

AMERICAN PAELLA

This is not the traditional recipe since many shortcuts have been incorporated, hence, the American version! Nonetheless, this recipe maintains the old world flavor while incorporating time-saving techniques. It is an easy recipe that can be prepared in about one hour. Also, this recipe includes a way to cook the fish separately to accommodate those who don't like their rice fishy-tasting. An excellent traditional paella can be found in *Doors, Dishes, and Dreams* by F. Vicondoa.

Since most Spanish cooks don't use a recipe, it is difficult to really write down how to make paella. The most important ingredients are the rice and the saffron. Long grain or short grain rice can be used. However, if one can find the Bomba or Calasparra Spanish rice, it does make a difference. Some use Arborio rice, however, it can make it too creamy and similar to risotto. Traditionally, the rice is not covered while cooking and it is stirred. Some will cover it. Either way, the important thing is to make sure there is enough broth so that the rice absorbs it, it doesn't stick to the pan, and the rice is tender. It is just rice, not a soufflé! Actually is very hard to ruin this recipe!

Splurging on the purchase of saffron is definitely a must! It is important for both flavor and coloring. If you don't have your grandmother's mortar and pestal, just crush it between your fingers.

Using freshly roasted peppers is great, but canned or frozen roasted peppers are fine. A shortcut to making a traditional *sofrito* (sautéed onion, garlic, and tomato) is using tomato sauce or canned tomatoes, garlic powder for flavor, and a package of dried onion soup, which really adds a richness to the broth.

The meat and fish that are used is really up to the cook. If you like chicken, use whatever pieces you like. If you like pork, use either ribs or chops. Baby back ribs, cut in half lengthwise so that they are short, are especially delicious! Traditionally, shellfish such as clams and mussels are used. Also, shrimp are commonly used. The addition of other fish, such as scallops, is another variation. The fish can be cooked in the rice near the end of the cooking or can be cooked separately and added to the rice dish at the end.

Chorizo is always great, but not always easy to purchase if you don't make your own. It not only adds flavor to the rice, it adds color. If purchased, it is important to get cured Spanish chorizo. The closest substitute would be the Portuguese linguicia. Not much is needed, just a link or so, sliced.

This recipe can easily be adjusted for any size. Just make sure there is at least a piece of chicken per person and keep the ratio of rice to liquid at 1 cup rice per 2 cups liquid.

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A traditional *paellera*, or paella pan, makes a great presentation, but really, a paella can be made in any pan!

Ingredients: (for about 6 people)

(Remember: The only ingredients that really will make a difference if you measure or not, are the rice and the liquid. Everything else can be adjusted according to what you have and what you like!)

6-8 chicken thighs

1 sheet of baby back ribs (cut in half so that they are short and then cut to separate)

1 link of chorizo sausage

8 cups chicken broth

2 c. roasted peppers - fresh, frozen, canned, or in a jar

1 envelope dry onion soup - like Lipton's - optional

1 small can tomato sauce

Saffron - a couple of good pinches

Salt

Pepper

Garlic powder - to taste- fresh garlic if you like

4 cups rice

Optional for garnishing: Peas, cooked asparagus spears, extra roasted peppers

Brown the chicken, ribs and chorizo in a little oil in a large pan/pot. They only need to be browned, as they will cook in the broth.

Add 8 cups broth and all the other ingredients except the rice and saffron. Bring to a boil and then let this simmer for about 20 minutes or so - timing is not too crucial.

Add the rice and saffron, stir, bring to a boil and then cover and cook for about 30 minutes. It may take a little longer. Check to see how much liquid there is. It doesn't all have to be gone. Taste the rice to see if it is soft. This isn't like other rice where you will ruin it if you take the lid off. You can even stir it around to make sure it's not sticking to the bottom and you can continue to cook it without the lid. When it is done, turn it off. Garnishes can be added. It usually can sit for 20 minutes or so before serving.

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THE SEAFOOD

Ingredients: (Again, use those you like and adjust amounts according to tastes.)

- 1 lb. large shrimp- cleaned, deveined, and shelled
- ½ lb. scallops
- 1 lb. mussels
- 1 lb. clams
- 2 green onions, chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, chopped
- 1 c. chicken broth
- 1 c dry sherry
- 2 T. tomato sauce (save a little from the can used in the rice)
- Saffron - a couple of good pinches
- Dash salt
- 2 T. butter
- 2 T. olive oil

Melt butter and olive oil in large sauté pan. Add garlic and chopped green onion. Sauté for just a few minutes. Add the shrimp and sauté for a couple of minutes, tossing. Add the scallops for just another minute and then add the broth, sherry, tomato sauce, saffron, salt and a dash of pepper if you want. (If it seems like it is a lot of liquid, don't add it all at once)

Bring it to a boil quickly and add the mussels and clams. Cover and cook until the clams and mussels open. Be careful to not overcook the seafood. Serve with the rice and enjoy!