

The Castejóns have brought Spain to the Lowcountry, infusing some of their favorite dishes from abroad with a Charleston twist.

“When you have a quality ingredient, you don’t need to mess with it much,” says Rachel Castejón. She and her husband, Alfonso, run the popular Spain-inspired pop-up restaurant The Castejóns.

While you can find them at various pop-up events, their frozen items make staying in a treat.

Cooking With The Castejóns

Chorizo



Chorizo, available for purchase at CHS Fermentory

Uncooked, The Castejóns’ chorizo has a firm crumble – not the typical gooey mess you might expect from store bought chorizo. The flavors mingle with just the right amount of heat, creating a savory experience that even those wary of spice can enjoy.

While you may think of chorizo as an ingredient, The Castejóns encourage you to try it as a meal.

Made with local pork and a mix of spices, each frozen pack contains four links. Their favorite way to enjoy their chorizo is to grill each link or cook in a cast iron pan until cooked through, let it rest for a few minutes, and serve in thick slices on a charcuterie board. “It’s also very common in Spain to cook [the chorizo] over a fire, slice and pass around on a plate.”

Another common use for chorizo in Spain? Use one or two links to flavor an entire legume stew. The Castejóns often set aside some of their product to use in a garbanzo stew.

You can also cook and slice the chorizo before adding it to some homemade pizza or pasta salad.

Albóndigas – Spanish Meatballs and Sauce

Sold in packs of 16 with a sauce pack, The Castejóns’ albóndigas are not your typical meatball. Rachel says, “Spaniards tend to eat their meatballs with bread to dip in the sauce (our favorite way) or over rice. We like it as a main course with a side salad or grilled veggies.



Albóndigas, available for purchase at CHS Fermentory

It would also be really good over mashed potatoes or really any of your favorite starches or starch-substitutes.”

For anyone tired of cooking, albóndigas are here for you. Just put the sauce, the meatballs, and 1/4 cup water in a pan, cover, and cook over medium to medium-low heat until warm. Then take the top off and let the sauce reduce until desired thickness. They can be cooked frozen or thawed. A delicious meal has never been more attainable.



Frozen Croquetas, available for purchase at CHS Fermentory

Croquetas – The “Fan Favorites”

Croquette “dough” is mainly made from roasted chicken, herbs, and a chicken broth that the Castejóns simmer for close to a day. After adding various ingredients, they’re chilled and breaded before heading to the freezer to prep for packaging.



Jamón Croquettes

Their jamón croquetas are available as often as they’re able to find jamón. Once they run out, they’re replaced with chicken croquetas.

As for the best way to cook them? The Castejóns recommend that you thaw the croquetas before cooking. Then, fill a pan with enough oil to almost cover the croquetas and heat it to about 350 – 375 degrees. Add the croquetas, flipping to make sure they’re evenly a dark golden tone – your sign that they’re done.

Rachel says they have “never done a wedding, party or event without someone having chosen these [croquetas] as one of their items.” She recommends making them as an appetizer for a party, or serving them as a main dish (about 4 – 5 per person) with a salad.

Where Can You Purchase The Castejóns Frozen Entrees?

The Castejóns frozen food is available through CHS Fermentory. Simply go to their website and click the button that says Beer to Go! Select how you'd like to pick up your order (curbside or pickup), then scroll down the menu to Frozen Castejóns Food.

While their Chorizo, Croquetas and Albóndigas are their regular items, keep an eye on their Instagram page as they occasionally also offer pre-marinated wings, ribs, and other delicious options. It all depends on what ingredients they can get for the right price and quality.

Visit The Castejóns At Their Pop-Up Events

Since the pandemic, their menu at pop-up events has been limited to 3 – 4 items. Two things you can definitely look forward to? Their Fried



Fried Cod Sandwich, a popular menu item at pop-up events

Cod Sandwich and a Chorizo Dog.

The Chorizo Dog is served with roasted red pepper, diced white onions, aioli sauce, butter lettuce and pickles on a sausage dog roll. Lately they've been sourcing fresh peppers from Kindewood Farms.

The Fried Cod Sandwich is a year round special, and one of Alfonso's favorites. A combination of fresh flavors, they serve it as often as they're able to find great quality fresh fish. While codfish is by far their favorite to use, they'll often swap it out for another type if codfish isn't readily available. True to their Spaniard beliefs, quality ingredients are the most important component to a fantastic meal.

Be sure to check their Instagram and Facebook accounts for event announcements.

How The Castejóns Started

The Castejóns built their business from a combined love of cooking, experimenting with flavors, and taking chances.

With Rachel's love of the Lowcountry and Alfonso's Spanish heritage, The Castejóns became a way for them to share a piece of home (Spain) with a Charleston twist. Their inspiration for new dishes comes from around the world. "Whenever we taste something great, we try to see if there's something similar in Mediterranean or Spanish cuisine."

While Spanish food is almost never spicy, Alfonso prefers to infuse a little slow-heat, describing it as "less intense flavors with more depth – something that lingers in your mouth."

As the pandemic has forced us all to pivot, The Castejóns mainly just want to make sure that the people who love their food can still get it. They encourage fans to "transform our food into something that's more American for you! We just want people to enjoy the food because we enjoy it here. Honestly, we save some on the side for ourselves when we do a batch."

Advice For Future Chefs

Rachel and Alfonso are firm believers that "you're never too big for your britches," and encourage anyone with a passion to take even the most random opportunity – as you never know what it'll lead to.

While they prepare as much as possible, the Castejóns advise new business owners to "be open to a new day every day...also, be flexible." Your pop-up might be scheduled to end at 9, but if there's a line out the door and you still have food to serve, they suggest taking the opportunity when it presents itself.

Looking Forward

At the moment, their hope is to continue to expand their chorizo and other frozen entrees – offering them at more breweries, shops and hopefully grocery stores one day.

When it comes to their menu, they'd love to add Salmorejo. A cousin to gazpacho, Salmorejo is made with tomatoes, olive oil and a good bread crumb. Not to be mistaken for tomato soup, Salmorejo is thicker and served cold, sometimes with a boiled egg, Spanish cheese or jamón.



House-made organic chicken-liver pâté with house-made country bread

Ultimately, The Castejóns hope to have a brick-and-mortar restaurant one day, serving a wide variety of Spanish flavors. It would be a chance for CHS locals to experience Spain the way they do – bread and paté with coffee for breakfast, jamón and papas bravas for lunch, or a charcuterie board reminiscent of the open markets and fresh ingredients found only during a stroll through Spain.

Until then, visit their pop-up events, order your chorizo and croquetas here, and let us know what you think! As the Castejóns say – Buen provecho!

By Samantha Paternoster | August 12th, 2020
