

**¡Buen provecho!**  
**Spanish Paella brings students together**  
By: Suzanne Holder

One of my goals from the year I spent living in Spain was to familiarize myself with local customs and traditions and to bridge the gap of cultural difference by celebrating the unique qualities of my new home.

One particular highlight was the Spanish hospitality.

Several foreign students and I were invited into a Spanish classmate's home to celebrate and sample traditional Spanish food. As we were all from different areas of the world, our common link was our love of the Spanish language, not to mention Spanish food.



Our generous host welcomed us to participate in a lesson on how to prepare Paella, a traditional Spanish dish. Not only did our group benefit from our host's hospitality, the richness of the food, and a chance to broaden our ever-growing comprehension of the language, but cooking together also enabled us to build friendships that evening that would last throughout the year and unite us in our memories when we traveled back home.

### **Paella**

- 12 medium-sized shrimp (tails on)
- 6 small hard-shelled clams
- 6 mussels
- 3 chorizo
- 1 ½ lbs chicken (cut in to 12 pieces)
- 2 tsp salt
- fresh ground black pepper
- ½ cup olive oil
- 2 oz lean boneless pork (cut into ¼" cubes)
- ½ finely chopped onion
- 1 tsp minced garlic
- 1 medium-sized sweet red or green pepper, cut into thin strips
- 1 large tomato, chopped
- 3 cups uncooked rice
- ¼ tsp saffron threads, ground
- 6 cups boiling water
- 6 lemon wedges

Place the chorizo in a skillet and add enough cold water to cover them. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat to low and simmer for 5 minutes. Drain on paper towel and slice in to ¼" rounds.

Season the chicken with salt and black pepper. In the skillet, heat ¼ cup olive oil over high heat until it starts to a light haze starts to form over it. Add the chicken and brown both sides until golden. Remove the chicken from the skillet and place on a plate.

Return the chorizo to the pan and brown the slices quickly on both sides. Place on paper towel to drain.

To make the sofrito, discard the fat in the skillet and add the remaining ¼ cup of olive oil. Heat until a light haze forms above it, add the cubed pork and brown it quickly over high heat. Add the onions, garlic, peppers and tomato. Stirring constantly, cook until most of the liquid has evaporated. Remove from heat. 30 minutes before serving the paella, heat the oven to 400°F. In a 14" paella pan or skillet combine the sofrito, rice, the remaining 1 tsp salt and saffron. Pour in the boiling water and, stirring constantly, bring to a boil over high heat. Remove the pan from the heat immediately. Arrange the chicken, chorizo, shrimp, clams and mussels on top of the rice. Set the pan on the floor of the oven and bake uncovered for 30 minutes or until the liquid has been absorbed by the rice.

When the paella is done, remove it from the oven and cover it with a tea towel. Let rest for 5 minutes. Garnish with lemon wedges and serve from the pan.

