



DELIA SMITH

**T**here are all kinds of versions of this delightful combination of rice, chicken, olives and pepper, from different regions all around the Mediterranean coast. But it is in the Basque region of Spain that the dish really comes into its own, with the addition of spicy chorizo sausage and a hint of cayenne pepper. And in this version the use of dried tomatoes preserved in oil gives it even more character and flavour. This recipe provides a complete supper for four people from the same pot – and very delicious too! It needs nothing to accompany it and works well piled on a large serving plate so that everyone can help themselves

# CHICKEN BASQUE STYLE

(SERVES 4)

**A 3½ lb (1.6 kg) chicken, jointed into 8 portions**

**salt and freshly milled black pepper**

**2 large red peppers**

**1 very large, or 2 medium onions**

**2oz (50g) sun-dried tomatoes in oil (or 1 tin Italian chopped tomatoes, well drained)**

**2-3 tablespoons fruity olive oil**

**2 large cloves of garlic, chopped**

**4oz (110g) chorizo sausage, in ½in (1cm) slices**

**brown basmati rice measured to the 8fl oz**

**(225ml) level in a measuring jug**

**½ pint (275ml) chicken stock (made from the giblets)**

**6fl oz (175ml) dry white wine**

**1 level tablespoon tomato purée**

**¼ teaspoon cayenne pepper**

**1 heaped teaspoon Provençal herbs**

**2oz (50g) stoned black olives, halved**

**½ large orange**

**You'll also need a wide and shallow flameproof casserole with a domed lid, measuring about 9½in (24cm) at the base (or failing that any wide flameproof casserole) of 8-pint capacity**

Begin by giving the chicken joints a good seasoning of salt and freshly milled pepper. Next slice the red peppers in half, remove the seeds and pith, then slice each half into 6 strips. Similarly slice the peeled onions into strips of approximately the same size. Now drain the dried tomatoes, wipe them with kitchen paper, and cut into little ½ inch (1cm) pieces.

Next heat up 2 tablespoons of oil in the casserole, and when it's fairly hot add the chicken pieces and brown them to a nutty golden colour on all sides. As they brown remove them to a plate lined with kitchen paper, using a draining spoon. Now you're going to brown the pepper and onion, so add a little more oil to the pan if it needs it and, with the heat a bit higher than medium and as soon as the oil is hot, add the onions and peppers and allow them to brown a little at the edges – moving them around from time to time – for about 5 minutes.

After that, add the chopped garlic, chorizo and dried tomatoes. Toss these around for a minute or so, until the garlic is pale golden and the chorizo has taken on some colour. Next stir in the rice and as soon as the grains have a good coating of oil, add the stock, wine, tomato purée and cayenne pepper.

As soon as everything has reached simmering point, turn the heat down to a gentle simmer. Add a little more seasoning, then place the chicken pieces gently on top of everything – it's important to keep the rice down in the liquid. Now sprinkle the herbs over the chicken and scatter the olives and wedges of orange in amongst them. Cover with a tight lid and cook over the gentlest possible heat for about 50-60 minutes, or until the rice is cooked but still retains a little bite. (Alternatively at this stage you could transfer the casserole to the oven for the same amount of time at gas mark 4, 350°F, 170°C.)