

## SPANISH CUISINE (ІСПАНСЬКА КУХНЯ)

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*Розглянуто характеристику іспанської кухні й найбільш поширені страви, які потрібно скуштувати в Іспанії.*

Spain's culinary traditions rely on an abundance of locally grown vegetables and fruits as well as meats and poultry. Jamón serrano, a cured ham, and chorizo, a seasoned sausage, are popular. Seafood and fish are popular in coastal areas. Other popular foods are cheeses, eggs, beans, rice, nuts (especially almonds), and bread (a crusty white bread, baked fresh daily, is common). Olive oil and garlic are common ingredients. Spain is also known for its wines, including the rioja, made in the northern province; sherry, a fortified wine that may be dry or sweet; and sangria, wine mixed with fruit and soda water.

The best-known Spanish dish, a stew called paella (pie-AY-ah), originated in Valencia, an eastern province on the Mediterranean Sea. Rice, a main ingredient, is grown in Valencia's tidal flatlands. Though there are numerous variations, paella is usually made of a variety of shellfish (such as shrimp, clams, crab, and lobster), chorizo (sausage), vegetables (tomatoes, peas, and asparagus), chicken and/or rabbit, and long-grained rice. Broth, onion, garlic, wine, pimiento (sweet red pepper), and saffron add flavor to the stew.

Every region has its own distinct cuisine and specialties. Gazpacho, a cold tomato soup, comes from Andalucía in southern Spain. Traditionally, a special bowl called a dornillo, was used to pound the ingredients by hand, but modern Spanish cooks use a blender. Andalusians also enjoy freidurías (fish, such as sole or anchovies, fried in batter). Cataluña (Catalonia), in northeastern Spain, is known for its inventive dishes combining seafood, meat, poultry, and local fruits. In the northern Basque country (país Vasco), fish is important to the diet, with cod, eel, and squid featured prominently. The signature dish of Asturias, in northwestern Spain, is fabada, a bean stew. In the interior regions, such as Castilla, meats play a starring role. Tortilla española, a potato omelet, is served throughout the country. It can be prepared quickly and makes a hearty but simple dinner. Spain's best-known dessert is flan, a rich custard.