

Shellfish Paella with Cauliflower Rice

Paella is a staple in Spain, but the traditionally excessive amount of rice makes for an unhealthy glycemic load. I discovered that substituting cauliflower rice (cauliflower that has been finely chopped in a food processor) makes this dish easier, quicker to prepare, dramatically healthier, and equally delicious.

*The only challenge with this amazing dish is buying that precious spice: saffron. It is expensive because the saffron crocus (*Crocus sativa*) it is an extremely labor-intensive crop. Each flower has three tiny, threadlike stigmas in the center, and is typically picked by hand. The result is an amazing, concentrated flavor. Saffron may be hard to find (though now it is easy to order on-line), and $\frac{3}{4}$ to 1 teaspoon (which is $\frac{1}{10}$ of an ounce) may cost anywhere from \$5-10. If you can't get it, you can still enjoy this dish without the saffron, although I hope you'll find that the occasional treat in this amazing meal is totally worth it!*

Serves: Four

Prep Time: 15 Minutes

Cooking Time: 15-20 Minutes

Ingredients:

$\frac{1}{4}$ cup extra-virgin olive oil

1 medium sweet onion, finely chopped

$\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon sea salt

4 cups cauliflower rice (fresh or frozen)

1 medium red bell pepper, diced

1 teaspoon ground paprika

1 teaspoon dried oregano

Zest of 1 medium organic lemon

4 medium garlic cloves, minced

2 medium tomatoes, chopped

$\frac{1}{4}$ cup vegetable broth (or fish stock, or white wine)

2 pinches saffron (about $\frac{3}{4}$ to 1 teaspoon)

1 cup peas (fresh or frozen)

1 pound shrimp or prawns, peeled and deveined

1.5 to 2 pounds clams and/or mussels (12 mussels = 0.5 pounds; 12 clams = 1 pound)

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup Italian parsley, chopped

Directions:

Heat a large pan (I use a 16-inch paella pan, you can also use a large 16-inch skillet, or two 8- to 9-inch sauté pans), to medium heat and add onions and salt and cook for 2-3 minutes, stirring intermittently until translucent.

(Paella cont.)

Add bell pepper and cauliflower rice, and cook another 2 minutes, stirring occasionally. Stir in paprika, oregano, garlic, tomato, broth, saffron, and sauté another 3 minutes, stirring as needed.

Over this mixture, sprinkle peas, shrimp, clams and/or mussels (clams and mussels placed on their hinge so they open facing up).

Reduce heat to medium-low and simmer covered with a lid or foil for about 12-14 minutes until seafood is nearly cooked and clams and mussels have opened.

Avoid stirring after adding seafood to the pan, allowing base vegetables to develop a little crunchiness.

Uncover, and simmer another 5 minutes.

Serve immediately.

Enjoy,

Steven Masley, MD