

# Paella and Rice Region of Valencia

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Despite the culinary diversity of Valencia, one has to admit that rice monopolises most menus, becoming an inevitable reference point. Quite rightly the Valencian food critic Antonio Vergara states that "the Spanish Mediterranean is like a tiny China. The difference is that our methods of cooking rice are much more entertaining, more colourful, and more pleasing to the eye than those of China".

The repertoire of Valencian rice dishes is by no means a monotonous succession of paellas - that humble yet exquisite dish from the "huerta" or market gardens of Valencia that, by popular demand, was exported from typical farmhouses in the country to invade eating houses, seaside stands and open-air restaurants along the Malvarrosa beach in Valencia and the Portichol and Albufereta beaches in Alicante in the late 19th century.

The lineup of specialities currently on offer at restaurants in the city, at rice restaurants near the seashore and at picnic stands on the beach are difficult to classify in a simple list. First, a division should be made between rices (paella) and rice stews (caldo) cooked in calderos, pucheros, peroles and cazuelas (varying types of metal or earthenware casseroles). There are also soft, spongy rices made in earthenware casseroles like arròs al forn (ovenbaked rice)

and arrs amb costra (oven-baked rice with an omelette crust), whose recipes are incredibly similar to that of the arrs en cassola al forn described in a 16th-century Valencian cookbook called the Llibre de Coch, by Robert de Nola (1520).

## Paella as a ritual [1]



Arroz Caldosos con Conejo y Verduras (Rice with rabbit and vegetables) [2]

Dish prepared in a stew pot which includes, as well as rabbit, several traditional ingredients in **Valencian cuisine**, such as the ñora pepper and garrofón butter....



Arroz con Cangrejos [3]

**Seafood lovers** will be delighted when they try this **delicious dish** made in an earthenware casserole pot. Crab, crayfish, and a combination of vegetables t...



Paella de boquerones y espinacas (fresh anchovy and spinach paella) [4]

This is one of the many **varieties of paella**. A **delicious and nutritious** dish that combines the sea flavour of fresh anchovies with the healthy properties....



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[Paella de coliflor y bacalao](#) [5]

It is common for paella, in its multiple varieties, to combine the flavour of the sea and the vegetable garden, cauliflower and cod in the case of this delicious and ch...



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[Paella de Langosta \(Lobster paella\)](#) [6]

Made according to the recipe for **traditional paella**, lobster paella is one of the most distinguished and delicious varieties in **popular Valencian cuisine**....



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