

## Spanish Foods

Spanish food and wine is very much diverse in character, with variations in the cuisine culture stemming from geographic, cultural and climatic differences. One could say, however, that typical Spanish food is influenced heavily by the fact that the country has extensive access to the sea, giving the food culture a Mediterranean soul. Spain's long history and diverse cultural influences combine to give culinary enthusiasts thousands of Spanish food recipes and tastes to choose from. When looking at the history of Spanish food, the considerable evidence of Jewish and Moorish influence comes to the fore. For centuries the Moors held a strong influence over Spain and up until today Spanish food reflects this. Pork, however, has proved to be very popular for hundreds of years in Spain, possibly linked to the Christian identity which characterised Spanish culture; since neither Jews nor Muslims eat pork. Modern Spanish food would not be the same without tomatoes, potatoes, peppers or beans; ingredients sourced from South America during the Spanish colonial era. Indeed it is the Latin American touch which differentiates Spanish dishes from the Mediterranean norm. Spain is responsible for some 44 percent of the world's olive oil production, so it is not surprising that olive oil is a vital ingredient in Spanish food. Across the country traditional Spanish food is still made by hand using fresh ingredients bought from the market. These ingredients can be purchased in Spanish food shops around the world, or you can pick them out from a selection of grocery stores. Handmade home cooked food, fresh from the market is less commonplace in the urban centres, such as Madrid; however the rural areas are lucky enough to enjoy the open air markets which give a cultural flavour to the region. The food is often cooked outside over a fire, many times in a brick or clay oven. Another cultural convention in Spain is to provide snacks whenever a drink is served, the snacks are known as tapas, and can come in the form of olives, cheese or pork. In many bars tapas are included in the price of wine, sherry or beer. For the sweeter tooth there is a traditional favourite, the churro, a fried pastry dough snack which is served with hot chocolate to dip it in. Although there is very much varieties within Spanish food, the following character traits generally run across the board:

- 1) Olive oil is used to cook in, but can also be used in its raw state.
- 2) Sofrito- a mix of garlic, onion and tomato cooked in olive oil - is often used as a point of departure in preparing a meal.
- 3) Garlic and onions are the two most popular seasonings.
- 4) Drinking wine during a meal is a cultural norm in Spain.
- 5) Bread is served with almost all meals.
- 6) Salads are extremely popular, especially in the summer months.
- 7) For dessert the Spanish will often serve a dairy product or a piece of fruit, keeping cakes or tarts for special events or occasions.

## About the Author

Providing audits, instruction and advice to food processing, handling and storage facilities, with seminar details and educational.

Source: <http://www.products herbal.com>