

Mediterranean

Seaside Tapas

Chef's Daily Creation Market Price

Please Ask Your Server

Spicy Harissa Seared Tuna* Market Price

Over Cucumbers with Grilled Fennel Raita

Caramelized Sea Scallop \$7

Sweet and Sour Fig Sauce

Feta, Olives and Roasted Red Peppers \$7

Served with Fresh Artisan Crisps

Whipped Feta Rouille \$6

Served with Sourdough Crostini

Seasoned with Extra Virgin Olive Oil, Maras and Urfa

Hummus and Country Olives \$5

Served with Fresh Artisan Crisps

Jumbo Garlic Shrimp Sauté \$8

Served in a Lemon Herb Butter Sauce

Bruschetta \$5

With Herb Chèvre and Diced Tomato

Marinated White Anchovies \$7

Over Greens with Roasted Peppers

Crispy Sesame Rice Stick \$5

Sweet Chili Dipping Sauce

Mini Arancini \$5

Served with Fresh Marinara Sauce

**Grilled Asparagus Wrapped
in Prosciutto** \$6

Topped with Balsamic Glaze

**Consuming raw or undercooked meats and/or eggs may increase your risk of foodborne illness.*

Tapas [*tah-pahs*] is the name of a wide variety of small bite size appetizers in Spanish cuisine. They may be cold (such as mixed olives and cheese) or warm (such as *puntillitas*, which are battered, fried baby squid). **Tapa** means “lid” or “cover” in Spanish.

The History of Tapas:

According to legend, the tapa tradition began when Castile’s King, Alfonso X of Castile or Alfonso the Wise, recovered from an illness by drinking wine mixed with small dishes between meals. After regaining his health, the king ordered that taverns were not allowed to serve wine to customers unless the beverage was accompanied by a small snack or tapas. The word became a kind of loophole in the law to allow drinkers to imbibe alcohol.

According to *The Joy of Cooking*, the original tapas were the slices of bread or meat which sherry drinkers in Andalusian taverns used to cover their glasses between sips. This was a practical measure meant to prevent fruit flies from hovering over the sweet sherry. The meat used to cover the sherry was normally ham or chorizo, which are both very salty and activate thirst. Because of this, bartenders and restaurant owners began creating a variety of snacks to serve with sherry, thus increasing their alcohol sales.^[1] Soon the lowly tapa (from tapa derived the verb *tapar*, “to cover”) became as important as the sherry.

Tapas evolved over Spain’s history through the incorporation of ingredients and influences from many different cultures and countries. The east coast was invaded by the Romans, who introduced the olive and irrigation methods. The invasion of the North African Moors in the 8th century also brought olives to the south, as well as almonds, citrus fruits and fragrant spices. The influence of their 700-year presence remains today, especially in Andalusia. The discovery of the New World brought the introduction of tomatoes, sweet and chili peppers, maize (corn), beans and potatoes. These were readily accepted and easily grown in Spain’s micro-climates.

There are several explanations for the etymology of “tapa”:

- ☞ A commonly cited explanation is that an item, be it bread or a flat card, etc., would often be placed on top of a drink to protect it from fruit flies; at some point it became a habit to top this “cover” with a snack.
- ☞ It is also commonly said that since one would be standing while eating a tapa in traditional Spanish bars, they would need to place their plates on top of their drinks in order to eat, making it a top.
- ☞ Some believe that the name originated sometime around the 16th century when tavern owners from Castilla-La Mancha found out that the strong taste and smell of mature cheese could help disguise that of bad wine, thus “covering” it, and started offering free cheese when serving cheap wine.
- ☞ Another popular explanation says that the king Alfonso XII stopped by a famous *venta* (inn) in Cádiz (Andalusian city) where he ordered a cup of sherry. The waiter covered the glass with a slice of cured ham before offering it to the king, to protect the wine from the beach sand, as Cádiz is a windy place. The king, after drinking his wine and eating the tapa, ordered another sherry “with the cover.”

We hope you enjoy the Tapas as much as we do!

- Chefs Douglas & Leslie Hewson