

Three Vegetarian Tapas

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These tapas were inspired by Gerry Dawes, a great writer and connoisseur of Spanish wines. The vegetarian aspect is, for better or worse, my own. These can hardly be called recipes, since they're so simple, but that means that the quality of ingredients is everything.

Tapas #1 Potatoes:

4 medium Yukon Gold potatoes

Spanish extra virgin olive oil (we use a Siurana unfiltered)

salt (we use Fleur de Sel)

fresh ground pepper

Wash the spuds, halve them, then boil until almost but not quite tender. Have them again (to make quarters), toss with oil, and cool a bit (5-10 minutes). Place on a cookie sheet, sprinkle with salt and pepper, then bake at 450° for about 10 minutes, or until they begin to brown.

Tapas #2 Piquillos:

2 jars roasted and peeled Spanish piquillo peppers

2-3 tbs Spanish olive oil

3 cloves garlic (red garlic if possible)

1/2 c oloroso sherry

salt (as above)

After observing the price of the piquillos, pick yourself up off the floor. Peel and slice the garlic thinly.

Cut the piquillos into strips about 3/4" wide. Heat the oil in a saute pan, then add the garlic. Saute until the slices just barely begin to brown, then add the sherry. Flame it and reduce by half. Toss in the piquillo strips, stir, then plate and salt to taste (be VERY sparing). Taste and assure yourself that the price of the peppers was worth it.

Tapas #3 Garbanzos:

8 oz can garbanzos, drained and rinsed OR
1-1/2 c cooked garbanzos, cooled
3 tbs Spanish olive oil
1 sweet onion (we use Walla-Walla when available)
1-2 ripe tomatoes, depending on size
2 cloves garlic, peeled and sliced
1/4 c dry white wine
1 tbs fresh rosemary, chopped
1 tsp fresh thyme leaves
salt and pepper

While heating the olive oil in a saute pan, peel and slice the onion thinly. Peel and seed the tomatoes, then cut into 3/4" dice. Saute the onion until it barely shows some brown, then add the tomatoes and garlic.

Cook until the tomatoes look wilted, then deglaze with the white wine. Add the herbs and the garbanzos, then cook until the liquid has turned to a syrupy glaze. Remove from heat, drizzle with a bit more olive oil, then salt and pepper to taste. This tapa works very well served over a thick slice of toasted country-style bread.

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