

SPAIN



WHAT'S YOUR FAVOURITE SPANISH DISH? SHARE YOUR PHOTOS ON INSTAGRAM @ESCAPE_SNAPS

Seville on a plate

In the self-proclaimed tapas capital of the world, food isn't just about what you eat. It's about how, when and where you eat it too, writes **Paul Ewart**

IT'S hard not to fall in love with Seville. The city is compact, rich in history and breathtakingly picturesque, with its mix of Moorish architecture and bountiful orange trees.

But it's as a culinary destination that this Andalusian capital truly shines. A melting pot of cultures, Seville has been a Roman, Muslim, Jewish and Christian city and this cultural legacy is in no way more apparent than in its cuisine.

Whether you're after small plates or a substantial meal, the prices are low and the quality is high. No matter what you order, you can't go wrong and a day spent eating and drinking in this city is definitely a day well spent.

Kickstart your appetite and begin the day with a typical Sevillano breakfast of cafe con leche (coffee with milk) and a mollete – a toasted bread roll topped with olive oil, crushed tomatoes and garlic.

This carb-loading dish will galvanise you for a few hours of pavement pounding and, in Seville, there's plenty to see – from the cobbled streets of the Santa Cruz quarter and the breathtaking Alcazar palace to an array of art galleries and quaint shops.

If you're in the city on a Thursday, the morning flea market is a gem that still hasn't made it on to the tourist trail. But, as we're focusing on gastronomy, then a pit stop at the Mercado De Triana, which is arguably the best fresh food market in the city, is a must.

Having worked up an appetite exploring, your thoughts may be turning to lunch but don't even think about eating before 2pm. A great option is a round of montaditos (small snack-like sandwiches). Start with Seville's signature sandwich, the serrano – a seared piece of pork loin topped with salty serrano ham and grilled green pepper.

Whether you go native and break the day with a traditional siesta, or push on with a bout of sightseeing, you'll need something to see you through to dinner time. In a city full of night owls, dinner is a late affair with the average person eating about 10pm at the earliest. So, be sure to indulge in the Sevillianos afternoon lifesaver, the merienda – a snack designed to fill the gap between lunch and dinner.

Use this Spanish institution as an excuse for a sugar hit, follow the heavenly sound of the cloistered nuns' choir practice and pay a visit to one of the 15 convents that offer baked sweets for sale. Some convents specialise in only one sweet, while others have a long list of delicious goodies, often created using recipes dating back to the 15th century. It's their only source of income, so your custom keeps both the convent and this fabulous tradition alive.

Come evening, it's time to tapas. Lives are lived alfresco here and



TASTE INFUSION: (from main) A Spanish dinner; diverse menus; dining al fresco; and the Alcazar palace. **Pictures:** iStock



going out for tapas is as much about socialising as it is about eating and drinking.

It's said there are more than 3000 tapas bars in the city, so knowing where to begin – particularly as a Seville tapas newbie – can be tough.

Lauren Aloise, a food blogger and creator of Seville-based food tour company Devour Spain, has some advice: "You should plan to visit two to three places in one night – maybe

four if you're very ambitious," she says. "Don't let busy bars and crowds deter you. Gently wriggle your way inside and take a look at what's on offer. Signal to the bartender once you're ready to order and be loud!"

"Only order one tapas at a time. This allows you to get a feel for the ambience and the quality of the food before committing to a second in the same place.

"And remember, if you plan to visit

multiple places in one night, you don't want to fill up right away."

Three to four tapas a person will suffice, but if you do end up peckish later in the evening, kitchens stay open late. Speaking of that, Seville comes alive at night, so post-dinner bar-hopping with locals is a must-do. Head to the Alameda de Hercules where venues stay open until the wee hours, offering plenty of temptation to linger until dawn.

MUST TRY

PARA Tapear y Compartir
Tapa- chups de calamar
Milhojas de la Huerta
Mantecados Ibéricos
Pavias de Bacalao

Gambas al ajillo
Coquinas. Almejas
Menuo de ternera.
Pigotas-Acedias
Calamares

Arroz Con Perdiz
Cordero lechal Asado
Pulpo Gallega.
Bacalao - Rabo de Toro.

You can't leave Seville without working your way through these signature tapas dishes.

Jamon Iberico de Bellota

Spain's unique cured ham, courtesy of the free-range, acorn-eating, Iberian pata negra pig. Sweet and succulent, the ham is sliced paper thin.

Espinacas con Garbanzos

A culinary embodiment of Moorish Seville, this spinach and chickpea stew is a little piece of history on a plate.

Tortilla de Patatas

A ubiquitous favourite, the traditional Spanish potato omelet is simple but oh so tasty.

Salmorejo

A thicker, creamier and "pinker" version of gazpacho, this cold tomato-based soup is perfect on a hot Seville day.

Carrillada

Once a poor man's dish, carrillada is a slow cooked melt-in-your-mouth cheek – either pork or beef – braised in a variety of sauces.

Croquettes

These deep-fried parcels of goodness are filled with a variety of minced fillings and served with a delectable bechamel sauce.

Chiripones Plancha

These small squid are lightly grilled and dressed with a little olive oil, garlic and parsley.

Pescado Frito

Synonymous with Seville – and the Andalusian region in general – fried fish is a firm favourite. The fish will vary from cod and hake to shrimp.

Solomillo al Whisky

Medallions of pork tenderloin cooked in a whisky sauce alongside garlic cloves and a dash of lemon.

Pringa

A spread made with the leftovers of a traditional pork-based stew, at tapas bars.

ESCAPE ROUTE

SEVILLE

GETTING THERE

Ethiad Airways offers four weekly one-stop connections to Madrid from Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane and Perth via Abu Dhabi.

See etihad.com or call 1300 532 215

Rail Europe offers connections between Madrid and Seville.

See raileurope.com.au

EATING THERE

El Rinconcillo: Dating from 1670, it's said to be the oldest tapas bar in Seville. Calle Gerona, 40, 41003 Sevilla

Abaceria de San Lorenzo: A hybrid store-cum-restaurant.

DOING THERE

Get your bearings and get an expert overview of the food scene. During a four-hour walking tour, Devour Food Tours pairs travellers with nine food and drink businesses.

See devoursevillefoodtours.com

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