

Paella

Getting from the airport to the centre of Valencia, which is where paella originally comes from, is easy. You unpack and settle into your downtown self-catering apartment and already you are thinking about paella, although no one has warned you that ordering paella in the centre of Valencia is the equivalent to a culinary catastrophe. Other things you probably do not know are that there are dozens of kinds of paella as well as the fact that for the best paellas you need to order in advance.

For a delicious seafood paella, take the metro to the *Las Arenas* beach where there is a row of famous and reasonably priced restaurants right by the sand. Here you will not have to book ahead but you will need to be patient as real paellas are made individually and take half an hour or so to prepare. While away your time munching *tellinas* or clams.

If you decide to rent a car, book a Valencian paella in Serra, which is a town up in the mountains, to savour what the Valencians consider to be the authentic paella. It is made with chicken, rabbit, snails, rosemary, butter beans and green beans and cooked over a log fire. You have to book though or your journey will be wasted. My favourite restaurant is *La Balsa de San Antonio*, just out of town tucked into a bend in the mountain road by a small reservoir. Take advantage of having a car and drive out to the fishing village of *El Palmar* by the lagoon. Order *arros a banda* or *arros amb caranc*, which is crab and rice stew along with a serving of spicy eels with potatoes called *all i pebre*.

(287 words)

Phone number and address

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