

Tapas - A Spanish Tradition

The origins of the famous Spanish tradition of **TAPAS** are a subject of much debate, but it is known that King Felipe II insisted that all tavern owners serve a *tapa* with each glass of wine to reduce drunkenness. The word 'tapa' means 'lid' or 'covering' and customers were invited to try these tasty morsels. What they did not realise was that extra salt was added to encourage another glass of wine! In modern times less salt is added but a charge is made for tapas; they are still a tasty and reasonably priced way to try a variety of the local dishes. In most bars and taverns the tapas are arranged on the counter so you can see what's available or displayed on a blackboard behind the bar. If you enjoy a particular tapa you can order a '*ración*' of it, and it will be served as a main course with fresh bread and a mixed salad. Tapas vary from bar to bar but these are some of the more common:

Albondigas	Home made meatballs cooked in a tomato and herb sauce
Boquerones en Vinagre	Fresh anchovies marinated in oil, garlic and vinegar. The best anchovies are caught off Estepona
Carne con Tomate	Diced pork cooked in a thick tomato sauce
Ensaladilla Russa	A cold dish of mashed potato, tuna, peppers and mixed vegetables bound with mayonnaise
Gambas a la Plancha	Large unpeeled prawns cooked on a hot plate with salt
Habas y Jamon	Large broad beans fried with small chunks of cured ham
Pinchitos	Marinated spicy pork or chicken cooked on skewers and served with peppers and onion
Sardinas	Freshly cooked sardines, normally cooked on a hot plate with salt or, in the chiringuitos (beach bars), barbequed on a wooden spit and served with fresh bread
Tortilla Española	Potatoes, onion and garlic fried in an omelette

Other tapas may be available, it's well worth *shopping around*:

Aceitunas	Olives	Chorizo	Spicy sausage
Escalibaba	Aubergine salad	Cocido	Stew
Anchoas	Anchovies	Mejillones	Mussels
Gambas	Shrimp	Navajas	Razor clams
Berberechos	Cockles	Patatas alli olli	Potatoes in mayonnaise
Habas	Beans	Patatas bravas	Spicy potatoes
Calamares	Squid	Pimientos	Peppers
Higado	Liver	Pincho muruno	Kebab
Callos	Tripe	Pulpo	Octopus
Huevo cocido	Hard boiled egg	Riñones al jerez	Kidneys in sherry
Caracoles	Snails	Salchichón	Salami
Jamón serrano	Dried ham	Sepia	Cuttlefish
Carne en salsa	Meat in tomato sauce	Garbanzos	Chickpeas
Jamón York	Cooked ham	Tortilla Francesca	Plain omelette
Champiñones	Mushrooms	Empanadilla	Fish or meat pastry