

Vegetarian Paella

Season: Summer/Autumn

Makes: 30 tastes in the classroom
or 6 at home

Fresh from the garden: artichokes, beans, capsicums, garlic, lemons, onion, parsley, peas (or snow peas or sugar snap peas), tomatoes, zucchini

This paella is a great way to introduce Spanish or Portuguese cuisine to a kitchen class. It's a big dish with a lot of colour and flavour – just like the culture it comes from. It's fun to make outside on a special paella pan, but if you don't have one of these, you could try a Weber-style barbecue or just cook it on the stove indoors. Feel free to substitute with whatever vegetables you have in the garden. Asparagus spears in spring would be a lovely addition instead of the beans, for example. If using asparagus, snap off the woody ends, halve and add at the same time as the peas to keep them fresh and green.

Equipment:

metric measuring cups and spoons
tea towel
chopping board
cook's knife
citrus juicer
medium bowl
kettle
tongs
bowl of cold water
teaspoon
50 cm paella pan (or equivalent large wide pan)
paella cooker (as above)
large heavy-based pot
wooden spoon
heat-proof jug



Ingredients:

2 medium tomatoes
½ cup olive oil
1 large onion, peeled and chopped
6 garlic cloves, peeled and finely chopped
5 cups vegetable stock or broth
16 saffron threads (or 2 tsp ground turmeric)
2 ½ cups short-grain rice (Spanish: bomba, calasparra or Italian: arborio)
3 tsp Spanish smoked paprika
1 red and 1 green capsicum, de-seeded and cut into thin strips.
1 medium zucchini, diced
1 cup green beans
¾ cup green peas (or snow peas or sugar snaps)
juice of 3 lemons
artichoke hearts, to garnish
olives, to garnish
extra lemon, cut into wedges, to garnish
fresh parsley, roughly chopped, to garnish

Instructions:

1. Prepare all of the ingredients based on the instructions in the ingredients list.
2. Cut a cross in the bottom of each tomato and cut out the core from the stem end.
3. Put the tomatoes into the medium bowl. Boil water and pour over to cover them. Leave for 30 seconds to a minute until you see the skin start to come away.
4. Remove with tongs and quickly place in the bowl of cold water.
5. Once cool enough to handle, strip off the tomato skin. Chop the tomato into four pieces, remove all the seeds with a teaspoon and then chop into 1 cm pieces.

6. Heat the olive oil in the paella pan and sauté the onion and garlic until the onion is tender and translucent, about 5 minutes.
7. At the same time, heat the stock or broth in the large pot. Crush the saffron threads (if using) with the back of the wooden spoon and add them (or the turmeric) and the smoked paprika to the broth. Bring it to a simmering heat.
8. Pour the rice into the paella pan and sauté for about 3 minutes.
9. Add the capsicums, zucchini, tomatoes and beans, and cook for a further 3 minutes.
10. Using a jug, add the simmering vegetable broth and cook over medium heat for 20 minutes or until the rice is almost tender and almost all the liquid has been absorbed.
11. Stir in the peas.
12. Quarter the artichoke hearts and sprinkle them with lemon juice. Slice the olives. Arrange the artichokes and olives over the rice in an attractive pattern.
13. Continue cooking the paella until the liquid has been absorbed and the rice is tender. For the authentic paella, leave it until you start to hear the rice crackling, which means it will have a crispy, caramelised base, known as the *socorrat*.
14. Serve the paella straight from the pan, garnished with parsley and lemon wedges.

