GOURMET RECIPES

Tapas: A Mini-Feast

The Trade Commission of Spain in Toronto has invited us to explore the wide variety and the richness of the wines of Spain on October 6th to benefit The Arthritis Society, and we'll be first in line! We adore Spanish food, especially tapas, those tasty little concoctions served up informally on tiny plates that are perfect accompaniments to a glass or wine or sherry. Tapas can be almost anything: a few perfect shrimp or mussels, rich sausages, spicy beans and roasted vegetable dishes, bite-sized bits of Serrano ham or samples of the remarkable range of marvelous cheeses. You'll always have a plate of olives with crusty bread on the side... tapas are a mini-feast every time!

Didn't know you could be in two places at once, did you – Toronto and Spain on October 6. All the information you need is listed below!

Meanwhile, we have Chef James Campbell Caruso's new book, *El Farol: Tapas and Spanish Cuisine*, named for Santa Fe's oldest restaurant and cantina. This landmark eatery has served artists, locals and travelers since 1835, and today is one of the city's finest restaurants. The cuisine is a combination of award-winning traditional and contemporary Spanish cuisine by Executive Chef Caruso, and his cookbook *El Farol* features more than a hundred creations that blend the rich and diverse cultural traditions of New Mexico.
with bold an interesting flavours. In his unique recipes, Caruso combines Mediterranean and Spanish cooking influenced by a variety of lively Latin American dishes, and we can tell you they are absolutely wonderful!

A native of Norwood, Massachusetts, Caruso was "home-schooled" in cooking and eating Mediterranean foods in his large Italian American family. Moving to New Mexico in 1988 inspired him to learn about Latin American and Spanish foods, and he's never looked back!

*El Farol: Tapas and Spanish Cuisine* is a book you'll pick up every day looking for that perfect starter or little dish for lunch. From the first page our mouths began to water, and we got cooking right away! Helped along with a glass or two of wine to accompany the dishes, we immediately found favourites! Herewith...

*On today's menu:*

- **Portobello en Jerez**
- **Gambas al Alcaparra**
- **Mejillones con Jamon**

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**Portobello en Jerez**

*Mushrooms Simmered in Sherry*

This dish sneaks up on you: the intensity of the mushrooms is suddenly matched and enhanced with a touch of sherry vinegar and sherry, plus olive oil and herbs. It's served hot with small slices of good toasted crusty bread. Do try this at home – it's also a great first course served up as a topper to chilled designer greens.

"Another order please, Jose!"

*Makes 5 tapa servings*
● ¼ cup good olive oil
● ½ yellow onion, peeled and diced
● 2 green onions, chopped
● 6 cloves garlic, minced
● 4 large Portobello mushroom caps cut in 1-inch dice
● 1 Tbsp sherry vinegar
● 1 cup dry Spanish sherry
● 1 Tbsp fresh thyme
● Salt and black pepper to taste

Heat oil on high in a sauté pan. Add onions, garlic and mushrooms. Sauté, stirring occasionally, for 2 minutes. Add all other ingredients and bring to a boil. Turn down to simmer for 5 minutes. Serve hot.

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**Gambas al Alcaparra**

**Grilled Honey-Caper Shrimp**

Chef Caruso says, "Grilling shrimp in this simple sweet-and-sour emulsion creates an exotic Mediterranean flavour combination that will have your friends asking for the recipe." Wait no longer, here it is!

Makes 4 tapa servings

● 1 pound large shrimp, peeled and deveined
● 2 Tbsp capers
● 2 Tbsp pickling liquid from the jar of capers
● ½ cup honey
● 2 Tbsp dry sherry
● Zest of 1 lemon
● Juice of ½ lemon
● 2 tsp sea salt
● 1½ cups extra virgin olive oil
● Capers for garnish
● Lemon wedges for garnish
Put shrimp in a glass baking dish or bowl. In a food processor, puree all remaining ingredients except olive oil and garnishes to make the marinade. While the mother is running, add olive oil in a slow steady stream. Toss shrimp with this marinade and refrigerate for 1 hour. Grill over medium-hot coals for about 2 minutes per side. Serve 3 to 4 hot shrimp per person, dressing each plate with capers and lemon wedges.

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**Mejillones con Jamon**

Steamed Black Mussels with Carrots and Jamon Serrano in a Dijon-Sherry Cream Sauce

This is another variation of the great Spanish tradition of mixing meats with seafood – *mar y montano*, or sea and mountain. We love mussels and are always looking for another version, and this recipe has become one of our favourites. It's rich and almost sinful, and makes a wonderful dinner party main dish as well as a dynamite starter. Olé!

*Makes 6 tapa servings*

- ½ cup julienned carrots
- 2 pounds fresh black mussels, debearded
- ¼ cup chopped jamon Serrano
- 1 Tbsp chopped garlic
- 1 Tbsp Dijon mustard
- 1 cup dry fino
- ½ cup heavy cream

Cut carrots into matchstick-sized pieces. Place all ingredients in a shallow pan on high heat and cover. Cook just until mussels open (discard any mussels that do not open). Stir well and serve with lots of crusty bread.

Note... the dish probably will not need salt, as the mussels and jamon tend to be salty enough.
**Accompanying wine? Tony recommends...**

Tapas demand sherry, but the style you choose is important. For Helen's selection of dishes I would go for a Fino or Manzanilla style lightly chilled. If you prefer wine, a non-wooded Sauvignon Blanc, Soave or Muscadet.

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We wish to thank Gibbs Smith, Publisher, Layton Utah for permission to publish material and photographs from *El Farol: Tapas and Spanish Cuisine*. Distributed in Canada by Raincoast Books, Vancouver. Text © 2004 James Campbell Caruso. Photographs © 2004 as follows: Amelia Opalinski for the Portobello en Jerez; John Yost for Gambas al Alcaparra and Mejillones con Jamon; Leslie Campbell for James Campbell Caruso at work.

Wines of Spain on October 6th will take place at the Hart House, University of Toronto in Toronto and will benefit The Arthritis Society. Please contact Sue Curtis, at 416-979-3353 ext. 380 or by email: scurtis@on.arthritis.ca.

Happily tested by Helen Hatton and Ron Morris.