

# RAMBLAS RAMBLINGS

Iberia Restaurant's Newsletter, January 2012

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## RAVENOUS RAMBLINGS

### Slow Food

This issue is dedicated to Slow Food—preparing quality ingredients with care, then enjoying a leisurely meal in a convivial fashion—the opposite of fast food. *Guisos* are Spanish stews. These slow-cooked dishes are particularly appealing in cold weather.

*Jose Luis' Drunken Chicken* (serves 4 – 6)

- 2 to 3 Tablespoons olive oil or chicken fat
- 12 chicken leg/thighs
- Salt and pepper
- 3 large onions, peeled and chopped
- Saffron, a few threads (optional)
- 1 bay leaf
- Beer (your choice- see *Libations* column)

Preheat oven to 350°F. Heat olive oil in a sauté pan over medium-high heat. Season the meat with salt and pepper, and brown on all sides in the oil. Remove chicken from the pan and set aside. Pour off excess fat.

In the same pan, start the onions, bay leaf and saffron on medium heat. When the onions are soft and starting to color, transfer them with the chicken to a casserole dish. Add the beer to cover the chicken halfway. Finish, uncovered, in the oven until tender, about 45 minutes.

## ¿POR QUÉ?

### Latin Time

Whenever I dine with Spaniards, they ask me to arrive at 8 pm, but we don't begin eating until 10 pm and don't finish until midnight. I've learned that if I have any kind of time constraint, it is best to take a rain check on dinner.

"I think we are victims of the bureaucracy in Spain," said Jose Luis. "We joke that if the train arrives on time, it's yesterday's." Yet "there is a relaxed attitude when we go out and are celebrating, which infuses everything," says the digressing chef. (Try keeping a Spaniard on track in an interview; it's like herding ferrets.)

At Iberia, customers are welcome to stay at their table all night; only four times in 27 years have customers been asked to finish their after-dinner drinks in the lounge.

Mention the secret word *guiso* to your server when you dine on January 16 and/or January 23 between 5:30 and 6:30 pm and

enjoy 20 percent off your food and beverage! Discount applied to parties with a max of six people.

## NEWS

### Sunday Suppers and Rock of Gibraltar

Sunday Suppers are back! The convivial family-style dinners, served for the entire table (minimum of four persons), are a great value. The set menu changes weekly, and includes an appetizer such as steamed mussels; salad; two proteins such as chicken Marbella and leg of lamb; sides; and dessert. \$39/pp

Iberia's sister store, The Rock of Gibraltar Comestibles, has just added the Conservas de Cambados line of high quality canned seafood. Lest the phrase "canned seafood" conjure images of unappealing cat food, bear in mind that these delicacies such as razor clams, cockles and octopus are mostly packed by hand. "Spain is at the forefront of canning because Spaniards have been doing it for so long," said Jose Luis. "Spanish vessels scoured the Atlantic Sea, as far north as Norway. That's how salt cod came about. The Cantabrian Sea, because of its rough, cold waters, produces the best seafood."

"These are stupendous tapas in a can; just open and eat," said Jose Luis.

## LIBATIONS

### British Beer

Iberia's bar area is unofficially called the Red Terrier Pub. Jose Luis' ex-wife, Jessica, owned a British restaurant called The Garden Grill that consolidated with Iberia 10 years ago. Being Norfolk Terrier aficionados, it was only natural to name the bar the Red Terrier Pub. BTW, Jose Luis named his dogs Guinness and Whisky—again, is it any surprise that we have an entire column devoted to libations?

The Red Terrier Pub serves a dozen beers on tap, including Fuller's ESB, Boddington's, Bass and Guinness—all hailing from the U.K. Jose Luis said that the Drunken Chicken recipe [see left] works with any of these beers, as there are plenty of onions in the recipe and the sweetness of the onions complements the hopiness of the beer. Iberia also offers beers on tap from Germany, Japan and Belgium, including Chimay Triple.

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*Newsletter by Cynthia L., a professional food writer whose friendship with Jose Luis was cemented over paella at the beach and Iberia's cheese scones.*