



### The History of Paella

According to The Paella Company, paella was originally a laborers' meal, cooked over an open fire in the fields and eaten directly from the pan using wooden spoons. Seafood is rare in the fields of Valencia, which is why they used chicken, rabbit, duck and snails.

According to the La Paella Website, snails were the most commonly used meat as they were cheap; for special occasions rabbit or duck would be added and the well-off would have chicken. Anyone that tries to tell you that the original paella was a seafood dish is wrong.

Read more about the Origin of the word ' [paella](#) '.

### Paella Today

Paella is still a popular dish today. Despite tourists' desire to get a well-made fresh paella and their willingness to pay over the odds for it, one of the appeals of paella to the Spanish is that it can be cooked in large quantities and will still taste good later that day or even the next day, which is a good thing as making paella is a laborious task. Making large quantities saves time later. It is popular in restaurants as it can be served all day and is popular with restaurant clientele as they can have 'instant' paella without the hassle of making it themselves.

In Valencia things are a little different - there, making paella is a part of local pride and every mother claims to make the best paella in the land! Restaurants in the Valencia region are therefore aimed at tourists as the locals make it at home (don't assume that because a restaurant is full of the Spanish that it isn't touristy - the Spanish travel extensively in their own country - an Andalusian in Valencia is still a tourist).

Communal paella cooking and even paella competitions are common in village festivals, especially in the Valencia region. The paella I had for breakfast at the Tomatina Tomato Fight(hey, it seemed like a good idea at the time) had clearly been made during the previous night's paella competition.