

SEAFOOD PAELLA

Everyone needs a great party dish and one of my favorites is seafood paella. One bite transports me to the Spanish seaside town of Torremolinos where I not only had my first taste of paella, but also one magical evening on the back of a motorcycle with a guy named Enrico. But that's another story.

□At the base of this dish is *sofrito*, an aromatic vegetable base used to enhance many Spanish dishes. You can find it pre-made in the supermarket, but I prefer to make my own.

□SOFRITO INGREDIENTS

1/2 cup, plus drizzle, of extra-virgin olive oil

3 large yellow onions, rough chop

6 medium cloves garlic, rough chop

2 large tomatoes, rough chop

Salt and pepper, to taste

□PAELLA INGREDIENTS

Extra virgin olive oil, preferably □

8 large whole shrimp, peeled with heads and tails intact, deveined□

8 large clams

8 mussels

1 link of Portuguese sausage or Linguiça*

3 clove garlic, finely chopped□

¼ cup Sofrito□

1 cup Spanish bomba rice□

2 pinches of saffron□

3 ½ cups hot seafood stock**

Salt to taste

Chopped parley and chives for garnish

□SOFRITO PREPARATION

Heat large skillet and add ½-cup olive oil. Once oil is shimmering, add in onions and sauté for 8-10 minutes until translucent. Add in tomatoes and garlic, allowing some of the liquid from the tomatoes to evaporate, another 8-10 minutes. Lower the temperature to a simmer and continue to cook until the sofrito is a deep redish color, about 30 minutes longer. Allow to cool for ten minutes. Place all ingredients in a blender and pulse until chunks are small, but the same size. Do not pulverize into a liquid.

□This should make about 2 cups. You can refrigerate the sofrito in an airtight container for up to 5 days. I usually split it into four portions and freeze it for easy use. It's not just for paella. It makes a great base for pasta sauces and stews too.

PAELLA PREPARATION

Heat 3 tablespoons of the olive oil in a 12-inch paella pan over high heat. Add the shrimp and sausage, searing for about 1 minute each side and set aside. Add another tablespoon of oil and stir in the garlic, cooking for 1 minute. Add the sofrito and rice and cook for 1 minute more, stirring to coat the rice. Add the hot stock and increase heat to high.

□Once the stock is boiling, crush the saffron between your fingers and add to stock. Add salt to stock.

Stir the rice during the first 5-minutes while boiling, then lower the heat to a simmer. The rice should take about 20-25 minutes to cook. DO NOT STIR THE RICE AGAIN.

□After the first 8 minutes, place the clams and sausage on top, pushing them into the rice. Cover the pan with aluminum foil to help the clams steam. 4 minutes later add the mussels, pushing them into the rice. Cover with foil again. 3 minutes after that add the shrimp, pushing them into the rice. Cover with foil until the full 20-25 minutes are done.

□The paella is finished when the rice has absorbed all of the liquid. Garnish with parsley and chives. Serve 4-5 people.

□*I prefer Portuguese sausages to the Spanish chorizo. I find the Spanish chorizo often overwhelms the delicate flavor of the saffron. But if you love Spanish Chorizo, go for it.

**For an extra special depth of flavor, use homemade lobster stock.

NO-KNEAD CHEESE BREAD

Whenever we go to visit my in-laws just north of Chicago, we always make a trip to Kenosha, Wisconsin, just to go to the Mars Cheese Castle. It's this wonderfully tacky, fake castle just off the highway that sells everything from cheese curds to authentic Danish *Kringles*. My husband is addicted to their cheddar cheese bread and has been known to show up back at his parents house with the bag empty.

I've made my own version, upping the sophistication a bit with some *Gruyère*, but it's just as irresistible as the Mars' version. I'm not the first to come up with this "no-knead"

technique, but it's a great time saver.

Don't worry about how long this bread will last before it gets stale. It will be gobbled up so quickly, you'll never have the chance to find out.

□ **INGREDIENTS**

3 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups bread flour, plus more for dusting

2 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups shredded Gruyère cheese, use large grate

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup sliced and pitted black olives (optional)

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup prosciutto, cubed into $\frac{1}{4}$ " pieces (or 1 cup if you don't use olives)

2 teaspoons kosher salt

2 cups warm water

2 $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoons instant yeast

1 tablespoon olive oil

□ **SPECIAL EQUIPMENT**

Dutch oven Le Creuset #22, which is 2.75 quarts. It makes a nice boule shape. You can use a bigger Dutch oven but the loaf will be flatter. □

PREPARATION

In a small bowl, combine yeast and warm water. Stir to dissolve yeast, then set aside for ten minutes to bloom. □

In a large bowl, combine the bread flour, 2 cups Gruyère cheese (reserving remaining $\frac{1}{2}$ cup for topping), the prosciutto, black olives, and salt. Stir well.

Add the yeast/warm water mixture and stir with a silicone spatula until the dough comes together.

Using the spatula, fold the dough around the edges of the bowl toward the center, rotating the bowl each time and folding a total of 8 times. Cover with a kitchen towel and let proof in a warm place for 60 minutes, or until almost doubled in size.

Using the spatula, fold the dough toward the center again 8 more times. Cover with the towel and let proof for an additional 30 minutes.

WARM THE DUTCH OVEN: Place the Dutch oven and lid in the oven, and preheat to 450°F for 30 minutes.

After the second rise, fold the edges of the dough towards the center 8 times, then flip over the dough and transfer to a piece of parchment paper.

Brush the top of the dough with the olive oil, so the cheese will stick. Sprinkle the remaining $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of cheese on top. Using a sharp knife, razor, or lame, score the bread. That will allow the steam to escape. You can make an "X," or I like to cut a half circle on an angle.

Carefully remove the Dutch oven from the oven (it will be very hot!) and use the parchment to lift the bread into the pot.

Cover with the lid and bake for 30 minutes, then remove the lid and bake for 20 more minutes, until the bread is golden brown.

Lift the parchment paper, sliding the bread out of the pot and onto a wire rack. Remove the parchment paper and let the bread cool for at least 45 minutes before slicing.

Just try not to eat all at once. I dare you.

SALMON ROULADE

My husband and I practically live at the *sushi* bar across the street. We've spent countless hours watching Osamu, the owner and chef, prepare hundreds of pieces of *sushi* and rolls.

Although I'm reluctant to make raw fish rolls on my own, knowing full well they'll never be as good as Osamu's, watching him inspired this idea for a smoked salmon roulade.

This is a great make-ahead dish that will help keep your stress level down if you're throwing a big party. I always have a few of these pre-made and standing by in the freezer for times when unexpected guests show up, so you might want to double or triple the recipe once you get the hang of it and store some in the freezer too. When ready to serve, pull one from the freezer, let it thaw for about five minutes. It will still be too cold to eat, but firm enough to slice. By the time you're done slicing them, they'll be nearly thawed and ready to dress and serve.

INGREDIENTS

12 oz. package smoked salmon
1/2 cup sour cream
1/2 cup whipped cream cheese
1 tablespoon lemon or orange zest
1 teaspoon chives
1 scallion, chopped
1 cucumber, sliced in 1/4" pieces□

FOR GARNISH

Red Caviar
Chives, chopped
Sliced avocado (optional)
Everything Bagel Topping□ (optional)

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT:

1 *sushi* rolling mat or soft placemat
Makes 2 roulades

PREPARATION

Place a sheet of plastic wrap over a *sushi* bamboo mat. Lay out

1/2 of the smoked salmon slices to create an 8 x 8" square of salmon, only overlapping the salmon edges slightly.

In a bowl, combine sour cream, cream cheese, zest, chives & scallion.

Thinly spread a third of the sour cream mixture over the smoked salmon, leaving about a 1/2 inch border of salmon.□

Starting at the bottom, tightly roll up the smoked salmon, as if making a *sushi* roll. Use the plastic to lift and roll, making sure not to let the plastic get caught in the roll itself. Once the roll is complete, place the *sushi* mat over the roll and clamp your hands over it, tightening the roll.

Take a clean piece of plastic wrap and tightly cover the roll. Freeze roll for at least 20 minutes before cutting. (If planning to store for longer, cover wrapped roll with aluminum foil and place in Ziploc freezer bag.)

□Repeat process for 2nd roll.

To serve, slice salmon rolls into 3/8" pieces and place on cucumber slices. Put a dollop of leftover sour cheese mixture on top. Garnish with red caviar and chives.

Or if you want to dress up your Sunday bagels and lox spread, schmear some more cream cheese on half a bagel. Place six to seven slices of roulade on top. Garnish with avocado slices and Everything Bagel topping mix.

BURRATA IN THE GARDEN

Every summer we plant an urban vegetable garden on our roof deck. Depending upon the year, we've had some success,

particularly if we beat the squirrels to our harvest. But by far, the most consistent and tastiest crops are our cherry tomatoes. We plant all different kinds and sizes. I like using small, sweet tomatoes for this dish, but feel free to use whatever kinds you've grown.

INGREDIENTS (Serves 4)

1 lb Fresh Burrata

28 Cherry tomatoes

4 chives, chopped

Balsamic glaze

Olive Oil

Salt and pepper to taste.

□PREPARATION

Divide the burrata into four portions and place each portion in the center of a bowl or plate. Place about seven cherry tomatoes on and around the cheese. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Sprinkle on chives and garnish with a drizzle of balsamic glaze and olive oil.

TWO INGREDIENT MARINADE

Admit it—you ordered Chinese food at least once a week during Covid lockdown. Okay, maybe you didn't, but I did. My local take-out place always throws in soy sauce and duck sauce packets by the handful. Being someone who hates to waste, I put them to good use for this very simple marinade.

Sometimes I just need to get dinner on the table without much fuss. This is particularly good on skirt steaks, but it works great with chicken too.

INGREDIENTS

$\frac{1}{4}$ Cup Chinese Duck Sauce (or Apricot jam)

$\frac{1}{4}$ Cup Soy Sauce

PREPARATION

Mix ingredients together. Place in Ziploc with some seasoned meat, and refrigerate overnight.

Just oil those grates, heat up the grill, and you'll be all set to go.

KK'S EXOTIC SPICE BLEND

Whenever I travel, I'm a sucker for those pre-packed spice blends used in the local cuisine. I've got Voodoo Spice from the Caribbean, Creole seasoning from New Orleans, Pacific Cioppino Spice blend from San Francisco, and Shichimi Tagarashi from Tokyo. They're all taking up space in my pantry, having been forgotten about as soon as I get home.

□Most blends always have some flavor or ingredient in them that I just don't like—usually dried thyme. Once I taste that, a dish is ruined for me. So rather than continuing to waste money, I decided to create my own rub. It's great for marinating meats, but I've also used it as a base in soups and stews. Feel free to make it your own by subbing out what you don't like. Believe me, I won't mind.

INGREDIENTS

2 tsp smoked salt flakes

2 tsp Aleppo pepper

2 tsp anchoite

2 tsp harissa

2 tsp garlic powder

2 tsp onion powder

2 tsp maple flakes

2 tsp brown sugar

1 tsp mustard powder

1 tsp chipotle powder

1 tsp cayenne

PREPARATION

Mix all ingredients together.

Adjust to taste.

Store in airtight container. Best used within three months.