

## Spanish Food - The Tasty Tortilla

It certainly is a poor man or woman who cannot find a few eggs, a couple of potatoes and an onion in their store cupboard! The ever-practical Spaniard realized this and thus created their marvellous "tortilla" - an easy-to-make dish that could be savoured by rich and poor alike. Not only cheap to make the tortilla, or Spanish omelette, is immensely adaptable: you can eat it hot or cold, depending on the weather and your mood; you can enjoy a small slice as a "tapa" (snack) in between meals; or, accompanied by a multi-coloured mixed salad and crusty, fresh Spanish bread, you have a marvellous main meal! Should unexpected guests come knocking at your door ... just whip out the ever-adaptable tortilla, pour them a glass of smooth, Spanish wine and they are bound to be delighted! Unlike the better-known French omelette which should be made quickly and over a high heat, the Spanish omelette needs to be cooked more gently, so that the middle is not too runny. The French omelette is best eaten straight away and always hot. Its Spanish counterpart, on the other hand, improves if left to rest for at least five minutes before eating, keeps well for a couple of days in the fridge, and can easily be re-heated in the microwave, unless you prefer it cold. As with the French omelette, the Spanish tortilla is made in a frying pan (preferably non-stick) but, unlike the French version, both sides need to be cooked. For this reason, it is possible to buy special tortilla frying pans - a sort of double pan which allows you to just swish it over and cook the other side!! I have to say, I prefer the traditional method of placing a plate on top of the pan, turning the tortilla out and then returning to the pan to cook the underside. But, perhaps the simplest method is to just place the frying pan under the grill to brown the tortilla. Whichever way you choose to prepare it, once cooked, leave it to cool a little, cover with a large plate, then gently ease the omelette out. It should be circular, about an inch-and-a-half thick, and it is usual to cut it in slices or wedges. Having said that, you can divide it into small cubes, pop a cocktail stick on top, and serve along with other "bits and pieces" as *apéritifs*. Spanish recipes for tortilla vary slightly from region to region - also what you have in the fridge and what you fancy! You can replace the potato with, say, spinach, leave out the onion, add a bit more garlic, etc, etc. Just use your imagination! Below is a recipe for a traditional potato-and-onion tortilla.

**TORTILLA - Spanish Omelette**

**Ingredients:** Olive oil 1 large onion, chopped 1 clove garlic, crushed with 1 teaspoon salt 2 medium-sized potatoes, peeled and diced Black pepper 6 eggs, beaten

**Method:** 1. Heat 2 tablespoons oil in a pan. 2. Add onion, garlic, pepper and potatoes. 3. Gently fry until golden-brown and potatoes slightly softened. 4. Tip potato-and-onion mixture into bowl containing the beaten eggs. 5. Stir and transfer to a large frying pan containing clean oil. 6. Cook over a low heat for 10-15 minutes. 7. Transfer pan to a preheated hot grill until top is browned. 8. Alternatively, turn upside down onto a plate and return to pan to brown underside. 9. Carefully tip onto plate and slice as you would a cake.

## About the Author

Essays, charts and links illustrating predicted environmental and economic trends including oil reserve depletion, food production, and population.

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