

Sparkle Kitchen

Paella (serves 8)

Ingredients

6 cups chicken stock
a large pinch of saffron
1 tablespoon olive oil
 $\frac{1}{4}$ pound chorizo
2 boneless, skinless chicken thighs (cut into cubes)
1 onion (diced)
1 bell pepper (diced)
2 large garlic cloves (minced)
28-ounce can whole, peeled tomatoes (drained and squeezed to get rid of most of the juice)
2 tablespoons tomato paste
 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon smoked paprika
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup fresh parsley (stemmed and chopped)
10 sprigs fresh thyme (remove leaves and discard stems)
2 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups arborio rice
 $\frac{1}{2}$ pound green beans (with tops and tails trimmed)
1 pound headless shrimp (shelled)
2-3 lemons (cut into wedges, for serving)

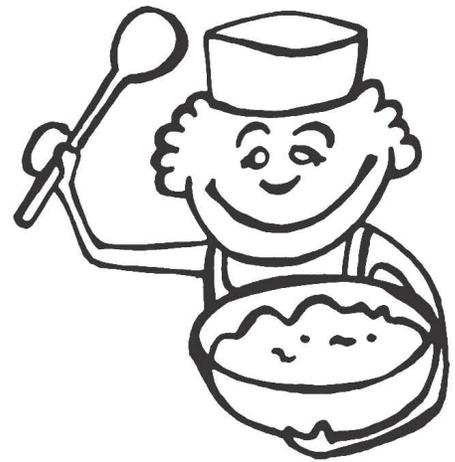
Directions

You'll thank yourself later if you begin this recipe by getting some of the ingredients ready before you begin. If an ingredient above has parenthesis behind it, you should do whatever is in the parenthesis before you start cooking. Just go straight down the list, and get them all portioned out before you go on.

Once that's done, pour the chicken stock into a medium stock pot, add a generous pinch of saffron, and bring it to a low simmer.

While the stock warms, in the largest, high-sided skillet you have, heat the olive oil. Add the chorizo, and cook it until it's just browned; there's no need to cook it all the way through yet. Remove the chorizo from the pan.

Do the same thing with the chicken—brown it, but don't worry about cooking it through—and, likewise, set it aside.



Sparkle Kitchen

Paella continued...

Next, add the onion, bell pepper and garlic. Cook them together until they're softened, then add the tomatoes, breaking them up a bit as you stir them into the other veggies.

Push the veggies over to one side of the pan, then scrape the tomato paste out onto the other side. Let the tomato paste caramelize a bit, spreading and scooping it with a spatula for about two minutes.

Then, add the chorizo and chicken back into the pan, along with the paprika, parsley, and thyme. Mix everything in the pan together well.

Now it's time to add the rice. Stir the rice into the vegetable/meat mixture, and keep stirring until the edges of the rice begin to go translucent. This usually takes me 3-4 minutes. Then, add enough stock to cover the rice and veggies.

Keep stirring and adding stock (as necessary to keep the mixture covered) for another 10 minutes, then quit stirring and allow the paella to cook undisturbed. You should still add stock as necessary to keep the rice covered, but otherwise resist the urge to fiddle. Paella is supposed to get a bit crispy on the bottom, and if you keep stirring that can't happen.

After about 10 more minutes, layer the green beans and shrimp on top of the paella. Let the shrimp cook for 4 minutes, or until one side is pink, then flip them to allow the other side to cook.

Once the shrimp is cooked, turn off the heat, pop on a lid, and let your paella sit undisturbed for 15 more minutes. Again, resist the urge to fiddle or take off the lid to check on it.

Once that last 15 minutes is up, it's time to eat. Because paella is so rich and hearty, I like to serve it with lemon wedges squeezed over the top and a crisp, green salad.