

## Vegetable Paella Pete's Recipe



For years, I have been making traditional paella with seafood. Probably 27 years ago when we were first together, I asked Julia Anne if there was one thing that she wanted for dinner that night, what would it be. She said she wanted the paella from Spain Restaurant in Narragansett. I just happened to find a recipe for it and made it that night. I kept adjusting it over the years to my own style and liking until it became a staple here, especially for entertaining.

Over the past few years, we have discussed making a vegetarian version of paella. I found a good recipe in Cook's Illustrated that I began working with and modifying. It features browned cauliflower, green beans, butter beans, red pepper and traditional spices including saffron and smoked paprika. It really isn't too complicated although the flavor suggests otherwise. I use a 12-inch skillet instead of my paella pan although that would work also.

### INGREDIENTS:

Extra virgin olive oil

1 head of cauliflower, cut into 2" pieces

6 ounces green beans, trimmed and cut into 2" pieces

1 red bell pepper, cleaned and chopped

2 tablespoons tomato paste

4 garlic cloves minced

2 teaspoons smoked paprika

½ teaspoon saffron threads

¼ cup dry sherry

1 cup arborio rice

1 15 oz can butter beans

4 cups vegetable broth

1. Heat 2 tablespoons oil and some salt and skillet and brown the cauliflower for about 5 minutes. It should have a nice coating on it. Add the green beans and cook them a few minutes until they get a dark green color.
2. Heat 2 more tablespoons of oil and cook the pepper for 5 minutes. Add the tomato paste and cook, stirring constantly for about a minute. Add the garlic, paprika and saffron for another minute then add the sherry. It will evaporate and form clumps, maybe 2 minutes.
3. Add the rice and mix well. Take it off the heat and smooth it out. Scatter the butter beans on top and then top with the cauliflower and green beans. Pour the veggie broth over the mixture and make sure rice is submerged (don't worry if some veggies are sticking out).
4. Bring the dish to a boil and then lower to a simmer. Cook until the liquid is just below the top of rice, maybe 15 minutes. Then cover the pan for about 5 more minutes. Do not stir the rice (one of my major issues in life if you ask Julia Anne). Remove the lid and cook until all the moisture is gone, maybe another 5 minutes (the rice will begin to sizzle and pop). You can cook it a little longer if you want to get the traditional socarrat on the bottom (the crusty brown layer on the bottom of the pan).
5. Let the dish sit for 5 minutes off the heat before serving. Serve with lemon wedges.