

LA RIOJA
Apeteece



Riojan Gastronomy

www.lariojatourismo.com
Tourist Information about La Rioja +34 941 29 12 60

Tourist Office of La Rioja: C/ Portales 50 (Escuelas Trevijano). 26071. Logroño.
Fax: +34 941 29 16 40 info@lariojatourismo.com

Follow us on: @lariojatourismo
 www.facebook.com/turismodelarioja

LOCAL TOURIST OFFICES

Alfaro
+34 941 18 01 33
alfaro@lariojatourismo.com

Arnedillo
+34 941 39 42 26
arnedillo@lariojatourismo.com

Arnedo
+34 941 38 39 88
arnedo@lariojatourismo.com

Calahorra
+34 941 10 50 61
calahorra@lariojatourismo.com

Cameros (Pradillo)
+34 941 46 21 51
cameros@lariojatourismo.com

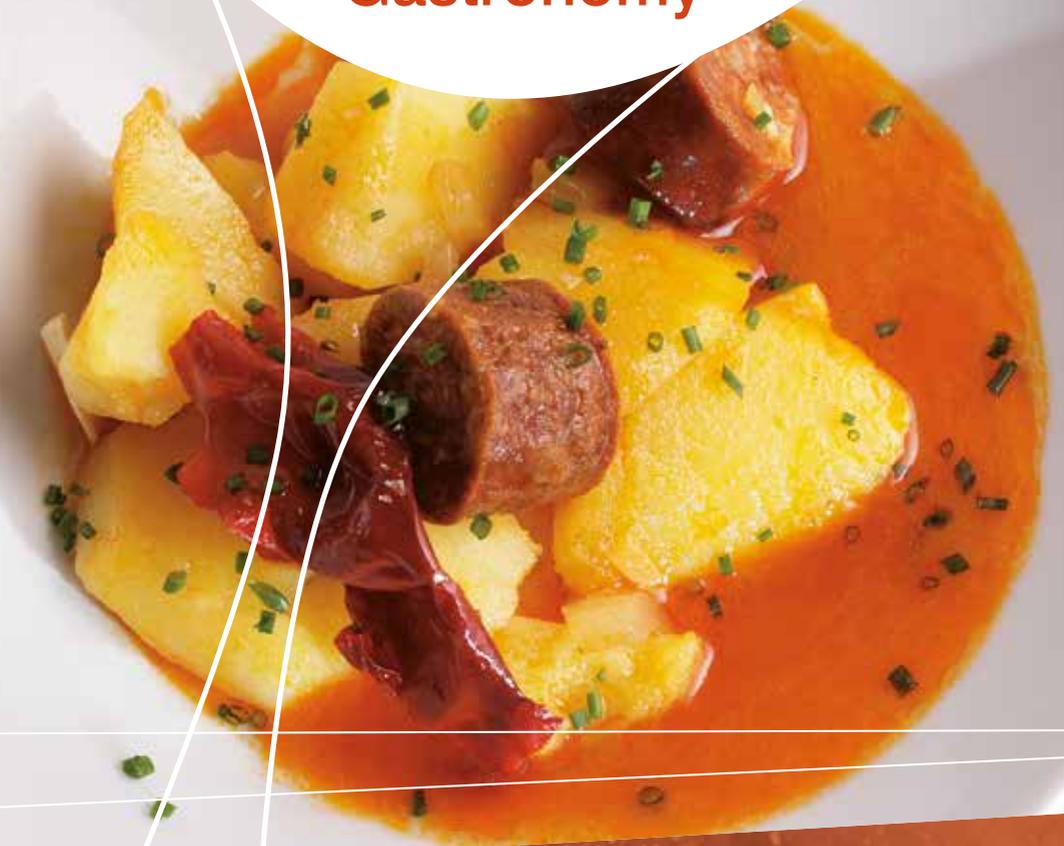
Ezcaray
+34 941 35 46 79
ezcaray@lariojatourismo.com

Haro
+34 941 30 35 80
turismo@haro.org

Nájera
+34 941 36 00 41
nájera@lariojatourismo.com

San Millán de la Cogolla
+34 941 37 32 59
sanmillan@lariojatourismo.com

Santo Domingo de la Calzada
+34 941 34 12 38
info@santodomingokm550.com



D.L.: LR-445-2015

LA RIOJA
Apeteece

www.lariojaapetece.com

April 2017



Riojan Gastronomy

If you mention La Rioja today, people immediately think of its **high quality wines**. La Rioja is a universally-known name thanks to this much-loved product, but the pairing between Rioja wine and local food is also an art that raises the pleasure of good food and good wine to the very highest level.

Traditional Riojan cuisine is essentially based on produce from its lands and the skill of its people; a huge range of high quality products that are as varied as its landscape and climate, which have given Riojan cuisine its tremendous personality and diversity; natural and simple, rich in resources and highly regarded.

Asparagus and peppers, vegetable menestras, potatoes with Riojan chorizo, meat braised in red wine, roast lamb, fresh fruit and delicious desserts make up a symphony of **typical dishes** which, with the personal finishing touch of each chef, either in one of our excellent restaurants or in every home kitchen, offer a real treat for the senses.

Every town or village has its own traditional product that forms the central ingredient of its most typical dishes, and they are also paid homage to at some of the **festivals** dedicated to showcasing regional produce. An example of this is the Festival of Rincón de Soto Pears and the week dedicated to vegetables in Calahorra.

Going for **pinchos**, or tapas, is another deep-rooted custom in our region, whether at lunchtime or the early evening. In fact, any hour of the day is a good time to stroll down one of our streets replete with bars offering a range of delicious specialities, meticulously put together and known by some unusual names, and always served with the finest wines.

Riojan cuisine



Calle Laurel. Logroño.



Riojan products.

La Rioja is a paradise for people who enjoy good food and wine. Most of the people who visit us for the first time are attracted by the well-justified fame of the extraordinary wines reposing in our bodegas, and it's easy to understand this interest. But once they are here, they are perhaps even more impressed —because of the surprise factor— by the quality and variety of our cuisine; simple, yet based on a wide variety of resources, and so unique that it is capable of seducing the most discerning of palates. Our superlative produce, combined with the skill of our finest chefs, turn all our visitors into ambassadors for the excellence of Riojan cuisine.

The differences between the mountains of La Rioja and the lowlands bathed by the River Ebro, both of which boast distinctive natural produce that are as varied as the terrain and the climate, have over the years produced two different types of cuisine which today have become amalgamated as a result of emigration from the villages to the cities. This has made **our cuisine even more rich and varied** although each individual area still retains the typical characteristics that have embodied its cooking down the years.



Lamb with artichokes.

Nugget of foie with a reduction of Garnacha wine and raisins.





Riojan-style cod.

Traditional Riojan cuisine is essentially based on the produce from its lands, though several **fish** dishes also appear on menus, given the special Riojan touch. An example of this is salt cod, tuna and sea bream, to which peppers and tomatoes are added in just the right proportions and then cooked and presented in the inimitable “Riojan style”. These recipes are now widely known and loved, having extended from La Rioja to their inclusion in Spanish cookery books.

One of the most delicious and indispensable ingredients of our stews are **sausages**. These are generally used to create the mouth-watering and celebrated stews and casseroles of our own regional recipes, combined with potatoes, snails, beans or bread shavings; they are also a delight just to eat as they are, sliced and served with good bread and a good bottle of Rioja wine. This is the usual welcome spread put out for visitors in every Riojan home.



Meat-filled peppers with wild mushroom sauce.

If you’re not already aware of people’s personal preferences, it’s worth pointing out to visitors that Riojan chorizo comes in two strengths —spicy or non-spicy.

And on the subject of sausages, we should not forget to mention our **morcillas** (black pudding), particularly the authentic Riojan one which is characterised by its sweet flavour, an unusual property in this kind of sausage that can be surprising to people unfamiliar with it. There is also a black pudding called delgadilla, which is mainly eaten in and around Haro, the unusual factor this case being that lamb is used for the sausage casing, and this is why they are so thin.

As La Rioja is **a land of transit**, close to other regions with which it is constantly in contact, it has inevitably felt the influence of these other regional cuisines. This is most obvious in the preparation of **fish dishes** in La Rioja Alta, where you can also see a Castilian influence in their meat roasts. Similarly,



Grilled fillet of beef with foie.



Roast lamb with potato slices.



Bodega snacks: cheese, anchovies, olives, green peppers and tomato with olive oil.



Artichokes with clams.



Crackling.



Potatoes with chorizo.

in La Rioja Baja, you can see the strong influence of the cuisine of the Navarran Ribera region in the **vegetable dishes**. The mountain areas, with their harsh winters, use **pork** as the main ingredient to provide their stews with the energy component. And there are still shepherds' recipes with influences from very far afield as a result of the transhumance of their flocks.

Agricultural production in La Rioja is both rich and varied. The extensive plains in Rioja Alta produce excellent potatoes. Meanwhile, in La Rioja Baja they grow delicious, high quality asparagus, peppers and tomatoes. Fruit is another abundant Riojan crop, particularly in the Iregua Valley, the Cidacos Valley and especially in the huge orchards of La Rioja Baja where they produce peaches and Rincón de Soto pears. Another important product is pickles, especially gherkins, which are exported to Central Europe. And one of the region's most important activities is mushroom-growing, which is prevalent throughout the region.

Potatoes

If there is one dish that is famous as being typically Riojan, that is **potatoes with chorizo**, a dish that our visitors always look for on our menus as being representative of the region, and one which has as many variations as there are chefs. Potatoes are also the main ingredient of **ranchos** and **calderetas**, a rustic stew made in an iron pot which, apart from chunks of potato, can also include whatever ingredients come to hand, though

Riojan-style potatoes

Ingredients for 6 people: 2 kg potatoes, 1 teaspoon paprika, 400 g Riojan chorizo, 1 green pepper, 1 dried pepper, 1 bay leaf, La Rioja olive oil, 1 onion, water, salt. *Optional: green chilli peppers, garlic.*

Finely chop the onion and fry in the oil in a saucepan. When transparent, add the peeled, diced potatoes and sauté gently, turning over several times.

Then add the paprika, bay leaf, green pepper and dried pepper and cover with water.

Bring to the boil and after 10 minutes add the Riojan chorizo cut into equal-sized rounds. Cook gently for another 20 minutes, season to taste and then leave to rest so the potatoes can release their starch to bind the dish.

Serve with green chillies baked with a little garlic and oil.

Tip: *when cutting the potatoes, it is important to break them up roughly so more starch can be released to bind the stew. However, if it does not bind fully, mash a few of the potatoes and stir into the stew.*



'New' cuisine

In the last few years, the concept of gastronomy has evolved and become reinvented, something that has also reached Riojan kitchens, whereby some of the region's restaurateurs, while continuing to respect our local roots, have embraced this fresh interpretation of traditional dishes, as you can see below with this cream of Riojan potatoes.



lamb is most commonly used to create this one-pot dish. This stew, which is generally used to serve big groups of people, is a feature of local festivals, fiestas and excursions and is even the subject of public **food competitions**.



Caparrón beans with pancetta, chorizo and deconstructed black pudding.

Pulses

Another key ingredient of Riojan cuisine is **pochas** or white beans podded when they are still fresh, delicious for their smooth, buttery texture as they melt in the mouth, and with an incomparable flavour. They form an essential part of every restaurant menu from September onwards. Although delicious served simply with garlic and tomato, they are even further enhanced when cooked with a piece of lamb skirt or tail. A stew of **caparrón** beans is the winter dish par excellence thanks to its high energy content. The name caparrón, which is not generally used in the rest of Spain, refers to a shorter type of red kidney bean, and the ones grown in the Anguiano region are particularly highly regarded. They are generally slow-cooked with pig's ear, trotters, ribs, tail and chorizo.

Riojan-style pochas

Ingredients: For 8 people: 1.2 kg podded pocha beans, 600 g shoulder of free-range lamb, 300 g fresh pancetta, 1 teaspoon spicy paprika, 2 green peppers, 200 g Riojan chorizo, 4 garlic cloves, 1 bay leaf, olive oil, 2 litres water, salt. *Optional: hot chillies, 1 onion.*

In a pan with the 2 litres of water, cook the lamb shoulder, pancetta, onion, garlic, green peppers and bay leaf for 1 hour. Skim all the foam off the top to leave a clear stock, then add the beans and the Riojan chorizo. Simmer gently for around 40 minutes, checking to ensure the beans do not start breaking up.

Gently fry the garlic, paprika and oil together, making sure the paprika doesn't darken in colour, and then pour over the beans.

After checking for seasoning, leave the stew to rest for a while so the starch can be released to thicken the sauce.

Serve the pancetta, lamb shoulder and Riojan chorizo in slices, accompanied by baked green chillies and drizzled with finely-chopped garlic fried in olive oil.

Tip: *Once the fresh pocha season has passed (September–October), they are dried and then simply called white haricot beans. These need to be soaked overnight before cooking.*





Baby vegetable tempura.

Vegetables

The vegetables from the **market gardens along the banks of the Ebro** are used to create tasty menestras, providing a wealth of delicious flavours and textures depending on whatever is in season, one of the key ingredients for a successful dish being **artichokes**. Artichokes are also eaten on their own, deep-fried in breadcrumbs, and it's very common to see them on bar counters to be eaten as a snack.

Two specialities of La Rioja that are given particularly creative treatment are borage and cardoon. The former is virtually unknown outside the Ebro Valley in Navarre, Aragon and La Rioja. **Borage** is cooked and drained and then served as a starter with potatoes drizzled with oil in which garlic has been slow-fried, or simply with extra-virgin olive oil. Another very Riojan dish is winter cardoon which is an essential feature of the Christmas Eve dinner. After cooking, the sliced stalks are generally served with a sauce containing very finely ground almonds.



Products from Riojan market gardens.

Vegetable menestra

Ingredients for 8 people: 250 g Swiss chard (stalk only), 200 g baby broad beans, 12 small artichokes, 200 g green beans, 200 g peas, 250 g cardoon, chicken stock, 1 medium onion, 100 g Serrano ham, 6 asparagus, La Rioja olive oil, salt. For coating the vegetables: flour and eggs.

The vegetables should all be cooked separately: the cardoon, Swiss chard and asparagus cut into lengths of about 4 cm; the artichokes cut in half. When cooked, drain well and set aside.

Finely chop the onion and fry in a little oil; when cooked through but not yet browned, add the diced ham and sauté gently.

Then add the peas, green beans and broad beans; cook for a couple of minutes then remove from the heat.

Coat the other vegetables in the flour and egg and fry in olive oil. Then add to the casserole and add the chicken stock. Cook over a gentle heat for another 5 minutes before serving.

Tip: *Never leave vegetables sitting in water for a long time before cooking them. If the dish is prepared a few hours before serving, the end result is more flavoursome.*





Asparagus from La Rioja Baja.



Wood-braised Najerano peppers with wild mushrooms and lamb's sweetbreads.



Beef cheeks in red wine with vegetables.

The delicate **asparagus**, particularly delicious when freshly harvested, are perfect when freshly cooked and brought to the table still hot. Those from the Cidacos basin are particularly highly rated. Apart from making a delicious salad ingredient, lightly glazed with a few drops of good olive oil and vinegar, they are also hugely popular served alone with mayonnaise or vinaigrette.

Our magnificent **tomatoes** and **peppers** deserve a separate paragraph. Tomatoes are an essential ingredient of the traditional Riojan sauce, known as **tomatada**, which is served with meat, crab, some fish (especially tuna) and eggs. Peppers are even more important, being one of the flagships of our gastronomy, and are used to enhance a huge number of dishes. There are various different classes, the most well-known being **Najerano peppers**, green peppers, dried peppers and Piquillo peppers. And we shouldn't forget to mention our chillies, some of which are known as "**alegrías riojanas**" (Riojan jollies) due to the jolly sensation their sharpness creates in the mouth!

Meat

Meat is treated with absolute mastery in Riojan cuisine, whether this is pork, lamb, kid or beef. Much of its **pork** production is transformed into the region's famed chorizos, salamis and Serrano hams under the Rioja label. **Lamb and kid** are usually used to enhance big group feasts after being roasted with no other addition than a good soaking in water for a couple of hours prior to cooking. Our **lamb cutlets** grilled over vine canes delight visitors and locals alike as the most typical and popular dish served at bodegas.

Our fabulous **beef**, raised on the slopes of the Cameros mountains (under the quality marks of Ternoja, 7 Valles and Las Llanas), is the source of a wide range of dishes, and often braised with our most distinguished ingredient: red wine. And the ubiquitous chicken is used to make a delicious dish when casseroleed with **fritada** (sautéed diced onion, tomatoes and peppers).

Lamb cutlets grilled over vine canes

Ingredients: Lamb cutlets, salt and vine canes.

You also need a barbecue or brazier.

The vine canes are gathered after pruning. First, burn the dried canes and sear the brazier, then clean it with newspaper. When the canes have turned to embers, spread them out and place the brazier with the cutlets on top. Grill on both sides until done, add salt to taste and... they're ready to eat!!!

This is probably the most typical dish in La Rioja.

Don't miss the chance to try them at a bodega along with a good Rioja wine, or at the local patron saint's day festivals held in any of our towns and villages.





Pig's trotters.

There is also a big range of popular local dishes, mainly served in inns and taverns, based on **offal**. The long list of dishes includes succulent stews made from tripe, chops, lamb's trotters, sweetbreads, chitterling balls (embuchados) and fingers (gordillas), roast lamb's heads, mixed offal, beef tongue in red wine, braised liver and onions, pig's trotters and pig's ears, which, like lamb's ears, are fried in breadcrumbs and served as a bar snack, kidneys and lamb's blood with fritada, slightly spicy and served with eggs.

Fish

Most of the rivers that flow down from the mountains and into the Ebro are **trout** rivers, especially the Najerilla and the Iregua. They are a source of high quality trout which, though simply cooked in Riojan cuisine, provide a delicious result. They are either fried with cured ham or soured. Other products from our rivers include what we call **peces** (literally, fish) but are actually a variety of cyprinids, which in some bars are fried and displayed on the counters as the stars of a special day in Logroño on 11 June, **St. Barnaby's Day**, a historic date that commemorates the city's liberation in 1521. On that day, the **Cofradía del Pez** (Guild of the Fish) offers all the inhabitants of Logroño a fried fish, a bread roll and a jug of wine.



Cod over ratatouille and Rioja pepper sauce.

The **tuna** that come from the nearby Cantabrian Sea are given the Riojan treatment by braising with tomato, as are **sea bream**, which are given a very regional stamp by serving with dried peppers. Above all, the happy pairing between **cod** and Riojan cuisine has resulted in an outstanding dish that is the worthy recipient of acclaim from all our visitors.



Baked sea bass with borage shoots and black olive oil.

Riojan-style cod

Ingredients: 12 salt cod fillets (bones removed) of around 70 g each, 2.5 kg ripe tomatoes, 4 medium onions, 6 dried peppers, 2 bay leaves, 1 head of garlic, La Rioja olive oil, flour, salt.

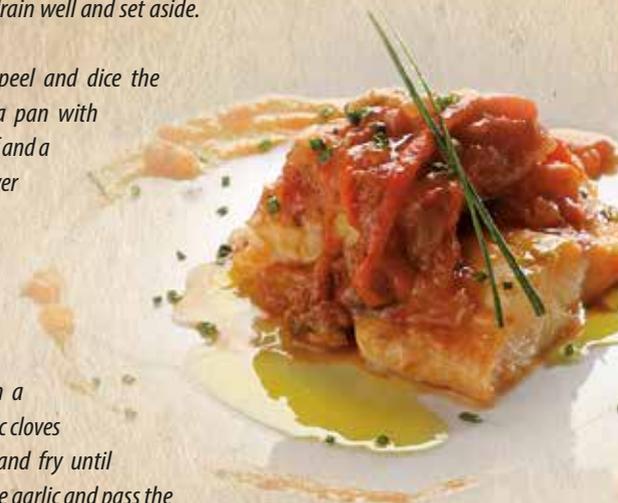
Soak the cod fillets in plenty of cold water for around 24 hours, changing the water at least 3-4 times. Wash the dried peppers well under running water and place in a pan with 250 ml water, a pinch of salt and a tablespoon of oil; cook over a low heat for about 5 minutes then drain well and set aside.

Chop the onions and peel and dice the tomatoes and put in a pan with 250 ml water, a bay leaf and a pinch of salt and cook over a low heat for 2 hours.

Blend the sauce and then press through a fine-meshed metal sieve. Heat some oil in a frying pan, add the garlic cloves and another bay leaf and fry until golden. Then remove the garlic and pass the oil through a strainer.

When the cod fillets are soaked and dried, coat in flour and fry in the garlic-infused oil. Once fried, arrange the cod in a casserole dish and cover with the blanched dried peppers and tomato sauce, then cook over a low heat for a further 15 minutes before serving.

Tip: This dish is best when prepared one day in advance and served warm rather than hot.





Enciso honey, Camerano cheese, Soto marzipan and Fardelejo pastries from Arnedo.

Desserts

As well as the wide variety of **fresh fruit** from our orchards, we also produce peaches **in syrup or red wine**, a recipe also used for pears. Baked apples, Christmas compote with plums, figs, raisins and dried peaches and red wine, fardelejos from Arnedo (a marzipan-filled pastry), marzipans from Soto, Cameros cheese and bread pudding are all very traditional desserts that in some cases date back centuries.

And to round off your meal with a liqueur, La Rioja offers various different kinds, the most well-known being those made with sloes, crab apples, walnuts or cucumber. Other **liqueurs** include arlope and a type of Benedictine made by the monks at the Monastery of Valvanera. Another very popular and traditional liqueur is **zurrapote** made for local festivals with a blend of wine and other ingredients that vary depending on who's making it!

Rincón de Soto pears in red wine

Ingredients for 6 people: 12 Rincón de Soto pears of around 150 g each, 3 bottles young Rioja wine, 12 g black peppercorns, 2 cinnamon sticks, 1 clove, 500 g sugar.

Peel the pears, leaving them whole with the stalk still attached, and place in a pan along with the sugar, cinnamon, clove and wine. Cook over a high heat for about 20 minutes or until the pears have taken on the colour of the wine. Then lower the heat, put the lid on the pan and simmer until the wine has reduced.

The pears can be served either warm or cold.

Bars and restaurants

This varied Riojan cuisine is showcased proudly in our bars and restaurants the length and breadth of La Rioja. In some places, such as the famous **Calle Laurel** in Logroño, one of the most popular streets with tourists and locals alike, and the less well-known **Calle San Juan**, you'll find a bar behind every door and a speciality in every bar. The names of these **pinchos**, miniature creations of haute cuisine, are almost as fun as they are delicious: matrimonios (wedded couples), zapatillas (slippers), cojonudos (awesomes), Tío Agus (Uncle Agus), calzoncillos (underpants)... you'd need a lifetime to try them all. Ask the locals, all of whom will have their personal favourite.



Marinated pork kebabs, button mushrooms, potatoes in spicy mayo, 'cojonudos', cuttlefish, cured pork... there is a stunning variety of Riojan tapas.

Riojan **restaurants** are also worthy of their fame. From the home-style cooking of your everyday bar to the sophisticated creations of internationally-acclaimed chefs featured in good food guides, there is something to suit every taste, time of day and budget; and always with that unique alliance with **one of the finest wines in the world**, which in La Rioja are meticulously selected and served based on the knowledge and experience amassed by the professionals in the Riojan hospitality industry.

A trip to La Rioja is a real treat for the senses. **Enjoy!**



Millefeuilles of potato and chorizo.