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Chiringuito Seafood Paella ***Paella a la Marinera***

Come summer, the Spanish flock to the water with the determination of fish. Awaiting them on the beach are **chiringuitos**, humble seaside establishments that are to the Spanish coast what clam shacks are to New England. There is usually a pretty **terraza** with a view of the sea and a menu that revolves around salt-baked fish, lacy fried baby squid, clams in **salsa verde**, and invariably a simple but irresistible mixed seafood paella, such as this one. Feel free to play with the seafood assortment here, substituting mussels for the clams and small scallops for the monkfish, but keeping the proportions pretty much constant.

A good seafood paella is a minimalist affair, with few other ingredients besides seafood and rice. As the flavor depends on a good rich fish stock, I strongly recommend using Shrimp Shell Stock or another well-reduced flavorful fish or seafood stock. And don't skip the **alloli** for serving.

About 5 cups Shrimp Shell Stock (below),
or 3-1/2 cups clam juice diluted with 1-1/2 cups water (more if using bomba rice)
1 large pinch of saffron, pulverized in a mortar
5 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
1/2 pound monkfish or other firm-fleshed fish, cut into 1-inch chunks
Coarse salt (kosher salt)
4 to 6 ounces cleaned squid, bodies and tentacles cut into 1-inch pieces
10 medium-size garlic cloves; 8 crushed with a garlic press, 2 minced
2 large, ripe tomatoes, cut in half and grated on a box grater, skins discarded
1-1/2 teaspoons sweet (not smoked) paprika
1-3/4 cups short- to medium-grain rice
1/2 cup minced fresh flat-leaf parsley
12 small littleneck clams, scrubbed
12 jumbo shrimp, shelled and deveined
2 lemons, cut into wedges, for serving
Allioli, for serving (see below)

1. Place the shrimp stock in a medium-size saucepan and bring to a simmer over medium heat. Add the saffron and keep the stock at a simmer until ready to use.

2. Place 3 tablespoons of the olive oil in a 15- or 15-inch paella pan set over a single burner and heat on medium until it starts to smoke. Add the monkfish and cook until barely seared, about 1 minute, seasoning it lightly with salt. Using a slotted spoon, transfer the fish to a bowl. Cook the squid, stirring, until just seared, about 2 minutes, seasoning it with salt.

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3. Push the squid to the edge of the paella pan, where it's not as hot. Add 1 tablespoon of the olive oil to the center of the pan. Add the crushed garlic and cook until fragrant, about 30 seconds. Add the tomatoes to the center of the pan, reduce the heat to low, and cook, stirring the tomatoes several times, until they are thickened and reduced, 5 to 7 minutes. Using two wooden spoons, push the squid toward the center of the pan and mix it up with the tomatoes. Add the paprika and stir for a few seconds.

4. Preheat the oven to 425°F.

5. Add the rice to the paella pan and stir it gently to coat with the pan mixture. Pour in 3-1/2 cups of the simmering stock (5 cups if you are using *bomba* rice), keeping the remaining stock simmering in case it is needed later. Set the paella pan over two burners, stir in the parsley, and shake the pan gently to distribute the rice evenly. Cook over medium heat for 5 minutes. Periodically move to rotate the pan so that the liquid boils evenly.

6. Press the clams and the monkfish into the top of the rice and cook until the cooking liquid is almost level with the rice but the rice is still rather soupy, another 2 to 3 minutes. If the liquid is absorbed too fast and the rice still seems to raw, sprinkle on some more stock.

7. Transfer the paella pan to the oven and bake until the clams open and rice is tender but still a little *al dente*, about 15 minutes. Check the paella a few times and sprinkle more stock over the rice if it seems too *al dente*. Remove the paella from the oven and discard any clams that have not opened. Cover the pan with aluminum foil, and let stand for 5 minutes. Uncover the pan and let stand for another 5 minutes (the rice gets better as it stands).

8. While the rice is standing, heat the remaining 1 tablespoon olive oil in a large skillet or wok over high heat. Stir-fry the shrimp, a few at a time, adding some of the minced garlic to each batch, until the shrimp are bright pink and just cooked through, 2 to 3 minutes per batch. Transfer the shrimp to a bowl and keep warm.

9. To serve, arrange the lemon wedges around the edge of the paella and decorate the top with the shrimp. Serve the paella straight front the pan, along with the *allioli*, for stirring into the rice.

Serves 6 as a first course, 4 as a main course.

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Shrimp Shell Stock

For cooking seafood-flavored rices and pastas, my favorite liquid is a store-bought fish stock or clam juice I've enhanced with the toasty nuttiness of sautéed shrimp shells. If you can get shrimp with their heads on (try Chinese or other ethnic markets), they will intensify the stock's flavor still further. Whenever you are peeling shrimp or cooking a lobster, save the shells; keep them in a zipper-lock bag in the freezer so you can make stock at whim.

1 tablespoon olive oil
4 whole garlic cloves, unpeeled and smashed
Shells (and heads, if available) from 1 pound shrimp
1 tablespoon tomato paste
10 cups store-bought fish stock, or 7 cups clam juice diluted with 3 cups water
3 fresh flat-leaf parsley springs

Heat the olive oil and garlic in a large saucepan over medium heat. Add the shrimp shells and heads, if using, and cook, stirring, until pink and very aromatic, 2 to 3 minutes. Add the tomato paste and stir until darkened, about 30 seconds. Add the fish stock and parsley, increase the heat to medium-high, bring to a boil, and cook until reduced to 6 to 7 cups, 15 to 20 minutes. Strain the stock, discarding the solids. The stock can be refrigerated, covered, for 2 to 3 days or frozen for up to 1 month.

Makes 6 to 7 cups.

Basic One-Cup Allioli

2/3 cup extra-virgin olive oil
1/3 cup peanut or canola oil
4 large garlic cloves, minced
2 large egg yolks
4 teaspoons fresh lemon juice, or to taste
Coarse salt (kosher or sea)

Stir together both oils in a measuring cup with a spout. Place the garlic, egg yolks, and lemon juice in a blender and pulse until a coarse paste forms. With the motor running, add the oil in a slow, thin, steady stream. The mixture will be the consistency of a thick mayonnaise. Scrape the *alloli* into a bowl, and season with salt to taste, and more lemon juice, if desired. Let stand for at least 1 hour before serving, or cover and refrigerate if keeping longer. If the *alloli* seems to thicken, thin it out with a little water before using.

Makes just over 1 cup.