

# Arroz Negro con Calamares

This is a black rice dish. It is basically a seafood paella in which the rice is blackened with squid ink, which can be bought in sachets. In Spain, the seafood content is often *chopitos/chipirones* (baby squid) but, that being more or less impossible to buy in the UK, you can do it with fresh squid cut suitably instead.

Squid is one of those ingredients that should either be cooked very little, or quite a lot; it's the "anything in between stages" that cause people to wince, "it's rubbery". So, cut your squid reasonably small but not so small that it becomes unrecognisable, about 1cm strips/rings.

## Planning

serves:	2
prep time:	20 mins
cooking time:	45 mins

## Ingredients

500g fresh squid, whole  
1 medium onion, finely chopped  
2 cloves garlic, finely chopped  
1 tsp sweet smoked paprika (pimentón)  
3 medium tomatoes, skinned, deseeded & finely chopped  
150g paella rice (Bomba or Calasparra)  
500ml fish/seafood stock  
2 sachets squid ink  
juice of ½ lemon  
Salt & pepper

## Method

Preparing the squid. Holding each squid body in one hand and the head in the other, pull the head away. Do this over a bowl as much of the body contents will come away with the head. Put the head down while you use your fingers to remove the remaining body contents, including the translucent quill. With your fingers, peel/rub off the purple-ish membrane on the outside of the squid bodies. Back to the heads; cut the tentacles off immediately in front of the eyes, which you can now discard. Don't shorten the tentacles but, if the squid are larger, divide them into 2 or 4 lengthwise as necessary for bite-sized pieces. For modest squid, slice the bodies into 1cm rings; if the squid are large slit the body to lie flat, halve it lengthwise and slice into 1cm strips.

Now we can start cooking. To a paella or good sized skillet, add a good glug of olive oil and fry off the squid rings and tentacles over moderate heat. This is a longer cooking approach to squid so we can cook them well and brown them a little. Remove the squid onto a plate with a slotted spoon.

In the same pan, adding more olive oil if necessary - it probably will be - fry the onion and garlic over medium heat until soft and translucent. Stir in the smoked paprika and fry for a minute more. Add the chopped tomatoes and cook them down until they break up and form a mush. (Yum!)

Now lower the heat and stir in the rice. Cook gently for a couple of minutes to allow the rice to absorb some of the flavours and oil. Return the squid to the pan before adding the stock and ink mixture, together with the citrus juice. Hopefully, you are using home made stock. If so, season well with salt and pepper. If you are using anything else, one of the stock jellies, say, it is probably already seasoned so be careful about adding more. Increase the heat to moderate again and bring the liquid to the boil. Cook reasonably briskly for about 5 minutes before lowering the heat and simmering gently for 20 more minutes or until the rice is cooked.

The trick with paellas is to time the cooking such that all the liquid is absorbed by the rice just as the rice is cooked. If

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your pan is much wider than your burner/heat source, it helps to move the pan around on the burner as you cook it, say 5 mins in each of four positions. The rice should not be wet. The Spanish like a toasted bottom to the rice in their paellas so you can have a go at that. They also generally use a gas burner whose diameter is matched to the pan.

It is suggested that this is served from the pan with garlic mayonnaise (alioli), either dolloped in the middle of the dish or as a side accompaniment. A little green salad wouldn't go amiss, either.