

Tapas de Extremadura



David Lindo, the Urban Birder and 2021 Springsong Guest Birder, divides his time between London, England, and Mérida, Spain, capital of Extremadura, a rugged region in central-western Spain famous for its large and varied bird population. These tapas are among David's favourites, paired with a glass of good wine from Extremadura's burgeoning vineyards.

The garlic shrimp can be whipped up at home for an easy last-minute appetizer. The cod fritters that follow require advance preparation but are worth the time and effort. Both recipes come courtesy of [Sociedad de Gestión Pública de Extremadura](#).

Gambas Al Ajillo

INGREDIENTS

1 LB large shrimp, peeled and deveined

Kosher salt

½ CUP extra virgin olive oil

10 garlic cloves, chopped

1 TSP red pepper flakes, or to taste

1 TSP sweet paprika

2 TBSP dry sherry or white wine

JUICE of ½ lemon

Chopped parsley to garnish

SERVES 4-6

METHOD

Pat the shrimp dry and season with salt.

In a cast-iron skillet, heat the oil until shimmering but not smoking. Test by dipping a shrimp tail: it should immediately turn red.

Add paprika and shrimp to the hot oil. Just as the shrimp turns opaque, add garlic and red pepper flakes. Toss until shrimp is fully opaque, about 3 minutes total. Garlic should be cooked but not brown (and bitter).

Remove from heat. Quickly stir in sherry, lemon juice, and sprinkle with parsley. Serve in skillet, with crusty bread for dipping.

Continued on next page.



Tapas de Extremadura

continued from previous page.

Buñuelos de Bacalao translates as Cod Balls, more commonly called cod fritters or, if shaped as ovals, cod croquettes. They are made with salt cod, available from most fish stores. If you are unfamiliar with this maritime staple, you will be amazed at the delicate taste of the desalinated fish. These appetizers are the perfect combination of crispy on the outside and light as a cloud within.

Buñuelos de Bacalao

INGREDIENTS

½ LB salt cod
½ LB potatoes (2 medium)
3 green onions
1 clove garlic
1 TBSP parsley, minced
Salt and pepper to taste
¼ CUP flour
1-2 eggs, beaten
1 CUP fine breadcrumbs
Olive oil, for frying

MAKES 12 LARGE

METHOD

Soak the salt cod in cold water for 24 hours, changing the water 3-4 times. Rinse the fish, then simmer lightly for about 10 minutes. Drain, pat dry, and flake in a bowl.

Peel potatoes and boil until soft. Drain, and mash roughly with a fork.

Lightly sauté the onions and garlic in oil. Mix together onions, garlic, potatoes, cod, and parsley. Season to taste and refrigerate 1 hour.

Shape cod mix into balls, roll in flour, dip in beaten egg, and coat in breadcrumbs.

Heat an inch of oil in a skillet until shimmering, then fry the buñuelos, turning often to brown evenly. Drain on paper towel and eat hot with sofrito (tomato sauce) or alioli, Spanish garlic mayonnaise

