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RECIPE: Arroz con Leche

CREATED BY: José Andrés

The following recipe from José Andrés, protégé of Ferrán Adriá of El Bulli in Spain, is the chef-owner of seven restaurants in the Washington DC area and comes from www.vibrantrioja.com. He was named Best Chef in the Mid-Atlantic region in 2003 by the James Beard Foundation, and has been profiled in *Gourmet*, *Saveur*, *Bon Apétit*, *Food & Wine*, *Wine Spectator*, the *Washington Post*, the *New York Times*, *USA Today*, and other publications. José travels widely as a guest chef, teacher, and fundraiser at charity events, and is the host of a television cooking show that airs in Spain.

Arroz con leche is the dessert that best reflects Asturian cooking. Asturias doesn't produce rice, but it's undoubtedly one of the best milk-producing regions in Europe, with its green pastures and mountains.

10 cups whole milk

1 strip lemon zest

1 cinnamon stick

1 cup Spanish Bomba or Calasparra rice or Arborio rice

4 tablespoons unsalted butter

1 cup sugar

Directions:

Combine the milk, lemon zest, and cinnamon stick in a large pot and bring to a boil. Once the mixture boils, remove the cinnamon stick and the lemon zest.

Stir in the rice, reduce the heat to low, and simmer for 30 minutes. Keep stirring with a wooden spoon to make sure the rice does not stick to the bottom of the pot.

Add the butter and simmer for another 5 minutes. Add the sugar and mix vigorously. Remove the pot from the heat and spread the rice on a platter. Leave it to rest. As it cools, the milk will develop a thin skin on the top of the rice; fold this into the rice before serving. The pudding will be ready when it reaches room temperature, in 3 to 4 hours. You can also serve it cold from the refrigerator the next day.