SALMON *FIDEUA PAELLA*

Laura Frankel

Somewhere between risotto and pasta lies this Jewish dish from the Iberian Peninsula. Thin pasta (fideus or vermicelli) is toasted with an aromatic base, to a light golden color and then simmered in wine with vegetables and fish until tender.

This is one of my FAVORITE dishes to make in the summer. I love preparing this on a grill where everything picks up a smoky (flame-licked) flavor. If you are a not a grill enthusiast, the dish can easily be made indoors….just MAKE IT!

Don't skimp on the smoked paprika (*pimenton)* or you will lose the smoky character of the dish.

Serves 5

Extra virgin olive oil

Sea salt

Freshly cracked black pepper

3 shallots or 1 small onion

2 red peppers

2 medium tomatoes

10 ounces vermicelli or other thin pasta, broken into 3-inch segments

6 cloves garlic, minced

3 teaspoons smoked HOT or MILD smoked paprika

Pinch of saffron threads

1 eggplant, cut into medium dice

4 ounces mushrooms, sliced

1 cup fresh, frozen or jarred artichoke hearts, drained if using jarred

2 tablespoons tomato paste

½ cup dry white wine

½ cup water

1 lemon, sliced thinly

5 5-ounce fish filets (I am using SEASONAL WILD salmon or halibut)

½ cup chopped fresh herbs (I use parsley and basil)

1. Pulse shallots or onion, peppers and tomatoes in a food processor until ground, but not a puree. Some texture should remain.
2. Heat a large sauté pan (or paella pan!), generously coated with evoo over medium heat. Sweat ground mixture (sofrito), stirring occasionally, until all the moisture has cooked out and the mixture is beginning to caramelize. Add pasta and a bit more evoo if needed to toast pasta to a golden brown.
3. Add garlic, spices, eggplant, mushrooms, artichokes and tomato paste. Stir to coat veggies with tomato paste. Add wine and water and simmer until pasta is cooked through.
4. Add fish and push down gently to "bury" fish in mixture. Top with lemon slices and herbs. Continue cooking for another 5-8 minutes until fish is cooked through.