

SPANISH HOME COOKING · FROM SUECA, VALENCIA

The Way Spain Cooks *at Home*

130 Spanish recipes, tips and tricks, cooked the old way



AMPARO FERRER

CUPS, POUNDS AND °F

A CUE BESIDE EVERY TIMING

A CARD FOR EVERY RECIPE



FREE SAMPLE

A taste of the book

This sample has a few pages from *The Way Spain Cooks at Home*: how the book works, the pantry, two recipes, the food-safety sheet and the last page. The page numbers are the book's own, so they jump.

The full book has 130 recipes in twelve chapters, a week of cooking that plans its leftovers, two menus for a crowd with shopping lists, a glossary with pronunciations, every source listed, and a printable card for every recipe.

The full book is available [here](#).

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Cook with Amparo on YouTube: youtube.com/@CooktheSpanishWay

AMPARO FERRER

The Way Spain Cooks at Home

130 Spanish recipes, tips and tricks, cooked the old way

The Way Spain Cooks at Home

First edition, October 2026.

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Amparo is a character created for this channel. The recipes in this book were compiled from published Spanish recipes and checked against U.S. food-safety guidance.

The recipes have been editorially reviewed against their sources. They have not been tested in a kitchen for this book.

The pictures of finished dishes are illustrations. Your dish may look different.

Food-safety advice in this book follows guidance from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration and the U.S. Department of Agriculture as of October 2026.

How this kitchen works

Come here. Leave the phone face down on the table.

I am from Sueca, a rice town south of Valencia. In my mother's kitchen the paella pan hung on a nail by the back door, one handle bent from the summer my brother used it as a shield. She cooked by eye, by ear and by smell. You and I will do it with a measuring cup, a timer and a few words on the page that tell you what to look for. That is the whole idea of this book: the way Spain cooks at home, written down for an American kitchen.

WHAT IS IN THIS BOOK

There are 130 recipes in twelve chapters, from the bases that the other recipes lean on, through rice, eggs, beans, soups, bread, vegetables, fish, chicken, meat and small plates, to the sweets. Before them is a chapter on the pantry, with a table of what to buy in a US shop. After them come a week of cooking that plans its own leftovers, two menus for a crowd with their shopping lists, a food-safety sheet, a glossary with pronunciations, the sources and a printable card for every recipe.

Every recipe was compiled from published Spanish recipes, and its quantities and timings were checked against them. The food-safety lines follow U.S. guidance. The recipes have not been tested in a kitchen for this book, so each step tells you what you should see before you move on. The sources for every recipe are listed at the back.

HOW TO READ A RECIPE

The top of the page. The chapter and the recipe's number, its Spanish name and its English name, a few lines about the dish, and a picture. The pictures are illustrations: yours may look different, and that is fine.

Serves, Time and Pan. How many it feeds, roughly how long it takes from start to finish, and the pan or pot you need.

What you need. Everything, in the order you use it. *Optional* marks what you can leave out. A name in brackets, such as (*The Bases*), means that ingredient has its own recipe in that chapter, and a shop-bought one will do.

How to make it. Numbered steps. Under many of them is a short **Why**, the reason the step is done that way. When you know the reason, you can fix the dish yourself.

The words in blue. Beside every timing is something you can see, smell or feel: *Move on when the onion is soft and golden, It is done when a knife comes out clean.* The clock is a guide. Your stove, your pan and your tomatoes are not mine, so trust the cue over the clock.

If it went wrong. The usual mistakes, what caused them, and what to do now or next time.

Keeping it. How long it keeps, where, and how to reheat it. These lines follow U.S. food-safety guidance, and sometimes they are stricter than a Spanish kitchen would be.

In a US shop. What to look for, and what to use when you cannot find the Spanish thing.

MEASURES

Everything is in US measures: cups, tablespoons and teaspoons, pounds and ounces, and degrees Fahrenheit. Spoon and cup measures are level. Eggs are large. Cans are the usual US sizes, 15 ounces and 28 ounces. Where a recipe says "a pinch", it means what you can hold between two fingers.

THE TOOLS THAT DO THE WORK

You do not need a new kitchen. You need:

- A wide, heavy frying pan, and a smaller one, 8 to 9 inches across and non-stick, for omelettes.
- A heavy pot with a lid, for beans and stews.
- A paella pan about 15 inches across for the rice chapter. A wide frying pan will do the job.
- A box grater, for grating tomatoes.
- A fine sieve, a slotted spoon and a wooden spoon.
- A mortar and pestle, or a small food processor, for picada, alioli and the pastes.
- A blender, or a stick blender, for creams, sauces and the cold soups.
- **A kitchen thermometer.** An instant-read one for meat, fish and chicken, and one that clips to the pan for frying. It is the one tool this book insists on, because it is how you know the chicken is safe and the oil is ready.
- An earthenware cazuela is lovely and not necessary.

HOW THIS BOOK KEEPS YOU SAFE

Spanish home cooking and U.S. food-safety guidance do not always agree. In Spain, yolks are often left runny, beans are boiled briefly, garlic sits in oil on the counter and mayonnaise is made with a raw egg. Where the two disagree, this book follows the guidance of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration and the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the recipe says so. Runny eggs are offered only with pasteurized eggs. Dried beans get a full boil. Garlic in oil lives in the fridge. Mayonnaise is shop-bought, or the alioli in The Bases is made with a pasteurized egg. All the rules are gathered on one sheet at the back of the book, in Keeping it safe.

WHERE THINGS ARE

- **Before you cook:** this chapter, and The pantry.
- **The recipes:** The Bases · Rice · Eggs and Potatoes · Beans, Lentils and Chickpeas · Soups, Hot and Cold · Bread and Savoury Bakes · Vegetables · Fish and Seafood · Chicken and Rabbit · Meat · Small Plates · Sweets.
- **After the recipes:** The week · A full table · Keeping it safe · Glossary · Sources · Recipe cards.

WATCH IT COOKED

Amparo also cooks on YouTube, at youtube.com/@CooktheSpanishWay.

The pantry

A Spanish kitchen runs on a short list: olive oil, garlic, onions, tomatoes, pimentón, a good rice, a bag of beans, bread from yesterday. Most of what this book needs is in an ordinary American supermarket. A few things come from a Spanish grocery or online, and for each of those there is something you can use instead. The table at the end of this chapter puts every swap in one place.

OIL, SALT AND SPICES

Olive oil. The fat for almost everything in this book: frying, stewing, dressing. A mild olive oil is good for frying and an extra-virgin one for pouring over bread and salads. A few recipes fry in "olive or mild oil", and any neutral oil will do there.

Salt. Fine salt for cooking, and a flaky or coarse salt for the top of the dish, where you can see it and feel it.

Pimentón. Spanish paprika, made from dried red peppers. It comes sweet (*dulce*), hot (*picante*) or smoked. Most recipes here use sweet. Pimentón burns in seconds and turns bitter, which is why so many steps take the pan off the heat before it goes in.

Saffron. Sold as threads in tiny boxes. A recipe's "pinch" is about 10 threads. It goes into hot broth, or into a pan for a few seconds only, never longer.

Bay leaves. Dried ones, in stews, beans, rice and sauces. Take them out before you serve.

FROM THE VEGETABLE DRAWER

Garlic, onions and tomatoes. The start of most recipes, and of the sofrito in The Bases. Spanish cooks often grate tomatoes rather than chop them: cut in half, cut side against the large holes of a box grater.

Green peppers. The long, thin-skinned Italian frying pepper or cubanelle is the closest to the Spanish green pepper. A green bell pepper works.

Parsley. Flat-leaf, chopped, at the end of many dishes.

Lemons. For fish, fried things, the custards and the sweets.

THE SHELF

Paella rice. A short, round Spanish rice, sold as bomba or Calasparra, or labelled for paella. It drinks more broth than ordinary rice and stays firm. Arborio, from the risotto shelf, is a last resort, because it turns creamy and soft. Long-grain rice is only for the plain white rice in the Rice chapter.

Dried beans, chickpeas and lentils. White beans (great northern are the easiest match), red kidney beans, chickpeas, and small brown lentils (*pardina*, or the smallest brown ones on the shelf). Dried beans always get a full boil before the slow cook; the recipes explain why. Cans are a shortcut where a recipe offers one.

Tomate frito. A smooth Spanish tomato sauce, made in The Bases or bought in a jar.

Broth. Chicken, vegetable or prawn-shell broth, all in The Bases. A good shop-bought broth will do, but taste it before you salt the dish.

Noodles. *Fideos*, short thin soup noodles, are sold as "fideo" in the Latin or pasta aisle. Fideuà noodles are sold online.

Nuts. Blanched almonds and hazelnuts for picada, romesco and the sweets, almond flour for the almond cake, and pine nuts for the Catalan spinach.

Flours. All-purpose flour, and chickpea flour (sold as garbanzo bean flour or besan) for the shrimp fritters and the squid sandwich.

Wine. A dry white wine for cooking, a dry red for a few stews, and fino or Montilla, which are sold where sherry is sold.

Bread. A crusty country loaf. Yesterday's bread is not waste in Spain: it becomes migas, picatostes, torrijas and salmorejo, and the thickening in many sauces.

FROM THE BUTCHER AND THE FISHMONGER

Spanish chorizo. Pork sausage seasoned with garlic and pimentón. For the pot, ask for the soft Spanish kind sold for cooking, not the hard, dry-cured kind for slicing. Mexican chorizo is a different sausage, fresh and seasoned with chillies and vinegar, and it gives a different dish.

Serrano ham. Spanish dry-cured ham, sold in thin slices or small pieces. Prosciutto is the nearest stand-in.

Morcilla. Spanish blood sausage, usually with onion or rice. It is sold at Spanish groceries and online.

Salt cod. Sold boxed or in pieces in many supermarkets and at Portuguese, Spanish and Caribbean groceries. It is soaked in the fridge for one to three days before use, with the water changed every 8 to 12 hours.

Shrimp. What Spain calls prawns. Buy them raw, in the shell if you can. Frozen raw shrimp are fine, thawed overnight in the fridge.

Clams and mussels. Buy them alive and cook them within 2 days. Keep them in the fridge under a damp cloth, never in water or a sealed bag.

Squid. Cleaned squid tubes, fresh or frozen, are sold at most fish counters.

IN THE FRIDGE

Eggs. Large eggs, kept in the fridge. **Pasteurized eggs** in the shell are sold in many supermarkets, and the carton says "pasteurized". Buy them if you want a yolk runny, or for the alioli.

Mayonnaise. This book uses shop-bought mayonnaise, or the alioli in The Bases made with a pasteurized egg.

Butter and whole milk. For béchamel, croquetas and the custards.

WHEN YOU CANNOT FIND IT

THE RECIPE SAYS	LOOK FOR	IF YOU CANNOT FIND IT
Bomba rice	Bomba or Calasparra, or rice labelled for paella	Arborio, as a last resort. Never long-grain.
Spanish chorizo for cooking	The soft Spanish kind, at Spanish groceries or online	Not Mexican chorizo, which is a different sausage
Morcilla	Spanish groceries, online	Leave it out (in the baked rice, add 4 oz more ribs)
Serrano ham	Delis, most supermarkets	Prosciutto
Ñoras (dried round peppers)	Online, Spanish groceries	A dried ancho chile (romesco), or pimentón (suquet)
Choricero pepper paste	Jars online, as "carne de pimiento choricero"	Pimentón
Garrofó	Frozen or canned large lima beans	
Flat green beans	Romano or Italian flat beans	Ordinary green beans, cooked 2 or 3 minutes less
Fabes	Online, as "fabes de La Granja"	Large dried white beans
White beans	Great northern beans	
Pardina lentils	Small brown Spanish lentils	The smallest brown lentils on the shelf
Grellos (turnip tops)	Turnip greens	Collard greens, cooked a little longer
Padrón peppers	Farmers' markets, Spanish groceries	Shishito peppers
Fideos	"Fideo" in the Latin or pasta aisle	Angel hair, broken into 1-inch pieces
Fideuà noodles	Online, as "fideos para fideuà"	Thin spaghetti, broken into 1-inch pieces
Hake	Often sold frozen	Cod or haddock steaks or thick fillets
Sea bream	Dorade or orata	Branzino or red snapper of the same size
Bonito del norte	Albacore tuna	Yellowfin tuna
Cuttlefish	Frozen, at some fish counters and Asian markets	Squid
Tiny Cádiz shrimp		The smallest raw shrimp, chopped
Salt cod	Boxed or in pieces; Portuguese, Spanish and Caribbean groceries	Fresh cod, for the salt cod with tomato only

THE RECIPE SAYS	LOOK FOR	IF YOU CANNOT FIND IT
Rabbit	Frozen, from some butchers and online	Chicken thighs
Beef shank	Shank or shin	
Thin veal fillets	Veal or beef top round, sliced thin, or veal scallopini	
Moixernons	Dried, online	Dried porcini, or fresh cremini
Squid ink	Sachets or jars at Spanish and Italian groceries, online	
Miel de caña (cane molasses)	Online	Light molasses or a dark honey
Fino or Montilla	Where sherry is sold	Dry white wine
Chickpea flour	Garbanzo bean flour or besan	
Almond flour	Most supermarkets	Finely ground blanched almonds
Empanadilla wrappers	"Discos para empanadas", in the Latin American freezer section	
Plátano (in arroz a la cubana)	The ordinary sweet banana	Not the green cooking plantain
Dried chickpeas or beans		Canned, drained and rinsed, where the recipe offers it

Tortilla de patatas

The thick Spanish potato omelette

In every bar in Spain there is one of these on the counter under glass. Gold outside, moist all the way through. My mother turned hers on one white plate with a blue rim and a chip the size of a lentil, and she never once looked down. I thought it was her wrists. It was something she did to the plate, and it is step 7.

**SERVES**

4

TIME

About an hour

PANS

A wide pan for the potatoes, and a deep 8-inch non-stick pan for the tortilla

WHAT YOU NEED

1¼ lb yellow potatoes
(Yukon Gold or similar)

1½ cups olive oil (most of
it comes back)

1 medium onion, sliced
thin (optional, and Spain
has argued about it for
generations)

6 large eggs

1 level teaspoon salt, plus
a pinch for the eggs

HOW TO MAKE IT

1 Peel the potatoes, slice them about ⅛ inch thick, and salt them.

2 Put the oil in the wide pan over low heat and add the potatoes. The oil should barely move. Cook for about 20 minutes. If you are using the onion, add it 10 minutes after the potatoes. **They are ready when** the tip of a knife goes into a slice like soft butter, with nothing pushing back. If it catches, give them 5 more minutes. Nothing should brown.

WHY *In hot oil the outside of the potato hardens before the inside is soft, and a potato with a crust will not drink the egg. The potato takes a bath, not a beating.*

3 Beat the eggs in a large bowl with a pinch of salt. Lift the potatoes into a strainer set over a bowl and let them drip for 1 minute. Keep the oil.

4 Taste a slice of potato for salt. Then put the potatoes, still warm, into the beaten egg and leave the bowl alone for 10 minutes.

WHY *The potato drinks some of the egg, and its starch helps bind everything together. Pour it early, and the egg runs to the bottom of the pan and sets on its own. This is also your last chance for salt.*

5 Put 1 tablespoon of the potato oil in the small pan over strong heat. Pour in the bowl and shake the pan for 30 seconds.

6 Turn the heat to low. Cook for about 4 minutes, tucking the edge in with a spatula so the side comes up round. **It is ready to turn when** the edge is set and the whole tortilla slides as one piece when you shake the pan.

WHY *Strong heat all the way browns the outside and leaves the middle raw.*

- 7 Rub a flat plate, wider than the pan, with 1 teaspoon of oil. Take the pan off the heat and stand over the sink. Plate on top, your open hand flat on the plate, and turn it over in one movement. Do not do it slowly. The slow turn is the one that spills.

WHY *The top is still wet when you turn it. Wet egg grabs a dry plate and half the face stays behind. On an oiled plate it slides home in one piece.*

- 8 Slide the tortilla back into the pan, wet side down. Cook on low for about 6 more minutes. **It is done when** a knife in the centre comes out clean (160°F, if you have a thermometer).

- 9 Turn it out onto the same plate, wiped clean, and leave it for 10 minutes before you cut it.

WHY *A tortilla cut hot falls apart. A rested one cuts like cake.*

IF IT WENT WRONG

It stuck. It was the pan. A scratched pan holds on to egg, and that was never in your hands.

It broke at the turn. You turned too soon or too slowly. Wait until it slides as one piece, and then do not hesitate.

It is dark outside and wet in the middle. The flame stayed high. Next time: strong for 30 seconds, then low.

It tastes flat. It is the salt. Nine times in ten, it is the salt.

The outside is pale gold, not brown. That is not a mistake. That is exactly how it should look.

KEEPING IT

This recipe cooks the egg all the way through. Half of Spain likes the middle runny, and runny is egg that is not cooked through, so I will not teach you that one with ordinary eggs. If you want it, use pasteurized eggs. No more than 2 hours on the table, then into the fridge. Eat it within 3 days, and heat it until it is hot right through (165°F).

THE OIL

Strain it through a fine sieve into a clean jar with a lid and keep it in the fridge. It turns cloudy in the cold and clears on the counter. Use it within a month for eggs, sofrito, vegetables and the next tortilla. If it smells sharp, or foams in the pan, it is finished.

Lentejas con chorizo

Lentils with chorizo

This is a Tuesday in Spain. One pot, one low flame, and nothing for you to do but leave it alone. My mother had one sentence for this: “Lentils do not need a cook. They need a quiet stove.”

**SERVES**

4

TIME

About 1 hour 15 minutes

POT

A heavy pot, 3 quarts or larger

WHAT YOU NEED

12 oz (1¾ cups) pardina lentils, or the smallest brown lentils you can find

2 tablespoons olive oil

1 small onion, chopped

1 carrot, peeled and chopped

2 cloves garlic, chopped

2 links Spanish cooking chorizo

1 ripe tomato, grated (as in the sofrito)

1 medium potato, peeled and cut into dice

1 bay leaf

1 teaspoon sweet pimentón (Spanish paprika)

6 cups cold water, and a kettle of hot water standing by

Salt

HOW TO MAKE IT

1 Rinse the lentils in a strainer. Do not soak them.

WHY *Pardinas are small. They cook without a soak, and faster than bigger lentils.*

2 Put the oil, onion, carrot, garlic and the whole chorizo in the pot over medium-low heat. Cook for about 10 minutes, turning the chorizo now and then. **It is ready when** the onion is soft and the chorizo has begun to colour.

3 Lift the chorizo out, slice it, and put it back. Add the grated tomato and cook for 2 or 3 minutes.

4 Add the lentils, potato, bay leaf, pimentón and the cold water. Bring it to a boil, then turn it down at once until it barely bubbles. Leave the lid off.

WHY *A hard boil knocks the lentils about and empties them out of their skins. That is the mushy pot with skins floating in it.*

5 Cook for about 45 minutes, stirring now and then. If the lentils show above the water, add a little hot water from the kettle. **They are done when** a lentil crushes soft between two fingers and a knife slides into the potato. If they are not there, give them 10 more minutes and try again.

6 Now the salt. Start with 1 teaspoon, stir, taste, and add more if it needs it. Take out the bay leaf.

WHY *The chorizo brings salt of its own, and you cannot know how much until the pot is cooked.*

IF IT WENT WRONG

Still hard after an hour. A bigger kind of lentil takes longer. Keep them at a quiet bubble, add hot water, and try one every 10 minutes.

Mushy, with loose skins. The flame was too high. Next time, barely a bubble.

Too thin. Cook it a little longer with the lid off.

It tastes flat. Salt, a little at a time.

KEEPING IT

Into the fridge within 2 hours, and eat it within 3 days. Heat it until it bubbles and is hot right through (165°F). Or freeze it and use it within 3 months.

IN A US SHOP

For the chorizo, see the note under the white beans: the soft Spanish kind sold for cooking, not Mexican chorizo. Pardina lentils are the small brown Spanish kind. If you cannot find them, buy the smallest brown lentils on the shelf.

Keeping it safe

These are the rules every recipe in the book follows, on one sheet. They come from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the extension services as of October 2026. Print this page and keep it inside a cupboard door.

COOK IT TO

FOOD	SAFE TEMPERATURE	WHAT YOU SEE
Chicken, and rabbit (rabbit's U.S. minimum is 160°F; this book cooks it to 165°F, like chicken)	165°F	No pink at the bone, and the juices run clear
Ground meat: meatballs, patties, fillings	160°F	No pink in the middle
Whole cuts of pork, beef, veal and lamb	145°F, then a 3-minute rest	
Fish	145°F	The flesh is no longer glassy and separates easily with a fork
Shrimp		Pearly or white, and opaque
Clams and mussels		The shells open. Throw away any that stay shut.
Egg dishes	160°F	White and yolk both firm
Leftovers and casseroles	165°F	Steaming hot right through
Soups, broths and sauces, reheated		Brought to a boil

TIME

- **2 hours.** Cooked food goes into the fridge within 2 hours, and that includes the time on the table.
- **3 days.** Most leftovers in this book are eaten within 3 days. Fish and shellfish within 2.
- **3 months.** What goes into the freezer is used within 3 months.
- Cool big pots fast, in shallow containers.

THE RULES A SPANISH KITCHEN MIGHT BREAK

- **Eggs.** Runny yolks and soft omelettes only with pasteurized eggs. Otherwise, cook until the white and the yolk are both firm.
- **Mayonnaise.** Shop-bought, or the alioli in The Bases made with a pasteurized egg. Never a raw ordinary egg.
- **Dried beans.** Soak them, drain them, then boil them in fresh water at a full boil for 30 minutes before the slow cook. Never cook dried beans from raw in a slow cooker: it may not get hot enough to destroy the natural toxin in them.
- **Cooked rice.** Into the fridge within 2 hours, eaten within 3 days, and reheated until steaming hot.
- **Garlic in oil.** Homemade sauces and dressings with raw or roasted garlic in oil live in the fridge and are used within 4 days. Never on the counter.
- **Raw chicken.** Do not rinse it. Rinsing spreads its germs around the sink. Wash your hands and anything it touched.
- **Clams and mussels.** Buy them alive, keep them in the fridge under a damp cloth, never in water or a sealed bag, and cook them within 2 days. Throw away any with cracked shells, any open ones that do not close when tapped, and any that do not open in the pot.
- **Salt cod.** Soak it in the fridge, never on the counter, and change the water every 8 to 12 hours.
- **No canning.** Nothing in this book is kept in jars on the shelf. Sauces and bases go in the fridge or the freezer.

HOT OIL

Never leave hot oil alone. Keep the pan no more than half full, keep a lid beside it, and if the oil smokes, turn off the heat. Never put water on burning oil. Slide the lid over the pan and turn off the heat.

ALCOHOL

Cooking does not remove all the alcohol. After 15 minutes of simmering about 40% of it is still there, after half an hour about 35%, and after an hour about 25%. The recipes say where a dish is not for children.

NUTS

Recipes with almonds, hazelnuts or pine nuts carry a note. Tell your guests.

That is everything I know how to put on a page. The rest is in your hands and on your stove: the colour of the sofrito, the sound of the oil, the smell of the garlic going gold.

Cook for the people at your table, and keep a little back for whoever comes late. That is why the pan was always wide enough for one more.

Come and cook with me on YouTube:
[youtube.com/@CooktheSpanishWay](https://www.youtube.com/@CooktheSpanishWay)

Amparo

THE WAY SPAIN COOKS AT HOME

130 Spanish home recipes, written down for an American kitchen

Rice from Valencia, a tortilla that comes out whole, beans and stews, soups hot and cold, fish, small plates and sweets: the food Spanish families cook at home. Every recipe has exact measures in cups, pounds and degrees Fahrenheit, numbered steps with the reason under each one, something to look for beside every timing, and what to do if it went wrong.

INSIDE THIS BOOK

- ◆ 130 recipes in twelve chapters
- ◆ The pantry, with a table of US swaps
- ◆ A week of cooking that plans its leftovers
- ◆ Two menus for a crowd, with shopping lists
- ◆ One food-safety sheet that follows U.S. guidance
- ◆ A glossary with pronunciations
- ◆ Every source listed
- ◆ A printable card for every recipe



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