

A paella is the name of the pan in which it is cooked, a flat round pan with two handles. Something that must be taken into account is that each paella is meant -according to its size- for a certain amount of rice, no more, no less. Otherwise the rice may be too hard (undercooked because of lack of liquid) or too soft (overcooked due to excess of liquid) .

The following ingredients are for an 18 cm diameter paella which will take 375 g of rice, serving up to five people.

Paella Valenciana

Ingredients:

Meat:

Half a chicken
one small rabbit
(meat cut into small pieces)
200 g snails (optional)

Vegetables:

For the “picadillo”:

3 big cloves of garlic
2 very ripe tomatoes (peeled, or you can use tinned)
half a green pepper

All the above very finely chopped.

375 g runner beans
250 g of mangetout
(cut into small pieces, 4 or 5 cms)
4 or 5 globe artichokes (cut into 5 or 6 pieces each, keep them in water with lemon juice to prevent browning)

1 sprig of rosemary
1 full teaspoon of saffron
Olive oil (enough to cover the central part of the pan but not the edges, about 6 or 6 cms should be uncovered)
salt

Method:

Fry the chicken and rabbit and when well browned set them around the paella, in the edge uncovered by the oil.

Fry the picadillo until soft and then add the other vegetables and cook them for 2 or 3 minutes. Mix with the meat. Add boiling water. (About double the amount of rice, but it might need a bit more). If using snails, add them now.

(Snails should have been washed thoroughly, left in tepid water for about 1 hour or until they have all come out and then brought to the boil and left to boil for 30 minutes on medium heat.

Add salt (it should be on the salty side, to compensate for the blandness of the rice), saffron and the rosemary, the artichokes and the rice. Bring to the boil and keep on medium/high heat. After 10 minutes the rice should start to get dry when the liquid seems to have evaporated. Turn down the heat and wait until the remaining liquid in the bottom is gone. Take it off the heat and cover with a tea towel and let it rest for another 10 minutes before uncovering and serving.

Paella Marinera

Ingredients:

Seafood ingredients can vary according to taste and availability but should include king prawns and squid. Mussels and/clams are also usually added but can't be omitted and replaced with other seafood. If using mussels and clams, wash them well and place them in a pan with not a lot of water, bring to the boil and cook until the shells open. Discard any that have not opened. Reserve the liquid to add it to the stock.

375 g Calasparra or Bomba rice
10 King prawns (uncooked and with heads, the biggest you can find)
Squid
scallops
mussels, clams (optional)

For the picadillo:

1 onion
1/2 red pepper and 1.2 green pepper
1 big clove of garlic
One very big tomato (or two smaller ones), peeled

All the above very finely chopped

For the seafood stock:

Reserve 4 or 5 of the King prawns and peel the rest of them. Save the shells and heads. Ask the fishmonger for fish heads or bones for stock.

In a big pan heat some olive oil and add the prawn shells and heads. Sauté until they go red, squash them with a wooden spoon and add a chopped onion, a carrot, a stick of celery, a bay leaf and a sprig of parsley. Season with salt and add a teaspoonful of saffron. Add the fish heads and bones, cover with cold water and bring to the boil. Cook for about an hour, check seasoning and skim the stock to get rid of the foamy scum. When ready, strain and reserve the stock and discard fish bones and vegetables.

In a frying pan with just a little oil sear the remaining whole prawns both sides until they go pink and then set aside.

In a paella pan (or frying pan) add some olive oil and fry the picadillo until soft. Add the squid, prawns and scallops and then the rice. Sauté everything and add the hot stock. Twice as much stock as rice, ie, 700 ml.

Something very important is not to stir at all once the stock has been added. This can break the rice and it would make the grains stick to each other.

Let it cook at medium/high heat for about 10 minutes. When all the liquid has disappeared take it off the heat. Decorate with the whole king prawns and mussels and clams if used. Cover with a tea towel and let it rest for 10 minutes.