

Seafood Paella: Authentic Taste of Spain with Saffron & Fresh Seafood

Seafood Paella: A Taste of Spain, Vibrant & Flavorful, Right in Your Kitchen!



TIME
5-7 min

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INGREDIENTS

- 1 tbsp olive oil (extra virgin)
- 1 onion, chopped
- 3 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 ½ cups arborio or paella rice (short-grain rice is best)
- ½ tsp smoked paprika
- ... tsp saffron threads (optional, but highly recommended for authentic flavor and color)
- ½ cup white wine (optional, dry white wine like Sauvignon Blanc or Pinot Grigio)
- 3 cups seafood or chicken broth (low sodium preferred)
- ½ lb shrimp, peeled and deveined
- ½ lb mussels or clams, cleaned (or a mix)
- ½ cup frozen peas
- Salt & pepper to taste
- Lemon wedges & fresh parsley for garnish

Swaps and Notes:

Rice: Arborio rice (used for risotto) works well if you can't find specific paella rice (like Bomba or Calasparra). Avoid long-grain rice like Basmati, which won't absorb the liquid in the same way.

Smoked Paprika: Essential for the authentic smoky flavor of paella. Do not substitute with regular paprika.

Saffron Threads (Optional but Recommended): Saffron provides the classic golden color and delicate

floral aroma of paella. It can be expensive; if omitting, the dish will still be delicious but less traditional.

White Wine (Optional): A dry white wine adds depth of flavor. If omitting, use extra broth.

Broth: Seafood broth is ideal for a full seafood flavor. Chicken broth can be used as an alternative. Use low-sodium to control saltiness.

Seafood: Shrimp and mussels/clams are common. You can add calamari, scallops, or firm white fish (added with the shrimp/mussels) if desired. Ensure mussels/clams are cleaned and purged.

Peas: Frozen peas add a pop of sweetness and color.

Garnish: Lemon wedges are crucial for a final squeeze of brightness. Fresh parsley adds color and freshness.

Preparation:

SautØ Aromatics: In a large, shallow paella pan or a wide, large skillet (a Dutch oven or large cast iron pan works well), heat 1 tbsp olive oil over medium heat. Add the chopped onion and minced garlic. SautØ, stirring occasionally, until the onion is soft and translucent, about 5-7 minutes.

Add Rice & Spices: Stir in the arborio or paella rice, smoked paprika, and saffron threads (if using) with the sautØed aromatics. Stir for 1-2 minutes, toasting the rice slightly and infusing it with the spices.

Deglaze with Wine (Optional) & Add Broth: If using, add the white wine to the pan. Let it simmer and reduce by half, about 2-3 minutes, scraping up any browned bits from the bottom of the pan. Pour in the 3 cups seafood or chicken broth. Stir gently to combine.

Simmer Rice (Uncovered): Bring the mixture to a gentle simmer. Do not stir the rice extensively after this point, as it releases starch and prevents the formation of the coveted socarrat (the crispy rice crust at the bottom). Let it simmer uncovered for 15 minutes, allowing the rice to absorb the liquid and cook partially.

Nestle in Seafood & Peas: After 15 minutes, gently nestle the shrimp (peeled and deveined) and cleaned mussels or clams into the rice mixture. Sprinkle the frozen peas evenly on top.

Cover & Finish Cooking: Cover the pan tightly with a lid (or aluminum foil if your pan doesn't have a lid). Reduce the heat to low and continue to cook for an additional 5-10 minutes, or until the seafood is cooked through (shrimp are pink and opaque, mussels/clams have opened) and the rice is tender and has absorbed most of the liquid. (Discard any mussels or clams that did not open).

Rest & Serve: Remove the pan from heat. Let the paella rest, still covered, for 5 minutes. This

allows the flavors to meld and the rice to finish absorbing liquid. Season with salt & pepper to taste. Garnish generously with fresh parsley and lemon wedges. Serve hot for a truly Spanish-inspired feast!

Tips for Success:

Don't Stir the Rice (Much): After adding the broth, avoid stirring the rice too much. This helps develop the socarrat on the bottom.

Quality Ingredients: Good quality olive oil, smoked paprika, and fresh seafood will make a noticeable difference.

Heat Control: Maintain a gentle simmer for even cooking and proper liquid absorption.

Saffron is Key (Optional): While optional, saffron adds authentic flavor and color. Steep it in a tiny bit of warm broth before adding for maximum color extraction.

DIRECTIONS

1. **Making :** Seafood Paella is a layered process, but it's largely a one-pan dish, perfect for building deep flavors!
2. **SautØ Aromatics:** In a large, shallow paella pan or a wide, large skillet (a Dutch oven or large cast iron pan works well), heat 1 tbsp olive oil over medium heat. Add the chopped onion and minced garlic. SautØ, stirring occasionally, until the onion is soft and translucent, about 5-7 minutes.
3. **Add : Rice & Spices:** Stir in the arborio or paella rice, smoked paprika, and saffron threads (if using) with the sautØed aromatics. Stir for 1-2 minutes, toasting the rice slightly and infusing it with the spices.
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9. **Tips for Success: Don't Stir the Rice (Much):** After adding the broth, avoid stirring the rice too much. This helps develop the socarrat on the bottom.
10. **Quality : Ingredients:** Good quality olive oil, smoked paprika, and fresh seafood will make a noticeable difference.
11. **Heat : Control:** Maintain a gentle simmer for even cooking and proper liquid absorption.
12. **Saffron is : Key (Optional):** While optional, saffron adds authentic flavor and color. Steep it in a tiny bit of warm broth before adding for maximum color extraction.
13. **Check : Seafood Doneness:** Seafood cooks quickly. Avoid overcooking, as it can become rubbery.
14. **Serve : Immediately:** Paella is best served hot, straight from the pan.
15. **Serving Suggestions and Pairings:** This Seafood Paella is a complete and incredibly impressive meal on its own! It's perfect for a special family dinner, a dinner party, or a themed gathering.
16. **Serve it directly from the pan at the table for a rustic, communal feel.**
17. **Offer extra lemon wedges for squeezing over individual portions.**
18. **A side of crusty bread for dipping in the flavorful sauce (though less traditional, still delicious!).**
19. **Pair with a chilled glass of dry white wine (like a Spanish Albariño or a crisp Sauvignon Blanc), or a light sangria.**
20. **For other delicious seafood dishes, consider my Coconut Fish Curry with Lime and Lemongrass or my rich Cheesy Rich and Creamy Shrimp and Crab Spinach Dip.**
21. **Storage and Leftover Tips:** Seafood Paella is definitely best enjoyed immediately after preparation. Leftovers can be stored in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to 1 day. To reheat, gently warm small portions in a skillet with a splash of broth or water over low heat, or in a microwave, being careful not to overcook the rice or seafood. The texture of the rice and seafood may change slightly upon reheating. Freezing is not recommended.
22. **More Recipes You Will Love:** If you loved the vibrant flavors and comforting satisfaction of this paella, here are a few more fantastic savory recipes that I think you'll absolutely love:
23. **For another light and refreshing seafood salad, check out my Crab Salad.**

24. If you're a fan of indulgent fried seafood, my Southern Deep Fried Lobster is a must-try.
25. For a hearty, soulful, and comforting stew, my This Cajun Chicken Sausage Gumbo Is My Favorite Bowl of Southern Comfort is a fantastic choice.

SWAPS & NOTES

, and the seafood cooks perfectly, staying tender and juicy.

It's a complete meal in one pan, making cleanup surprisingly easy for such an impressive dish.

It truly feels like a Spanish-inspired feast!

Smoked Paprika: Essential for the authentic smoky flavor of paella.

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

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More recipes: [ChefManiac.com](https://chefmaniac.com)

Original recipe: <https://chefmaniac.com/seafood-paella-authentic-taste-of-spain-with-saffron-fresh-seafood/>