

Easy-to-prepare meals and accompanying drinks

Chorizo And Prawn Paella

BY RACHEL WALKER



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DID YOU KNOW that the Spanish have a specific word for the slightly crunchy, caramelised rice that forms on the bottom and round the edge of a paella pan? The *scoarrat* is the rice equivalent of the crispy chicken skin, or pork crackling—so even though it seems counter-intuitive to let rice stick to the pan, it's the key to an authentic paella. Simply refrain from stirring, kick back and watch the rice cook from a distance—preferably with a chilled sherry in hand.

Serves 6

- 2tbsps olive oil
- 1 onion, diced
- 1 red pepper, sliced
- 225g chorizo, chopped
- 1tsp smoked paprika
- 2 tomatoes, diced
- 100ml sherry or dry white wine
- 400g Bomba paella rice
- 800ml chicken stock
- Pinch of saffron (optional)
- 150g raw king prawns
- Handful of parsley, roughly chopped
- 1 lemon

1. Heat the oil in a paella pan or a wide-bottomed pan, and then cook the onion, red pepper and chorizo on a low heat for 8 minutes.
2. Once the onion and red pepper have softened, and the chorizo is giving off a deep red oil, then stir in the smoked



- paprika, add the tomatoes and sherry, and bring the sauce to a simmer.
3. Add the paella rice to the pan and stir so all the grains are coated in the sauce and they're starting to absorb all the delicious flavours.
4. Meanwhile, bring the stock to a boil. If using saffron, add it to the stock at this point. Add 600ml of the stock to the rice, and leave it to cook at a rolling simmer—uncovered and without stirring—for 12 minutes.
5. Add the remaining stock and then arrange the prawns in a circle on top of the rice. Let the rice cook for another 5 minutes and then taste a

- couple of grains to check it's cooked through—though a little bit of an *al-dente* "bite" is a good thing.
6. Take the pan off the heat and cover it with tin foil for the final 5 minutes. The trapped steam and heat will cook the prawns and improve the texture of the rice.
7. Garnish with chunks of lemon, scatter over a handful of chopped parsley and serve.

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Sherry Redefined

SHERRY COMES with a set of associations: great aunts, cut crystal, Sunday lunch. This seems unfair. Whiskey, gin and rum aren't saddled with this kind of reputation—they effortlessly regenerate their image each generation, always renewing their appeal.

It's a misunderstood drink, mainly because British sherry drinking has centred around sweet cream sherry. Its heady raisin notes divide opinion, as fruit cake does. But the Spanish tradition of sipping a chilled Fino or Manzanilla with tapas couldn't be further from the British tradition of cream sherry in cut glass.

Fino is light, crisp and dry—the best starting point for novices. Next up is Manzanilla and Amontillado, which are a little darker and more



fortified—but both are still delicious chilled and sipped straight. Oloroso is further down the list, its walnut colour and nutty, dried-fruit notes making it an elegant alternative to port with a cheese board. Pedro Ximénez rounds off the selection. It's a completely different beast to Fino—thick and dark, sweet and prune-y.

So why not dabble with a new tittle? The sherry category is ripe for exploration—and its lack of street credibility means there's great value to be had.

TOP SHERRY PICKS

- **The Society's Fino (15%),** £6.25, The Wine Society
- **La Gitana Manzanilla (15%),** £11.99/£47.94 for a half-case, Majestic
- **Lustau East India Solera Rich Oloroso Sherry (20%),** £10.49, Waitrose
- **M Signature Pedro Ximénez (17%),** £6, Morrisons



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BOOK



Basque: Spanish Recipes from San Sebastián and Beyond, Amazon, £17. Chef José Pizarro's latest tome—full of recipes to impress.

BARGAIN



Waitrose Cooks' smoked paprika, Ocado, £1.99. Shop-bought paprika differs greatly, but this range really delivers.

BLOW OUT



16-person enameled paella pan, Brindisa, £32.95. Invest in a good paella pan to get that *scoarrit* crispy rice.

pudding
of the
Month



Warm Figs With Honey

This is such an easy dish to make—and the creativity comes with the way you serve the figs. Start with plump, ripe figs and you can't go wrong. A dollop of crème fraîche, greek yogurt or scoop of ice cream is delicious. Get more experimental by topping each fig with a half-teaspoon of ricotta or soft goat's cheese before grilling. Garnish with fresh thyme, crushed walnuts or a drizzle of Pedro Ximénez sherry.

Serves 4

- 8 figs
- 2tbsps honey

Optional extras:
thyme, walnuts, sherry

1. Cut the figs in half, lengthways.
2. Arrange them on a tray and drizzle the honey over them.
3. Cook under a grill for five minutes, until hot and soft. ■