that's been grown all around the western Mediterranean for centuries. It's thought to have originated in Spain, but is now grown extensively throughout the Iberian Peninsula and southern France. It prefers warm, dry climates and has small, thick-skinned berries, a perfect combination for making wines with intense colours and high tannins. It's meaty, herby aromas are very distinctive. These qualities make it a potent ingredient for blending, most often with vibrant, rich Garnacha and Syrah. Single-variety Monastrell wines aren't very common, but as the curiosity of the average wine consumer increases, more producers are making wines from 100% Monastrell. This variety was also hard hit by the phylloxera epidemic of the 1880s, such that it was largely eradicated from some vineyard areas. In Spain, popular modern wine tastes have gravitated towards Tempranillo, but Monastrell is regaining some of its former importance. At one point in time it was the second most planted red wine variety in Spain behind Garnacha. These wines tend to be rich and dark, frequently showing flavours of blackberry and black cherry. Growing Monastrell isn't recommended for vignerons without a great deal of patience. The vines take several years before they begin to produce fruit of any quality. The variety is also a late ripener, one of the very last to be picked. My top 10 are :

[Artadi El Seque \(2009\)](#)  
[Castano Gran Calero Monastrell \(2011\)](#)  
[Castano Hecula Monastrell \(2011\)](#)  
[Olivares Altos de la Hoya Monastrell \(2011\)](#)  
[Tarima Monastrell, Volver, D.O. La Mancha \(2011\)](#)  
[Casa Castillo Monastrell \(2012\)](#)  
[Juan Gil 12 Meses Silver Label Monastrell \(2012\)](#)  
[Bodegas Juan Gil Honoro Vera \(Organic\) Monastrell \(2013\)](#)  
[Juan Gil 4 Meses Monastrell \(2013\)](#)  
[Luzon Verde Organic Red \(2013\)](#)

## 7.5 JUMILLA

*Jumilla* is a wine of origin title from the province of Murcia, a small region on the south-eastern coast of Spain. The Jumilla viticultural area, between Yecla in the north and Bullas in the south, is regarded as Murcia's most important in terms of quantity and quality. It's also the region's oldest, established in 1966. Jumilla is characterised by wide valleys and plains, interrupted by the mountain ranges that cross Murcia between the sea and the inner plateau of Spain. The zone is hot, dry and harsh. Despite these seemingly adverse conditions, vines have been grown here since Roman times, when the region had a solid reputation for its full-bodied red wines. The wine industry in Jumilla received a major boost when phylloxera struck neighbouring France. This resulted in demand for Jumilla wine soaring. Despite escaping the major outbreak, Jumilla was struck down by the louse in 1989. This offered the region the opportunity to modernize and refocus on lighter, more elegant wines. Jumilla's climate is best described as arid and continental, similar to the Castilla-La Mancha areas to its west, although in the eastern fringes it is more transitional. Summer temperatures of 40°C are not uncommon here. This, along with the minimal rainfall, makes the region a harsh grape-growing area, but there are two factors that act as saving graces. Firstly, there is a healthy amount of lime in the soil, which helps to retain vital moisture, and secondly, the elevated central plateau, which provides some respite from the intense heat. Nevertheless, there are still frosts, violent storms and torrential rains that pose real threats to the vines. Like other wine regions of the area, Jumilla specializes in wines based on the Monastrell grape variety, which accounts for more than 80% of vines. It's well suited to the harsh conditions here, and the best wines demonstrate a varied flavour profile, including lively fruits and earthy, mineral notes when young, developing into complex aromas of matured fruit, coffee and oak spices with extended barrel ageing. The region also produces quality

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rosé wines from Monastrell. The principal white varieties are Airen, Malvasia, Macabeo and Pedro Ximenez. Since the 1990s, when the region's potential to produce some quality wines came to the fore, Jumilla has attracted a lot of external attention. Spanish and foreign producers have set up wineries here. As a result, plantings of varieties such as Syrah, Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon have steadily increased, mainly to add some body and character to the Monastrell-based reds. This blending approach has worked well for the status of the region's wines and it's now seen as a benchmark among similar styles produced in this part of the country. My top 10 wines from Jumilla are :

Silvano Garcia Vinahonda Crianza (2006)

San Jose Dominio de Ontur Syrah (2008)

Ego 'Goru' Monastrell (2009)

Silvano Garcia Vinahonda Blanco (2009)

El Nido 'El Nido' (2010)

Juan Gil 18 Meses Blue Label Monastrell (2011)

Vina Elena Familia Pacheco Roble (2011)

La Bascula Turret Fields Monastrell & Syrah (2012)

The Mimic Old Vine Shiraz (2012)

Juan Gil Petit Verdot (2013)



## 7.6 YECLA

*Yecla* is the smallest and northernmost wine zone in Murcia. Named after the town of Yecla at its centre, the zone was delimited and granted official DO status in 1975. It's surrounded on all sides by other DO regions – Jumilla in the west, Alicante in the east and Almansa in the north. The classic Yecla wine is a rich, dark, fruit-driven red made from Monastrell grapes, which we have covered in an earlier chapter. Although officially a single region, Yecla is unofficially divided into two zones, distinguishable by their relative altitudes. The higher, northern *Campo Arriba*, with its older vines and more concentrated wines, is more highly regarded than the lower, southern *Campo Abajo*. The climate here at 80km inland, marks the transition between coastal influences and the harsh continental climate of Spain's hot, arid interior. Rainfall is low, with less than 300mm falling annually. Thankfully, the limestone soils here are efficient enough at storing whatever rainfall the region is lucky enough to get. The altitude also moderates temperatures here. The zone is at the eastern edge of the *Cordillera Subbética* mountain range. Most Yecla vineyards are between 400m and 800m above sea-level. Yecla's hot, dry summers are ideal for the late-ripening Monastrell grape variety. This grape dominates the local vineyards and wines. Almost 80% of Yecla's total vineyard area is planted with Monastrell grapes, and the rest are divided between the perennial Spanish favourites of Tempranillo and Garnacha. There are also small varieties of Syrah, Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon. The small quantity of white *Yecla Blanco* produced each year is made from Airen, Macabeo and Chardonnay. Traditionally, the local red wines were made in a lighter, fruitier style than they are done today. These were often vinified by carbonic maceration, and were planned for consumption within a couple of years of vintage. Today, fashions have shifted towards conventional winemaking and complex, well-structured, barrel-aged

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examples which can be cellared for five years or so. Viniculture only became an important part of the local economy in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Yecla's economy has traditionally revolved around agriculture, notably grain, fruit and oil. Since the 1980s, the local wine producers and the *Consejo Regulador* (wine authority) have worked to produce distinctly *Yecla* wines, ensuring a personality for the region's wines. One of Spain's largest cooperative wineries, Bodegas La Purísima, is based here. Yecla's ever-improving reputation has not gone unnoticed, as demonstrated by foreign interest in the region. My favourite top 10 favourites from Yecla are :

[Bodegas Castano Coleccion Cepas Viejas \(2009\)](#)

[Bodegas Castano Macabeo – Chardonnay \(2009\)](#)

[Bodega Senorio de Barahonda Barrica \(2010\)](#)

[Bodega Senorio de Barahonda Crianza \(2010\)](#)

[Bodegas Castano Monastrell \(2011\)](#)

[Casa del Canto Roble \(2011\)](#)

[Bodegas Castano Solanera Vinas Viejas \(2012\)](#)

[Bodegas Castano Dominio Espinal Tinto \(2012\)](#)

[Molino Loco Monastrell \(2012\)](#)

[Castillo del Baron Monastrell \(2013\)](#)



## 7.7

## VALDEPENAS

*Valdepenas* is a wine-producing zone in the south of Castilla-La Mancha in central Spain. It's almost entirely surrounded by the larger La Mancha region. Valdepenas is named after the ancient city of the same name that lies in a sunbaked river valley dotted with small rocky formations. The name literally means "Valley of Rocks". The region's climate is semi-arid and strongly continental. The Sierra Morena mountain range to the south blocks out most of the Mediterranean Sea's moderating influences. Soils are mainly limestone, sandy loam and clay. The high lime content helps to retain good moisture, which is vital in these hot and dry conditions that experience about 2500 hours of scorching sunshine per year. The Jabalon River and its tributaries wind through Valdepeñas, providing water and some respite from the heat. The vineyards' altitude of 700m above sea level also gives some relief. Valdepenas is a historic wine-growing area with a long tradition of supplying wine to Valencia and Madrid. It had a flourishing wine trade in the 19<sup>th</sup> century until it was struck by the phylloxera virus. The area was then replanted with the hardy grape variety, Airen. The region's traditional claim to fame was its *Clarete* or *Aloque*, light red and *rosado* (rosé) wines enlivened by the addition of about 20% predominantly white Airén. Production of Clarete continues today, although the practice now is to blend the musts rather than the finished wines. Another feature of the winemaking culture of Valdepenas was the use of *tinajas*, or large clay pots, for fermentation and storage. These are rarely used nowadays, because stainless-steel tanks and oak barrels are preferred, in keeping with modern trends. Like its larger northern neighbour, La Mancha, Valdepenas is widely planted with Airén vines, which are tolerant of the harsh conditions here. However, Cencibel (Tempranillo) is the best-known variety, because of its ability to produce a wide range of styles, ranging from young, easy-to-drink wines to more serious examples that respond well to barrel maturation.

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A growing preference for international varieties has seen increased plantings in recent years of Merlot, Syrah and Cabernet Sauvignon. The light-red wines upon which the reputation of Valdepenas was founded are slowly giving way to more-serious aged and unaged reds. The best examples are velvety soft with bright red fruit flavours. Oak-aged *Crianzas*, *Reservas* and *Gran Reservas* can all be found. While the reds dominate the production in Valdepenas and are well-renowned, some white wines are made using Airén, Chardonnay, Macabeo, Moscatel, Verdejo and Sauvignon Blanc. The production of sparkling and sweet wines is also permitted under the DO laws, which are governed by the local *Consejo Regulador* wine authority. My selected top 10 from Valdepenas are :

Felix Solis Castillo de Pastores Gran Reserva (2001)  
Casa Rojo 'Balthasar' Tempranillo Gran Reserva (2002)  
Bodegas Los Marcos Montecruz Seleccion (2004)  
Bodegas Los Marcos Montecruz Tempranillo Gran Reserva (2004)  
J. Garcia Carrion Bodega los Llanos Pata Negra Gran Reserva (2005)  
Bodegas Vicente Gandia Marques de Chive Gran Reserva (2006)  
Felix Solis Vina Albali Gran Reserva (2007)  
Castillo Roquero Reserva Tempranillo (2008)  
Duque de Castilla Tempranillo Crianza (2009)  
Gran Familia Clasica Reserva (2009)



## 7.8 ALBARINO

*Albarino* is a green-skinned grape variety native to Galicia, which is on the north Atlantic coast of Spain. It's an aromatic variety that is high in acidity. Albarino can be produced as a light white wine, sometimes slightly sparkling, or in a fuller style, with oak or less ageing, adding to the texture and richness. The wines are best consumed from 1 to 3 years from harvest, when the fresh aromas of white peach, apricot, citrus and jasmine still prevail with a dry, lively, fruit and mineral finish. In Spain, Albarino constitutes more than 90% of the grapes planted in the Rias Baixas area, where the complex mesoclimates within this DO region signify the many different sub-regions and variations between vintages and vineyards. Albarin, also an aromatic white wine variety grown in the northwest of Spain, has been widely assumed to be the same as Albarino. However, these are two completely different varieties. My chosen top 10 Albarinos are :

[Bodegas Vina Nora 'Nora' \(2009\)](#)

[Bodegas Terras Gauda O Rosal \(2010\)](#)

[Martin Codax Albarino \(2011\)](#)

[Agro de Bazan Gran Bazan Ambar \(2012\)](#)

[Bodegas Fillaboa Albarino \(2012\)](#)

[Pazo de Senorans Albarino \(2012\)](#)

[Bodegas del Palacio de Fefinanes 'Albarino de Fefinanes' \(2013\)](#)

[Bodegas Terras Gauda Abadia de San Campio Albarino \(2013\)](#)

[Mar de Frades Albarino \(2013\)](#)

[Terra de Asorei Pazo Torrado Albarino \(2013\)](#)



## 7.9 CAVA

*Cava* is Spain's iconic sparkling wine style and the country's answer to Champagne. Its name comes from the stone cellars (*cavas*) in which the wine is matured. This style was first produced in the 1870s, by Josep Raventós, on his return to Catalonia after a visit to France. For the first century of their existence, the wines were called *Champaña*. Raventós had originally tried to imitate Champagne, using the *methode traditionnelle*. In the 1970s, however, the Champagne authorities in France clamped down on the use of the name "Champagne", backed by international laws. Thus there was a need for an alternative name for these Spanish sparkling wines. The name *cava* was chosen, and in 1970 the official Cava DO title was introduced to cover exclusively sparkling white and rosé wines from this region. Since the adoption of the new name of Cava, its producers have worked hard to distinguish it from Champagne. It doesn't bear as hefty a price tag as its French competitor, and has thus been suggested as a bubbly drink for special occasions that still offers quality. While the original Cava was produced exclusively in San Sadurn de Noya in Catalonia, modern Cava can come from various parts of Spain. However, 90% of Cava still comes from Catalonia. All of the other scattered Cava producing regions share similar climates, largely Mediterranean, with moderate rainfall. Most vineyards are at an altitude of 200m to 300m, although some reach 800m. The traditional grapes used in Cava were Xarel-lo, Macabeo and Parellada, but the Champagne grapes Chardonnay and Pinot Noir are now also being used. Macabeo constitutes around half of a standard Cava blend, not for its bland flavour, but because it represents a viticultural insurance policy ! Macabeo vines bud relatively late in the spring, ensuring that their flowers and grapes are safe from the early frosts. The interesting, slightly earthy flavours that distinguish Cava from most Champagnes are generally attributed to Xarel-lo grapes. Pinot Noir and

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Monastrell are used to bring red pigment and a depth of flavour to *Cava Rosado*, which can also be found as *Cava Rosé*. Garnacha, Malvasia and Trepát are also allowed to be used in Cava by the wine authority, although Trepát is only allowed in *rosado* wines. The production conditions placed on Cava winemakers are similar to those followed by their counterparts in Champagne. All Cava wines must be aged for a minimum of 9 months, and should reach a final alcohol level of not less than 10%abv and not more than 13%abv. My favourite cavas are :

[Recaredo Gran Reserva Brut Nature Cava \(2005\)](#)

[Agusti Torello Mata Kripta Gran Reserva Cava \(2006\)](#)

[Gramona III Lustros Gran Reserva Brut Nature Cava \(2006\)](#)

[Segura Viudas Cava Heredad Reserva \(2008\)](#)

[Agusti Torello Mata Brut Reserva Cava \(2009\)](#)

[Juve y Camps Brut Rose Cava \(2010\)](#)

[Juve y Camps Reserva de la Familia Gran Reserva Brut Nature Cava \(2010\)](#)

[Bodegues Sumarocca Brut Reserva Cava \(2011\)](#)

[Raventos I Blanc L'Hereu Reserva Brut Cava \(2011\)](#)

[Castellblanch Topacio Brut Cava \(2012\)](#)



## 7.10 JEREZ

*Jerez de la Frontera* in a sunny corner of south-west Spain, is a city of long-standing wine traditions. It's the home of sherry. All true Sherry comes from the vineyards around Jerez de la Frontera and the nearby coastal towns of Puerto de Santa Maria and Sanlucar de Barrameda. Together these three towns form the "Sherry Triangle". Few wines can boast such a long and such a distinguished history as Sherry. The Jerez DO title was Spain's very first, awarded in 1933 and now managed by the *Consejo Regulador de Jerez* wine authority. Before this, the wines of Jerez had been popular for centuries, in France as *Xérès* and in England as *Sherry*. Even today, the appellation title appears on bottle labels in all three languages. Sherry, and the numerous styles in which it is made, represents the coming-together of four key factors - climate, soil, grape varieties and wine-making techniques. The soils found in Jerez vineyards can be broken down roughly into three key types. The most important is *albariza* – composed of clay, calcium and marine fossils. This soil type is valued for its high *albedo*, the amount of sunlight it reflects back up to the vines, as this helps to ripen the grapes. Under Andalusia's bright summer sun, *albariza* soils can be blindingly white ! Their high moisture retention is also significant, as this corner of Spain endures the hottest temperatures found on the Iberian Peninsula. The other two soil types are *barroz* and *arenas*. *Barroz* is high in clay, with a little chalk, and found mostly at the foot of local hills. *Arenas* simply means "sands", and is naturally found in most coastal areas. The climate here is just as important. It is strongly affected by both the cooling effects of the Atlantic Ocean and the warmth that originates in the eastern plains. The moist coastal winds moderate temperatures, not only helping to preserve vital acidity in the sherry grapes, but also to provide natural air-conditioning for local wine cellars. This contributes to a slow and gradual maturation of the wines. The 300 days of sunshine that the

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region receives (on average) each year are also important factors in terms of achieving optimal ripeness for the grapes. The three varieties on which Sherry is based are Palomino Fino, Pedro Ximenez, and Moscatel de Alejandria. Before the phylloxera crisis, a greater range of varieties were planted in the region. However, the infestation led to the homogenisation of grapes, largely determined by which vines would graft to American root-stocks. Manzanilla wines, which are produced in the area around Sanlucar de Barrameda, have their own specific *Manzanilla* DO title. They begin life as standard fino wines, but take on a particularly yeasty aroma from the thick flor that develops in the humid, slightly cooler climate. The aroma is quite distinctive, and redolent of briny sea air, bruised apples and chamomile. Jerez's other claim to fame is its *Brandy de Jerez*. However, this is often made using grapes grown outside the region, particularly in Extremadura and Castilla-La Mancha. My selection of the best sherrys are :

A.R. Valdespino El Candado Pedro Ximenez Sherry  
A.R. Valdespino Inocente Single Vineyard Fino Sherry  
Bodegas Hidalgo La Gitana Manzanilla Sherry  
Casco de la Cruz Pedro Ximenez Sherry  
Emilio Lustau East India Solera Sherry  
Gonzalez Byass Tio Pepe Fino Muy Seco Sherry  
Harvey's Bristol Cream Original Superior Sherry  
Pedro Domecq Fino 'La Ina' Sherry  
Sanchez Romate Cream Sherry  
Sandeman Armada Rich Cream Oloroso Sherry

## 8 LIQUEURS

In this chapter we sample some “digestivos” - after dinner liqueurs. Any one of these is an ideal after-dinner drink, or as a nightcap !

- 8.1 ANISETTE
- 8.2 ORUJO
- 8.3 PATXARAN
- 8.4 CANTUESO
- 8.5 LICOR 43
- 8.6 RATAFIA
- 8.7 RESOLI
- 8.8 RONMIEL DE CANARIAS
- 8.9 HIERBAS IBICENCAS
- 8.10 HERBERO



## 8.1 ANISETTE

*Anisette* is an aniseed-flavoured liqueur that's consumed in most Mediterranean countries, mainly in Spain, Italy, Portugal, Turkey and France. It's colourless and, unlike other aniseed-based liqueurs, doesn't contain licorice. It's also sweeter than most aniseed-flavoured liqueurs. True anisette is produced by means of distilling aniseed. This liqueur has a powerful flavour when drunk straight, and can even irritate the throat if not ingested slowly, due to its high alcoholic content. It produces a sweet agreeable flavour when used as a mixer. It's often mixed simply with water, where it shows a milky white consistency which is called "palomita" in Spanish-speaking countries. All the liqueur has to be dropped into very cold water at the same time. Pouring it from a bottle even quickly doesn't give the same result. A very white liquid means that a good anisette has been used. A "palomita" with just a drop of anisette can be had as a refreshing drink. The sugar is added in as a syrup. Anís del Mono is a well-known Spanish brand of the anisette. Aniseed-based drinks are some of my favourite liqueurs and I have definitely given this one a try !



## 8.2 ORUJO

*Orujo* is a pomace brandy liqueur obtained from the distillation of *marc*, the solid that remains after the pressing of the grapes. It originated in northern Spain. It's a transparent spirit with an alcohol content over 50% (100° proof). Its name comes from the expression “aguardiente de orujo” meaning pomace firewater. It's a popular drink in northwest Spain, especially Galicia, where it's called *aguardiente* (firewater) or *caña*. It's also known in Asturias, Castile and Leon, and Cantabria. Many high-quality distilled spirits have appeared in the last twenty years, including some origin appellations (in Spanish D.O.). These are obtained from quality grapes and produced according to the highest standards and are replacing the traditional homemade liquor, nowadays only available in small villages. Orujo's main ingredient is the residue from wine production. Once the grapes are crushed, the *orujos* or residue of the grapes are used to produce the liqueur of the same name. The grape skins, seeds and stalks are fermented in closed vats before being distilled. Stills, called *alambiques*, *alquitaras* or *potas* are traditionally large copper kettles that are heated over an open fire, while the *poteiro* (*orujo* distiller) watches over the brew. The distilling process takes 6 hours or more in the *alambiques*. The copper stills have been used by Galicians for centuries. They are thought to have been brought to the Iberian peninsula by the Arabs, but, in fact, is not true. The *orujo* that's produced by the distillation is a colourless liqueur, while the *orujo envejecido* or “aged *orujo*” is amber in colour. The aged variety is fermented and distilled the same way, and is then poured into oak barrels to age for at least 2 years.

### 8.3 PATXARAN

*Patxaran* is a sloe-flavoured liqueur commonly drunk in Navarre and the rest of the Basque country, the Pyrenees and other parts of Spain. It's usually served as a digestif, either chilled or on ice. Known to have existed in Navarre as early as the Middle Ages, Patxaran was initially a home-made liqueur of rural Navarre and became popular during the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. It was commercialised in the 1950s and then got to be very popular outside Navarre. One theory for this is that young Navarrese took bottles with them while on National Service, thereby popularising the Patxaran liqueur throughout Spain. The name should be protected in order to ensure its quality, tradition and Navarrese identity. Zoco was the first commercial brand solid in 1956, and was founded by the family of Ambrosio Velasco, who'd been producing Patxaran in the Viana area since 1816. This brand is now owned by Pernod Ricard. Other brands of Patxaran are *Etxeko*, *Kantxa*, *Barañano Atxa*, *Basarana* and *Baines*. Every year 7 million litres of Patxaran are commercially produced !





## 8.4 CANTUESO

*Cantueso Alicantino*, or often simply called *Cantueso*, is a liqueur made in the province of Alicante, mainly in the city of Elche. The drink has been made there since 1867. It's made by distilling a neutral alcohol made from grain with the flower and the stalks of the Cantueso plant, a small and rare member of the thyme family. It must then spend a minimum of 2 months ageing before being stored in wooden barrels for at least 2 years. The resulting drink has an alcohol content of between 25% and 35%. It also has a high sugar content which gives it its characteristic very sweet taste. This means that it is often enjoyed after a meal as a digestive and stomach settler. The colour of it normally ranges from transparent to a grey-brown colour. The aroma of the drink should be of thyme - the drink's main ingredient. Cantueso is also often drunk as part of a cocktail from the region of Alicante called "mesclaet". This cocktail is made of half cantueso alicantino and half herbero. Just like the rest of the Iberian peninsular, the lands that now form the Spanish region of Valencia, also fell under the rule of the Moors. Their alchemists, who dedicated a lot of time to the art of extracting natural aromas from plants to make perfumes and other products, were the ones who taught the people of the region the process of distillation. From then on, people in the community would distill plants that they'd find in the surrounding areas and mountains. The exact date of the invention of this liqueur is unknown. However there is evidence to suggest that the first factory dedicated to the production of the early ancestor of this liqueur was set up during the 19<sup>th</sup> century in Monovar, where they distilled the stalks and the flowers of the cantueso plant in *alambiques*, which are copper stills. The resulting product was then transferred to oak barrels, in which the liquid was aged. Today, the main ingredient is still the cantueso plant that is grown in the local area, especially in the more mountainous regions. This particular variety of thyme grows well in the

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area as it prefers the acidic dry soil found in the region. The flower is usually picked when it is flowering and at its fullest. The stalks and the flowers are picked together before being washed and left out to dry. The process of making the Cantueso liqueur starts with the maceration of the thyme flowers and stems in an alcohol that will have been produced by fermenting a grain. After this, the mixture is then distilled in copper stills. During the process, the impurities which float to the top or sink to the bottom of the liquid are removed. From here on, the basic cantueso liquid is then placed into oak wood barrels and stored for ageing for at least 2 years, after which the cantueso alicantino is then filtered and allowed to rest before being bottled for distribution. This process and the drink itself is regulated by the *denominación de origen* “Distilled spirits of Alicante”, the same body that also protects the other drinks produced in the region. If you ever visit Spain, make sure that you try out this liqueur. You won't be disappointed !



## 8.5 LICOR 43

*Licor 43* is a Spanish liqueur made with citrus and vanilla. It is actually made with 43 different ingredients, which is where the name comes from, including Cuarenta y Tres, which is 43 in Spanish. The drink dates back to Roman times. It's said that after the Roman Empire conquered Quart Hadas in the South East of Spain, they found a delicious drink made from citrus and various herbs. It is 31%abv and is a light-bodied, sweet liqueur. It's colour is yellow-tinged with a touch of gold. The aroma is sharp, warm, and complex, with vanilla up front. It has a tangy sweet fruit taste, with spices, and an aged rum like presence. The flavour is similar to the aroma - vanilla, complex intermixed spices, tangy fruits, and hints of citrus, carried by a flavor similar to aged rum. I've already order my bottle !



## 8.6 RATAFIA

*Ratafia* is a Spanish liqueur made by the mashing of different fruits (such as lemon peel, morello cherries, red carnations and green nuts), herbs (such as mint) and spices (such as cinnamon, cloves, nutmeg, bramble branch) in an alcohol of some sort, generally an *aguardiente*. According to the method and customs of the area in which the drink is made, the ingredients can vary considerably. This liqueur can actually be found in many of the regions and countries in the Mediterranean, but mainly in Italy, France and Spain. In the majority of the countries where you can find this drink, the names tend to be rather similar - ratafià, ratafia, rataffia, retacia. The widely held belief is that this name derives from the expression in Latin “rata fiat” which means “it is ratified”. This phrase is often used in Catholic weddings to declare the official ratification of the union. Legend has it that the liqueur was named by the man who invented the drink. He gave it this name as the drink he made helped the local residents of the town of Andorno in Italy overcome the plague around the year 1000 A.D. His son was among one of the survivors and was able to celebrate his wedding, where the phrase “rata fiat” was used. As the people of Andorno spoke a dialect of Italian, the name got shortened from rata fiat in Latin, to Ratafia. Ratafia is very sweet tasting and normally has a deep caramel colour. However, this depends on who makes it and how it's made. This liqueur is full of different tastes, hidden within the depths of the liquid, and allows the drinker to experience a little piece of the Catalan forests. The commercial versions found in specialist shops and some supermarkets are sold in glass bottles and can be kept for a long time. You should drink ratafia liqueur at room temperature. However, it can be served cold when drunk as an aperitif or as a nightcap. Because of its sweet taste, it's the ideal drink to accompany dried fruits and nuts, as well as biscuits. In the Spanish region of Catalonia, the drink has had a protected status since 1989. However, the

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tradition of making the drink at home is well-rooted in the region. Recipes for Catalan Ratafia are often passed down from generation to generation and many families claim to have the best version. The oldest recipe to be found in Catalonia is from 1842 which was found in a recipe book that was discovered in the region of Selva, along with a whole host of other recipes for food, drinks and home medicine. Fortunately, there are many fairs and festivals dedicated to this drink which often include tasting sessions and competitions. If you ever happen to visit Barcelona, make sure you take a trip out of the city to go and try some Spanish Ratafia. Ratafia has also been prepared in the Spanish region of Aragon from around the 18<sup>th</sup> century, and here it is more commonly known as “Retacia”. In this region, the drink is usually made with red carnation, aguardiente, cinnamon, a bramble branch, morello cherries, and nutmeg. However, the recipe varies from village to village. One of the best places in Aragón to find Retacia is in the municipality of Calamocha, as well as in Daroca and Jiloca. I'll give this one a try on my next trip to the region !



## 8.7 RESOLI

*Resolí* is a traditional liqueur from the city of Cuenca in the Spanish region of Castilla-La Mancha. It's most commonly consumed at religious festivals including Christmas and Easter. It forms an important part of the culture of the city. Recipes for it vary depending on the producer so you should make sure you try as many different varieties as possible. *Resolí* is normally drunk with something sweet, including the typical dish called *alajú* from Cuenca. The drink has a relatively low alcoholic content compared to other Spanish drinks, and ranges from 16% to 18%, depending on the ingredients used. *Resolí* is a rich coffee liqueur, but depending on the recipe used, can have a multitude of different flavours. In bars, it's common to drink *resolí* by itself or with ice. On the other hand, it's much more traditional for people to drink *resolí* from a *porron* when they're at home. A *porron* is a large glass bowl with a spout, from which the drink is poured directly into the drinker's mouth from a great height. The idea for this is to allow the drink to be shared between family members or friends. The early origins of *Resolí* are mostly unknown, although some people believe it to have Moorish origins. Others believe that it actually comes from Italy, hence the rather Italian sounding name. Regardless of its origins, though, it has somehow or other become a large part of the culture in Cuenca. *Resolí* must have been produced before the year of 1809, as this was the year that Joseph Bonaparte, who was at the time the King of Spain, freed up the production, distribution and sale of *resolí* among a number of other drinks, by official decree. At the time, the drink was highly used as a digestive aid. Even the wife of Napoleon III wrote about the fantastic qualities of it. To this day, the drink is still used for digestive problems, but that's not an excuse to drink it all the time, as excess consumption of the liqueur is unadvisable ! The traditional recipe comes from production in people's homes. Hence it's been passed down from generation to

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generation, and varies from home to home. In general however, the ingredients usually are of coffee or of a coffee liqueur, dry anís or an *aguardiente*, cinnamon sticks, slices of lemon and orange, sugar, cloves and water. Traditional factories used to sell the resolí liqueur in ceramic bottles that resembled typical symbols from the city of Cuenca. Many were made to look like the typical houses of the city, which were called “casas colgadas”, while others were shaped in the form of “nazarenos”, the religious men who perform a procession through many cities in Spain at Easter time and who wear a characteristic long, white robe with a tall pointed hood. This meant that you could have an ornament and a drink in one go, and helped to spread three of the main attractions from the city of Cuenca across the globe - the casas colgadas, the nazarenos and resolí liqueur. These bottles are much rarer nowadays, and resolí is more commonly found in plastic bottles. However, you can still find them in specialist shops in Cuenca. Some of the modern versions have got funky labels, but still do carry some reminders of the traditional bottles, including images of typical casa colgadas and nazarenos.



## **8.8 RONMIEL DE CANARIAS**

*Ronmiel de Canarias* means “Honey Rum from the Canaries”, and is exactly what it is. This particular liqueur is one of the Canary Islands' signature products for both production and consumption. Everyone who's tried the drink when they've visited these islands has instantly fallen in love with its smooth flavour and full bodied texture. It should have an alcohol content of between 20% and 30%, as specified by the the local government. The colour of the drink should range from a golden hue to a deep mahogany, and should be clear and bright. You should be able to detect aromas of caramel, honey and some traces of rum and vegetable extracts. Regarding the taste, it's said to be intense and sweet, yet soft on the palate. Honey rum is an ideal drink for any time of the year and is especially nice when tasted on its own. This liqueur has a long yet unknown history in the Canary Islands, and has become one of the traditional products of the islands. Initially, it was prepared in homes and small, family-run bars, but gradually rum-producing companies began incorporating the traditional techniques and practices into their production to ensure that there was a strong honey rum industry on the isles, whilst also maintaining the quality and characteristics of the home-made product. This particular drink was given its own special status with a 'Denominación Geográfica' (Geographical Designation) by the Canarian government in 2005, which meant that strict rules ensured the quality, flavour and correct production processes were followed to protect the artisan qualities of the rum. Ronmiel de Canarias is actually regarded as a liqueur because the process requires flavouring a spirit with another product, in this case the honey. The ingredients for it include rum, an aguardiente made from sugarcane, molasses or its distillates, water, sugars, vegetable extracts and, in order to be considered a true honey rum, a minimum of 2% of the volume has to be of bee's honey. The production of Ronmiel de Canarias begins by diluting the honey and sugars



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in water using a large mixing container. In this the *aguardientes* and/or distillates are mixed with the sugary syrup, along with the rest of the ingredients. Water is added as and when necessary in order to reduce the alcohol percentage to the specified margin of between 20% and 30%. Once the mixing process is complete, the resulting product should then be set aside for two days. It's during this time that the various control checks are performed to ensure that it meets the required standards. The factories today still have to practice a traditional method for making the drink in order to preserve this part of the history and culture of the Canary Islands as well as meeting the requirements for the drink's Denominación Geográfica. Ronmiel de Canarias must be produced within the Spanish region of the Canary Islands in order to keep its official name. The quantity of Ronmiel de Canarias that's produced is around 1.2 million litres per year, of which about 45 000 litres are exported, especially to various events that help to make the honey rum an symbolic product of the Spanish territory. The most popular brand of Ronmiel de Canarias is made by the Arehucas brewery that was established in the area in the early 1900's. It has become one of the largest rum cellars in Europe. Thanks to the effort and development of technology at their brewery, they've become one of the leading brands both national and internationally. Other brands of Ronmiel include Artemi, Guajiro and Cayo Grande Club. Try as many different brands as you can to experience the different variations of this popular island liqueur !

## 8.9 HIERBAS IBICENCAS

*Hierbas Ibicencas* is considered to be a true representative of the typical gastronomy of the Balearic Islands. It is a drink that's been protected by the Regional Designation of Origin and has been made on the islands for over 200 years. It's an aniseed-flavoured drink that is made with a combination of the extracts and flavours of a variety of plant that contain aniseed. Its colour should be somewhere between amber and green. The mixture of the plant extracts can often be so strong that it can actually mask the smell of the aniseed base of the drink. However, this depends on the mixture and what ingredients are used. It's often that one particular aroma dominates - such as fennel, rosemary or thyme. This drink is very popular in the Balearic Islands where its made. It is also deeply rooted in the cultures and traditions of the people living in the Balearics, and it's often made at home. Every family has their own recipe for it and many claim to have the secret to the best version of the drink. Liqueurs actually have a long history on the Balearic Islands. Monks living there were already developing them during the Middle Ages when they used wild herbs and alcohol for medicinal purposes. However, the real process of manufacturing of liqueurs didn't start until the 19<sup>th</sup> century on the island of Formentera. Back in those days, a lot of the people living on Formentera would combine working as a fisherman, farmer and livestock breeder just to get by. However, someone from the island wasn't content with their lot, and in around 1880, decided to travel to Barcelona. Here, the islander learnt about the technologies for making alcohol such as the *alambique* - a still used to create distilled alcoholic beverages, amongst other things. Once he returned from his travels, he set up a small factory using all the knowledge he had gained about producing alcoholic beverages. Later this factory would move to Eivissa, the Catalan name for Ibiza, where it is still in existence today. By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Hierbas Ibicencas liqueurs were being exported to

other countries, including South America, hence their fame and appreciation spread. The Hierbas Ibicencas drink was approved for Regional Designation of Origin (DO) status in 1997, which means that it is now a protected drink that has guaranteed quality and is no longer threatened by competing drinks from outside of the designated region. The production of the liqueur is restricted to the islands of Ibiza and Formentera. According to the official description of the Spanish liqueur, Hierbas Ibicencas is defined as being an aniseed-flavoured liqueur that's mostly made from the extraction of aromas from various plants that can be found in the region in which it is produced. These plants include thyme, lavender, fennel, juniper, oregano, rosemary, mint, oranges, lemons, sage, eucalyptus, rockrose and camomile. These are combined with other plants such as hierbas ibicencas, Balearic star aniseed and green aniseed. The plant aroma extraction process begins with a period of distillation that's normally done in large, gas-fired copper stills for about 18 hours. Then the maceration process takes place that sees the plants put into a hydro-alcoholic solution for about 2 weeks. Finally, there's an infusion process that sees the plants put into boiling water and the mixture is allowed to cool. The resulting product is then mixed in order to create a liqueur that has an alcohol content of between 24% and 38%. Today there are only 8 registered producers of the liqueur on the islands. According to the Ministry of Agriculture in Spain, the production rate of the drink reaches a total of nearly 1.2 million litres per year. If you visit the Balearics, make sure that you try one of these – you'll be pleasantly surprised !

## **8.10 HERBERO**

*Herbero de la Sierra de Mariola*, which is more commonly known just as *Herbero*, is a Spanish spirit that's made in the province of Alicante in the south of Spain. This aniseed-flavoured drink is produced by distilling or macerating various plants that grow in the Sierra de Mariola region, with alcohol made from an agricultural product. The end product has an alcohol content of between 22% and 40%. Its hue can be anywhere from transparent to light yellow to green and even to pink in colour. The aroma depends on the plants used in the recipe, but in general it should smell rural. Herbero can be served at room temperature or cold, and should taste dry with a background taste of aniseed. This tippie is also often drunk as part of a cocktail from the region called "mesclat". This cocktail drink is made of half herbero and half cantueso alicantino. The origins of this drink are mostly unknown, and there's an added difficulty in the fact that it is hard to separate the actual creation of the drink and its link with the popular tradition. There's a number of different drinks that are made in the various areas of Alicante, each with their own specific identities based on the plants used in them, their production method, and the necessary climate to produce them correctly. Herbero, like most of the distilled beverages from Alicante, can therefore be traced back to the times of the Moors who brought the technology of stills and the distillation process to the Iberian peninsular. The Sierra de Mariola area of Alicante is particularly famous for its flora. In the driest areas, the flora is made up of hardy, adaptable plants that grow well in the dry, arid terrain. Most of these plants are aromatic plants and were probably first used for medicinal purposes. However, with the introduction of distillation, the Herbero de la Sierra de Mariola was born. It's therefore likely that this Spanish drink was made by a resident of the region before passing into tradition and common knowledge across the region. It was only at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century that Alicante herbero was

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manufactured commercially. The main plants used in the recipe vary from place to place, but the most common are sage, thyme, pennyroyal, bulrush, lemon verbena, agrimony and fennel. Any of the plants that are used to make the drink should be collected when they are at their maximum flowering point and should then be washed and dried before being used. The number, type and quantity of plants used are completely at the discretion of the maker of the Herbero. However, the original version would have depended on whatever plants were growing in the area at the time. Traditional, home-made herbero can contain at least four of any of the following plants: peppermint, thyme, anise, chamomile, fennel, sage, lavender, savory, lemon verbena, pennyroyal, blessed thistle root, bullrush, melissa, and agrimony. The process starts with the maceration of the various plants in an alcohol which will have been produced by fermenting an agricultural product. After this, the mixture is then distilled using copper stills. During the process, the impurities which float to the top or sink to the bottom of the liquid are removed. Then some more alcohol and a little water is added to the mixture which is then allowed to rest for a while. After resting, the herbero is ready to drink. For the commercial product, the liquid is often filtered before being bottled and sold to consumers. This process and the drink itself is regulated by the *denominación de origen* “Distilled spirits of Alicante”, the same body that also protects the other drinks which are made in the region.



## 9 COFFEES

This final chapter is all about Spanish coffees. Coffee is such an essential part of Spanish culture. When the Spanish order a coffee in the morning, they seem to be speaking in code. It's rarely just 'café'. There are certain terms you're going to need to get to grips with if you want to keep your head above water in a Spanish '*cafeteria*'. The coffee is generally made from a blend of Arabica coffee beans, known for its full flavour and low caffeine content, and is often perfect. There are quite a few variations, so I reduced the list down to my final 10.

- 9.1 CAFE SOLO
- 9.2 CAFE CORTADO
- 9.3 CAFE CON LECHE
- 9.4 LECHE MANCHADO
- 9.5 CAFE CON HIELO
- 9.6 CAFE AMERICANO
- 9.7 CAFE CARAJILLO
- 9.8 CAFE BOMBON
- 9.9 CAFE SUIZO
- 9.10 CAFE TRIFASCO



## **9.1 CAFE SOLO**

*Cafe solo* means “only coffee”, or more literally, “coffee alone”. It is simply a shot of espresso, a coffee beverage that's made from forcing hot water at a high pressure through ground coffee beans. It's served in a short, tiny glass or ceramic cup with a saucer, spoon, and a teaspoon of sugar. A good *café solo* will have a thick, almost bitter body capped with a thin layer of foam. This is coffee at its rawest !

## **9.2 CAFE CORTADO**

A *café cortado* is so called because the shot of espresso is “cut” with some steamed milk, but only some, as there's more coffee than milk in this drink. It's just not quite as strong or bitter as a straight-up *café solo*. Instead, the creaminess of the milk makes it a little more palatable.

## **9.3 CAFE CON LECHE**

*Café con leche* is made of equal parts espresso and steamed milk. It's the best of both worlds, and the milk foam is literally the icing on the cake. Compared with other coffee beverages in Spain, a *café con leche* is actually quite substantial in terms of volume, so it'll last longer if you're having breakfast or munching on a savoury snack. It's the perfect combination of coffee beans and dairy. What is really great is the contrast between the cooled milk foam on top and the hot coffee beneath.

## **9.4 LECHE MANCHADO**

*Café manchado* (“stained coffee”) is a *cortado* that's been stained with milk, literally. However, this coffee could be better named as *leche manchada* (“stained milk”) because it's

mostly steamed milk with a little bit of espresso, not quite an entire shot. It's very milky with a little coffee flavour. This coffee is quite popular in Seville.

## **9.5 CAFE CON HIELO**

Add a shot of espresso to a glass of ice cubes and you get *café con hielo* – quite literally “coffee with ice.” Although it hardly measures up to a typical grande iced coffee to-go, it's a nice pick-me-up that Spaniards often drink on warm summer afternoons when they're craving some caffeine but don't want anything too hot. You've got to be fast when pouring the espresso into the glass of ice because you'll end up with a *mesa con café*, a “table with coffee” ! There's a small art to the flick of the wrist involved in making a *café con hielo*.

## **9.6 CAFFE AMERICANO**

A cafe Americano is about half way between the American-style coffee you're probably used to and a more traditional style coffee. An Americano is an espresso that's been watered down a bit and served in a bigger cup than the little espresso cups. Quite simple, really !

## **9.7 CAFE CARAJILLO**

This coffee-based drink might surprise you since it's one part brandy and another part espresso. Alcohol and caffeine sound like a risky combination, but it's surprisingly common in the afternoon and evening. A *carajillo* with whipped cream on top becomes a *café irlandés* ! An Irish coffee !

## **9.8 CAFE BOMBON**

A *café bombón* is one part of condensed milk and one part of



espresso. It's an extremely syrupy and sweet little shot that tastes similar to the inside of a chocolate bonbon, but to be fair, I really enjoy this one ! I love the condensed milk that sharply contrasts with the espresso that floats on top of it, so much so that when it's all served in a clear glass you can see three stripes of milk, espresso, and foam. This makes for a great dessert coffee after a heavy *menú del día*.

## **9.9 CAFE SUIZO**

This is literally a “Swiss coffee”. It's made with chocolate, whipped cream and cocoa powder. The hot chocolate is poured into a cup, topped up with the whipped cream and finished off with a sprinkling of cocoa. Delicious !

## **9.10 CAFE TRIFASCO**

A *café trifasco* is a Catalan specialty, basically a café carajillo, as described earlier in this chapter, with a bit of milk



## RESTAURANT – XXII APOSTEL

This is one of my favourite restaurants on Mallorca, found in Santa Ponsa, on the south west coast of the island, just 20 minutes from Palma de Mallorca.

## 12 GLOSSARY

**aioli** - A sauce made of garlic, olive oil, lemon juice, egg yolks and seasonings.

**ajo** – Spanish garlic.

**ajoarriero** – A typical paste used as a preservative, produced from potatoes, garlic, egg, and oil.

**ajopuerco** – Garlic pork chops.

**alajú** – A sweet-shaped cake made of almonds, toast, toast,spice and fine honey.

**alambiques** - Devices used for distilling liquids through a process of evaporation by heating and subsequent condensation by cooling. It's used in the preparation fo alcohols and liqueurs.

**albondigas** - Authentic Spanish meatballs.

**almogrote** – A soft paste made from hard cheese, peppers, olive oil and garlic, which is typically eaten spread on toast.

**almojabañas** – Sweet fritters that originated in Andalusia.

**alquitaras** - Large traditional copper kettles that are heated over an open fire.

**arnadi** - A traditional Valencian sweet or tart made from pumpkin and sugar, produced during Lent and Easter.

**arroz** – The Spanish word for rice.

**asado** - A range of barbecuing techniques or a barbecue.

**aguardente** - A popular drink in northwest Spain, literally translated as “firewater”.

**bacalao** – This is cod fish that has been preserved by drying after salting.

**béchamel** – This is a white sauce made from butter, flour and milk, and sometimes used as a base for other sauces.

**bistec** - The Spanish word for steak.

**bodega** – This can refer to a winery, a wine cellar, a wine bar, or a warehouse.

**bollos prenaos** - This is a piece of bread stuffed with bacon or

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sausage, and is usually served as a tapas with wine or cider.

**bomba** – This is a special type of rice used for paella.

**boquerones** – These are white anchovies due to the colour of the meat in the fillets.

**borage** – This is a herb that is also known as a starflower, and is native to the Mediterranean region. The leaves are edible.

**botillo** - This is a dish of meat-stuffed pork intestine.

**bouillabaisse** – This was a fish stew traditionally made by Mediterranean fishermen using the bony rockfish that they couldn't sell to restaurants.

**bunuelos** - These are fried dough balls.

**cabanil** - An emulsified sauce made by crushing a few heads of garlic with vinegar, water and salt. It's a very popular Murcian sauce that can be applied to various dishes such as potatoes, meat and chops. The cabañil pastoral name indicates the possible origin of seasoning.

**cabrales** – A blue cheese made in the artisan tradition by rural dairy farmers in the north of Spain.

**cachelos** - They are potatoes cooked with salt and bay leaf, in whole or in part knife cut into irregular pieces.

**cachopo** - Refers to a meal of two large fillets of meat, including beef and ham and cheese. It's usually fried after being dipped in egg and breadcrumbs and is usually served with potatoes, peppers and / or mushrooms.

**calamares** - is a Mediterranean dish made of batter-coated, deep fried squid, that is served plain, with salt and lemon.

**calcots** – These are types of scallions or green onions that are milder and less bulbous than onions.

**caldereta** - A typical Spanish casserole, normally made with lamb and lots of garlic and vegetables.

**caldo** - A Spanish soup or broth.

**callaspara** - This is a special type of rice used for paella.

**caña** – Please see *aguardiente*.

**carbayones** – These are traditional almond-filled pastries from Asturias, which consist of a thin puff pastry crust filled

with a most, rich mixture of finely ground almonds, eggs, and sweet wine, or cognac or liqueur. They are then baked until golden and then covered in a glaze made with lemon juice and sugar.

**carquinoles** – These are a sweet toast made with almonds, sugar and egg, and are quite typical of Catalonia. Other optional ingredients are lemon peel and cinnamon.

**castañas** - Chestnuts.

**cava** – This is a sparkling wine having DO status, most of which is produced in Catalonia. It can be white or rose. Only wines produced by the champenoise traditional method can be labelled cavas.

**cazuela** - A Spanish cooking pot.

**ceviche** – This is a seafood dish typically made from fresh raw fish cured in citrus juices, such as lemon or lime, and spiced with chilli peppers. Additional seasonings, such as chopped onions, salt, and cilantro may also be added. Ceviche is usually accompanied by side dishes that complement its flavours, such as sweet potato, lettuce, corn, avocado or plantain. It has to be prepared fresh.

**chacoli** – This is a white wine produced in the Basque Country from green grapes.

**changurro** - The name given to a number of popular dishes from the Basque Country made of the shredded meat of crabs.

**chilindron** – This is a preparation of a type of salsa very from the northeastern part of Spain and is used to accompany meat.

**chorizo** – This is a sausage made from coarsely chopped pork and pork fat, seasoned with smoked paprika and salt. It can be spicy or sweet, depending upon the type of smoked paprika used. There are hundreds of regional varieties of Spanish chorizo, both smoked and unsmoked.

**chuletas** – The Spanish word for chops.

**churros** - These are Spanish doughnuts.

**cochofrito** - Various fried foods made mainly of pork.

**cochinillo** – A suckling piglet.

**codorniz** – A Spanish type of quail.

***cordero*** – Lamb, in Spanish.

***cornejo*** – Dogwood.

***costillas*** – Normally spare ribs, grilled.

***costra*** – Crust.

***digestivos*** – These are digestifs which are served at the end of a meal to aid digestion and typically contain herbs and spices that are believed to have stomach-settling properties.

***DO*** – This is a quality assurance status afforded to Spanish wine and is fully known as Denominacion de Origen (DO). These wine laws were created in 1932 and were later revised in 1970. The system shares many similarities with the AOC system of France, the DOC system of Portugal's and the DOC system of Italy.

***dorada*** – This is a guilt-head bream.

***empanada*** - A stuffed bread or pastry, baked or fried.

***ensaimadas*** - A pastry product from Mallorca.

***escalivada*** - A traditional Catalan dish of smoky grilled vegetables.

***escudella*** - A traditional Catalan soup and stew.

***extra virgin olive oil*** – Extra virgin olive oil comes from virgin oil production only, and is of a higher quality. It is judged to have a superior taste, having some fruitiness and no defined sensory defects. Extra-virgin olive oil accounts for the following percentages in the Mediterranean countries - Greece: 80% ; Italy: 65% ; Spain 30%.

***farigola*** - The Catalan word for “thyme”.

***fideua*** – This is a typical dish from the region of Valencia that originated in the 1920s in the city of Gandia when thin noodles like vermicelli were used instead of rice in paella.

***filloas*** – These are a type of Galician pancake.

***flamenquin*** – This is a typical dish from Cordoba, created in the 1950s in a restaurant in the city of Andujar. It literally translates to “little flaming”, borne out by the fact that it is

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golden in colour, derived from the egg used in the batter, resembled the blond hair of the Flemings who came to Spain accompanying the Emperor Charles V.

**frangollo** – This is a Canarian dessert made from milk, millet, flour, lemon, eggs, sugar, butter, raisins, almonds, cinnamon, and sometimes aniseed.

**frisuelos** - This is typical dessert from Cantabria, Asturias and León, made of flour, milk and eggs.

**gambas** – This is the name for shrimp, generally cooked in garlic.

**garbure** – This is a thick French soup or stew, made of ham with cabbage and other vegetables, usually with cheese and stale bread added. The name comes from the use of the term 'garb', which is to describe sheaves of grain depicted on a heraldic shield or coat of arms.

**gazpacho** - A cold soup made with from 5 vegetables and bread, vinegar, water, salt and olive oil.

**gofio** – This is the Canary Islands' name for flour made from roasted grains or other starchy plants, containing a little added salt.

**guisado** – This is a type of stew.

**horchata** – This is the name of several kinds of traditional beverages, made of ground almonds, sesame seeds, rice, barley, or tigernuts.

**hornazo** - This is a Spanish meat pie eaten in the provinces of Salamanca and Ávila, that is made with flour and yeast and stuffed with pork loin, spicy chorizo sausage and hard-boiled eggs.

**horno** – *A tradition Spanish-style oven.*

**huevos** – *The Spanish word for eggs (from a hen).*

**Jabugo** - Jabugo is a town and municipality located in the coastal province of Huelva and is well-known for it's locally produced ham.

**judión** – These are beans from the farm.

**laconadas** – A Galician carnival meal consisting of pork, sausages, turnips and potatoes.

**lechazo** – This is a dish made from the meat of unweaned lambs or suckling pigs.

**leche** – The Spanish word for milk.

**legumes** – These are the plants that are grown agriculturally, primarily for their food grain seed, for livestock forage and silage, and as soil-enhancing green manure.

**manchego** – This is a cheese made in the La Mancha region from the milk of sheep of the manchega breed. The official manchego cheese is aged from 60 days to 2 years.

**manzana** – The Spanish word for 'apple'.

**marisco** - The Spanish word for 'seafood' or 'shellfish'.

**merluza** - The Spanish word for 'hake'.

**michirones** – This is a typical dish from the region of Murcia and Alicante. It's a stew made with dried beans, sausage, ham bone, and laurel. It's usually made in a crock-pot.

**migas ruleras** – This is a dish made of breadcrumbs from the region of La Mancha.

**mojete** - This is a salad dish from Murcia.

**mojo picon** - This is a red pepper sauce from the Canary islands.

**morcilla** – This is a generic type of sausage made by cooking blood or dried blood with a filler until it's thick enough to congeal when cooled.

**morteruelo** – This is a stew made from pork livers, and sometimes other meats such as poultry, small game, or rabbit are added.

**neulas** – These are a type of Catalan biscuit, eaten traditionally at Christmas with cava and torró. They're often dipped into cava. They are made of a very thin sheet of a mixture of egg whites, butter, sugar and flour, flavoured with



lemon and rolled.

**nougat** - This a group of confectionery made of sugar and/or honey, roasted nuts, whipped egg whites, and sometimes chopped candied fruit.

**pacharan** - Also known as “patxaran”. It is a sloe-flavoured liqueur commonly drunk in Navarre and the rest of the Basque Country, the Pyrenees and elsewhere in Spain. It's usually served as a digestif either chilled or on ice.

**paella** – This is a Valencian rice dish that originated from near the Albufera lagoon on the east coast of Spain.

**paellera** – This is the utensil in which paella is cooked. It is a flat round pan with two handles.

**panellets** – This is the traditional dessert of the All Saints holiday known as Castanyada, in Catalonia, Valencia or Ibiza. Panellets are often accompanied by a sweet wine, usually a moscatel. They are small cakes or cookies in different shapes, mostly round, made mainly of marzipan.

**paparojotes** – This is a typical garden dessert from Murcia. It's made from sheets of dough coated with flour and eggs and fried, and then coated with lemon and sprinkled with cinnamon and powdered sugar.

**pasiegas** – A Cantabrian pastry made from smooth cheese.

**pavias** – A fried cod dish, particularly popular in Andalusia.

**pebre** – This is a condiment made of coriander, chopped onion, olive oil, garlic and ground or pureed spicy peppers. It is most commonly used on bread.

**peladillas** - Almond candies from the Valencia region.

**perdiz** – This is a type of partridge.

**perrunillas** - These are traditional cookies from Extremadura, in the southwest of Spain, bordering on Portugal. They were originally made with lard for that rich taste and melt-in-your-mouth feeling. The modern day version is made from vegetable shortening instead, as well as sugar, eggs, flour, lemon peel, a touch of cinnamon and a splash of liqueur. Just before baking the tops are coated with beaten egg white and a

bit of sugar. The egg white and sugar give the cookies a shiny golden coating.

***picada*** – Picada is one of the characteristic sauces and culinary techniques essential to Catalan and Valencian cuisine. It's not an end user sauce like mayonnaise, but it's added as a seasoning during the cooking of a recipe.

***pimientos*** – Types of cherry peppers that are large, red, and heart-shaped. The flesh of the pimiento is sweet, succulent, and more aromatic than that of the red bell pepper.

***pinchos morunos*** - Skewered kebabs of marinated pork that are served in tapas bars.

***pisto*** – The name of a typical Spanish dish from the region of Murcia and La Mancha that's made of tomatoes, onions, eggplant or courgettes, green and red peppers and olive oil.

***porron*** – A specialist wine pitcher – a cross between a wine bottle and a watering can !

***pringa*** – This is a dish that's popular in rural Andalusia and consists of roast beef or pork, cured sausages such as chorizo or morcilla, and beef or pork fat that's slow cooked for many hours until the meat falls apart easily.

***pulpo*** – The Spanish word for octopus.

***queso*** - The Spanish word for cheese.

***quesucos*** - A type of cheese made with milk from cow, goat or sheep, or a mixture thereof.

***rabo*** – The Spanish word for tail, normally from an ox.

***romesco*** - This is a nut and red pepper-based sauce from Catalonia. It's typically made from any mixture of roasted or raw almonds, pine nuts, hazelnuts, roasted garlic, olive or sunflower oil, and peppers.

***saffron*** – This is a spice made from a flower that's commonly known as the saffron crocus.

***salchichas*** – Cooked sausages normally made from hashed pork meat.

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**salchichón** – A cured, smoked and sometimes cooked sausage that usually contains hashed pork meat.

**salmorejo** – This is a purée that consists of tomato and bread, originating from Cordoba in Andalusia. It's normally made from tomatoes, bread, oil, garlic and vinegar. The tomatoes are skinned and then puréed with the other ingredients.

**salsa** – This is the Spanish term for sauce. English-speaking countries usually refer to the sauces typical of Mexican cuisine, particularly those used as dips. They're often tomato-based, although many are not, ranging from mild to very hot.

**salsa inglesa** – Worcestershire sauce !

**samfaina** - A special Catalan sauce made from a mixture of onions, garlic, eggplant, peppers, tomatoes, and zucchini.

**sobaos** – A delicacy typical of the valleys of Pas and Miera and one of the signature delicacies of Cantabria.

**sopa** - The Spanish word for soup.

**sorropotún** – A typical dish from Cantabria containing fish such as bonito.

**suquet** – A juicy fish or seafood stew originating in Catalonia.

**tapas** - A wide variety of appetizers or snacks which may be cold (such as cheese or mixed olives) or hot (such as *chopitos*, which are battered and fried baby squid). In certain bars in Spain, tapas have become an entire and sophisticated cuisine. Patrons of tapas bars can order many different tapas and combine them to make a full meal.

**ternasco** – This may refer to a young lamb, regardless of gender and the term originated in Aragon. It's also used to refer to any dish that takes lamb as its main ingredient.

**thyme** – Thyme is a herb use for cooking and is composed of a woody stem with paired leaf or flower clusters. Usually when a recipe specifies “bunch” or “sprig”, it means the whole form. When it specifies spoons, it means the leaves. It is perfectly acceptable to substitute dried for whole thyme. Leaves may be removed from stems either by scraping with the back of a knife, or by pulling through the fingers of a fork.

Thyme retains its flavour on drying better than many other herbs.

**tetilla** – A characteristic cheese made in Galicia, that has been certified from origin since 1993.

**tortel** – Generally referred to as King's Tortel, a famous desert from Catalonia.

**tortilla** – This is a type of soft, thin flatbread made from finely ground wheat flour, originally derived from the corn tortilla.

**tostadas** - Tostada is a Spanish word meaning "toasted", and generally refers to toast.

**tronchon** – This is a traditional, creamy, semi-soft cheese made from blended cow's, goat's and sheep's milk. It's shape resembles a flattened globe with a deep crater. The rind is smooth, glossy and has the colour of butter. It has an aromatic taste, with a background hinting of white wine acidity. The inside of the cheese is bone white and has many small holes.

**tumbet** – This is a traditional vegetable dish from Mallorca, and can be found at almost every local restaurant on the island. It combines layers of sliced potatoes, aubergines and red bell peppers previously fried in olive oil.

**turmeric** – Turmeric is a perennial plant of the ginger family, and is native to southeast India, and needs temperatures between 20°C and 30°C and a considerable amount of annual rainfall to thrive.

**variat frit** – This is a traditional dish from Mallorca. It's made from meat, offal, liver and the blood of cooked pork, lamb, goat, or turkey. The dish is fried with olive oil and cooked with potatoes, onions, tomatoes, and red peppers.

**vinagre** – This is the Spanish word for vinegar.

**zarangallo** – This is a common countryside dish in Murcia. It is a tapas bar favourite and is made from scrambled eggs with zucchini, onion, and occasionally potatoes.

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