



Delicious Cuisine from Navarra

The cuisine of Navarra is as complex and diverse as its wines. Layering not just flavors, but textures, there are a dizzying number of different traditional dishes to try. Celebrated chefs and locals alike start with an abundance of fresh vegetables coming from the Ebro Valley plains in southern Navarra. White asparagus is one of their specialties, as well as artichoke and red piquillo peppers. Meat-based dishes can be anything from local lamb, beef, rabbit, quail, and more. Fish and shellfish come from both the fresh mountain streams of the Pyrenees and the nearby Atlantic. Its cheeses--Roncal (Queso de Roncal) and Idiazabal (Queso de Idiazabal) --come from the milk of sheep thriving in the Pyrenees and each is made using a fiercely guarded recipe and has its own regional quality council. Olive oil from Navarra is also name-protected. The types of olives grown in the region include Arroniz and Arbequina.

The region is packed with restaurants serving up meals created from these local ingredients, and at prices that make you want to eat out daily. For haute cuisine, the cities of Pamplona, Tafalla and Cintruenigo offer up exquisite experiences equal to those in the best restaurants of the world. Major restaurants in Navarra are listed on their restaurant association website: www.restaurantesdelreyno.com.

For a small taste of Navarra, below are some of the locals' favorites:

White Asparagus – Whether roasted in the oven, sautéed in oil, steamed or boiled, white asparagus are traditionally enjoyed with homemade mayonnaise in Navarra.

Piquillo Peppers – Locals love these stuffed with various meats or brandade (salted or smoked fish with olive oil, garlic, milk and cream).

Tudela Artichokes - Blanca de Navarra is a variety of artichoke grown in the town of Tudela in Southern Navarra—and the only variety allowed to be grown in the D.O. for the special category designations of “Extra” and “First”. These artichokes are rounder and softer than other varieties and must follow strict regulations such as growth size and artichoke leaf retention when picking.

White Beans – The Pochas are a variety of bean which turns white when just ripe. There are two sub-varieties: the Arrionada and the Boio. Grown in Rioja as well as Navarra, the pochas are often added to stews. Locals also like to slowly boil them, sans shells, in a casserole dish, adding onion, green peppers, tomatoes and whole garlic cloves just as

the beans come to a boil. After draining, paprika and oil are added, as well as salt to stop the beans from hardening. A second and similar style is to sautee the beans in paprika and oil and then add these same ingredients to the pan about half way through. Salt after taking the beans off the heat. Pochas are often served as a main dish, but Navarrans will lay quail or lamb chops on top—or add chorizo—for a heartier meal.

Roncal Cheese - an artisanal cheese from the legendary breeds of oveja sheep –Lacha and Aragonesa. It is the first of Spain’s cheeses to be name-protected. Roncal cheese can only be made in 7 villages in the Valley of Ronca (Valle de Roncal) in Navarra. Nutty flavors, having a distinct taste of olive, pair perfectly with the local, red wines.

Idiazabal Cheese – Typically made from the unpasteurized milk of Latxa sheep, this cheese must be made according to the regulations of its Denomination of Origin. It was given this status in 1987. Smoking of the cheese externally is allowed, but the cheese tends to take on smoky flavors even when it is not smoked.

Trout - Trout cooked Navarran style is sautéed stovetop with a thin slice of ham inserted between the filet. The trout is first salted and coated in flour, and the ham inserted into a cut made lengthwise through the filet. It is then sauteed over low flame (but with very hot oil) until cooked through the center. Extra slices of ham are cooked along with the fish, and then placed on the dish under the filet before serving.

Pacharán - Truly a local specialty. Considered to be a perfect balance between brandy and anise-flavored liquors, Pacharán provides the richness of the former without the singular anise flavor provided in the latter. Made from macerating fresh sloe berries, which are abundantly available in the Pyrenees, in an anise-based liquor, Pacharan is often personalized by adding additional natural flavors such as coffee beans, cinnamon, or vanilla beans. The resulting elixir provides the perfect ending to a meal.

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