

The Institute of Culinary Education (ICE) - Tapas Class

[The Institute of Culinary Education \(ICE\)](#) in New York is legendary. Tapas are a hot trend. Taking a Tapas Class at ICE with Chef Jordy Lavanderos combined the best of both worlds.



We love tapas, those "little bites" that are popping up everywhere, and when we heard about the Tapas from Cataluña class at ICE taught by Chef Jordy Lavanderos, we immediately signed up. For those of you not familiar with The Institute of Culinary Education, (ICE), this is the renowned culinary school founded by Peter Kump in 1975. When Mr. Kump died in 1995, Rick Smilow purchased the school, which is one of the only remaining independently owned culinary schools in the United States.

Celebrated ICE alumni include Jordy Lavanderos, Scott Campbell, Allison Vines-Rushing (James Beard Rising Star 2004), and Pastry Chef Claudia Fleming, and the illustrious list continues. Signing up for the tapas class at ICE, we knew that we would be in excellent company.



On September 17, 2006, we excitedly entered the doors of ICE, registered, and made our way to our assigned teaching kitchen, one of 12 teaching kitchens at the school. We entered just as Chef Jordy Lavanderos was explaining a little about the history of tapas to our small class of eight students, which consisted of three women and five men. Chef Lavanderos knows all about Tapas, he worked in the Basque Country, and worked with the legendary chefs Juan Mari Arzac and Ferràn Adrià at El Bulli in Spain, and was the former owner of Secretes, the acclaimed Tapas restaurant in New York.

So, why the name tapas? The name originated in Andalucia, where in order for the bars to keep the bottles of wine fresh after opening them, they would place small plates over the bottles. In general, in Spain tapas are known as "little bites" or "little dishes." Within Spain, there are many different tapas, and how they are prepared. For example, in Barcelona they eat boquerones (white anchovies) with the head left on, in Andalucia, they remove the head. It is also common in Europe now to serve soups as "shots" in crystal glasses so that you can see and taste the different layers.

History lesson learned, Chef Lavanderos divided the class into two groups of four in each team, and handed us our menu with the recipes for Tapas Corridas (Traditional Tapas). Our team consisted of Rick

Created by: Debra C. Argen and Edward F. Nesta

from San Diego, who came to New York for a vacation and had always wanted to take a class at ICE; Markus from New York was taking the class to make tapas to entertain his friends, and the two of us who enjoy learning new techniques at professional culinary schools. Chef Lavanderos instructed us to look at the recipes, and then decide on the division of labor. Each of the tapas had many steps, so we would each get to contribute to the overall recipes. He reminded us to read the recipes, and start the recipes that would take the longest first, and to have all of our ingredients assembled in front of us before we began our tasks.



Tapas Corridas Menu

Bombas de Patatas y Sobrasada (Potato with Sobrasada sausage, and scallion)

Boquerones a la Andaluza (Anchovies breaded and fried)

Toastas de Revuelto con Morcilla (Eggs and Morcilla on sliced garlic bread)

Gazpacho Shots with Sweet Chile Jalapeño Nuage

Caballa Ahumada (Smoked Mackerel with pickled red onions, roasted beets, and Manchego cheese over baby arugula salad)

Chiporones Rellenos con Salsa Negra (Stuffed squid with rice, mushrooms and Manchego cheese with black sauce)



Our team would make six tapas, but first things first. One of the key elements to enjoying tapas is the accompanying Sangria. Chef Lavanderos instructed us to use a mixture of fresh fruit, juices, and red wine in our Sangria. We decided that Rick and Edward would prepare the Sangria, while Markus and Debra started chopping vegetables for the other recipes.

Edward: Rick and I "got the party started," so to speak by making the Sangria. We chopped cantaloupe and granny smith apples, added a cinnamon stick, a little simple syrup, cranberry juice, a little orange juice and Rioja wine. This was definitely an "add an ingredient and taste" creation, and the result was refreshing and perfect to keep the "student chefs" focused on their assigned tasks.



Debra: My assigned task was cleaning the squid for the Chiporones Rellenos con Salsa Negra. I rarely even eat squid, so I knew absolutely nothing about cleaning them. Not to worry, with Chef Lavanderos and Chef Assistant Rebecca standing on either side of me, they walked me through the proper way to clean the squid, and mentioned that sometimes when you clean the squid you might find a small fish inside, because the squid was caught "with its mouth full." No sooner had they said that, I picked up my first squid, went to clean it, and out popped a small fish, and a loud startled shriek from me! Rick, standing on the other side of the table, also shrieked and we shared a great laugh. Fortunately, this was the only fish I found or I may have "delegated" this task to someone else in my team. I learned how to clean the squid by separating the body from the tentacles, to remove the little beak, and to remove the reddish skin and wings. The squid were cleaned and were now ready for the next step, stuffing them using a plastic pastry bag with the rice that Markus had made. The pastry bag made the job of stuffing the squid so easy, except for the fact that the bag was enormous and I may have overfilled it a bit, so it was a bit unwieldy, but I finally managed to get my hands around this task.



Edward: While Markus was smoking the mackerel, and Debra was beginning the bombas, I prepared the beets and the pickled red onions. Rick was cleaning the boquerones, a labor-intensive task to clean the tiny fish, so when I was done with the beets and red onions, I pitched in and together we worked our way through the cleaning process with assistance on cleaning technique from Chef Lavanderos.

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Debra: My next assignment was to prepare the potatoes that Markus had boiled for the bombas, using the largest food mill that I ever saw, and then the team made the bombas in assembly-line format. One member rolled the mixture into balls, the next member rolled them in the flour, the third member dipped them in the eggs, and finally the last member rolled them in the panko and parsley. Once we finished the bombas, we set them on a parchment-covered tray and put them in the refrigerator for 1½-hours to firm, and would later deep-fry them in hot oil.



There are always proper procedures, techniques, and tips to learn, and learn we did at ICE. During our class, we learned how to clean squid and boquerones, how to smoke mackerel, learned "wet" and "dry" hand techniques, and also to always salt using the fingertips and not just drop it off a spoon to better control the salt. Catching someone adding pepper first, Chef Assistant Rebecca gently scolded, "It is called salt and pepper, not pepper and salt, for a reason."



If you have never gone to culinary school or worked in a restaurant, entering a teaching kitchen can be a bit intimidating with the large professional ovens, deep fryers, and having to measure ingredients using a scale, however Chef Lavanderos, Chef Assistant Rebecca and the ICE staff helped us throughout the class and turned us into tapas "chefs." We are now ready to entertain our friends at home with our tapas, but it would be nice to call Rick and Markus to come and work together as a team again, and invite Chef

Lavanderos to see how we have progressed.



After 4.5 hours, we had made all of the recipes on the menu, and it was time to sit down at the table with the other team and enjoy the tapas that we created. Feeling quite proud of our accomplishments, we toasted Chef Lavanderos, Chef Assistant Rebecca, the ICE staff, and each other with our Sangria and ate the fruits of our labor. At the end of our tapas dinner the best part was that we did not have to clean the kitchen!

To give you a little taste of tapas, Chef Lavanderos shares his recipe for Bombas de Patatas y Sobrasada (Potato with Sobrasada sausage, and scallion).

The Recipe



Bombas de Patatas y Sobrasada (Potato with Sobrasada sausage, and scallion)

1

pound (.45 kilograms)

Idaho potatoes

4

ounces (113 grams)

sobrasada

1

egg

1½

ounces (43 grams)

flour

eggs

flour

panko and parsley

salt and pepper

Cook the potatoes with the skin on until tender enough to make a puree (mashed). Add the egg and the sobrasada to the potatoes and mix with your hands. Add the flour a little at a time until all of the flour is incorporated. Season well with salt and pepper.

In a shallow bowl add the flour and set aside. In another shallow bowl, add the eggs, beat them, and set aside. In another shallow bowl, add the panko and fresh chopped parsley and set aside.

Shape the mixture into round balls, and roll the balls in the flour, then dip the balls in the beaten eggs, and then roll them in the panko and parsley mixture. Set the balls on a parchment-covered tray in the refrigerator for a minimum of 1½ hours, and then deep-fry the "bombas" and serve hot.

To learn more about **The Institute of Culinary Education (ICE)** and taking classes, please visit their website at: www.iceculinary.com.

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