



# Howard Hillman's Great Peasant Dishes of the world

This printout is from the peasant cuisine section of my website ▷

hillmanwonders.com

## Arroz Con Pollo

Spain

It originated as a peasant dish. Today, it is a popular national speciality.

**Pronunciation:**  
ah-rohth' kohn poh'-yoh

### Part 1 Recipe

#### ■ Ingredients

Servings: 4

##### ■ **Chicken drumsticks & thighs**

1 1/2 kilograms or 3 pounds

##### ■ **Water**

6 deciliters or 2 1/2 cups

##### ■ **Dry white wine**

12 centiliters or 1/2 cup

##### ■ **Salt**

4 milliliters or 3/4 teaspoon

##### ■ **Bay leaf**

1 medium sized

##### ■ **Olive oil**

60 milliliters or 4 tablespoons

##### ■ **Long-grain white rice**

35 centiliters or 1 1/2 cups

##### ■ **Chopped white onions**

20 centiliters or 3/4 cup

##### ■ **Diced Italian sweet pepper**

12 centiliters or 1/2 cup

##### ■ **Minced garlic**

15 milliliters or 1 tablespoon

##### ■ **Diced tomatoes**

12 centiliters or 1/2 cup

##### ■ **Lemon juice**

15 milliliters or 1 tablespoon

##### ■ **Crushed saffron**

2 milliliters or 1/2 teaspoon

##### ■ **Chopped fresh parsley**

30 milliliters or 2 tablespoons

#### ■ Steps

- 1** Remove the chicken from the refrigerator 45 minutes before beginning step 2.
- 2** Bring the water and wine to a boil in a 3 or 4 liter (3 or 4 quart) saucepan.
- 3** Add to the liquid the salt, bay leaf, and chicken drumsticks. Bring the mixture to a simmer. Cover the pot and gently simmer for 3 minutes.
- 4** Add the chicken thighs. Bring the mixture to a simmer. Cover and gently simmer for 10 minutes, turning the pieces after 5 minutes.
- 5** Transfer the chicken with a slotted spoon to several layers of paper towels and pat dry. Reserve the stock in the pan over low heat.
- 6** Heat the oil in a shallow casserole measuring at least 30 centimeters or 12 inches in diameter (or in a paella pan).
- 7** Brown the chicken pieces on all sides in the hot oil over moderate heat. (Brown in batches if necessary.)
- 8** Transfer the chicken to a warm bowl and cover it.
- 9** Add the rice to the casserole. Sauté it for 5 minutes, stirring frequently.
- 10** Reduce the heat to low to moderate. Add the onions and sauté them for 2 minutes. Add the Italian pepper and the garlic

and sauté them for 1 minute. Stir constantly.

- 11** Add the tomatoes and lemon juice. Stir the mixture.
- 12** Strain the reserved chicken stock and add 5 deciliters or 2 cups of it to the casserole.
- 13** Add the saffron. Stir the mixture for 1 minute.
- 14** Arrange the chicken pieces on top of the rice. Bring the liquid to a simmer. Cover the pot and gently simmer for 15 to 20 minutes, until the rice has absorbed all the liquid.
- 15** Let the covered pot stand off the heat for 5 minutes.
- 16** Sprinkle the arroz con pollo with the parsley. Serve it at the table from the casserole.

### Part 2 Cooking tips

#### ■ Pointers

- **Chicken** - Select thighs and drumsticks from a small to medium-sized chicken.
- **Garlic** - Unless you proceed promptly from step 10 to step 11, your garlic will burn and become bitter.
- **Heat** - Use low heat in step 14 to avoid scorching pot.
- **Lid** - Preserve steam in the pot by not lifting the lid during the cooking process in step 14.

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### ■ Affinities

- **Beverage** - Serve beer or a young, dry medium-bodied white or light-bodied red wine.

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### ■ Variations

- **Chicken breasts** - Use chicken breasts exclusively, or use them in combination with thighs and drumsticks.
  - **Smoked pork products** - Add diced chorizo or ham with the onions in step 10.
  - **Vegetables** - Add green vegetables such as peas.
  - **Other ingredients** - Substitute rabbit or shellfish (lobster, shrimp, mussels, and clams are popular choices) for the chicken. Or combine a medley of these ingredients for a paella.
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### Part 3

## Travelog

Paella a la Valenciana, as the world knows it, is seldom eaten by Valencian peasants. Chefs in fancy restaurants from New York to Madrid too often make the dish ridiculously complex by incorporating into it everything in their larder: chicken, fish, lobster, shrimp, clams, mussels, what have you. While these big production numbers may dazzle the eye, they tend to overwhelm the palate.

The peasants, in contrast to their big city cousins, prefer to use one or at most two meats in this Valencian specialty.

Along the region's balmy Mediterranean coast, the star ingredient is most apt to be shellfish, perhaps mussels or shrimp. Inland, when the littoral plain gives way to foothills and mountains, the cook's first choice is generally chicken and, if this be the case, the dish is usually called arroz con pollo ("rice with chicken") rather than paella.

A well-made, peasant-style arroz con pollo is infinitely superior to the run-of-the-mill restaurant style paella a la Valenciana and is just as delicious as a great one. It's also quicker, easier, and less expensive to prepare.

Rice - the foundation of any paella or arroz con pollo- is a major crop in Valencia. This cereal grain was introduced to the Spanish Mediterranean coast two thousand years ago by Middle Eastern traders.

These seafarers also brought with them what would turn out to be Valencia's most famous product, the orange. "On nights when orange blossoms open, the countryside is filled with a heady fragrance," the daughter of a Valencian farmer told me. "It's the aphrodisiac of Valencia."

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