

GUILT-FREE GOURMET

Decadently delicious dishes, no compromi to health

Photos and story
by Tanya Barham

Already spent your well-earned vacation time? Never fear. Fenouil brings a Mediterranean vacation to your doorstep. What could be better than a refreshing Sangria, crab cakes, paella and a live, classic Spanish guitar serenade? A guilt-free restaurant meal without sacrificing the rich color, texture and taste of this Spanish staple.

Start your taste adventure with the *Salade de Crab au Citron Vert* (\$12). Pert, young arugula sprouts explode atop supple strands of mauve and pink shredded crab resting on a bright-green and soft-yellow column of cubed avocado. Fenouil's signature gray sea salt and fennel cracker garnishes the plate among dots of deep-black and orange flying fish roe. Taking a huge departure from the tendril-laden ceviche of Peruvian origin, Fenouil's crab salad nonetheless conjures visions of the sea. Subtle and moist, the crab, when followed with the avocado, has a warm hint of pepper with just a suggestion of lemon. And because crab is a rich source of protein that is low in fat and calories, the modest portion of avocado is just the right amount of decadence to ensure big taste without overdoing it on fat and calories.

Our trip continues along the Spanish coast to Valencia, home of Spain's most famous culinary export: Paella. Fenouil's *Paella Camar*

Fenouil's paella is a veritable explosion of color and texture.

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guaise aux Fruits de Mer (\$23) is a veritable explosion of color and texture. A little indecisive about where to begin, I go for the beige and pink chorizo sprinkled with paprika.

Surely, I think, this will be where the "guilt-free" falls apart. Much to my surprise, this sausage manages to be tender without dripping of fat. Fenouil's chorizo is leaner than average. It is Spanish pork with a somewhat milder flavor profile, making it easier to relish each nuanced bite of saffron, rice and seafood. Texturally, the firmness of the squid, prawns and chorizo contrasts nicely with the dish's morsels of buttery halibut, clam and mussel. Oven-dried Roma tomatoes and lively nibbles of fresh peas infused with fish and chicken stock punctuate the dish.

Paella is a safe choice. It derives most of its flavor from extra virgin olive oil, chicken and fish stock with white wine, saffron and paprika instead of the standard butter and heavy creams.

Enjoy a fresh glass of Sangria from the bar to the tunes of a father/son guitar duo each Friday and First Thursday to complete your fantasy tour of Spain without leaving the neighborhood.

Fenouil

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