

SKUPINOVÁ MOBILITA: IES FRANCISCO SALZILLO Alcantarilla, Murcia, Španělsko
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Food and Eating Habits in Murcia Region

During my stay in Spain, I discovered that food is not only something people eat when they are hungry. **In Spain, food is strongly connected with family, traditions and spending time together. Meals are usually long, relaxed and full of conversation.** For me, this was a bit different from the Czech Republic, where we often eat more quickly and do not always sit at the table for such a long time.

One of the most famous Spanish dishes is **paella**. Even though it originally comes from Valencia, it is very popular in the region of Murcia as well. The main ingredient of paella is **rice**. The rice has a **yellow-orange colour because of saffron**, which is a special spice. Paella is cooked in a **large, flat pan**, and sometimes the pan **can be almost one metre wide**. It is usually prepared during family celebrations or when many relatives meet together.



There are **different types of paella**. **Seafood paella** contains shrimp, squid and other seafood. **Mixed paella** combines meat and seafood. There is also paella de pollo, which is made with chicken. The basic ingredients are **rice, olive oil, tomatoes, garlic and different spices**. Each family can prepare it in its own way.



pieces like a cake.

The filling usually contains **meat, chorizo, boiled egg and sometimes vegetables**. I tasted empanada on my first day after school. I had it for dinner in a shopping centre. **It was warm, soft and very filling**. I liked it because it was simple but very tasty.

In Murcia, people also eat **arroz de caldero**. “Arroz” means rice and “caldero” means pot. This dish is rice cooked in strong fish broth with tomatoes and garlic. The rice is served first, and then the fish is served separately. Sometimes it is eaten with **alioli, which is a garlic**

We tasted paella in the school canteen on the last day of school. At first, I was not sure if I would like it because I am not used to seafood. However, **I was pleasantly surprised**. The flavour was strong but very good, and I really enjoyed trying something so typical for Spain.

Another traditional dish is **empanada de carne**. It is a baked pastry filled with meat. It comes from Galicia in the north of Spain. The word “empanada” comes from the Spanish verb “empanar”, which means **“to wrap in dough”**. Empanadas can be small, like little pies, or large and cut into



sauce. I found it interesting that the rice and fish are served separately, because in the Czech Republic we usually eat everything together on one plate.

For dessert, I tasted **tocino de cielo**, which is typical for Murcia. It looks like pudding and has caramel on top. It is made mainly from **egg yolks, sugar and a little water**. It is very sweet, maybe even too sweet for me, but I was happy that I could try it because it is part of the local tradition.



In Spain, it is also very common to eat appetizers before the main meal. Even at home, families prepare small snacks like **olives, sausage, chips, bread or shrimps**. My host family always prepared something small before lunch. Everyone sat together, talked and shared the food. I liked this tradition because it made every meal feel special.

Another food that I tried was **focaccia**. It originally comes from Italy, but it is also popular in Murcia. **It is soft bread with olive oil, tomatoes and herbs.** It is fluffy inside and slightly crispy outside.



Also, **jamón** is a traditional Spanish dried ham. It is one of the most typical dishes in Spain – almost like pizza in Italy.

It is usually dried for 7-16 months and it is made from white pigs.

My host family used to give me this as a snack and I even brought this ham home for my family.

Overall, I really enjoyed Spanish food. It was different from what I am used to, but I liked discovering new tastes and traditions.

I learned that food in Spain is not only about eating. It is about family, sharing and enjoying time together.

Author: Eliška Richterová, 7.C

