

*The popularity of Spain as a holiday destination has made so many Spanish recipes extremely popular in the UK and elsewhere such as France. Colour and flavour stand out when we think of the food. The Spanish people have often been poor and their recipes have developed often using food that can be grown. The Southern part of Spain was occupied by the Moors from North Africa for very many years and the influence of those time can be seen. **Spanish chorizo** is a cured, or hard, sausage made from coarsely chopped pork. The red colour of Spanish chorizo is due to the heavy amounts of paprika in the spice mix. Depending on the type of paprika used, it can be either spicy or sweet.*

Paella

This recipe grew popular in Spain because not only can it be cooked in one pot over an open fire, but it uses up lots of left-over chicken and uses fresh fish which is always easily available as there is so much coastline.

Serves 4

2 Garlic cloves, chopped
1 onion, diced
1 carrot, diced
100g chorizo
200g diced chicken
1 tsp paprika
1 red pepper, deseeded and chopped
1 tbsp tomato purée
750ml chicken stock
Pinch of saffron
300g paella rice
100g frozen peas
200g diced mixed fish (e.g. cod, haddock, coley, pollock)

In a large lidded shallow casserole pan heat a little olive oil and gently sauté the garlic, onion and carrot. Add the chicken, chorizo and paprika and cook for 5 minutes. Then add the pepper and cook for a further 3 minutes.

Stir in the tomato purée then add the rice and cook for a couple of minutes. Then add the stock and saffron, and cover the pan. Cook for 10 minutes.

Add the fish and the peas and stir in. Re-cover and cook for 10 minutes until the rice is soft and the fish is cooked.

Season and serve, sprinkled with chopped parsley.

Tapas

The Tapas consists of lots of little snack dishes which are served in Spanish bars to satisfy people's hunger between larger meals. The history of the Tapas claims that while on a long trip, King Alfonso had stopped to rest in the town of Ventorillo del Chato in the southern province of Cádiz, and he ordered a glass of Jerez or sherry. There was a gusty wind, so the inn keeper served him his glass of sherry covered by a slice of ham to prevent the sherry from getting dirty. King Alfonso apparently liked it, and when he asked for a second glass, he requested another tapa or "cover" just like the first.

The recipes below serve four as part of a range of Tapas dishes

Patatas Bravas – [V]

"Patatas Bravas" or Bravas Potatoes is one of the classic Spanish tapas dishes and is served in bars all over Spain. The sauce has a slight bite from the paprika or often Tabasco sauce, hence the name bravas, which means "fierce."

For the sauce:

3 tbsp olive oil
1 small onion, chopped
2 garlic cloves, chopped
227g can chopped tomatoes
1 tbsp tomato purée
2 tsp sweet paprika
Pinch of chilli powder
Pinch of sugar

900g potatoes, diced

Sauté the onion in a saucepan for 5 minutes in a little oil then add the rest of the sauce ingredients and bring to a simmer. Cook for 10 minutes to produce a fairly thick sauce.

Coat the potatoes in oil and bake in oven at 200C for 45 minutes until crispy.

When the potatoes are done, pour the hot sauce over, sprinkle with parsley and serve, with cocktail sticks.

Sweet Potato and Spinach Tortilla Frittata – [V]

The Tortilla Espanola or Spanish Omelet is the most commonly served dish in Spain. It is also called Tortilla de Patata or Potato Omelet. Bars and cafés serve it as a tapas or appetizer, but it is often served as a light dinner in Spanish homes. Because it is easy to transport, the Spanish make bocadillos or sandwiches by placing a piece between two pieces of a baguette.

Serves 4

300g baby spinach, wilted and squeezed dry

Olive oil

2 large onions, sliced

4 sweet potatoes, peeled and sliced

2 cloves garlic, chopped

8 large eggs, beaten

In a large pan with a lid, gently sauté the onions for 5 minutes. Then add the garlic and sweet potato, cover and continue to cook for 15 minutes, stirring occasionally.

Place the eggs in a large bowl and stir in the sweet potato mix and the spinach. Add a little more oil to the pan and pour the mix back in. Cover and cook on a medium heat for 15 minutes.

When nearly set, turn onto a plate and slide back into the pan. Cover again and cook for 5 minutes until set.

Allow to rest for a few minutes then turn out and serve.

Gazpacho Soup – [V]

Gazpacho is a soup made of raw vegetables which can easily be grown in the area and is served cold, usually with a tomato base, originating in the southern Spanish region of Andalucía. Gazpacho is widely eaten in Spain and neighbouring Portugal, particularly during the hot summers, as it is refreshing and cool. It is often served in quality British restaurants as an appetiser to clean and refresh the palate (mouth).

There are many theories of its origin. It possibly arrived with the Moors as it is similar to a typical Arab soup of bread, olive oil water and garlic, or via the Romans with the addition of vinegar. There are many modern variations of gazpacho and sometimes instead of tomatoes, avocados, cucumbers, parsley, watermelon, grapes, and seafood are used.

Serves 4

1 red onion, roughly chopped
2 garlic cloves, chopped
1 red pepper, deseeded and chopped
4 ripe tomatoes, deseeded and chopped
1 slice white bread, in pieces
500ml passata
300ml stock
5 tbsp olive oil
4 tbsp red wine vinegar
1 tsp tabasco sauce
1 tsp sugar

Put the onion, garlic, pepper, tomato and bread into a food processor and blend until finely chopped, but not too smooth. Tip into a large bowl with the passata, stock, oil, vinegar tabasco and sugar. Mix well and season. Chill.

Serve with basil torn over the top.

Tortilla de Patatas

Serves 4

olive oil for frying
4 medium potatoes, peeled and sliced $\frac{1}{8}$ " (3mm) thick
1 large onion, diced
6 large eggs
Salt and black pepper

Heat a heavy-based pan on a medium heat. Add some olive oil, then the potato and onion. Add a little salt too. Continue to cook this mixture, stirring occasionally, until the potatoes have softened, taking care not to colour them too much.

Crack the eggs into a large bowl and beat well. Once the potato mixture is cooked, add to the egg mix and stir in.

Heat a non-stick pan over a medium heat. Add a little oil. Stir the mixture just before adding to the pan, then pour in. Allow the egg to set all around the edges. When this has occurred, the tortilla can be lifted to check browning.

When the underside is golden, turn the tortilla, cook for a further 2-3 minutes to set the remainder of the egg then turn out onto a serving plate.

This can be eaten hot on its own, or the Spanish will have it cold between two pieces of a baguette, as it is easy to transport.

Beef Burger in Aubergine Slices with Guacamole

Serves 4

1 aubergine, sliced into 8 rounds
Olive oil for frying
Red onion, thinly sliced
1 *Little Gem* lettuce
1 tbsp ketchup

For the burgers:

450g lean beef mince
1 egg
1 tbsp Dijon mustard
½ red onion, finely chopped
1 garlic clove, crushed
1 tsp salt
½ tsp pepper
½ tsp cayenne pepper
1 tbsp chopped fresh parsley

For the guacamole:

1 avocado, juice of 1 lime, a handful of coriander, 1 red or green chilli, deseeded

Place the burger ingredients in a large bowl and mix together, then shape into four burgers. Spray a non-stick frying pan with a little olive oil and fry the burgers over a medium heat for 3-4 minutes on each side.

Meanwhile, heat a little oil in a second pan and fry the aubergine slices over a medium heat high heat for 3-4 minutes on each side.

Place all the guacamole ingredients in a bowl and mash together with a fork.

Stack each burger on an aubergine slice and layer with the salad, red onion, guacamole and ketchup and serve immediately.