

# Seafood Paella

This recipe, which serves 6–7 people is from Elisabeth Luard's website.<sup>1</sup> She says:

"The cooking implement, a shallow, double-handed raw-iron pan of Roman design, gives its name to the dish. In addition, to be truly worthy of the name, the cook is always a man, preparation is in the open air and—traditionally—it's always eaten in the middle of the day, never after sundown. The same ingredients prepared by a woman in the kitchen, even if using the same implement, ingredients and method, is *un arroz*, a rice-dish. ..."

You'll need a 7-person paella pan (diameter 45cm) and a heat-source to match. To allow the rice to cook evenly in a single layer, the pan requires an even bed of heat which allows the full expanse of metal to come into contact with the heat-source. If this is not available, use a large frying-pan and remember to stir the rice as it cooks.

## Ingredients

12-18 threads	saffron, <i>lightly toasted in a dry pan</i>
4 large	ripe tomatoes
6-8 tbsp	olive oil
4 cloves	garlic, <i>unskinned and roughly chopped</i>
1	rabbit, <i>jointed into 16-20 bite-sized pieces</i>
	or
1 small	chicken, <i>similarly jointed</i>
handful	thin green asparagus or young green beans, <i>chopped</i>
500 g	short-grain rice (paella or risotto, though pudding-rice will do)
1Kg	live shellfish (clams, mussels)
	salt

## Method

Put the saffron to soak in a splash of boiling water for 15 minutes or so. Meanwhile grate the tomato flesh: cut the tomato through the equator, empty out the seeds. Now, holding the skin-side firmly in your palm, rub the cut side through the coarse holes of the grater onto a plate. You should be left with an emptied-out shell in your hand and a juicy heap of pulp on the plate.

Set the pan on the fire and wait till the metal is hot. Preheating avoids sticking later. Add the oil and wait till it smokes. Immediately add the garlic and the jointed rabbit (or chicken) and turn the pieces over the heat. Cook gently until tender and no longer pink, turning regularly - allow at least 20 minutes.

Add the rice and stir till all the grains are coated and transparent. Stir the tomato-pulp into the rice. Add the saffron and its soaking liquid and top up with as much water as will cover the layer of rice to a depth of one finger - the liquid should be level with the screws which fix the handles to the pan.

Allow all to bubble up, season with salt and pepper, and leave to cook for 15-18 minutes. Move the pan over the heat, add more water when necessary, but don't stir again. After 10 minutes, add the asparagus spears and the shellfish - they'll open in the steam.

When it's ready, most of the liquid will have evaporated and little craters, like worm-holes, will begin to appear on the surface. Test the rice for doneness by biting into a grain - it should be soft but still retain a nutty little heart.

Remove the pan from the heat, cover with a clean cloth or a couple of sheets of newspaper, and leave for 10 minutes to allow the rice to finish swelling. A paella should be moist and succulent, never dry.

Settle everyone in a circle around the pan. Traditionally you should eat the portion in front of you straight from the pan. You may use clean fingers or a spoon or lettuce leaves for scooping. Provide plenty of robust country bread for the faint-hearted who would otherwise go hungry.

---

1. <https://www.elisabethluard.org/seafood-paella>