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SPANISH CUISINE RECIPE BOOK

Thore Carlsen, Executive Chef





I have eaten these crisp, delicious shrimp fritters only in Andalusia, where deep-frying reigns supreme. They are at their best when made with chickpea flour, but regular flour is just OK. For the best results, fry only a few fritters at a time so that the oil temperature doesn't drop, as a constant high temperature keeps the tortillitas from absorbing excess oil. Even though the shrimp are minced, I recommend using small shrimp, which are more tender than large ones. And if you were shopping in Andalusia or in the Canary Islands, you would ask for camarones, just as you would in most of Central of South America, whereas everywhere else in Spain, you would ask for gambas.

Serves 6

Ingredients:

½ pound small shrimp, peeled
1½ cups chickpea or regular flour
1 tablespoon chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley
3 scallions, white part and a little of the tender green tops, finely chopped
½ teaspoon sweet pimenton
Salt
Olive oil for deep-frying

Preparation:

In a saucepan, combine the shrimp with water to cover and bring to a boil over high heat. As soon as the water starts to boil, quickly lift out the shrimp with a slotted spoon and set aside. Scoop out 1 cup of the cooking water and let cool. Discard the remaining water. When the shrimp are cool, cover and refrigerate until needed.

To make the batter, combine the flour, parsley, scallions and pimentón in a bowl or a food processor. Add a pinch of salt and the cooled cooking water. Mix or process well until you obtain a texture slightly thicker than a pancake batter. Cover and refrigerate for 1 hour. Remove the shrimp from the refrigerator and mince finely. The pieces should be the size of coffee grounds. Remove the batter from the refrigerator, add the shrimp, and mix well. Pour the olive oil to a depth of about 1 inch into a heavy sauté pan and heat over high heat until it is almost smoking. Add 1 tablespoon of the batter to the oil for each fritter and, using the back of the spoon, immediately flatten the batter into a round 3 1/2 inches in diameter. Do not crowd the pan.

Fry, turning once, for about 1 minute on each side, or until the fritters are golden and very crisp with what Spanish cooks call puntillas, or lacelike formations, on the borders. Using a slotted spoon, lift out the fritters, holding them briefly over the pan to allow the excess oil to drain, and transfer to an ovenproof platter lined with paper towels to drain further. Keep the fritters warm in a low oven. Fry the rest of the batter in the same way, always making sure the oil is very hot before frying more fritters.

When all the fritters are fried, arrange them on a platter and serve immediately.

BARBECUED MINI RIBS

These tasty ribs are known as Costillas in Spain. They are delicious cooked on a barbecue and almost as good when cooked under a hot grill. If you prefer a sweeter flavour, use freshly squeezed orange juice instead of the sweet sherry.

Serves 6-8

Ingredients:

1 sheet of pork ribs, about 1 1/2 lb
6 tablespoon sweet oloroso sherry
1 tablespoon tomato purée (paste)
1 teaspoon soy sauce
1/2 teaspoon Tabasco Sauce
1 tablespoon brown sugar
2 tablespoon seasoned plain (all-purpose) flour
Coarse sea Salt

Preparation:

Separate the ribs, then, using a meat cleaver or heavy knife, cut each rib in half widthways to make about 30 pieces.

Mix the sherry, tomato purée, soy sauce, Tabasco, and sugar in a bowl. Stir in 1/2 teaspoon of salt.

Put the seasoned flour in a strong plastic bag, then add the ribs and toss to coat.

Dip each rib in the sauce. Cook on a hot barbecue or under a hot grill (broiler) for 30-40 minutes, turning occasionally until cooked and a little charred.

Sprinkle with salt and serve.

STUFFED TOMATOES TOMATES RELLENOS



This one is a simple recipe, very handy when preparing a barbeque or a picnic party. Tomatoes here are used as a container for a delicious Spanish stuffing. If you don't like garlic, you can use plain mayonnaise instead of alloli (typical Spanish garlic mayonnaise).

Ingredients:

8 small tomatoes, or 3 large ones
4 hard-boiled eggs, cooled and peeled
6 tablespoons alloli or mayonnaise
Salt and pepper
1 tablespoon parsley, chopped
1 tablespoon white breadcrumbs, if using large tomatoes

Preparation:

Skin the tomatoes, first by cutting out the core with a sharp knife and making a '+' incision on the other end of the tomato. Then place in a pan of boiling water for 10 seconds, remove and plunge into a bowl of iced or very cold water (this latter step is to stop the tomatoes from cooking and going mushy).

Slice the tops off the tomatoes, and just enough of their bases to remove the rounded ends so that they will sit squarely on the plate. Keep the tops if using small tomatoes, but discard those large tomatoes. Remove the seeds and insides, either with a teaspoon or small, sharp knife.

Mash the eggs with the alloli -or the mayonnaise, if using- salt, pepper and parsley. Stuff the tomatoes, firmly pressing the filling down. With small tomatoes, replace the lids at a jaunty angle. If keeping to serve later, brush them with olive oil and black pepper to prevent them from drying out. Cover with cling film and keep.

For large tomatoes, the filling must be firm enough to be sliced. If you make your own mayonnaise, thicken it by using more egg yolks. If you use shop-bought mayonnaise or alloli, add white breadcrumbs until the mixture reaches the consistency of mashed potatoes.

Season:

Fill the tomatoes, pressing down firmly until level. Refrigerate for 1 hour, and then slice with a sharp carving knife into rings. Sprinkle with chopped parsley.

SALT COD FRITTERS WITH ALLIOLI



Bacalao - salt cod - is one of the great Spanish delights, adding flavour to bland ingredients such as potatoes. If you are unfamiliar with it, then this is a delightful way to try it out. Bite size fish cakes, dipped into rich, creamy, garlicky allioli, are irresistible as a tapas dish or appetizer.

Serves 6

Ingredients:

1 lb salt cod	3 1/2 oz dried white breadcrumbs
1 1/4 lb floury potatoes	Olive oil, for shallow frying
1 1/4 cups milk	Lemon wedges and salad leaves, to serve
6 spring onions finely chopped	For the allioli:
2 tablespoon olive oil	2 large garlic cloves, finely chopped
2 tablespoon chopped fresh parsley	2 egg yolks
Juice of 1/2 lemon	1 1/4 cups olive oil
2 eggs, beaten	Juice of 1/2 lemon, to taste
Plain (all-purpose) flour, for dusting	

Preparation:

Soak the salt cod in cold water for at least 24 hours, changing the water two or three times. The cod should swell as it rehydrates. Sample a tiny piece. It should not taste unpleasantly salty when fully rehydrated. Drain well and pat dry with kitchen paper.

Cook the potatoes, unpeeled, in a pan of lightly salted boiling water for about 20 minutes, until tender. Drain. As soon as they are cool enough to handle, peel the potatoes, then mash with a fork or use a potato masher.

Pour the milk into a pan, add half the spring onions and bring to a simmer. Add the soaked cod and poach very gently for 10-15 minutes, or until it flakes easily. Remove the cod and flake it with a fork into a bowl, discarding bones and skin.

Add 4 tablespoons of mashed potato to the cod and beat them together with a wooden spoon. Work in the olive oil, and then gradually add the remaining mashed potato. Beat in the remaining spring onions and the parsley.

Season with lemon juice and pepper to taste - the mixture may also need a little salt but taste it before adding any. Add one egg to the mixture and beat it until thoroughly combined, then chill until firm.

Shape the chilled fish mixture into 12-18 balls, and then gently flatten into small round cakes. Coat each one in flour, then dip in the remaining beaten egg and coat with dried breadcrumbs. Chill until ready to fry.

Meanwhile, make the allioli. Place the garlic and a good pinch of salt in a mortar and pound to a paste with a pestle. Using a small whisk or a wooden spoon, gradually work in the egg yolks.

Beat in about half the olive oil, a drop at a time. When the sauce is as thick as soft butter, beat in 1-2 tablespoons lemon juice. Continue adding oil until the allioli is very thick. Season to taste, adding more lemon juice if you wish.

Heat about 3/4 inch oil in a large, heavy frying pan. Add the fritters and cook over a medium-high heat for about 4 minutes. Turn them over and cook for a further 4 minutes on the other side, until crisp and golden. Drain on kitchen paper, then serve with the allioli, lemon wedges and salad leaves.

PRAWN CROQUETTES



Croquetas de gambas

Croquetas are ubiquitous in Spain, although they most likely originate from the French 'croquettes'. Their beauty lies in the bechamel base which is then mixed with your particular ingredient of choice to give it a characteristic flavour. The possibilities are almost endless - here we have used prawns.

Makes about 36 units

Ingredients:

3 1/2 oz butter
4 oz plain flour
1 1/4 pints cold milk
Salt and pepper
14 oz cooked peeled prawns, diced
2 teaspoons tomato puree
5 or 6 tablespoons fine breadcrumbs
2 large eggs, beaten
Olive oil for deep-frying

Preparation:

Melt the butter in a medium saucepan and add the flour, stirring continuously. Allow the flour to cook in the butter for a couple of minutes, continuing to stir.

Start adding the cold milk little by little, stirring all the while until you have a thick, smooth sauce.

Add the prawns, season well and stir in the tomato paste. Continue to cook for 7 or 8 minutes. The end result should be quite thick. Let the mixture cool completely - it is usually a good idea to leave it overnight.

Take a scant tablespoon of the mixture and form into a croqueta, a 1 1/2 - 2 inch cylinder. Roll the croqueta in the breadcrumbs, then coat in the beaten egg, then roll in the breadcrumbs again. Make sure the breadcrumbs are always dry to ensure an even coating.

Heat the oil for deep-frying in a large, heavy-based pan until the temperature reaches 350°F or a cube of bread turns golden brown in 20-30 seconds. Fry in batches of no more than 3 or 4 for about 5 minutes until golden brown. Remove with a slatted spoon, drain on kitchen paper and serve immediately.

CRISP SPICED POTATOES PATATAS BRAVAS

Patatas bravas is a basic, traditional tapa as popular in elegant big-city establishments as it is in the more modest village hostelrys. As with most tapas, each bar and household will have its own recipe, naturally believed to be the best! Savour this mildly tangy version of patatas bravas with a chilled white wine.

Serves: 4

Preparation time:

30 minutes

Ingredients:

3 tablespoons of olive oil
4 large Russet potatoes, peeled, and cut to 1-inch cubes
2 tablespoons minced onion
2 cloves garlic, minced
Salt and freshly ground black pepper
1 1/2 tablespoons Spanish paprika
1/4 teaspoon Tabasco Sauce
1/4 teaspoon ground thyme
1/2 cup (4 fl. oz) Ketchup
1/2 cup (4 fl. oz) mayonnaise
Chopped parsley, to garnish
1 cup (8 fl. oz) olive oil , for frying

Preparation:

The brava sauce:

In a saucepan, heat 3 tablespoons olive oil over medium heat. Add the onion and garlic and sauté until the onion is soft.

Turn off the heat, and add the paprika, Tabasco sauce, and thyme, stirring well.

Transfer to a bowl and add the ketchup and mayonnaise.

Season with salt and pepper to taste. Set aside.

The potatoes:

Sprinkle the potatoes lightly with salt and black pepper. In a large skillet fry the potatoes in 1 cup (8 fl. oz) olive oil until cooked through and golden-brown, stirring occasionally. (Take care when adding the potatoes to the saucepan because the oil will splatter due to the salt).

Drain the potatoes on paper towels, check the seasoning, add more salt if necessary, and set it aside.

Getting it all together

Mix the potatoes with the sauce immediately before serving to ensure that the potatoes retain their crispness. Garnish with chopped parsley and serve warm.

PULPO A FEIRA GALICIAN OCTOPUS



Though it originated in Galicia or the neighbouring region of Leon, pulpo a feira, as it is known in Galician, or pulpo a la gallega, as it is called in Spanish, is now popular throughout Spain. It is usually served on wooden plates with cachelos, potatoes that have been boiled or roasted in embers with their skins on. Frozen octopus works particularly well, since the freezing tenderizes the otherwise quite tough meat, so that is what I suggest you use here. If you prefer to use a fresh octopus, you will need to practice the almost tribal tradition of beating the animal with a rock or meat mallet to rid of its rubbery texture. Another option is to freeze fresh octopus for about two weeks to tenderize it.

The size of the most commonly available octopus is about three pounds; smaller ones, while more tender, are not suited to this preparation, since the tentacles would be too small when cut into rings.

Serves 6

Ingredients:

4 quarts water
6 tablespoons coarse sea salt
1 frozen octopus, about 3 pounds thawed overnight in the refrigerator
1 pound new potatoes, boiled with their skins on and kept warm
1 cup extra virgin oil
2 tablespoons hot paprika

Preparation:

In a large stockpot, combine the water and 5 tablespoons of the salt and bring to a boil.

While the water is heating, rinse the octopus under running cold water. Using sharp kitchen scissors, cut out the mouth and the eyes.

With a long fork, pierce the octopus to get a good grip and dip it into the boiling water. Lift out immediately and, when the water returns to a boil, dip it briefly again. Repeat this dipping procedure 3 or 4 times, or until the tentacles have curled. (Dipping the octopus into boiling water helps to tenderize it.)

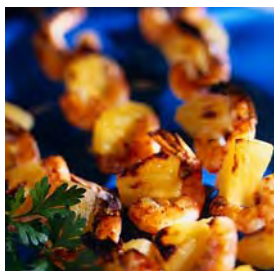
Submerge the octopus in the water and let it boil over medium heat for about 2 hours, or until it is tender when pierced with a knife.

Turn off the heat and let the octopus rest in the hot water for 10 minutes. Lift the octopus from the water and cut it into pieces with the scissors: the tentacles into 1/2-inch-thick rings and the body into small chunks. Divide the octopus pieces evenly among 6 plates.

Cut the potatoes crosswise in 1/2-inch-thick slices and surround the octopus pieces with the potato slices.

Drizzle the octopus and potatoes with the olive oil and sprinkle with hot paprika and the remaining tablespoon of salt.

Serve the dish while the octopus and potatoes are still warm.



Saniards love to eat grilled shrimp at the counter of a good tapas bar while sipping a glass of chilled fino sherry or cold beer. The bars are often crowded, leaving little or no space for proper eating, and I find it fascinating to watch the locals skillfully manage to eat shrimp with one hand while holding a drink in the other. Look for medium-large whole shrimp and leave the heads on for cooking. Sucking the juices from the flavour-packed heads of the cooked shrimp is considered the best part.

Serves 6

Ingredients:

1/2 cup olive oil

Juice of 1 lemon

2 teaspoons Sanlucar sea salt

24 medium-large shrimp (about 1 pound) in the shell with heads intact

Preparation:

In a bowl, whisk together the olive oil, lemon juice, and salt until well blended. Dip the shrimp briefly into the mixture to coat lightly.

Heat a dry skillet over high heat. When the pan is very hot, working in batches, add the shrimp in a single layer without crowding. Sear for 1 minute.

Decrease the heat to medium and continue cooking for 1 minute longer. Turn the shrimp, increase the heat to high, and sear for 2 more minutes, or until golden.

Keep the shrimp warm on an ovenproof platter in a low oven. Cook the rest of the shrimp in the same way.

MUSSELS VINAIGRETTE MEJILLONES A LA VINAGRETA



Steamed mussels are dressed with flavourful vinaigrette in this colourful tapa. It is an ideal treat for a party or any event with lots of people attending.

Servings: Makes 30 tapas

Ingredients:

2 1/2 dozen mussels, scrubbed and beards removed
Shredded lettuce
2 tbsp minced green onion
2 tbsp minced green pepper
2 tbsp minced red pepper
1 tbsp chopped parsley
4 tbsp olive oil
2 tbsp vinegar or lemon juice
Dash of red pepper sauce
Salt to taste

Preparation:

Steam open the mussels.

Put them in a deep pan with the water. Cover the pan and put over a high heat, shaking the pan, until the shells open. Remove from heat and discard any mussels that do not open.

Mussels can also be opened in a microwave. Place them in a microwave-safe bowl, partially covered, and microwave at full power for one minute.

Stir and microwave one minute more. Remove any mussels that have opened and microwave one minute more. Again remove open ones. Repeat twice more. Discard any mussels that have not opened.

When cool enough to handle, remove and discard the empty shells. (Mussels can be cooked in advance and refrigerated.)

Shortly before serving, arrange mussels on a bed of shredded lettuce on a serving platter. In a bowl combine the onion, green and red pepper, parsley, oil, and vinegar.

Season with red pepper sauce and salt. Spoon the mixture into the mussels in their shells.

RICE-STUFFED PEPPERS PIMIENTOS RELLENOS

The rice to fill these stuffed peppers, which are typical of the mountain towns of Alcoy and Bocairnt, cooks in the sweet juices from the tomato and pepper.

Servings: 4

Ingredients:

1 lb 2 oz short-grained Spanish Rice, such as Bomba or Calasparra
2-3 tablespoons olive oil
4 large red peppers
1 small red pepper, chopped
1/2 onion, chopped
1/2 tomato, skinned and chopped
5 oz minced / chopped pork or 3 oz salt cod
Saffron
Chopped fresh parsley
Salt

Preparation:

Cut off the stem ends of the peppers, keeping them as lids to replace later, and scrape out the inner membranes with a teaspoon.

Heat the oil, sauté the red pepper slowly until it is tender and remove. Fry the onion until tender, add the meat and brown it lightly, adding the tomato after a few minutes, then put back the cooked pepper, and stir in the raw rice, saffron and parsley. Salt to taste.

Fill the peppers carefully and lay them on their side in an ovenproof dish, being careful the filling doesn't fall out (you can wrap them in tinfoil to help hold them together).

Cover the dish and put it in a hot oven for about 1 1/2 hours.

The rice cooks in the juices from the tomato and pepper. If the peppers are thin-skinned, you may need to add a little stock towards the end of the cooking time.

SPANISH OMELETTE



Along with paella, the ubiquitous Spanish omelette - tortilla de patatas - is perhaps one of the best-known Spanish dishes. It is impossible to find a self-respecting tapas bar that does not feature tortilla in its repertoire. As delicious as it is versatile, this Spanish staple lends itself to countless variations according to personal taste. Some cooks mix in mushrooms, beans, spinach, and tomatoes, while others choose to omit the onion and instead cover the tortilla in tomato sauce. Others still would never dream of serving the tortilla without heaping mounds of mayonnaise. Each region, and each tapas bar, will have its own variation of the traditional tortilla. This delicious tapa can be served warm or cold.

Serves: 4

Ingredients:

1/2 pint of olive oil

5 medium (40 oz each) baking potatoes, peeled, sliced and lightly sprinkled with salt

1/2 yellow onion, chopped

3 cloves garlic, minced

5 eggs

Salt

Preparation:

Heat the olive oil in a 9-inch skillet and add the potato slices carefully, because the salt will make the oil splatter. Try to keep the potato slices separated so they will not stick together.

Cook, turning occasionally, over medium heat for 5 minutes. Add the onions and garlic and cook until the potatoes are tender. Drain into a colander, leaving about 3 tablespoons of oil in the skillet.

Meanwhile, in a large bowl, whisk the eggs with a pinch of salt. Add the potatoes, and stir to coat with the egg. Add the egg-coated potatoes to the very hot oil in the skillet, spreading them evenly to completely cover the base of the skillet. Lower the heat to medium and continue to cook, shaking the pan frequently, until mixture is half set.

Use a plate to cover the skillet and invert the omelette away from the hand holding the plate (so as not to burn your hand with any escaping oil).

Add 1 tablespoon oil to the pan and slide the omelette back into the skillet on its uncooked side. Cook until completely set.

Allow the omelette to cool, and then cut it into wedges. Season it with salt and sprinkle with lemon juice to taste (optional).

Serve warm or at room temperature.

MEATBALLS IN TOMATO SAUCE ALBONDIGAS EN SALSA DE TOMATES



Found in most tapas bars, this traditional dish tastes best when served piping hot straight from the pan. Provide plenty of fresh bread to mop up the juicy tomato sauce.

Serves: 4

Ingredients:

2 tablespoons of olive oil
8 oz ground beef
1 cup (2 oz) fresh white breadcrumbs
2 tablespoons grated Manchego or Parmesan cheese
1 tablespoon tomato paste
3 cloves garlic, chopped fine
2 scallions, chopped fine
2 teaspoons chopped fresh thyme
1/2 teaspoon turmeric
Salt and pepper, to taste
2 cups (16 oz) canned plum tomatoes, chopped
2 tablespoons red wine
2 teaspoons chopped fresh basil leaves
2 teaspoons chopped fresh rosemary

Preparation:

In a bowl, thoroughly mix together the beef, breadcrumbs, cheese, tomato paste, garlic, scallions, egg, thyme, turmeric, salt, and pepper.

Using your hands, shape the mixture into 12 to 15 firm balls.

Heat the olive oil in a skillet over medium-high heat. Add the meatballs and cook for several minutes or until browned on all sides.

Add the tomatoes, wine, basil, and rosemary. Simmer gently for around 20 minutes, or until the meatballs are cooked. Season generously with salt and pepper and serve hot.

SPANISH POTATO SALAD ENSALADILLA RUSA



This traditional tapa is served throughout every region of Spain, with little variation. A poorly made version will taste like a mouthful of mayonnaise. On the other hand, a well-made ensaladilla rusa is a perfectly balanced mixture of potatoes, hard-cooked eggs, and vegetables, using the mayonnaise solely to accent these other flavours. This colourful salad is served at nearly every tapas bar; it is even served free at times with an order of beer.

Serves: 4

Ingredients:

3 medium (16 oz) potatoes
1 large (3 oz) carrot, diced
5 tablespoons shelled green peas
2/3 cup (4 oz) green beans
1/2 medium onion, chopped
1 small red bell pepper, chopped
4 cocktail gherkins, sliced
2 tablespoons baby capers
12 anchovy-stuffed olives
1 hard-cooked egg, sliced thin
2/3 cup (5 fl. oz) mayonnaise
1 tablespoon lemon juice
1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
Freshly ground black pepper, to taste
Chopped fresh parsley, to garnish

Preparation:

In a saucepan, cook the potatoes and carrot in lightly salted water. Bring to a boil and allow to simmer until almost tender.

Fold in the peas and beans, and cook until all the vegetables are tender. Drain the vegetables and transfer them into a serving platter. Add the onion, pepper, gherkins, baby capers, anchovy-stuffed olives, and egg slices.

In a separate bowl, thoroughly combine the mayonnaise, lemon juice and mustard. Add this mixture to the serving platter, mixing well to ensure all the ingredients are coated. Sprinkle with pepper and toss.

Garnish with chopped parsley and refrigerate.

Allow to stand at room temperature for about 1 hour immediately before serving to enhance the salad's flavour.

As any dish made with mayonnaise, ensaladilla should be refrigerated and will not keep for more than 1 to 2 days.

BREAD WITH MUSHROOMS AND ALIOLI



This tapa recipe comes from a bar in Madrid.

Ingredients:

4 or 5 ounces mushrooms, stems removed and sliced thin
1 tablespoon extra virgin olive oil
A pinch of sea salt
1 teaspoon sherry wine
Alioli (garlic mayonnaise)
French bread, sliced into rounds

Preparation:

Heat the olive oil in a pan that has a cover.

When the oil is hot, add the mushrooms, salt and sherry. Cover, and lower heat. Cook until liquid is released from the mushrooms, about 10 minutes. Drain and set aside.

Toast bread slightly, just to dry it out a bit. Spread with alioli and top with mushrooms. Boil for about 30 seconds or until alioli starts to bubble.

CRISP-FRIED CALAMARI WITH ROSEMARY & CHILLI OIL



A simple but tasty dish from Aldo Zilli which is excellent as a starter or side dish.

Servings: 4

Cooking Time: 10 minutes

Ingredients:

Extra virgin olive oil
1 bunch of fresh rosemary
2 whole red chillies, deseeded and finely chopped
150ml single cream
3 egg yolks
2 tbsp grated Parmesan cheese
2 tbsp plain flour
Salt and fresh ground black pepper
1 garlic clove, peeled and crushed
1 tsp dried oregano
Vegetable oil for deep-frying
6 Squid, cleaned and cut into rings
Salt

Preparation:

For the dressing, warm the olive oil in a small pan and add the rosemary and chilli. Set aside.

Pour the cream into a large bowl and add the egg yolks, parmesan cheese, flour, garlic, and oregano. Beat until it becomes a smooth batter. Season with freshly ground black pepper.

Heat enough oil for deep-frying to 200°C, or until a cube of bread browns in 30 seconds.

Dip the squid rings into the batter, one at a time, and place gently into the oil. Fry for 2-3 minutes until golden brown.

Drain on kitchen paper and serve immediately, drizzled with the dressing. Add salt if required.

SPANISH TAPAS RECIPES



In the Mediterranean diet it is typical to begin the food with succulent starters to open up the appetite. Either in complete portions or in half rations - the famous 'tapas' - appetizers are usually served before the food. Of the endless variety of starters that is possible to find - there is not town that doesn't have its own.

Shrimp Fritters - Tortillitas de Camarones:

I have eaten these crisp, delicious shrimp fritters only in Andalusia, where deep-frying reigns supreme. They are at their best when made with chickpea flour, but regular flour is just OK.

Spicy Sausage and Cheese Tortilla:

This substantial tortilla is delicious hot or cold. Cut it into chunky wedges and serve for supper or a light lunch with a fresh tomato and basil salad. The addition of spicy chorizo and tangy cheese gives it a wonderful, rich flavour.

Barbecued Mini Ribs:

These tasty ribs are known as Costillas in Spain. They are delicious cooked on a barbecue and almost as good when cooked under a hot grill. If you prefer a sweeter flavour, use freshly squeezed orange juice instead of the sweet sherry.

Fried Black Pudding (Morcilla Frita):

Spanish morcilla - black pudding - is the first sausage to be made from the freshly killed pig and is very popular throughout Spain. It is flavored with spices and herbs, usually including garlic and oregano, and has a wonderfully rich, spicy taste.

Ceviche:

You can use almost any firm-fleshed fish for this Spanish influenced dish, provided that it is perfectly fresh. The fish is 'cooked' by the action of the acidic lime juice. Adjust the amount of chilli according to your taste.

Spiced Clams:

Spanish clams, especially in the North, are much larger than clams found elsewhere, and have more succulent bodies. This modern recipe uses Arab spicing to make a hot dip or sauce. Serve with plenty of fresh bread to mop up the delicious juices!

Stuffed Tomatoes tapas:

This one is a simple recipe, very handy when preparing a barbeque or a picnic party. Tomatoes here are used as a container for a delicious Spanish stuffing.

Salt Cod Fritters with Allioli:

Bacalao - salt cod - is one of the great Spanish delights, adding flavour to bland ingredients such as potatoes. If you are unfamiliar with it, then this is a delightful way to try it out. Bitesize fish cakes, dipped into rich, creamy, garlicky allioli, are irresistible as a tapas dish or appetizer.

Artichoke rice cakes with manchego:

These unusual little croquetas contain artichoke in the rice mixture, and they break open to reveal a melting cheese centre. Manchego is made from sheep's milk and has a tart flavour that goes wonderfully with the delicate taste of the rice cakes.

Prawn croquettes:

Croquetas are ubiquitous in Spain, although they most likely originate from the French 'croquettes'. Their beauty lies in the bechamel base which is then mixed with your particular ingredient of choice to give it a characteristic flavour. The possibilities are almost endless - here we have used prawns.

Prawn and Bacon Brochettes:

The Spanish love bacon, which we cure and air-dry in the same way as our famous jamon. This combination of prawns and bacon is inspired and very popular, and can be found at most Tapas bar, as well as in many banquets and receptions. It is an ideal treat for your guests when having a party at home!

Gildas:

Gilda means lollipop, and the classic Gilda is a simple assembly of a guindilla (Spanish chile pepper), an anchovy and an olive. The combination of good-quality pinkish anchovies, smallish, crisp, unwrinkled chillies and a freshly pitted olive produce a sophisticated mélange. Smoked Fish and Fruit Pintxos: Smoked fish and fresh fruit make a perfect match when combined in this recipe and served as an appetizer. Smoked salmon is now ubiquitous in Spain, particularly in the cities. Less evidence is traditional bacalao (salt cod), for which smoked mackerel is a substitute here.

Artichokes with clams:

Artichokes are a popular vegetable in Spain, especially fresh from the market. They are often served sautéed with ham or stuffed with white sauce and ham or meat, etc. Sometimes served cold, they combine well with anchovies and piquillo peppers, or with salmon and capers, or tuna fish with a good olive oil.

Patatas bravas:

A classic! Spicy and hot fried potatoes, with a Brava sauce to match!

Stuffed Mussels (Tigres):

In Bilbao, these stuffed mussels are called Tigres because of their fieriness. I fondly remember the crowded little bars in the old part of Bilbao, where orders of tigres would emerge by the dozens from the tiny kitchens.

Empanadas:

Empanadas, bread pies stuffed with shellfish, fish or meats, are iconic of Galician cuisine. The crusts and fillings vary from place to place, and nearly every Galician family, restaurant, and tavern claims to have the secret formula for making the best version. Of the many empanadas I have tasted in this beautiful north-western region, these ones are my favourites - their crust is consistently delicate and delicious.

Bread with Mushrooms and Alioli:

This tapa recipe comes from a bar in Madrid. I used to jog around the Retiro and then eat these tostadas washed down with a nice cold caña! When I serve this recipe at a party, it is always the first to go!

Mussels Vinaigrette:

Steamed mussels are dressed with a flavourful vinaigrette in this colourful tapa. It is an ideal treat for a party or any event with lots of people attending.

Pa amb oli:

Pa amb oli means "bread with olive oil" in Majorcan, and it is as commonly eaten in the Balearic Islands as pa amb tomàquet is in Catalonia.

Pulpo a Feira (Galician Octopus):

Though it originated in Galicia or the neighbouring region of Leon, pulpo a feira, as it is known in Galician, or pulpo a la gallega, as it is called in Spanish, is now popular throughout Spain. It is usually served on wooden plates with cachelos, potatoes that have been boiled or roasted in embers with their skins on.

Pimientos rellenos (Rice-stuffed peppers):

The rice to fill these stuffed peppers, which are typical of the mountain towns of Alcoy and Bocairent, cooks in the sweet juices from the tomato and pepper.

Gambas a la plancha (Pan-grilled shrimp):

Spaniards love to eat grilled shrimp at the counter of a good tapas bar while sipping a glass of chilled fino sherry or cold beer. The bars are often crowded, leaving little or no space for proper eating, and I find it fascinating to watch the locals skilfully manage to eat shrimp with one hand while holding a drink in the other.

Ensaladilla Rusa (Spanish Potato Salad):

This is a popular tapa recipe, made of vegetables and mayonnaise... It is served free in most bars in Spain, along with a beer or a glass of wine.

Spanish Ham Croquettes:

Croquetas are a common sight on bar counters and in homes across Spain, served as a tapa, light lunch, or a dinner along with a salad. The jamon serrano in this recipe could be replaced with chopped hard-boiled eggs, shredded salt cod, minced shrimp, chopped chorizo, cheese, or just about any vegetable.

Spanish omelette:

This is THE tapa! There is nothing more typical than a Spanish omelette! Learn how to prepare the real one!

Piperada:

Piperada is a filling egg dish, which makes a delicious brunch, and it can also be served as a tapa. A popular variation of this recipe serves the piperada on toasted bread rounds dripping with butter. Either way, this simple egg dish is sure to become a part of your culinary repertoire.

Green Aparaguses with Salmon:

This innovative tapa recipe puts together traditional Spanish ingredients with northern salmon... Try this new classic tapa!

Catalan Style Beans:

Habas are a traditional type of Spanish bean, that Catalan chefs (after their grandmother's cookbook!) have turned into one of the greatest tapas nowadays!

Meatballs in tomato sauce:

Found in most tapas bars, this traditional dish tastes best when served piping hot straight from the pan. Provide plenty of fresh bread to mop up the juicy tomato sauce.

Tuna and goat cheese empanadillas:

Empanadillas, the smaller, pocket-size versions of empanadas, are generally served as tapas, and, because no silverware is required to eat them, make perfect party food.

Garlic-marinated Black Olives:

Attesting to the simplicity of tapas, a handful of marinated olives is often ample accompaniment to a glass of chilled sherry in most Spanish tapas bars. Marinated to piquant perfection, these olives are far from ordinary.

Apple and Walnut Salad:

This refreshing, crisp summer salad provides the perfect accompaniment to a glass (or two) of chilled Spanish sherry. For a tangier version, add a dash of lemon juice to the mayonnaise before mixing it into the salad.

Champiñones al ajillo:

Few tapas taste more Spanish than champiñones al ajillo (ajillo mushrooms), dripping with olive oil, garlic and dry Spanish Sherry.

Red Onion and Orange Salad:

This popular and colourful salad lends a festive note to any tapas table, and is featured in many tapas bar throughout Spain.

Asparagus Omelette:

Although this unique omelette is usually served from the skillet, it is also delicious served cold or at room temperature. Indeed, cooled leftovers of this delectable dish with a glass of amontillado sherry make for a perfect picnic lunch.

Pinchitos Morunos:

Small Spicy Moorish Kebabs Europe's first kebabs were brought by the Arabs from Africa. Pinchitos morunos are eaten everywhere in Spain as a tapa, though nowadays they are made of pork, rather than lamb. Spices for them are sold ready-mixed in the south. I have used curry powder as part of my mixture as it contains cumin and very similar herbs.

Riñones al Jerez - Sherry Kidneys:

Most tapas bars in Spain serve Riñones al Jerez, though at home it can be served with rice or pasta as a main meal. You can add sliced mushrooms to increase the number of portions.

Boquerones en Escabeche:

Moorish Pickled Anchovies This is an old, old way of preserving small fish which has survived into modern times because it is so delicious. The coast round Nerja is known for its shoals of fresh anchovies. In Malaga the fish are pressed together into a little fan, four tails together, for frying, but this is not essential to the recipe.