



ACADEMIA
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GASTRONOMÍA

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OF EXTREMADURA



el **ATRIL**

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THE ACADEMY
NEWS
by Francisco Saúco



WINE OF
THE MONTH
by Marcelino Díaz

Days of
celebration and
remembrance
at the **Academy**

RED WINE

Mastines 2018
Garnacha Tintorera

Pago Los Balancines Winery

Paraje de la Agraria, s/n
Oliva de Mérida (Badajoz)



TOURISM AND
GASTRONOMY
by Francisco Rivero



SIGNED BY
Fernando Valbuena

The **Jerte**
Valley

One of the best-known places in
Extremadura, so it's no surprise that
since 1973 it has been considered a Site...

Ferrera
Salad

The tradition of pairing dishes with
famous figures goes back a long way.
Beef Wellington (Waterloo in between)...

Bye bye Summer!
Welcome Duchess!



SHAKEN,
NOT STIRRED
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Pago los
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where the **land**
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TRAVELLING
GOURMET
by Antonio Macías

In Rota there
are "Cositas
Buenas"





Days of celebration and remembrance at the Academy

Celebrations and commemorations are approaching: today, 8 September, is the **Extremadura Day** and with it we **celebrate** how proud we are of our land... and, of course, the well-deserved **Medal of Extremadura** that was awarded last night to our friend and fellow academic Marcelino Díaz at the gala that took place in Mérida.

Marcelino Díaz González, a winegrower and agricultural engineer, was a pioneer in the production of Cava in Almendralejo since the early 1980s. In 1982-1983, together with **Pablo Juárez** and **Aniceto Mesías**, he began producing Cava in the region, something that was only permitted in Catalonia at the time. Overcoming significant legal and administrative difficulties, his perseverance led to a historic ruling by the Supreme Court in 1987 that allowed the '**Cava**' Designation of Origin to be extended to the municipality of Almendralejo.

Since then, Marcelino Díaz's winery has achieved national and international prestige, and he himself has promoted initiatives such as the **Almendralejo Cava Museum** - the first of its kind in Spain - which opened in March 2025.

But it will also be a **nostalgic day**, as one of the '**Three Musketeers**' of Extremadura Cava, **Aniceto Mesías Iglesias**, passed away just a few days ago. With his departure, we cannot fail to **remember all the illustrious academics who are no longer with us.**

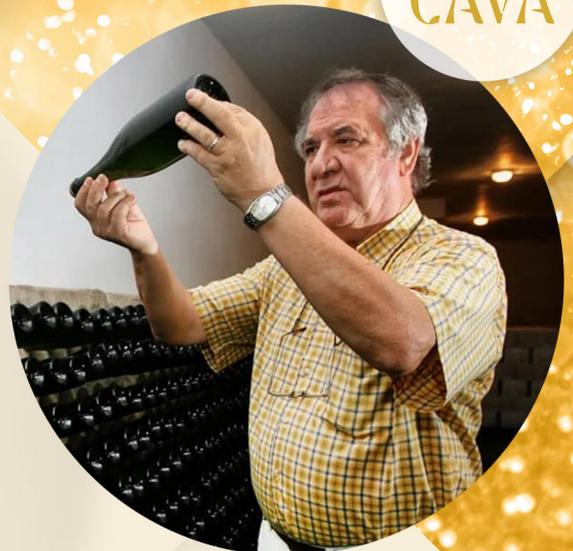


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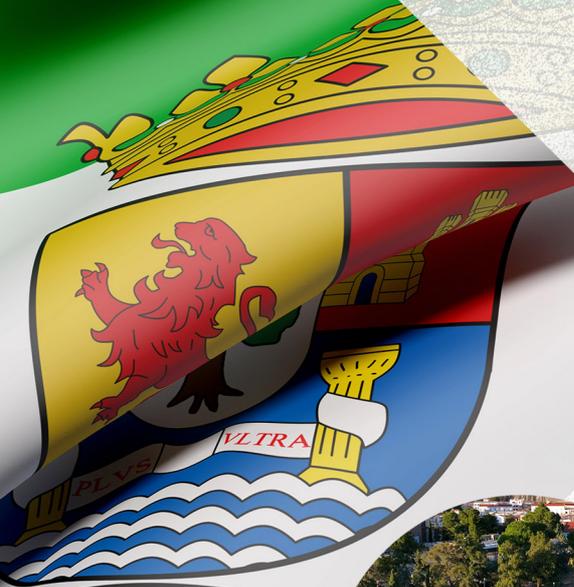
Aniceto Mesías

D.O.
CAVA



*1 Tasting of the **first bottle of Extremaduran cava** (**Pablo Juárez**, journalist J.M. Pagador and **Aniceto Mesías**).

Let's raise a glass to **Extremadura...**
with **Extremaduran Cava!**



We are **restarting all the machines** at the Academy, reactivating our projects with great enthusiasm for this new season that is beginning... but also looking back with **pride at the path we have travelled.**

The **fateful month of August** is still fresh in our minds, with fires that devastated natural enclaves, homes and farms, the hearts of Extremadura. In the face of this, we must **defend even more strongly** the image of **our region** as a **tourist, cultural and natural destination.** Our heritage, our gastronomy, our hospitality and our charm with visitors must continue to be the hallmarks of Extremadura's potential as a benchmark enclave on the national tourism scene.

So let us **remember**, yes. But above all, let us **celebrate our worth**, defend our treasures and show the world our region with more pride than ever. We will continue to do so from the Extremaduran Academy of Gastronomy, not only from a gastronomic perspective, but in all the wonderful manifestations of our land.

Because **the Academy will continue to contribute to Extremadura** with a wide variety of activities: AEXG **tastings, meals** for Academicians and Friends of the AEXG, **gastronomic round-table discussions**, visits to Extremaduran wineries, **participation in regional and national gastronomic events** and, every year, presenting the **AEXG Extremadura Gastronomy Awards** in recognition of the best individuals and organisations dedicated to the cause of Extremadura... like us.

Happy return!

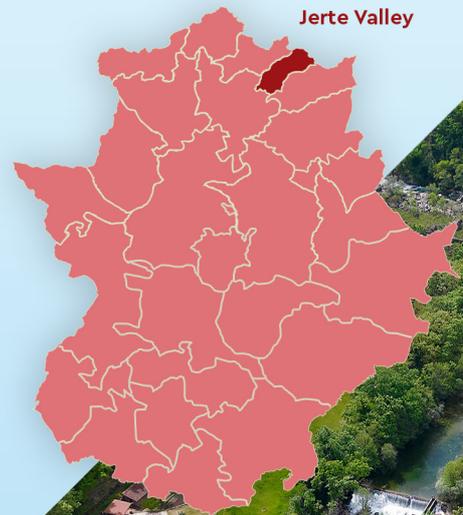
Francisco Saúco

President of the
Academia Extremeña de Gastronomía



TOURISM AND GASTRONOMY
by Francisco Rivero

Jerte Valley



The Jerte Valley

One of the best-known places in Extremadura; it is no surprise that since 1973 it has been considered a **Site of Cultural Interest** and one of the most attractive festivals in Spain: the **Cherry Blossom Festival** (el **Cerezo en Flor**), a festival that I have had the honour of collaborating on from my position in the Secretary of State for Tourism and as a journalist specialising in tourism, which was declared a **Festival of National Tourist Interest**.

The valley comprises **eleven villages**: **Barrado**, **Cabezuela del Valle**, **Cabrero**, **Casas del Castañar**, **El Torno**, **Jerte**, **Navaconcejo**, **Piornal**, **Rebollar**, **Tornavacas** and **Valdastillas**. But what undoubtedly gives this area of Extremadura its unique character is the **1.5 million** cherry trees in bloom during the month of March and their rich production, which in the 2025 season amounted to 300,000 kilos of cherries and one million kilos of **picota cherries**, the **native variety**, which is very popular in national and international markets and is used to make delicious dishes.

Thousands and thousands of nature lovers come to this region of Extremadura to stroll among the cherry blossoms, go **hiking**, bathe in its **gorges** and **pools**, sample its rich **cuisine** and enjoy such attractive places as its beautiful mountain villages. Many Japanese people living in Spain also come here, as the cherry tree is their national tree.



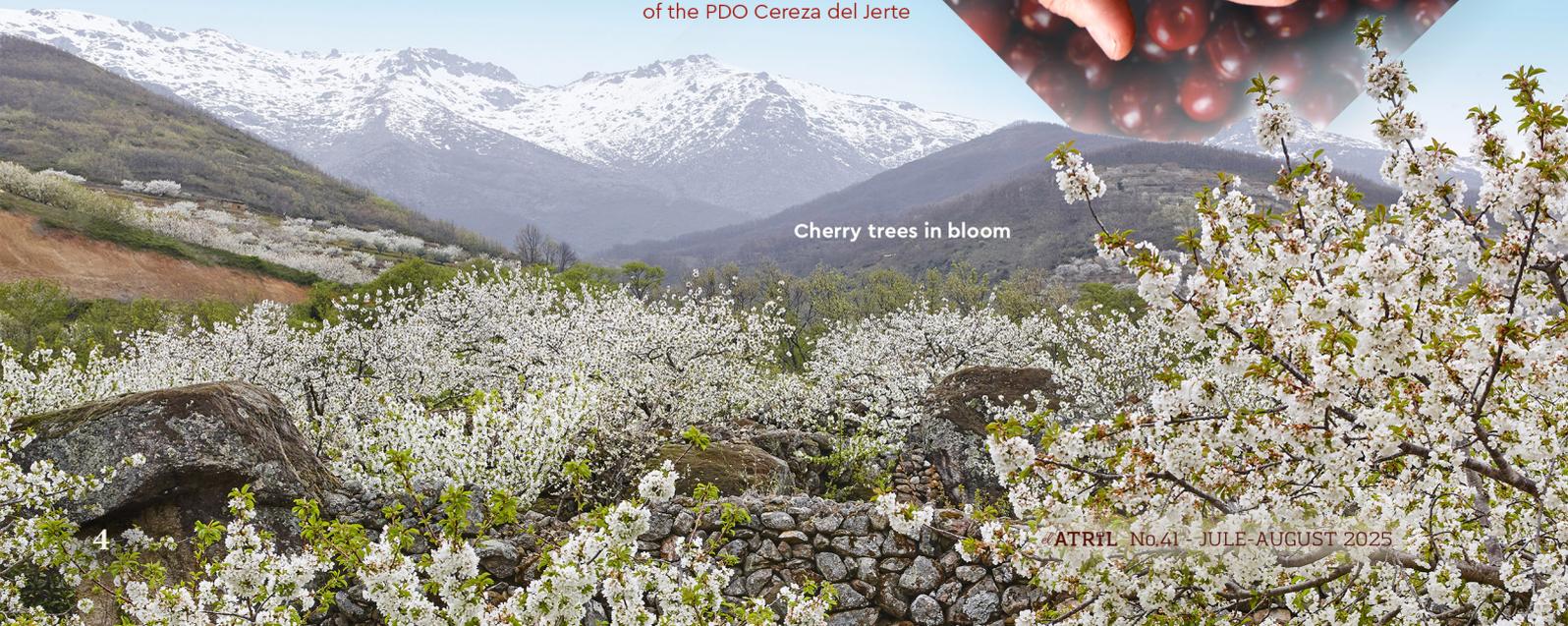
Hell's Gorge



Caozo Waterfall



Picota del Jerte, variety of the PDO Cereza del Jerte



Cherry trees in bloom

Teresa Núñez,
chef at **Garza Real**

Memorial
Viewpoint
in El Torno



The **Jerte Valley Gastronomic Days** were held this year from 31 May to 20 July in local restaurants, where chefs and cooks reinterpreted the region's most prized fruit through **innovative and traditional dishes**. A delicious way to get to know the region through its most representative flavours in recipes as intriguing as baby squid on toast with cherry ink and confit cod with sautéed vegetables and cherries, by chef **Teresa Núñez** from the **Garza Real** restaurant; cherry salmorejo and caramelised apple toast with confit cod and saffron sauce and cherry toffee, cooked by **Rosa**, from the **Pico Negro** restaurant in the Valle del Jerte spa; or beef sirloin with cherry sauce, prepared by **Guadalupe Nieto** from the **Sabores del Jerte** restaurant.

All the villages are very attractive, but special attention should be paid to the historic site of **Cabezuela del Valle**, declared a **Site of Cultural Interest** in April 1998. It is a network of narrow streets with houses built in the traditional style of the area, with wooden balconies and overhangs, although there are also several manor houses with stone facades and family coats of arms.

Finally, we must not forget some of the **unique festivals** in the valley that have been declared of National Tourist Interest, such as the aforementioned Cherry Blossom Festival and the **Jarramplas** Festival, in honour of Saint Sebastian in **Piornal**, the highest village in Extremadura, at 1,175 metres. **El Torno**, a village on the western slope of the Jerte Valley, has the unique **Mirador de la Memoria (Memorial Viewpoint)**, in memory of those who died in the uncivil Spanish Civil War, as well as its unique **huts**, some of which have now been refurbished as rural tourist lodges.

Francisco Rivero

Academician of the AEXG
PhD in Tourism
Chronicler of Las Brozas and Hinojal



The Pylons



Rosa, chef at
Pico Negro



Cabezuela
del Valle



Guadalupe Nieto,
chef at **Sabores
del Jerte**





SHAKEN, NOT STIRRED

by Alfonso Ramos



The salad: The summer duchess presides over our table

Summer, which naturally has only a few days left before leaving us, continues on its course. However, this suffocating heat shows no sign of letting up, which is why our bodies continue to crave fresh, simple dishes... and that's where **summer duchesses**, or **salads**, come in. There are four reasons for such an ostentatious noble title: they are **fresh, healthy, easy to prepare**, and always **delicious**.

A salad is, in general terms, a dish that combines **cold greens** (such as lettuce, arugula, or spinach) and **various chopped vegetables, mixed and dressed** –mainly with salt, vegetable oil, and vinegar– to which **other foods** are often added. There are many different recipes from cuisines around the world, so it is really a **family of dishes**. They can be served as a single dish, a first course, before or after the main course, and on many occasions as a side dish.

The vegetables are usually raw, although in many recipes they are cooked, such as in **Russian salad**. They are generally considered raw vegan dishes (no animal products), although there are many exceptions to this. Examples of salads include **salpicón, pipirrana, fattush, Caesar salad, solterito, caprese salad, golbaengi muchim, Niçoise salad, Waldorf salad, asinan, empedrat, seven-layer salad, wurstsalat, and tabbouleh**, to name a few. Although it is considered a cold dish, there are notable exceptions, such as **German potato salad**.

Etymology

The origin of salad dates back to ancient times, with roots in **Persia, Egypt and Greece**. The first evidence of salad consumption dates back more than **2,500 years**, when these civilizations mixed **raw vegetables with salt** to reduce their acidity and oil.

The word "salad" comes from the Latin *salata*, a shortened form of the term *herba salata*, which means "**salted herbs**." Salt is associated with salad because vegetables were **seasoned with brine** (a solution of salt in water) or **salty dressings of oil and vinegar** during **Roman times**. In fact, in Ancient Rome, vegetables dressed with salt water were a popular dish.





According to the RAE (Royal Spanish Academy), a salad is “a vegetable or combination of vegetables, cut into pieces and dressed with salt, oil, vinegar and other ingredients.”

Origins and evolution

Ancient times.

The Persians and Egyptians were pioneers in the consumption of salads, using fresh vegetables that they grew (such as lettuce) and dressing them with salt, oil, and vinegar.

Ancient Rome and Greece.

The Greeks and Romans attributed therapeutic properties to them, convinced that their juice protected the stomach. For this reason, they always included them at the beginning and end of feasts. The Romans popularized their name and consumed raw vegetables with water and salt. The Greeks, for their part, added nuts, honey and cheese to the vegetables.

Middle Ages.

With the fall of the Roman Empire and the arrival of the barbarians, salads lost popularity in Europe. It was during this period that the Muslims took up the baton and managed to revive them.

Renaissance.

Salads returned to become a common dish at banquets and meals, with the addition of other ingredients such as fruit, cheese and meat.

Modern Era.

Salads have evolved and diversified, adapting to different cultures and cuisines. Furthermore, professionalization and excellence in cooking have given rise to authentic culinary gems. But globalization and digital media have also served to democratize and disseminate the world's heritage, including the enormous diversity of ingredients and dressings that, mixed at will, have given rise to a multitude of new salads. Some are based on world-famous recipes or the culinary heritage of specific places; others are driven by creativity.

In short, salad is a dish with a long history; it began as a simple dressing of vegetables with salt and has evolved into the complex culinary creations we know today, as well as a vast array of new daily variations that we share every day thanks to digital connectivity.

Be that as it may, the fact is that today we have such a diversity of salads that we could be tasting them every day for a whole year without repeating a dish.



Classification

Salads can be classified into **several types** according to their ingredients or preparation. **Generally**, there are three main categories: simple, mixed, and composite. **Simple** salads contain a **single main ingredient**, while **mixed** salads combine **several ingredients**. **Compound** salads are those that require **more preparation and creativity** in combining ingredients. However, we provide four types of classification, including the one already mentioned:

Number of ingredients/complexity

- **Simple salads.** These have a single main ingredient with dressing: tomato salad.
- **Mixed salads.** Made with two or more ingredients: lettuce and tomato salad.
- **Compound salads.** These require more preparation, with varied ingredients and complex dressings: Waldorf salad.

Type of ingredients

- **Green salads.** These contain green leaves as a base, such as lettuce, spinach, arugula, kale.
- **Fruit salads.** Incorporate fresh fruit, often dressed with vegetable creams or yogurt.
- **Legume salads.** As the name suggests, the main ingredient is legumes: lentils, chickpeas, beans...
- **Grain salads.** Use grains such as quinoa, bulgur, or rice.
- **Pasta salads.** Made with different types of pasta.

Preparation

- **Garden salads.** The most typical salads, made exclusively with produce from the garden; their main ingredient is leafy greens. An example of a garden salad is the salad pictured here.
- **Salad mixes.** Their ingredients are finely chopped and mixed with a thick sauce, such as mayonnaise. An example is egg salad.

Other classifications

- **Warm salads.** A hot ingredient or warm vinaigrette is added at the end.
- **Signature/contemporary salads.** These are creative combinations using innovative ingredients.



Dressings

Dressings are essential in many dishes, sometimes even more so than the ingredients themselves.

They are key components in salads, both in their unifying role (whether due to quantity or diversity of elements) and in the arduous task of being the main melody in those “simple compositions of few and gentle instruments.” such as the case in ancient times, when a salad was nothing more than grass (a few years ago, The New York Times named Via Carota's insalata verde “the best salad in the world,” whose ingredients were nothing more than different types of green leaves, whose treatment in preparation—water—and dressing were and are the key to its success).

Traditional dressing and its elements.

Although we now find a wide range of dressings to season a salad and bring the ingredients together, the so-called “traditional” dressing is made with oil, vinegar, and salt (vinaigrette), with a popular saying in French cuisine: “to make a good salad, you have to be stingy with the vinegar, generous with the oil, moderate with the salt, and crazy about mixing it all together.” As for the order of these ingredients, to intensify their flavor, it is important to add the salt first, then the vinegar, and finally the oil. Let's talk a little about each one:

· **Salt.** The raison d'être of a salad, its original dressing. The best salt for salads is one that you like and that complements the flavor of your salad ingredients. Sea salts—fleur de sel, Maldon salt—and Himalayan salts are popular choices for their texture and flavor, but table salt is also a good option. In terms of texture, coarse salt, such as fleur de sel, can add a crunchy touch and a more intense flavor to the salad, especially if added just before serving. Fine salt dissolves more easily and is ideal for mixing with the ingredients.

· **Oil.** In Spain, we always, or almost always, use extra virgin olive oil, although we tend to use oils that are not bitter or whose flavor does not overpower the salad. Hojiblanca, Arbequina, Cornicabra, and Empeltre oils are exquisite, as is Picual oil when it is mild (such as the one from Baena). It is preferable not to use certain picual oils because of their excessive bitterness, which makes them ideal for frying in this case.

· **Vinager.** In Spain, white wine or red wine vinegar has been used par excellence for everyday use, depending on the region, as well as sherry vinegar on special occasions. Other vinegars are becoming increasingly popular, such as cider vinegar, balsamic vinegar from Modena, sweet wine vinegars (Pedro Ximénez, muscatel, port), raspberry vinegar, rice vinegar, etc. Recently, lemon has been used as an acidulant. Although it is not a bad dressing, most of the time it is used due to the false belief that salad dressed with lemon is less fattening than salad dressed with vinegar. This misconception probably stems from the numerous weight-loss diets that make this substitution, most likely to provide vitamins rather than because of the difference in calories between lemon juice and any type of vinegar. So, for goodness' sake, let's use vinegar!

Vinaigrette. A common type of dressing, which in its most basic form consists of whisking together oil and vinegar with a little ground pepper, although it can have multiple additions: yogurt (ideal for fruit salads), chopped gherkins—in vinegar or sweet and sour—chopped onion, chopped hard-boiled egg, parsley, aromatic herbs (basil, mint, cilantro)...

Mayonnaise, creams, and sauces. Another common dressing is mayonnaise and its derivatives: tartar sauce, cocktail sauce, mustard sauce... In this regard, yogurt vinaigrette works perfectly as a sauce, being lighter and healthier than a traditional sauce (ideal for evening salads on a weekday).





10 of each... MOST POPULARS

Olivier salad: Russian salad. Very popular in Spain and other countries, it is a typical dish for tapas, family gatherings, and summer parties due to its freshness and versatility. Its basic ingredients are boiled potatoes, carrots, peas, and mayonnaise. It also usually contains tuna, hard-boiled eggs, gherkins, or other variations depending on the region and taste.

It originated in Russia in the 19th century with a recipe by French chef Lucien Olivier in Moscow, which is why in many countries it is also known as Olivier salad. The current version is simpler.

Waldorf salad. Created in the late 19th century by Oscar Tschirky, maître at the newly opened Waldorf Hotel in New York. Originally, it consisted of only three ingredients: mayonnaise, celery, and apple. It was very well received by the wealthiest classes of the time who visited the hotel and became a star dish. Currently, its main ingredients are tart apples, lettuce, celery, walnuts, and raisins, in addition to the aforementioned sauce as a dressing.

Caesar salad. The globalized version has little to do with the original recipe, which originated in Tijuana, Mexico, in 1924. Does it contain chicken? And anchovies? Well, neither: chicken breast was added later, when the recipe began to gain popularity in the 1940s; the anchovy flavor, on the other hand, comes from the Worcester or Worcestershire sauce in the original dressing. You can also find a version with spinach instead of romaine lettuce, or with smoked salmon.

Tabbouleh. Most commonly eaten in summer in Arab countries, although its delicate flavors have made it popular all over the world. It is made with couscous, tomato, spring onion, and arugula; it also contains herbs such as cilantro, parsley, and mint, and is dressed with lemon juice, oil, and salt.

Caprese salad. The most classic and simple to prepare, this salad comes to us from Italy, with the colors of its tricolor flag. Originally from Capri, this salad's main ingredients are fresh tomatoes, buffalo mozzarella, and basil.

Coleslaw or cabbage salad. Its main ingredients are cabbage (red and white), carrots, and onions, as well as a dressing that combines mayonnaise with mustard, vinegar, honey, salt, and pepper.

Horiatiki Salata: Greek salad. A staple of Mediterranean cuisine, it is made with typical summer garden produce: tomatoes, cucumbers, onions, Kalamata olives, and feta cheese. It is dressed with a vinaigrette made with olive oil, lemon juice, oregano, and garlic.

Kartoffelsalt: German potato salad. It dates back to the 18th century, when potatoes arrived in Germany as food for aristocrats and nobles. At first, the peasants refused to grow something that grew underground, so Frederick the Great forced them to do so by decree. As for ingredients, potatoes are accompanied by Frankfurters (or bacon), pickles, and onions. Everything is mixed with aromatic herbs and a mayonnaise-based sauce. It is very filling, making it ideal as a single dish.

Niçoise salad. Another French salad that has crossed borders, originating in Nice, it consists of boiled potatoes, green beans, egg, tomatoes, lettuce, and canned tuna, dressed with a mustard vinaigrette.

Mimosa salad. A close cousin of Russian salad, it owes its name to the mimosa flower, which is a yellow color very similar to that of egg yolk, one of the main ingredients in this recipe.





10 of each...

ORIGINAL SALADS

Salmon, feta cheese, and avocado salad.

Simple to make, quick, and healthy, this salad is a fresh and light combination of lamb's lettuce, smoked salmon, creamy avocado, and feta cheese. It is dressed with EVOO, pepper, and salt, providing a balance between fat and salt. Delicious.

Colorful cold pasta salad. A nutritious and complete salad with radiatore pasta, fruit (strawberries, blueberries, avocado), nuts, and fresh cheese. It is dressed with EVOO and balsamic vinegar, achieving a sweet, sour, and crunchy contrast.

Eggplant and spinach salad. A Mediterranean dish with roasted eggplant, baby spinach, sun-dried tomatoes, olives, and pistachios. Topped with a creamy dressing of yogurt, garlic, oregano, and lemon, which adds Mediterranean freshness.

Chickpea salad. Very complete, filling and protein-rich, it combines legumes with fresh vegetables, tuna and black olives. It is enhanced with a classic vinaigrette of oil, vinegar, salt and pepper. Our Portuguese neighbors love this salad and it can be found in countless places, mainly in the Alentejo region.

Cherry tomato, Payoyo cheese, and anchovy salad. Miriam Rodríguez Prieto, chef at **Venta La Duquesa** (Medina Sidonia) and creator of this original salad, calls the dish "Explosion of Flavors." It is a revamped version of three ingredients that have always gone well together: tomatoes, cheese, and anchovies. A creative dish that combines yellow cherry tomatoes with Payoyo cream cheese and Cantabrian anchovies. It is rounded off with spices and sprouts, offering an intense and refined blend.

Apple and surimi salad. Fresh and crunchy, it combines the acidity of apple, the freshness of cucumber, the texture of corn, and the marine touch of surimi. It also contains boiled egg and is dressed with honey, lemon, oil, and apple cider vinegar, creating a sweet-sour contrast.

Chicken salad with aloe vera sauce. With a base of iceberg lettuce and cooked chicken flavored with bay leaf, garlic, and oregano, this delicious salad is accompanied by an original aloe vera dressing with cilantro, lime, tomato, and zucchini, which adds freshness and an exotic touch to the dish.

Tuna tataki, seaweed, and mojama salad. A sophisticated dish with marinated tuna tataki, wakame seaweed, shrimp, mojama, and mixed lettuce. It is topped with avocado, mango, and sesame seeds, achieving a balance between marine and fruity flavors.

Couscous, mango and mint salad. Light and refreshing, it combines couscous with mango, cucumber, red onion and shrimp. Mint and EVOO enhance the contrast between sweet, fresh and salty flavors. Undoubtedly surprising to the palate due to its diversity of flavors.

Tomato, roasted pepper, and goat cheese salad ("Quilla"). This salad is called "Quilla," after the restaurant where it is usually served. The recipe is by Maribel Téllez, owner of the establishment, and is based on the *asadillo manchego*, a recipe from her homeland, La Mancha. The original recipe is actually her mother's, although she has added some innovations, such as goat cheese. It combines tomatoes from Conil, roasted peppers, black olives, and goat cheese. The dressing of EVOO, sherry vinegar, and cumin adds a traditional and aromatic touch.





10 of each...

5 CLASSIC EXTREMADURAN SALADS

Extremaduran zorongollo. This is a salad made with roasted peppers and tomatoes dressed with their own juices, olive oil, and garlic. It is typical of the region of La Vera (Cáceres), where the main ingredient of this dish, red peppers, are grown. Zorongollo extremeño is usually served as an accompaniment to roasted meats such as lamb, as well as fish, although it is also often eaten simply as a starter, in which case hard-boiled egg or ventresca (tuna belly) is added.

Hurdana salad. Originally, it was a luxurious breakfast, typical of regional festivals, although it was also a dish made from leftovers, combining the products offered by the land. Its ingredients are oranges, lemons, chorizo, and eggs, dressed with EVOO and La Vera paprika. Do you think the mixture of sour, salty, and sweet flavors is eclectic and meaningless? Try it, because you will be pleasantly surprised.

Cojondongo. El cojondongo de gañán es un plato 100% vegetariano, fresco y ligero. Comida de agricultores y pastores en tiempos pasados, hoy se toma sobre todo en la comarca de Tierra de Barros (Badajoz), y es un ejemplo vivo de la mejor cocina popular extremeña. Sus ingredientes lo emparentan claramente con el gazpacho, pero a diferencia de la sopa fría andaluza, aquí los tomates y el pimiento no se majan ni se trituran. Por eso lo llamamos "ensalada", aunque se pueda tomar tranquilamente con cuchara. Nosotros hemos optado por una versión ligera, el pimiento suavizado con un ligero encurtido y poco ajo.

Escarapuche. A great unknown outside the borders of Extremadura. Perfect for summer and originating in the region of La Siberia (specifically, Pelosche), this dish is nothing more than a salad made from leftovers, as could not be otherwise, given the land we are in. A humble summer mince with two products from the garden: tomatoes and onions, plus the fish that the river offered for free. The original recipe is with fish: tench, carp, barbel, shad, albure, trout... As María Inés Chamorro Fernández writes in her book *Tradiciones, alimentos y recetas de la cocina extremeña* (Traditions, foods, and recipes of Extremaduran cuisine), any of these fish "are roasted without scaling over charcoal embers. When they are browned on both sides, the scales and bones are removed. The final touch to this Extremaduran salad is that, after cleaning and cutting the fish into pieces, tomato and onion are added and left to marinate in a good vinegar. The modern version of escarapuche replaces river fish with grilled pork. A simple but very tasty dish, the key to which is the smoky flavor of the meat or fish and the quality of the strong and tasty vinegar, although not excessive..

Macarraca. This is an old dish, little or unknown today. It is part of the traditional Extremaduran recipe book, a humble food that harvesters used to eat mid-morning; the predecessor of today's Extremaduran gazpacho. Its ingredients are quite basic: tomatoes, peppers, onions, garlic, vinegar, oil, and salt. It is also simple to make: chop the tomatoes into small pieces, add a little of each ingredient, and finally dress the salad with a dash of vinegar, oil, and a little salt.



10 of each...

5 MODERN EXTREMADURAN SALADS

Live lettuce, smoked cod, and citrus fruits, from Miga. **Andrea Irigoyen**, head chef at Miga in Cáceres, explains the meaning of the term "live lettuce," which refers to lettuce grown without soil, using hydroponic systems, and which arrives at the restaurant still with its roots intact: "We don't remove the roots until we're ready to use it, so it's still alive. This makes it very tender and gives it super smooth leaves," she describes. She also assures us that it "tastes like lettuce," that real flavor of food that is so sorely missed these days.

To create this dish, he was inspired by Hurdana salads, taking them one step further: it includes freshly cut grapefruit, lime, and orange segments, smoked cod, and a coconut milk vinaigrette, which gives it a slight Thai touch. He rounds off the dish with sun-dried tomatoes, red onion, and tart apple, resulting in a very fresh, crunchy salad in which the citrus fruits combine perfectly with the saltiness of the cod.

Tomato salad, from Achiperre. We also find a different kind of salad in Cáceres. **José Moreno**, one of the owners of Achiperre, explains that when they were putting together the summer menu, they wanted to add a dish featuring tomatoes... and it has become an ode with three different textures! The base is a roasted tomato cream. On top of that, oven-dried tomatoes, later rehydrated in oil with thyme and oregano. Finally, a high-quality tomato, peeled, sliced, and seasoned with salt, garlic, parsley, and "good oil." This holy trinity of tomatoes is topped with basil leaves and oil and a little Chinese chive, which adds a fresh and crunchy touch.

Watermelon without rules, from Metamorfosis.

At this restaurant in Valdencín (Cáceres), chef **Pablo Miguel**, tells us how he made watermelon the star of this dish: "I wanted to make a fresh salad with seasonal fruit, but without the sweet touch. In other words, I wanted a salad, not a dessert." So, in search of that salty touch, he marinated the watermelon in salt and sugar. The result is very similar to tuna meat: crunchy but soft, salty but with a hint of sweetness and without losing the flavor of the watermelon. He then grills it, giving it a smoky flavor, and accompanies it with Granny Smith green apples and seedless grapes seasoned with salt and pepper.

Live lettuce
from Miga



In the center, a citrus mascarpone quenelle sprinkled with chives and microgreens (carrots, broccoli, radish, etc.). The final step is to drizzle everything with a little clarified tomato water. In short, a salad with various preparations resulting from six or seven previous trials, until the perfect balance between sweet, salty, and sour was found (the vinegar, for example, is made from rice, which adds greater subtlety and does not enhance the flavor as much as apple vinegar does).

Prawn salad, from La Taberna de Noa.

Rocío Maya, chef at this restaurant located in Fuentes de León, Badajoz, is passionate about culinary competitions. This is logical, as her creations always make it to the podium.

Her grandfather Cesáreo's salad, in particular, was **runner-up** in the "Desafío WOOE Campo y Alma 2025" competition at the World Olive Oil Exhibition, held at IFEMA. "He was a tailor, but what he liked most was cooking. He was always eager to finish sewing so he could get into the kitchen", he recalls. He made the typical **shrimp salad**, which the restaurant has given a **twist in terms of preparation and presentation**.

The salad starts with a fine cream made with red pepper, onion, tomato, lettuce, and mayonnaise. Rocío blends everything raw and passes it through a cheesecloth, so that the liquid is released and a silky texture remains, similar to that of salmorejo.

To accompany it, she torches some prawns and uses the heads to make a very strong mayonnaise. She also texturizes olive oil with maltodextrin until it becomes a light powder, like icing sugar, which she uses to finish the dish. She decorates it with cilantro and fennel leaves, an herb that is important to this chef: "My grandfather always asked me to pick a sprig for him when we were walking along the road. It's a tribute to him."





Kamado salad
from Agallas

The dish is rounded off with pickled tomatoes, a very traditional preparation that here is served on a bed of cilantro and walnut pesto. The result is a salad with intense, fresh flavors, nods to Extremaduran cuisine, and great emotional depth.

Kamado salad with warm lettuce hearts, Torta de la Serena cheese and baby beans, from Agallas Gastro & Food.

This Mérida establishment has also decided to combat the heat with a **warm, smoky salad**. «It has many nuances», summarizes chef **Antonio Luis Falcón**. And that's no exaggeration: his salad is **pure rock'n'roll**, playing with temperatures, contrasts, and smoke.

The base consists of lettuce hearts that are cooked for a couple of minutes in a kamado –a Japanese ceramic oven– which gives them a light toast and a distinct smoky flavor. On top of these, they place a smooth cream of torta de la Serena cheese.

The baby chives are confit with garlic and preserved in extra virgin olive oil, which multiplies their flavor and creaminess.

Antonio finishes the dish with fresh mint leaves, dehydrated black olive powder, and a vinaigrette made with Torre Albalat gran reserva vinegar, which Agallas has no hesitation in describing as «the best in the world».

In order to offer you **different, innovative local salads**, I have taken the liberty of collecting those recently shared with us by our dear **Alba Barán** (credit where credit is due) in her **article** (credit where credit is due) in her **"En Salsa"** section of the **HOY newspaper** –which she writes and edits–, to help us cool off from this heat. These salads are the result of visits to various restaurants in Extremadura, all with a common denominator: a mixture of freshness, novelty, and reinvention with our Extremaduran roots.

Thank you, Alba! Happy return to routine..

Alfonso Ramos Retamar

Friend of the AEXG



Watermelon without rules
from Metamorfosis



Prawn salad
from La Taberna de Noa



Tomato salad
from Achiperre



In Rota there are Cositas Buenas¹

José Antonio Liaño's new gastronomic proposal

For more than six decades, every summer in Rota has been seasoned with fond memories of that man who walked the streets shouting 'Cositas buenas' (goodies): polvorón cakes, cuscurros mantecados... All carefully stored in his wicker basket, covered with a white cloth that guarded the flavours of childhood. The mere mention of his voice still awakens a sweet longing among those who grew up listening to him.

Today, that memory is brought back to life thanks to José Antonio Liaño, a name that already has a place of its own on the gastronomic scene in Rota. After conquering palates with his Badulaque de Rota – where his croquettes of Rota-style sea bream or marrajo morcilla (blood sausage) have left their mark – Liaño is embarking on a new adventure that promises to mark a before and after: Cositas Buenas. A traditional tapas bar that opened its doors at the beginning of July in the Plaza Jesús Nazareno.

Located opposite Badulaque, at number 2, where pizzas were once baked, the premises will now be transformed into a tribute to tapas done right: a bar, a dining room and a terrace that aims to be a meeting point for locals and holidaymakers alike.

¹In Andalusia, the term 'cositas buenas' is colloquially used in gastronomy when talking about really delicious food and dishes. It is equivalent in English to 'finer things' or 'goodies'.



Cositas Buenas



The menu, far from pretentious, is anchored in **freshness and honesty**: smoked foods, select preserves, montaditos (small sandwiches), fresh dressings, freshly cooked seafood, fried fish of the day and stews that taste like home.

The focus is **not on an abundance** of options, but on **quality and daily surprises**: the menu will be short, yes, but it will be renewed every day according to the market and the fish market. Liaño is clear: *'I want a lively traditional beer bar where the product reigns supreme.'*

The drinks menu is not far behind: wines from the Jerez region, reds and whites from the Cádiz area and selected wines from other appellations will make up a **diverse wine cellar**, perfect for pairing with every bite.

Those who are already familiar with Liaño's work know that **each dish bears his creative stamp**: tuna with tomato, **dishes that reinvent local recipes** and an infallible intuition for reviving traditional flavours with a contemporary twist. It is therefore no surprise that **Cositas Buenas** has raised high **expectations among the locals** and those who, summer after summer, return in search of the authenticity that only Rota can offer.

In short, **José Antonio Liaño** is not just opening a bar: **he is opening a door to memories, flavours and nostalgia turned into tapas.**

'Cositas Buenas' aspires to be, as its name suggests, a proclamation of delicacies to be savoured every afternoon in the warmth of a cold beer and the west breeze. And if your mouth is already watering, just wait until you walk through the door...

Antonio Macías

Academician of the AEXG



WINE OF THE MONTH by Marcelino Díaz

RED WINE

Mastines 2018 Garnacha Tintorera

Pago Los Balancines Winery

Paraje de la Agraria, s/n
Oliva de Mérida (Badajoz)

Bodega Pago los Balancines, a winery in a wonderful enclave in Extremadura, surrounded by olive trees and holm oaks in Oliva de Mérida.

A winery where wines are born in vineyards cultivated on slopes with different orientations, producing wines with distinct personalities. Organic vineyards with an endless variety of grapes that will delight consumers: Viura, Chardonnay, Garnacha común and Tintorera, Tempranillo or Alicante Bouchet, Graciano, Tinta Roriz. Cultivated in bush vines and without tilling, they produce low yields but of infinite quality.

Each plot is harvested separately according to variety and orientation, resulting in wines with different characteristics that reflect the varietal character and the place where they come from, and are bottled under different brands.

In this way, they offer a wide range of wines that are different from each other, although they all share the common denominator of their high quality and magnificent presentation, both in terms of the bottle and its packaging.

In this endeavour to produce the highest quality wines, the winery has several oenologists who combine their knowledge in the design of each of the wines.

Members of the AEXG
during their visit to Pago los
Balancines on 16 June 2025



PAGO LOS
BALANCINES



Rodrigo Hernández,
head of
Los Balancines
vineyards



Its owner, **Pedro Mercado**, architect and oenologist, along with **Juan Domínguez** and **Emilia Roa**, agricultural engineers, welcomed us during our **visit** with a group of twenty academics from the **Extremaduran Academy of Gastronomy**.

With an **exceptional design**, the winery has all kinds of **technology and modern facilities suitable** for receiving the grapes as soon as they are harvested. Technology based on **stainless steel**, refrigeration equipment to control fermentation temperatures and a **good stock of French oak barrels**.

Tasting notes

 **Appearance.** A deep garnet wine with cherry-red edges.

 **On the nose.** Clean and intense with abundant hints of red and black wild berries.

 **On the palate.** Full-bodied, well-structured, balsamic with smoky notes and a long finish.

A wine especially designed to drink in company of **red meats, stews and cured cheeses**.

Marcelino Díaz

Academician of the AEXG



SIGNED BY
Fernando Valbuena

Duke Wellington



Beef Wellington



Ferrera salad

The tradition of pairing dishes with famous figures goes back a long way. Beef Wellington (Waterloo in between); Duke Louis de Bechaimel (as rich as he was greedy); the Earl of Sandwich (a compulsive card player); another count, in this case Russian, Stroganov (in the history of food, converted into stroganoff sauce); Queen Marguerite of Savoy (for a pizza with royal blood, of course), or the Australian bel canto diva Nelly Nelba (copa melba, the supreme creation of the great Auguste Escoffier).

Among the salads, it suffices to mention the Dumas one (with cauliflower, beetroot, raisins and so on), the other Dumas salad, created by his son and also called Francillon, as this is the name of the play in which he details the recipe (potatoes and mussels galore), the Caesar (which we don't actually know if it was created by Caesar himself or his brother) and the Waldorf (full of walnuts, apple and cream, and named after the very luxurious New York hotel), the Cobb (very finely chopped,

Robert H. Cobb

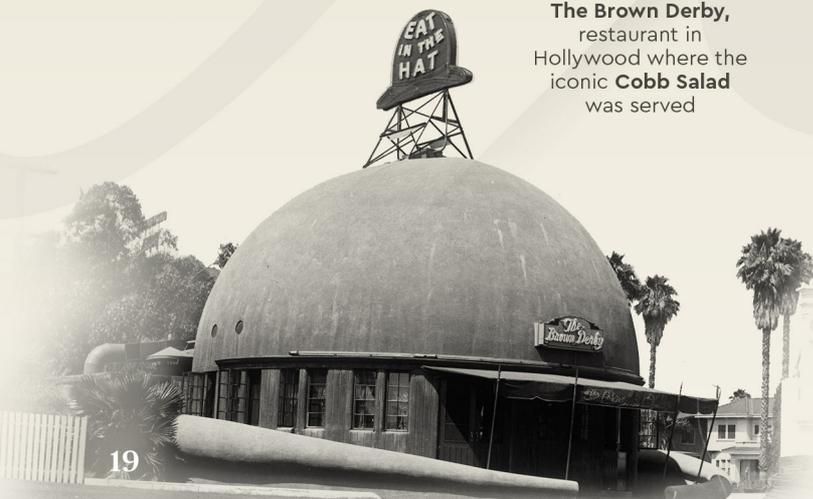


Cobb Salad

The Brown Derby, restaurant in Hollywood where the iconic Cobb Salad was served



Alexander Dumas





Mary Stuart

Ferrera Salad



Mary Stuart Salad



as they say its creator had toothache at the time), the **Mary Stuart** (intense in **truffle**) and countless other salads with their own stories. Nothing is as free as the profession of salad maker.

I say this because **in Badajoz** we already have our **own salad**. Actually, it is **Master Ferrera** who has it. So successful is its composition that it has become the hallmark of the **Marchivirito Restaurant**.

It was in the kitchens of this superb establishment that **Antonio Ferrera** produced one of his finest creations. To taste. **Lots of green, a little red** (as befits Villafranco, a town famous for its tomatoes) and then three magnificent gifts from the sea: **tuna belly, prawns and anchovies**.

Forget any scarcity. The absence of stinginess defines the dish. To be eaten on your knees. With your hands. A delicious salad.

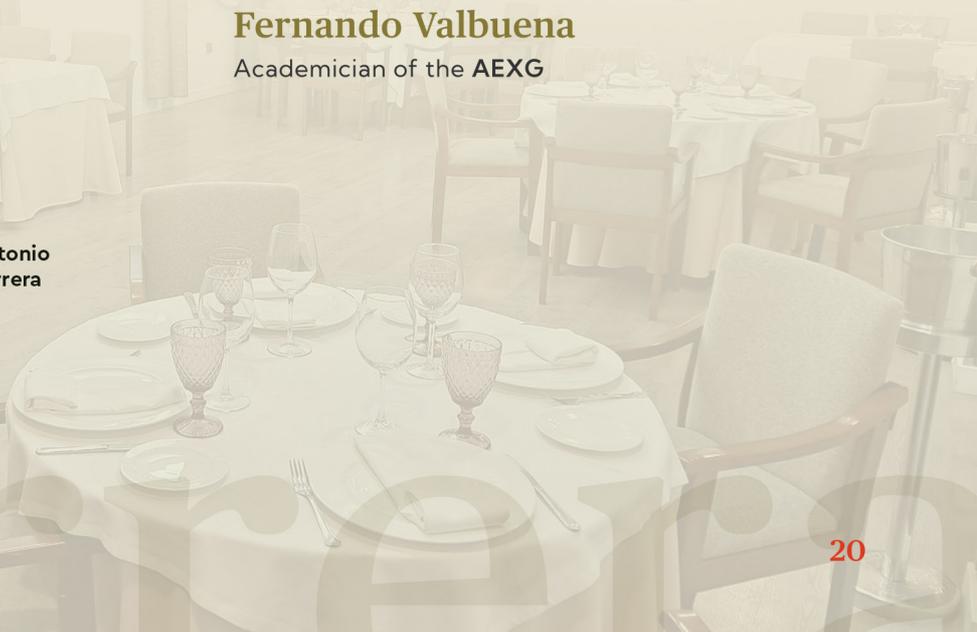
It is true that salads are usually nothing more than modest incitements to gluttony, but in this case, the master **Ferrera** and his protector, **Pepe Marchivirito**, have created gluttony itself. Both deserve to be carried on shoulders!

Fernando Valbuena

Academician of the AEXG



Antonio Ferrera





MISCELLANY

by Antonio Macías

Pago los Balancines: where the land speaks in each glass

In the heart of Extremadura, where the sun and silence shape the character of the vine, a story of commitment, respect and passion for wine is born: Pago los Balancines. More than a winery, it is a project with soul, where every decision—from cultivation to bottling—pursues a single goal: to produce wines that excite.

A vineyard that breathes authenticity

The Pago los Balancines vineyard is, above all, a statement of principles. Cultivated **entirely organically** and planted in a goblet style, it remains faithful to traditional practices that respect the natural balance of the plant. **There is no artificial irrigation** here: the vines are fed solely by the generosity—or harshness—of the environment, because only in this way can the grapes develop their true character.

But there's more: this is a **very low-yield vineyard**, producing less than a quarter of what regulations allow. The result? Intense, rich grapes full of nuances. Grapes that are not only cultivated, but cared for like a treasure. And you can taste it in every sip.



PAGO^{LOS}
BALANCINES





The winery: where precision becomes art

The journey from grape to wine is a dance of precision and sensitivity. At Pago los Balancines, the winery is not just a place of transformation: it is a temple of detail. Each variety, each estate, each plot, and each geographical orientation is vinified separately to preserve its identity and allow it to express itself freely.

Behind each wine is a team that spares no effort in terms of knowledge or enthusiasm. Because for them, making wine is not a job, it is a way of life. Their obsession is clear: to ensure that each bottle captures the soul of the terroir, that the wine speaks of its origin with its own voice.

Wines with personality and memory

The wines of Pago los Balancines are not products, they are liquid narratives that tell stories of climate, soil, time, and people. Each one has its own character, its own accent, its own memory. But they all share a common denominator: fidelity to the place they come from.

Those who taste them discover wines that not only please the palate, but also awaken the senses and transport the drinker. Wines that are different from each other, but with an unmistakable family resemblance, as if they all had the same heartbeat.

Pago los Balancines is a shining example of how excellence is not a distant goal, but a daily choice. A winery that proves that when you respect the land, work with humility, and love your craft, wine becomes pure emotion. Because in the end, each glass contains more than just a good wine: it contains a way of understanding life.

Antonio Macías

Academician of the AEXG

el ATRIL

THE AEXG MAGAZINE

desdelatril@gmail.com



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