

Mariscada and Saffron Rice

Mariscada translates from Galician as “Seafood.” Traditional Portuguese seafood stew served over saffron rice. Adapted by Vince Pitelka from various online recipes, 11/2024.

I encountered three kinds of Portuguese seafood stews. Cataplana is named after the specialized steel or copper vessel in which it is prepared. It is similar to Mariscada, but can contain cubed pork, chicken, chorizo, and/or seafood. Caldeirada is specifically a fish stew. Mariscada contains seafood with no meat except chorizo, andouille, or linguica, which lend a smoky flavor to the broth.

Mariscada recipes vary widely. Some contain potatoes or rice and more vegetables along with additional fish or chicken stock and are served in a soup bowl. This recipe has less vegetables, no potatoes, less liquid, and is served over rice. Because of the amount of liquid, it should still be served in a wide, low bowl. When serving Mariscada, it should be accompanied by lightly toasted bread or rolls to dip in the broth, and if that’s something you relish, you might increase the stock and wine to 1 ½ cups each and serve in a larger bowl.

Ingredients

- 1 - large onion, peeled, quartered, sliced thin
- 2 - large red, yellow, or orange bell peppers (or preferably a mix) quartered, seeded, sliced thin
- 1 - jalapeno pepper, seeded and diced
- 6 - garlic cloves, minced
- ¼ - tsp red pepper flakes
- 1 - tsp salt
- ½ - tsp fresh ground pepper
- 1 - tsp paprika
- 1 - tsp cumin
- Dash of cayenne pepper
- 2 - bay leaves
- 2 - tbsp tomato paste
- 2 - cups cherry tomatoes quartered and packed tight
- 1 - cup white wine
- 1 - cup seafood stock (or chicken stock)
- 1 - cup chopped cilantro
- 1 - cup chopped Italian parsley
- 1 - 12-oz can or 2 - 6.5-oz cans clams including juice
- 4 - anchovy fillets, minced
- 2 - pounds cod
- 2 - pounds shrimp
- 2 - pounds scallops
- 1 - pound calamari tubes (sliced into rings) and tentacles
- ½ - pound andouille (or chorizo or linguica) sausage

Directions

1. In an 8-quart or larger Dutch oven, sauté the sausage, onions, bell peppers, and jalapeno until the vegetables soften.
2. Stir in the garlic and red pepper flakes and sauté for a few minutes.
3. Stir in the spices, tomato paste, bay leaf, anchovy, cherry tomatoes, cilantro, clams with juice, white wine, seafood stock (or chicken stock).
4. Bring to a boil, turn burner to low, and simmer for five minutes.
5. Turn burner up full, add the cod and scallops and gently stir in. Adding that much seafood will cool the mixture, so keep burner on full and periodically stir gently until it simmers.
6. With burner on full, add shrimp and calamari and stir in. Periodically stir gently until all shrimp have changed color, probably a few minutes.
7. Immediately remove from burner and stir in the parsley.

Some Mariscada recipes have you add the seafood and then cook for up to ten minutes, which would seriously overcook the seafood. The above instructions avoid that.

Rice-Cooker (or stove-top) Saffron Rice (from pinchmeimeating.com)

This amount serves 6 to 8 people with the above Mariscada recipe.

Ingredients

- 3 - cups uncooked rice (basmati or jasmine)
- 2 - cup chicken broth
- 2 - cups water
- ½ - cup lemon juice
- 2 - generous pinches saffron threads
- 4 - tbsp butter
- ¼ - tsp kosher salt (more to taste)

Directions

1. Add all ingredients to a 6-cup or larger rice cooker and stir.
2. Hit the cook button and do nothing until it's finished.
3. Fluff with a fork and mix to make sure saffron threads are evenly distributed throughout the rice before serving.

Directions if you don't have a rice cooker

1. Combine the rice and all other ingredients in an appropriate pot on the stovetop and stir.
2. Bring to a boil, reduce to the lowest heat possible, cover, and cook 10-15 minutes until all liquid is absorbed.
3. Fluff with a fork and mix to make sure saffron threads are evenly distributed throughout the rice before serving.