



PRIME TRAVELER

Valencia, Real Paella Has Rules



The actual recipe this dish was born from, the lunch-only tradition most visitors never learn, and the futuristic skyline that has nothing to do with any of it.

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01 Real Paella Has Rules



Paella genuinely originates here, and the version most visitors have eaten anywhere else in the world, a mix of seafood and meat piled into one pan, is considered a significant departure from the original by anyone who actually grew up with the real thing.

The Traditional Recipe Is Specific

Authentic Valencian paella is built around chicken, rabbit, snails, a flat green bean, and a specific local white bean called garrofó, cooked in a wide shallow pan over an open flame. Seafood paella exists and is genuinely good in its own right, it's simply a different, coastal variation, not the original.

AUTHENTIC VALENCIAN PAELLA	THE COMMON TOURIST VERSION
Chicken, rabbit, snails, garrofó bean, flat green beans	Mixed seafood and meat combined in one dish
Cooked over an open wood or gas flame in a wide pan	Often prepared in a kitchen, sometimes pre-made
Traditionally eaten at lunch	Often served at dinner for visitor convenience
Cooked to order, often for a minimum group size	Available as a single portion, any time

This isn't food snobbery. It's simply the difference between the dish's actual hometown recipe and the version that traveled.

02

The Socarrat: A Feature, Not a Mistake



The thin, slightly crisp, caramelized layer of rice that forms at the very bottom of a properly cooked paella is called the socarrat, and it's genuinely prized, not a cooking error.

GENUINE
DETAIL

A restaurant that serves you a paella with no socarrat at all is often taking a shortcut. Scraping up that bottom layer is a normal, expected part of finishing the dish, not something to be embarrassed about at the table.

Don't Ask for It to Be Removed

Visitors unfamiliar with the tradition sometimes mistake the socarrat for burnt rice and ask a kitchen to avoid it. A good restaurant will already be building it in on purpose, it's worth tasting before deciding you don't want it.