Spain’s 50 Best

Your guide to Spain’s best gourmet products

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www.salonddegourmets.com
The country has become a gastronomic attraction for tourists, and this world—which continues to grow both here and overseas—has become something of a cultural and social science.

When they sit down at table, food-loving visitors to Spain increasingly demand the best from the local food of the different areas they visit. They no longer seek just a good restaurant, but one that will also prepare food based on local produce. This culinary wealth allows tourists to plan their trips through Spanish towns and cities not just on the basis of art and monuments, but also with an eye to the variety and quality of the food.

Spain’s great diversity of climate and geography makes it possible to find some basic products of excellent quality, both from the land and the sea.

Thanks to the different processes of canning and bottling, our products can be enjoyed everywhere—both in their place of origin and at home.

For this reason, Turespaña is sponsoring this ‘Guide to the Top 50 Spanish Food Products’. The aim is to promote Spain’s food and drink even further.

This is a selection of products from the country’s different Autonomous regions, which are more and more in demand from tourists to take back home with them to enjoy with their family or friends.

These products have thus become the distinguishing characteristics of their respective Autonomous regions.

Good examples of this are the wide range of extra virgin olive oils, the Iberico pork products, and the many different cheeses made in all part of Spain.

An important element in all this food and drink is the catalogue that lists the Denominación de Origen (D.O.) of each product—a prestigious classification awarded according to stringent criteria and which serves as a guarantee of quality—that is regulated by the Ministry of the Environment and Rural and Marine Affairs.

Because of the large quantity and high quality of the basic products, it hasn’t been easy to decide on this Top 50 list. This is only a partial list, but everything that is on it deserves to be there.

Joan Mesquida
Spanish General Secretary for Tourism and Domestic Trade
Extra virgin olive oil

1. Aubocassa Extra Virgin Olive Oil
Bodegas Roda produces both wine and olive oil. Among the oils are two of excellent quality: the Dauro in L’Empordá (Catalonia) and the Aubocassa extra virgin olive oil, produced in Manacor (Majorca). The British paper *The Independent* has ranked Aubocassa one of the world’s ten best olive oils, while food critic Rafael García Santos calls it the summit of Spanish oils. It is made exclusively from the Arbequina olives at the farm in Manacor (Majorca) and is the result of the first cold pressing. It is yellowish in colour, with a greenish, opaque look due to the lack of filtering. The flavour is smooth with slightly bitter and spicy notes.

www.roda.es

2. Rincón de la Subbética Extra Virgin Olive Oil
The Almazaras de la Subbética firm has ancient olive trees in the province of Córdoba producing the Picuda and Hojiblanca varieties. Outstanding among its extra virgin olive oils is the Rincón de la Subbética. It is 100 percent Hojiblanca, from the Priego de Córdoba D.O. It is also one of the oils that has won the most awards, both inside and outside Spain. The olives are harvested midway through the autumn. It is green in colour, with a bittersweet taste and a certain bite, and with suggestions of grass and almonds.

www.almazarasdelasubbetica.es
3. **CASTILLO DE CANENA RESERVA FAMILIAR PICUAL**

The Picual is the olive variety most cultivated in Andalusia, especially in the province of Jaén. The Castillo de Canena Reserva Familiar is the top of its Picual extra virgin olive oil range, and comes in numbered limited editions that have won its both domestic and international awards. The harvesting takes place in the mid-autumn, when the olives are optimally mature. After picking, they are cold-pressed, with controls of time and temperature, to extract the virgin extra olive oil. It is held in stainless steel vats at a constant temperature before bottling, with strict respect for the order of the different requests that have been made for this product.

www.castillodecanena.com

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**Extra virgin olive oil**

In the world of extra virgin olive oil, the tree is to the fruit what the fruit is to the tree. Thus the Latin aphorism *olea prima omnium arborum est*. For this reason, when we speak of extra virgin olive oil we refer exclusively to the oil that comes from the first cold pressing of the olives.

Olives have been used since antiquity for just about everything: as food, in medicine, in religion... Currently they feature in the world of cosmetics.

Spain has one of the largest areas in the world dedicated to the cultivation of olives, and is one of the biggest producers and defenders of extra virgin olive oil as an essential element in nutrition.

There is a wide variety of olives. Among the leaders: Arbequina, Arbosana, Blanqueta, Castellana, Changlot Real, Cornicabra, Empeltre, Farga, Lechín de Granada, Lechín de Sevilla, Manzanilla Cacereña, Morisca, Morrut, Picual, Picudo, Sevillenca, Verdial de Badajoz, Verdial de Huévar, Verdial de Vélez Málaga...

This great variety gives rise to a wide range of extra virgin olive oils. In the first group are the single-variety oil, the ones that use just one type of olive. Then come the blends, made from two or more varieties of olives, which lends a mix of aromas, flavours and textures.

The Spanish market offers a wide range of extra virgin olive oil: Cortijo de Suerte Alta, Cladium, Jugo de Aceituna 2010 Adolfo Colección Cornicabra, Marqués de Valdueza, Abbé de Queiles, Castillo de Tabernas, Dintel...
4. **La Organic Oro extra virgin olive oil**

This is a totally ecological oil, both in the growing and production processes. The Gómez de Baena family owns a grove of ancient olive trees on the La Amarilla farm (Ronda, Málaga province) that was a precursor to the La Organic operation. It is an association of growers who cultivate their old trees ecologically and in the traditional manner. This makes it possible to produce and sell the finest organic oil in Andalusia, La Organic Oro extra virgin. The original bottle—dark, square and squat—was designed by Philippe Starck. There are two varieties: La Organic Oro Intenso (100 percent Picudo olives) has floral and herbal aromas. La Organic Oro Suave is made from Picudo and Hojiblanca olives.

[www.laorganic.net](http://www.laorganic.net)

5. **Arbosana La Boella extra virgin olive oil**

La Canonja (Tarragona province) is home to the La Boella olive groves and press. This firm is an important producer of extra virgin olive oil from Arbequina, Koroneiki and Arbosana olives. The Arbosana is one of the oldest in Spain, indigenous to Catalonia and close to extinction. La Boella is fighting for its preservation. This olive gives extraordinary results because it adapts easily to intensive cultivation. The Arbosana extra virgin olive oil is the firm’s most emblematic product, harvested in December when the fruit has a low level of maturity.

[www.labella.com](http://www.labella.com)

6. **Pago Marqués de Griñón Oleum Artis extra virgin olive oil**

In the town of Malpica de Tajo (Toledo province), in the Dominio de Valdepusa area, there are some 100 hectares of semi-intensive olive groves of the Arbequina and Picual varieties, both very common on the Iberian Peninsula. The Marqués de Griñón Oleum Artis in an estate-bottled extra virgin olive oil, a perfect blend of these two varieties. The olives are harvested at the best possible time, and once collected are immediately pressed with rigorous controls. Then the oil is filtered and kept in stainless steel vats until bottling.

[www.pagosdefamilia.com](http://www.pagosdefamilia.com)
Saborea España ("Tasting Spain") is the first private platform—now domestic but with international ambitions—to promote tourism and gourmet eating. It has the support of the Ministry of Industry, Tourism and Trade, and of the Spanish Tourism Institute. Among its more noteworthy projects are a study of gourmet tourism in the country today, the devising of action plans for designing innovative culinary experiences for tourists, the creation of “gourmet maps”, the organizing of a gourmet event featuring pintxos and tapas and to be called EXPOTAPA, and the promotion of established gourmet events.

Its key aims are:

• To lend gourmet dimensions to tourism products
• To broaden the concept of gourmet tourism via a focus on Spain’s authentic regional cuisines
• To link the primary sector (agriculture) to the tertiary or services sector (the hospitality industry)

Saborea España is an association of four bodies involved in gourmet dining and tourism: the Spanish Hostelry Federation, the Spanish Association of Destinations for the Promotion of Gourmet Tourism (Euro-Toques), the European Chefs Organization (an association of Europe's most prestigious chefs de cuisine), and the Spanish Association of Chefs and Pastry Chefs.
7. **SEÑORÍO DE MONTANERA**

**ACORN-FED IBÉRICO HAM**

In the Extremadura region of western Spain there are large extensions of land given over to raising the Ibérico pig. The geography and climate are essential elements in hams yielded by these acorn-fed animals. The breeding, production and commercialisation of the acorn-fed Señorío de Montanera Ibérico pig is subject to the D.O. Dehesa de Extremadura. It begins with the selection of the best Ibérico pigs, which are raised in freedom and by the *montanera* process: in other words, through grazing in these special fields and eating acorns from the oak trees. The whole process —selection, salting, post-salting, drying and curing— is carried out by traditional craftsmanlike methods and is subject to the strictest control. [www.señoriodemontanera.com](http://www.señoriodemontanera.com)

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8. **Fermín ACORN-FED IBÉRICO HAM**

In the small picturesque town of La Alberca (Salamanca province), Embutidos Fermín began as a small family business. Today it is a leader in the field of acorn-fed Ibérico ham, exporting it all over the world. There are three things that characterise this ham. One is the fact that it comes from pure Ibérico pigs that have been raised on a diet of natural grazing and acorns in Salamanca. Others of its hams come from pigs that have grazed in the oak forests of the Extremadura...
and Andalusia regions. A second characteristic is the weather, which allows the hams to be perfectly dried and matured. The third is the natural curing by craftsmanlike methods.

9. Cinco Jotas acorn-fed Ibérico ham

A whole series of towns in the Sierra de Huelva region constitute the D.O. Jamón de Huelva. The Sánchez Romero Carvajal firm has been one of the leaders for over a century. Its most emblematic acorn-fed Ibérico ham is called Cinco Jotas. It doesn’t have the D.O. Jamón de Huelva, but it does come from free-range Ibérico pigs fed by the montanera method, and the production

Ibérico ham is the jewel in the Spanish culinary crown. The qualification ‘acorn-fed Ibérico ham’ refers to the pig of the Ibérico race that is native to the Peninsula and ranges free in the fields. It eats the grass here and the acorns from cork oaks (called the montanera diet).

The pigs classified as de cebo or de recebo are those whose diet and fattening has been rounded off with the use of fodder. They are of high quality but without reaching that of the ones that have been raised exclusively on acorns. The Ibérico pig develops a muscular mass, in this case on the hind legs, that contains a kind of fat that contributes to its quality and extraordinary flavour. The front legs weigh less but are also of excellent quality.

The four Protected Denominations of Origin are: Guijuelo (Salamanca); Dehesa de Extremadura, Los Pedroches (Córdoba) and Jamón de Huelva.

The breeding, preparation and curing of these different hams follows strict steps that yield unique products. An ideal way to consume ham is in thin slices sliced with a knife. Ham is also a fine ingredient in many recipes.

The essential characteristic of the Ibérico products is that fatty marbling in the meat, the result of the diet of these free-range pigs on the grazing land and on the acorns from the oaks trees. The fat lends a special texture and oiliness. Some experts believe that even the aroma of the meat varies from one growing area to another, depending on the amount of fat and its proximity to the bone.

REAL JAMÓN is a new brand that guarantees the very best in Ibérico hams. (http://www.realjamoniberico.com/)
and curing process is carried out by craftsmanlike methods. It has an intense aroma, uniform colour—with the characteristic fatty marbling, a result of its unique diet— a velvety oiliness and a flavour with a unique personality.

10. COVAP Alta Expresión Pure Acorn-Fed Ibérico Ham

COVAP (Sociedad Cooperativa Andaluza Ganadera del Valle de los Pedroches), produces excellent chacinas (cold cuts) of Pure Ibérico Pig. Among them is the acorn-fed ham classified as Alta Expresión, the firm’s top quality product. The Ibérico Puro de Bellota hams come from Ibérico pigs whose parents had 100 percent Ibérico blood. There are strict controls on selection and production, including analysis of the percentages of oleic, linoleic, palmitic and stearic fatty acids; control of the maturing and aging period, which must be greater than 36 months; and selection of the hams in the Alta Expresión class.

11. Señorío de Montanera Salchichón

Considered by some experts as the great salchichón of the Extremadura region, it comes from 100 percent acorn-fed Ibérico pig. At Señorío de la Montanera, nothing goes to waste. The firm also has other products apart from hams. The ingredients in this salchichón are the lean meat of the pigs, along with part of the meat from the front and back legs. The ingredients are chopped up and mixed, seasoning is added (salt, pepper in grains or ground up, and other spices), followed by marination and the stuffing into natural casing.

12. COVAP Lomito

Following the acorn-fed cured Ibérico ham Alta Expresión, the next most distinguished product of the COVAP cooperative is the cured Ibérico pork cut known as Lomito de Presa. The lomito or “small loin” is not a traditional cured pork loin, but a cut taken from the richest and tenderest part near the shoulders, and is a favourite of the best chefs. The exclusive lomito is not yet a traditional cut of cured pork, but it soon will be. COVAP’s version is made from a select cut that is dressed, seasoned and packed in a traditional gut casing. It is dark red and streaky, with an exquisite aroma and texture. Each piece weighs between 600 and 800 grams.
SPANISH FOODS ON THE WEB

ANDALUSIA.- http://www.andalucia.org
ARAGON.- http://www.turismodearagon.com
ASTURIAS.- http://www.infoasturias.com
BALEARIC ISLANDS.- http://www.illesbalears.es
BASQUE COUNTRY.- http://www.euskaditurismo.net
CANARY ISLANDS.- http://www.turismodecanarias.com
CANTABRIA.- http://www.turismodecantabria.com
CASTILE & LEON.- http://turismoCastileyleon.com
CATALONIA.- http://www.gencat.cat
CEUTA.- http://www.ceuta.es
EXTREMADURA.- http://www.turismoextremadura.com
GALICIA.- http://www.turgalicia.es
LA RIOJA: http://www.lariojaturismo.com
MADRID.- http://www.turismomadrid.es
MELILLA.- http://www.melillaturismo.com
REGION OF MURCIA.- http://www.murciaturistica.es
REGION OF VALENCIA.- http://www.comunitatvalenciana.com

TURESPAÑA.- http://www.spain.info
MINISTRY OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND RURAL AND MARINE AFFAIRS (FOOD DIVISION).- http://www.alimentacion.es
13. **Joselito** acorn-fed cured pork loin
Joselito is a brand that stands for excellence in acorn-fed Ibérico pork products. Its hogs are raised in immense pastures through the north-western part of the Iberian Peninsula, and its famed natural drying sheds are located in Guijuelo, in the province of Salamanca. Only hand-picked acorn-fed Ibérico pork is used to make the cured pork loins. After cleaning and trimming, each piece is covered in salt, garlic and paprika. Next, the meat is packed in natural casing, smoked by wood and charcoal and cured until packing.

[www.joselito.com](http://www.joselito.com)

14. **Frial** Ibérico Supremas
Frial, the company founded in 1953 by Ramón Frial, is now a group of companies dedicated to the preparation of cured Ibérico pork products and cooked cold cuts, in Ciudad Rodrigo (Salamanca province) and Tres Cantos, near Madrid. The three key features of Frial’s Supremas are meat from the black Ibérico pig –cooked at a low temperature to conserve the natural taste, aroma, and tenderness– and strictly limited production. Tinned Ibérico pork Supremas is a unique product, one of the most famous from Frial. Made entirely of tongue and jowls, this cold cut is firm, juicy, pink, and gluten-free.

[www.grupofrial.com](http://www.grupofrial.com)

15. **Feblame** cured beef
Feblame, S.L. is a family-owned processed meat company now in its third generation and under the management
of Santiago Blanco. Its leading product is cecina or cured beef, and this local variety is made in the province of León. Cured beef has been made since antiquity, and its preparation was described in the first century of the Christian era. The same process is used today. The cuts are from the hindquarters (flank, sirloin, round, and shank) of beef that is at least five years old, from breeds native to Castile and León. The meat is salted and cured with smoke. The whole process is done by traditional means, and no preservatives or additives are used, so the flavour, aroma and texture are entirely natural.

www.cecinadeleon.org

16. El Zagal Majorcan Sausage Made from Black Iberico Pig
The El Zagal brand is used by the company founded in 1905 by Francisco Tejedor García. It prepares Majorcan sobrasada sausage, in keeping with the standards of the D.O. Sobrasada de Mallorca. El Zagal makes a variety of sobrasada (as sausage, slices, in terrines, etc.), but its star product comes from local Iberico black pigs who are fed a special diet. The meat is carefully selected, minced and spiced with paprika before being extruded as sausage and cured at length. The result is a delicious soft and spreadable sausage, turned red by the paprika, with a complex and exquisite flavour.

www.elzagel.com

17. Saénz Horeca Vacuum-Packed Meats
Saénz Horeca has been in business for more than 25 years. Its complete meat-producing operation offers the safest food of four kinds: beef, sheep, goat and pig. Its fresh meat products have been vacuum-packed and undergone rigorous micro-biological and chemical analyses. The uninterrupted cold chain guarantees the best colour, texture and flavour. In general these products go wonderfully well with a good aged red or any of Spain’s appellation wines.

www.saenzhoreca.com

18. Ganso Iberico de Dehesa Cured Duck Magret
Ganso Iberico is a firm with long experience in all aspects of rural projects: natural, cultural and ethnographic. It is a pioneer in the ecological breeding of the Iberico free-range goose in southern Spain. In its cured magret, the meat is similar to that of the Iberico ham, with little water content, and is rich in monounsaturated fats, proteins and minerals. This is a very versatile meat with a surprising flavour, which should be eaten on its own, with some drops of extra virgin olive oil, or in salads or pastas. The ideal temperature for consuming it is around 20 degrees centigrade.

www.gansoiberico.com
19. **Marantona Manchego Cheese**

La Casota is a family business that has been going for five generations. Its sheep graze in different parts of La Mancha, land that includes the remains of harvests, grape vine shoots, rosemary. The cheese factory boasts the latest hygienic processes and produces several types of cheeses (soft, semi-cured, cured, old, in oil). They also make goat cheese. Outstanding is the Marantona Manchego cheese, cured in natural caves and with the D.O. Queso Manchego. It comes from Manchega sheep’s milk, and is matured from eight to ten months. It has an intense, pleasant and persistent aroma.

www.quesoslacasota.com

20. **Don Rebésino Torta del Casar**

There is a wide range of Spanish cheese...
cheeses. Among the creamy ones perhaps the Torta del Casar is the strangest yet most representative, for its shape and texture and the way it is made. Quesería Ganadera

The cheeses

To speak of cheese in Spain is to speak of one of the country’s most important food and culinary sectors.

This culinary wealth has been reflected in Spanish literature from the Golden Age to the present. It’s also seen in rhyming popular sayings like “con pan y vino se anda el camino” (with bread and wine we’ll get by) and “uvas, pan y queso saben a beso” (grapes, bread and cheese taste like kisses).

The great diversity from north to south and east to west—not to mention the archipelagos—makes it possible to group them into different categories. Depending on the kind of milk used in their production, we can speak of goat, sheep and cow cheese, along with blends. As for the maturing and curing processes, they can be classified as soft, semi-cured, cured and old.

As a general rule, in the Castilian regions and Extremadura the most common cheeses come from sheep; in Asturias and Galicia, from cows; in the Canary Islands, Murcia and Catalonia, from goats. There are different breeds in each of these three kinds of livestock, and this too is a factor in the characteristics of the different cheeses.

These cheeses should usually be kept in a cool place—but never a refrigerator—and eaten at room temperature. Good country bread is the best thing to go with cheese.

They are very nutritious and are high in saturated fats, and so should be consumed in moderation. They have high levels of calcium and other nutrients.
S.L. was founded in 2005. It is an association of farmers whose cheese blends tradition and technology, where natural craftsmanship coexists harmoniously with research into milk products. Outstanding among its cheeses is the Torta del Casar Don Rebesino (D.O.P. Torta del Casar). It’s made exclusively with the raw milk of Merino and Entrefina sheep to which is added salt and vegetable rennet, and it matures for at least 60 days. The rennet used is obtained from the common cardoon flower.

www.queseriaganadera.es

21. La Peral cheese
La Peral is a family-run cheese firm founded in 1923 by Antonio León Álvarez. Since then it has been producing La Peral cheese with craftsmanship and technology. This cheese is made from pasteurised milk, lactose fermentation and selected molds, which give it the characteristic blue spots and personality. It is a slightly spicy cheese with great flavour and oiliness. By heating the milk and adding coagulants,
it is possible to extract and press the curd to remove all the extra liquid and whey. Then the cheese is moulded and salted and placed in curing chambers.

quesoslaperal@hotmail.com

22. MAJORERO MAXORATA
GOAT CHEESE
The Grupo Ganaderos de Fuerteventura began operations in the 1980s to preserve the traditional ways of producing Majorero cheese, while at the same time adapting them to new technologies. It has won domestic and international awards. It is made from milk from Majorera goats, native to the Canary Island of Fuerteventura. The production process begins by coagulation with the rennet. Then the remaining buttermilk is extracted and the mass is moved to the respective forms. Once the pieces are taken from their forms they are salted, matured and classified as unripened, tender, semi-cured or cured.

www.maxorata.es

23. IDIAZÁBAL AIZPEA CHEESE
Idiazábal cheese comes from Latxa sheep, a race that does not produce a great deal of milk. But it is of great quality. The Quesería Aizpea, in Olaberría (Guipúzcoa province) makes its own cheeses under the D.O. Idiazábal, while at the same time maintaining the seasonal migration. There are two varieties of Idiazábal cheese: smoked and unsmoked. The rind is of a certain consistency; it’s white in the unsmoked version and dark brown in the smoked version. The cheese inside is smooth, with tiny orifices of colour depending on the type. The texture is creamy, smooth and velvety, with a consistent flavour.

www.quesoidiazabal.com
Top 50
The origins

This map details the places that produce the 50 best food products in Spain. As can be seen, they come from practically everywhere in the country.
The Route of Ibérico Ham

Ibérico ham is the crown jewel of Spanish products. The four protected Denominations of Origin are Guijuelo, Salamanca (in red on the map, under number 8); Dehesa de Extremadura (7), Los Pedroches, Córdoba (10), and Jamón de Huelva (9). The journey through them makes up the Route of Ibérico Ham.

Products 4, 5, 11, 12, 14, 18, 24, 25, 33, 35 and 50 belong to the seal of quality Elite Gourmet. www.elitegourmet.es
Delicatessen

24. Caviar Per Sé by Riofrío
PSN (Piscifactoría Sierra Nevada) began fish-raising operations in 1956, a tradition in the Navarre region of northern Spain. In 1963 it expanded to Riofrío (Granada, in the south), where it produces the Per Sé caviar: “black gold” with its own personality, full of subtleties and sensations and considered among the best in the world. This fish is bred in open natural areas, ecologically. Riofrío offers different types of caviar, but the star is Per Sé: complex and made in the traditional Iranian method. It ranges in colour from pearl-grey to brown-black, has a smooth but persistent texture, and is complex and elegant.

www.caviarperse.net/es

25. Mi Cuit Martiko Foie-gras
The Martiko firm, founded in 1986, is located in the town of Bera, in the Pyrenees of the Navarre region. It raises corn-fattened ducks and geese—for fresh food, semi-conserves, conserves and pre-prepared dishes— in some modern installations that use the latest technologies and quality control. This firm has been producing mi-cuit for 20 years. It has been prepared exclusively with the full liver of the Moulard duck,
Caviar, foie gras, truffles and smoked salmon are the four jewels of world gastronomy — products that have reached the peaks of haute cuisine.

Spain competes at this high level with the countries that have brought fame and reputation to these luxury products.

Riofrío (Granada province) produces sturgeon that must be 15 years old before their caviar can be extracted. It is of excellent quality, as is the caviar from the Garona River (Lérida). Both of them rival Russian and Iranian caviars.

Ever since ancient Egypt, mythic and ancestral foie-gras has been a delicacy, and starting in the 18th century it was emblematic of French cuisine: the foie-gras of Les Landes is famous. In Spain, ducks and geese are raised in Navarra, the Basque Country and Catalonia produce excellent foie-gras in all its variations — fresh, semi-fresh, in blocks, and in other styles. They can compete with the best from Les Landes and Strasbourg.

Spanish salmon comes from rivers in the north around Santander, in Vizcaya and in Asturias, and rivals that of Norway and Scotland. Its standards of production and smoking are equally high.

The king of fungi is the excellent, aromatic black truffle (tuber melanosporum). It grows spontaneously in the oak forests in the provinces of Soria, Teruel and Huesca, although today this delicacy can be cultivated artificially. It can be eaten fresh during its short season, or be conserved for consumption throughout the year.
off in warm water. Then comes the *canifé*, a small cut to display the flesh and appreciate its penetrating aroma. The truffles are classified by size, colour, texture and variety. Some will be consumed fresh, vacuum-packed to maintain all their fragrance and flavour. Others will undergo a process of thermal conservation.

www.arotz.com

27. Laumont Dehydrated Mushrooms
Laumont, an expert firm in mycology, began in the truffle and mushroom trade, products which it sold fresh. Because of the increasing market demand and the seasonal nature of these products, the firm expanded operations to include their freezing and dehydration. Spain has a wide variety of wild mushrooms that can only be enjoyed in certain months of the year. Thanks to the dehydration process, they can now be consumed all year long. This firm works with Boletus Edulis, Rebozuelo, Anaranjado, Shiitake, Senderuelal, Colmenilla, Perrochico and Trompeta Negra varieties. To be eaten, the only thing necessary is to re-hydrate them in water and/or wine. They are wonderful in rices or pastas, as a part of stuffings and with scrambled eggs.

www.laumont.net

28. San Román Saffron
For more than a century the Verdú Cantó Saffron Spain company has cultivated, packaged and sold saffron and other fine spices. The saffron is obtained from the stigmas of the *crocus sativus* flower, which is lilac in colour. Saffron is known as ‘red gold’ for its colouring, taste and aromatic qualities. It is harvested by hand, extracting the stigmas of each flower, to later bake them. Azafrán San Román is the high range product from this firm. It comes from the best saffron grown on the plantation in the province of Albacete. It enriches any food, from paella to fish, and is much in demand by the best chefs.
29. Santo Domingo Paprika from La Vera

Paprika –pimentón in Spanish– comes from the pepper that is cultivated in the area of La Vera. Pimentón Santo Domingo, in Aldea del Camino (Cáceres province), has been a leader in the field since the early 20th century. It produces a uniform and intense red powder with a penetrating smoky aroma and a refined flavour. The mature fruit is dried in the traditional way, then heated and smoked and ground into powder. Paprika gives dishes a unique flavour, colour and aroma.

www.pimentonsantodomingo.com

30. Les Garrigues Almonds

Foment Agricola Les Garrigues, S.A. began operations in 1982 with pistachio plantations in the province of Lérida. Today it raises other things, including the Marcona almond, perhaps the most highly esteemed variety. The largest almonds are fried in high quality oil until achieving that optimum point, with a crunchy texture, while at the same time conserving all their aroma and flavour; then salt is added. The almonds are vacuum-packed. The result is a golden almond: aromatic, crunchy and tasty.

www.les-garrigues.com
**Fish and shellfish conserves**

**31. Lolín Edición Oro filets of anchovies in olive oil**

In Spanish it rhymes: “Bocarte in the spring, tuna wherever you like” or “anchovy and boquerón are the same thing”. Bocarte, anchovy, boquerón... by whatever names it’s exquisite, delicious either fresh or tinned. The anchovy is native to the Bay of Biscay and the waters off Catalonia. It is caught in the spring, usually by traditional methods. Lolín ‘Edición Oro’ anchovy filets in olive oil come in glass jars or in tins. The colour, texture and flavour are exquisite. The production method is subject to strict quality controls regarding the size of the pieces and the quantity of the oil. First the anchovies are washed and the skin is removed. After a light drying, the fish is cut into filets, cleaned again, and placed in glass jars or tins. The oil is added and the container is sealed and refrigerated, since this is a semi-conserve.  

www.conservaslolín.es

**32. Ramón Peña filets of anchovies in olive oil**

Since its founding in 1920, the Hijos de Ramón Peña firm has been committed to quality, flavour and tradition, offering the best fish and shellfish from the estuaries of Galicia. Its products come in two ranges: Gourmet and Azul. The Gourmet side offers filets of sardines, without spines or skins, in olive oil. The sardines come from the estuaries of Galicia and the Atlantic. This is a blue
fish that gains in quality when tinned due
to its fat content, which is reflected in the
flavour and texture. It is preserved in olive
oil, although it is not an extra virgin oil,
because that would mask the taste of the
fish. The best sardines go to the factory
where the head and guts are removed.
Then comes the roasting and toasting,
followed by elimination of the skin and
bones. Finally they are cut into filets and
placed in tins with olive oil.

33. Frinsa Ventresca of Fresh
Tuna in Olive Oil
The Frinsa firm from Galicia
produces white fish conserves, and
decided to offer its own brand
(Frinsa). Outstanding among its products

Although food has been
preserved in containers
since the 18th
century, there
have been
other
methods of
conservation
since Antiquity.
Examples are
the salted and
smoked foods,
methods used especially
with fish and which are still very common.

Salting and smoking are processes of curing
and drying, and make it possible to conserve fish
and shellfish for long periods. The products treated
with these methods are of excellent quality and are
considered semi-conserves. To speak of fully conserved
products means tin or glass containers, those which
have undergone a sterilisation process.

Spain is one of the leaders in the production of fish
and shellfish conserves. It can be said that the Galicia and
Cantabria regions in the north head the presentation
of fish in this way, although there are important fish
conserving operations all along the Mediterranean coast
and in the area around Gibraltar. In addition, Galicia
is a leader in shellfish. These products bring together
tradition and technological advances to achieve the
highest quality.

In their natural state, most of these fish products are
presented with water and salt, or with olive oil, which
yield excellent results,
or in pickled form.

These products are
very healthy, especially
when presented
naturally and in olive oil.
They should be kept in
cool places but do not
require refrigeration.
They go very well
with beers and cavas,
in addition to white
wines, especially those
from Galicia. Also with
dry sherry like fino
and manzanilla.
is the belly of fresh tuna in tins with olive oil. Tuna is one of the blue fish. Unlike the highly sought after red tuna, which is very large and is native to the coasts of Andalusia and the Mediterranean, the ‘bonito del Norte’ is white, smaller and common to the Bay of Biscay. The belly is the most appreciated part, and this product has an exquisite flavour and a velvety texture. It’s an ideal product on its own or in salads.

www.frinsa.es

34. **Los Peperetes Natural White Clams**

Jesús Lorenzo founded this canning operation in 1990, and in 1993 the Lorenzo Paz family created the brand called Los Peperetes. It has a wide range of products, among them the white clam. The raw material –the *almeja babosa*, from the estuaries in Galicia– yields some excellent results. Once in the factory, the sand is removed with sea water. Then the clams are steamed, taken out of the shell, and tinned with water and salt. The container is sealed and the product is sterilised. These tins contain the best selection of clams from the estuaries of Arousa, Muros and Noia.

www.peperetes.com

35. **Frinsa Natural Cockles**

The cockle –*berberecho* in Spanish– is a modest bivalve that was neglected for years, but is now appreciated for its nutritional content and health benefits. Compared with other shellfish, it is low in fats and cholesterol and has few calories. When offered in tins, it is high-quality food that can be consumed all year long. Conservas Frinsa uses cockles from the estuaries of Galicia, and its tins contain between 15 and 20 pieces selected by size. Once a tin is opened, the cockles should be kept in their juice.

www.frinsa.es

36. **Cambados Gourmet Mussels in Brine**

Conservas Cambados, which has been in operation for more than 25 years, offers a select range of gourmet products. Outstanding among them are the tinned mussels in brine (*escabeche*). It’s a real culinary product from the coasts of Galicia and has undergone strict controls. In each gourmet tin there are from four to six large mussels carefully selected from the region’s estuaries: they are fresh, have undergone strict hygienic controls and have been produced in the traditional way. This is a real gourmet product with a rich taste and packed with nutrition.

www.conservasdecambados.com
37. **Pescaderías Coruñesas**

*Smoked Salmon*

Pescaderías Coruñesas, founded in 1911, was purchased by Norberto García when it was the point of reference in Madrid for the quality of its fish. One of its products is salmon, using traditional techniques of cold smoking. The process is as follows: the head is cut off, it is split down the middle, and the spine is removed. It is cleaned and any bones are removed, then covered with salt and sugar and left to macerate some 12 hours before being oven-dried and smoked. The skin is removed and the salmon is left in a single piece or cut up into smaller pieces to be vacuum-packed. The result is a juicy, fibrous meat with a sweet, smoky flavour.

[www.pescaderiascorunesas.es](http://www.pescaderiascorunesas.es)

38. **Herpac**

*Salted Red Almadraba Tuna*

Barbate is the cradle of what is called the *almadraba*, an ancestral fishing technique from this part of Andalusia. With this tuna and some marine salt, the local people make the red salted tuna (*mojama*). It comes from the upper belly of the fish, which is salted, dried and cured with marine salt and strict control of temperature and humidity. It is considered the very best of the mojamas, with a deep marine flavour and a high salt content. It is dark red with a firm texture and intense aroma. It should be eaten in thin, almost transparent slices. This is a very healthy product, good with just a few drops of olive oil, and perfect for salads.

[herpacc@herpac.com](mailto:herpacc@herpac.com)
39. **La Catedral asparagus and ‘habitas’**
La Catedral de Navarra, a firm with more than 40 years of experience, produces vegetable conserves from its gardens in Navarre. It has always maintained a balance between traditional production methods and the newest technologies, with rigorous quality controls. Outstanding among its many offerings are the extra-thick asparagus and the tiny *habitas* beans in olive oil. The Navarre asparagus from La Catedral is extra-thick, with a white colour, smooth texture and ample aroma. After cooking they are bottled or tinned and water and salt are added. Similar methods are used with the baby *habitas*, with a clear green colour, a fine flavour and a buttery texture.

[www.lacatedraldenavarra.com](http://www.lacatedraldenavarra.com)

40. **Legumbres El Hostal**
El Hostal is the leading Spanish brand of tinned vegetables, both dried and cooked. It is a division of the Alimentos Naturales, S.A. firm, founded in 1988. In 2009 El Hostal launched its gourmet line, with a wide variety of dried legumes: the
canela bean, the large chickpea and the milky chickpea; in cooked legumes, the fabada bean. Legumes figure prominently in the Mediterranean diet for their balanced concentration of nutrients. Almost all the regions in Spain produce some kind of legume. At El Hostal this diversity and quality is reflected in the wide range of different D.O. controls, up to seven.

41. EL NAVARRICO PIQUILLO PEPPERS
José Salcedo Soria began activities in the 1960s with a family business that bottled tomatoes. With time it launched the Conservas El Navarrico brand, part of the Pimiento del Piquillo

Vegetable and fruit preserves

The world of preserves has evolved considerably since its beginnings at the end of the 18th century. It arose after the French army’s need to conserve food in good condition over long periods during its prolonged European campaigns.

Frenchman Nicolas Appert developed the system of conserving food in airless glass jars, after first cooking it at high temperatures. In Spain the industry began to develop in the second half of the 19th century, and today the country is an important producer of high quality preserves.

When we speak of preserves we refer to those foods that have been specially prepared before being placed in metal, glass or plastic containers.

In all cases, the aim is to prevent micro organisms from altering the sanitary conditions of the food.

Preserves have achieved their highest expression with vegetables and fruits. A whole industry has arisen around products such as asparagus, peas, beans, artichokes, Swiss chard, peaches, pears and cherries. The principal autonomous communities that grow these fruits and vegetables are Andalusia, Navarre, the Rioja, Aragón and Castilla & León.

The excellent basic materials, along with the shape and design of their containers, have made today’s world of preserves an important gastronomical sector. In general they are very nutritious, healthy products.
de Lodosa, Espárragos de Navarra and Alcachofas de Tudela D.O.s. Conservas El Navarrico offer a range of products from Navarre, produced by traditional methods. One of the most outstanding is the small sweet piquillo pepper with an intense red colour and delicate aromas. It is roasted on wood fires, then peeled and cleaned by hand. The firm produces other bottled peppers.

www.navarrico.com

42. Marchenica Peaches in syrup

Under its Marchenica brand, the family-run Hijos de Francisco Celma, S.A. firm sells quality products under some of the D.O. supervision of the Aragón Autonomous Community. The peaches, of the D.O. Melocotón de Calanda, are produced by traditional methods, with strict quality and sanitary controls. They come in bottles of either full peaches or halves. They have a characteristic aroma and a yellow-orange colour, with a firm and velvety texture.

www.marchenica.com

43. Santa Teresa RAF Gazpacho

Ávila, where Santa Teresa lived, is inseparable from the city’s famous pastries (yemas) and from a shop called La Flor de Castilla. A visit here wouldn’t be complete without trying some yemas de Santa Teresa at this traditional establishment, which has been going for more than a century and a half. They’re a smooth, sweet delicacy. What was once a traditional pastry operation is today a new firm that makes quality products that last a long time without any preservatives. One of them is the Gazpacho Raf Santa Teresa. This traditional cold Spanish soup is made from farm-fresh products (Raf tomato, pepper, cucumber, fresh garlic), virgin extra olive oil, vinegar from Jerez
and salt. It has no additives or gluten, and is rich in vitamins C and E.

www.yemasdesantateresa.es

44. LITORAL FABADA ASTURIANA
The history of the Fabada Litoral firm goes back to the 1940s when it began manufacturing for local orders. It wasn’t until the 60s that it started to do business on a national level. With time, the firm developed other traditional Spanish dishes, but it was fabada – the bean stew of northern Spain – that brought it fame. Since 1985 this brand is part of the Nestlé group. Fabada is prepared following the traditional recipe of the Asturias region: authentic fabes beans with meat (chorizo sausage, blood sausage and streaky bacon), and then canned. To eat, just heat it up following the instructions. It’s a dish that’s full of energy.

www.litoralautentico.com

45. ANTONIO DE MIGUEL PICKLED RED PARTRIDGE
Antonio de Miguel is a firm that specialises in pre-cooked products. It uses the highest quality basic products, without additives or colouring, and traditional methods. One of its creations is the red partridge preserved in brine. After maturing the meat under refrigeration, it is plucked and cleaned. Then it is fried in olive oil. The partridge is tinned and the cold brine as added. The final result is a rosy meat, tasty, tender and juicy – qualities brought out by the pickling. It is best consumed cold.

www.euroambrosias.es
Sweets

46. JAMS FROM LA VIEJA FÁBRICA

The Ángel Camacho manufacturing group produces a wide range of jams and marmalades under the name La Vieja Fábrica, a traditional brand since the end of the 19th century. The most attractive features of these jams are their abundant fruit, which is carefully selected for texture, flavour, aroma and appearance. Products range from the classic strawberry, plum and peach to the more modern redcurrant, pineapple and exotic fruits. There is also a wide range of dietetic jams and others rich in fibre. www.laviejafabrica.com

47. EL QUEXIGAL HONEY

El Quexigal is a firm owned by the Vega-Sicilia group, known all over the world for its quality wines. El Quexigal makes food products. Among them is the highly appreciated honey. El Quexigal has honeys that are made from a single flower (orange blossom, heather, lavender) and others that come blends of different flowers. These honeys combine their original purity with a natural production system and rigorous hygienic-sanitary controls. Their principal components are sugars, and the liquid tends to crystallise naturally: this is an indication of quality. The hand of man – in this case El Quexigal – only intervenes to collect, process and package the honey. www.elquexigal.com
48. Alicante and Jijona nougat
from Pablo Garrigós Ibáñez
Everyone likes them both: the soft nougat (turrón) from Jijona and the hard stuff from Alicante. A good example of this is the turron made by Pablo Garrigós Ibáñez in his Premium version: all the goodness of the traditional high-quality honey and almonds and careful craftsmanship. The elegant way it is presented combines with the brilliance of the almond oil in the Jijona turron, and with the brilliance of the honey in the turron from Alicante. The pieces of almond and the aromatic honeys are easily perceived on the taste buds in the case of the Alicante nougat –as are the ground almonds in the Jijona version.

www.pablogarrigos.com

49. Oriol Balaguer
Chocolates
Oriol Balaguer is a young pastry chef who has made his products into masterpieces through a blend of chocolate, innovation and design. In 2002 he opened his first pastry shop in Barcelona, and since then he has continued to expand in Spain and overseas. His chocolates come in unique shapes, textures, aromas and favours. He uses the best cacao from all over the world. Another of his strong points is the modern, elegant presentation. In a word: a pleasure for the senses. The caloric content varies, and can be very high.

www.oriolbalaguer.com

The magic world of sweets in Spain has often been linked to the country’s history: Arab civilisation brought almonds and sugar, while the discovery of America yielded cacao, an essential ingredient in making chocolate.

Religion has also been a factor, with the sweets traditionally made in convents (yemas, tocinos de cielo, mantecados, tortas); the Christmas sweets (turrones, rosca de Reyes and polvorones); and the Easter delicacies (monas or chocolate eggs). The people themselves have contributed with the so-called ‘frying pan sweets’ (torrijas, florones, pestiños).

The fact is that sweets are increasingly popular. There are not only good dessert chefs and chocolate specialists in Spain but outstanding ones, such as Paco Torreblanca, Oriol Balaguer, Jordi Butrón, Christian Escribá, Jordi Roca...

Chocolate can be considered the king of sweets. Then, too, there are the fruits that are the basis of so many pastries, jams, jellies and candied fruits; or those that come in syrup or with nuts (almonds, hazelnuts, walnuts) that are the basis for popular pastries such as marzipan, polvorones, mantecados, alfajores, guirlaches, turrones.

Ice creams and sorbets also have pride of place in the sweets department. Thanks to the great variety of fruits that they contain, there is an enormous variety of flavours. Likewise, spices have contributed to the world of ice cream. Example: saffron ice cream. Even olive oils and vinegars enter the picture, with such inventions as olive oil ice cream or Jerez vinegar ice cream.

Spain is a point of reference in quality sweets and desserts. The easiest ones for travellers to carry are the chocolates and the fruits and preserves.
50. El Pastoret Yogurt Caprices

El Pastoret de la Segarra, a firm specialising in milk products, cottage cheese and yogurt, has developed the latter food into a dessert of the highest quality. This is a new concept: a magic mix of textures with a combination of fruit juices, jams, pieces of fruit and toppings. Some of the basic yogurt flavours are Greek, orange and chocolate, baked apple, pear and cinnamon, lemon and mint, mango and berries, and coffee toffee. This is the perfect light dessert to end a copious meal. It has a reasonable number of calories, high quality proteins, many minerals and lots of vitamins.

www.elpastoret.com

Rafael Ansón

This guide was compiled by Rafael Ansón, founder and president of the Royal Spanish Academy of Gastronomy, with the assistance of Javier Carretero.
Where you can inhabit ancient palaces fit for kings and queens
Art here is not only to be found in museums