

PAELLA RECIPE

Paella (pai-ei-uh) is a classic Spanish rice dish made with rice, saffron, vegetables, chicken, and seafood cooked and served in one pan. Although paella originates from Valencia, it's recognized as the national food of Spain and there are several different varieties. The most common types of paella are chicken paella, seafood paella, or mixed paella (a combination of seafood, meats, and vegetables).

Ingredients:

The main ingredients in every paella dish are rice, saffron, chicken, and vegetables. From there, ingredients vary depending on the type of paella or region where it's made. The ingredients in this easy paella recipe include:

Produce: onion, bell pepper, garlic, tomatoes, parsley, frozen peas.

Spices: bay leaf, paprika, saffron, salt and pepper.

Saffron: this may be the most important ingredient, so it's best to buy high quality. If your grocery store doesn't carry it, try an International food market, or Amazon. If necessary, substitute 1 teaspoon saffron powder.

Seafood: jumbo shrimp, mussels, calamari.

Chicken thighs: I prefer thighs to breasts in the recipe since they don't dry out as easily during longer cook times.

Olive Oil: Spanish olive oil, or any good quality olive oil.

White wine.

Spanish Rice: See my notes below about the rice, and possible substitutions.

Chicken Broth: Authentic paella would include making your own fish stock from the discarded shells of seafood. I usually substitute chicken broth, for convenience.

How to Make Spanish Paella:

1. Sauté: Add olive oil to a skillet over medium heat. Add onion, bell peppers and garlic and sauté until onion is translucent. Add chopped tomato, bay leaf, paprika, saffron, salt and pepper. Stir and cook for 5 minutes.

2. Add white wine. Cook for 10 minutes.

3. Add chicken & rice. Add chopped parsley and cook for 1 minute.

4. Add broth. Pour the broth slowly all around the pan and jiggle the pan to get the rice into an even layer. (Do not stir the mixture going forward!). Bring mixture to a boil. Reduce heat to medium low. Give the pan a gentle shake back and forth once or twice during cooking.

A skillet with sautéing vegetables, chicken and rice, then broth added to make paella.

5. Cook uncovered: Cook paella uncovered for 15-18 minutes, then nestle the shrimp, mussels and calamari into the mixture, sprinkle peas on top and continue to cook (without stirring) for about 5 more minutes. Watch for most of the liquid to be absorbed and the rice at the top nearly tender. (If for some reason your rice is still uncooked, add ¼ cup more water or broth and continue cooking).

Paella rice cooking in a pan, then mussels, shrimp and calamari added.

6. Cover and let rest. Remove pan from heat and cover pan with a lid or tinfoil. Place a kitchen towel over the lid and allow to rest for 10 minutes.

7. Serve. Garnish with fresh parsley and lemon slices. Serve.

Close up of cooked chicken and seafood paella in pan, ready to eat.