

# April Tapas

Seattle Pro Musica & Seattle Cucina

## Paella Para Ti

Serves 4-6

Paella has many variations between Spanish regions and from family to family. A few key techniques and ingredients still remain unchanged, but this recipe encourages you to make paella 'your way' by using what you have and what sounds good!

\*No Paella pan or fancy rice required

-¼ cup olive oil

-½ pound meat: chicken thighs, chorizo, ground pork, chicken breast, pancetta/bacon \*Optional

-Salt and pepper to taste

-4 to 5 cups liquid: chicken or veggie broth or water; ~½ cup white wine \*Optional)

-1 small onion, chopped

-1 bell pepper, minced

-3 to 6 cloves garlic, finely minced

-1 tomato, very finely chopped

-Bay leaf

-1 teaspoon paprika, plus more to taste

-1 pinch saffron threads \*Optional

-2 cups rice: Spanish rice (Bomba, Senia, or Bahia), Calrose rice, or medium or short-grain rice

-½ pound cleaned seafood: shrimp, mussels, or squid/calamari \*Optional

-½ pound vegetables: frozen or fresh peas, olives, snow peas, mushrooms, additional bell peppers and tomatoes

-¼ cup chopped parsley

-2 quartered lemons

1. Put Olive oil in a very large (12-inch) skillet over medium-high heat. When hot, add roughly 1/2 pound of meat(s), sprinkle with salt and pepper and cook until browned on all sides. It's OK if meat is not cooked through.
2. Meanwhile, heat liquid (broth or water) over medium heat in a saucepan and season generously with salt until it tastes like the sea!
3. Add the onion, bell peppers and garlic to the meat and cook until onion is translucent. Add tomato, bay leaf, paprika, saffron and another small pinch of salt and pepper. Cook for a few minutes. (If you want a meatless paella, skip right to this)
4. Add 2 cups of rice and cook, stirring, until shiny. Add the wine (if using) and let the alcohol steam off for a minute or two, then add about 3 1/2 cups of your hot broth or water, and stir until just combined
5. Cook over medium or medium-high heat, undisturbed and uncovered for a total of ~20 minutes, *but do not walk away from it entirely*. Set a 10 minute timer. If the pan is too big for your burner, move it around a little. When the mixture starts to dry, begin tasting the rice; if the liquid amount seems O.K., keep going. If the rice seems

quite tough or is drying out too quickly, add another 1/2 cup or so of liquid. If you can smell the bottom starting to burn, lower the heat a bit.

6. After 10 minutes, about halfway through the cooking, add desired vegetables, taste and adjust seasonings and stir gently, just once. Set a 5 minute timer.
7. After five minutes, stir in seafood (or press it onto the top of the rice). Again, skip the seafood if you want vegetarian paella. Cook for another 5 or so minutes (mussels should open up, and shrimp and calamari should be opaque)
8. The rice is done when tender and still a bit moist- taste, taste, taste! If the mixture has stuck to the bottom of the pan, congratulations: you have *socarrat*, a characteristic of good paella. If the bottom is not crispy, you can increase the heat to medium-high or high for a few minutes to crisp up the bottom.
9. Top with a generous sprinkling of parsley and lemon wedges strewn about for people to season as they like. This should be served in the pan, in the middle of the table, and those eating it just might fight over it!

*Recipe inspired by and adapted from Mark Bittman's Paella Recipe*