



SPANISH · GALICIAN · PRECISION-COOK HYBRID · MAIN · TAPA ·  
SHOWCASE PROTEIN

# Pulpo Sous-Vide 77°C / 5h → Plancha · The Precision Alternative

Whole octopus tentacles vacuum-sealed and cooked in a water bath at precisely 77°C for 5 hours, chilled in the bag, then finished with a 60-second plancha sear at 280°C for a crisp charred exterior over silky gel-converted interior. The sous-vide-first approach to Galician pulpo — zero risk of rubbery texture, zero guessing on doneness, and a tentacle that's been in the 'perfect tender' zone for four consecutive hours before it ever sees fire. Pair with pimentón dulce + flake salt + a drizzle of good oil; no second technique needed.

Protein Pulpo (octopus)

Serves 4 as main, 6 - 8 as tapa

Difficulty Intermediate

Active 20 min active (plus 5 h idle SV)

Total 5 h 25 min (or cook-ahead: SV-cook 2 - 3 days ahead, finish day-of)

## THE STORY

### Why 77°C for Five Hours Beats the Copper Pot

Galician pulpo a feira has a cooking tradition that goes back five hundred years — a whole octopus dipped three times into boiling water (the *susto*, the fright), then simmered for 45-60 minutes until a fork slides through the thickest part of the tentacle. It's an excellent technique. It's also a technique that produces rubbery

octopus about 30% of the time in home kitchens, because the narrow doneness window (collagen converted, muscle not yet overcooked to dry) is a moving target that depends on the octopus's size, age, and previous freezing cycles.

Sous-vide solves the problem by eliminating the window entirely. At 77°C, octopus muscle sits indefinitely in the exact textural sweet spot: the collagen has fully converted into gelatin (the tough-chewy phase is over), the muscle fibers have separated cleanly (no resistance), and the moisture is locked in the bag (no risk of drying out). At three hours it's excellent; at four hours it's the same excellent; at five hours, still excellent. The timing stops mattering once you cross the 3-hour threshold.

The second advantage: chill and hold. SV-cooked octopus in the bag keeps perfectly in the fridge for 3-4 days. You can cook a kilo on Sunday afternoon, eat a tapa portion on Sunday night, and still have dinner-party-grade tentacles ready for a plancha finish on Wednesday. This is what restaurants do — the boil-and-hope technique doesn't fit a service kitchen, so the best tapas bars in Madrid run a daily SV batch and finish to order.

The finish is a 60-second plancha sear at 280°C with nothing but a brush of oil. Direct heat on rested-cold-SV tentacles produces a crisp mahogany exterior over a silky pearl-white interior, and the plancha's thermal mass means the sear is fast enough to brown without reheating the center past its sweet spot. Dress at the plate: flaky salt, pimentón dulce, a fast pass of a good olive oil, and a squeeze of lemon if the mood demands it. No sauce required — the octopus is the entire point.

# Specs

<p><b>YIELD</b></p> <p><b>1 kg octopus (pre-cook weight) → 4 main portions or 6-8 tapa</b></p>	<p><b>SV TEMPERATURE</b></p> <p>77 °C / 170 °F – collagen conversion + muscle tenderness window</p>	<p><b>SV TIME</b></p> <p>5 hours (minimum 3 h for full tenderness; 5 h is the safe zone)</p>	<p><b>FINISH TEMP</b></p> <p>Plancha 260 - 280 °C surface, 60 sec per side</p>
<p><b>OCTOPUS SIZE</b></p> <p><b>1-1.5 kg whole, OR pre-portioned tentacles (500-800 g)</b></p>	<p><b>DIFFICULTY</b></p> <p><b>Intermediate</b></p> <p>●●●○○</p>	<p><b>ACTIVE TIME</b></p> <p><b>20 min (prep + finish)</b></p>	<p><b>HOLD WINDOW</b></p> <p><b>SV-cooked octopus in sealed bag: 3-4 days refrigerated</b></p>
<p><b>KEY RULE</b></p> <p><b>Finish-sear must happen on cold or cool SV tentacles, not hot — 60-sec plancha, zero interior cook-through</b></p>			

## What Changed & Why

Two variables: octopus source and finishing oil. Technique is identical across tiers. ● Tier A (Everyday) uses **frozen Spanish octopus from Casablanca Seafood (Hialeah) or Marky's (Aventura)** — frozen is actually optimal for pulpo since freezing pre-breaks the muscle structure and replaces the traditional *susto* boiling-shock step. Paired with **California Olive Ranch Arbequina + La Chinata Pimentón Dulce**. ● Tier B (No Limits) uses **fresh Galician pulpo from a Spanish importer** (rare; Marky's occasional or direct-order from La Tienda when they have Portuguese/Galician fresh stock) — still freeze 24 h before cook for texture, then defrost + SV. Paired with **Rincón de la Subbética summit Arbequina + Las Hermanas de la Vera DOP Pimentón Dulce + fleur de sel**. The octopus-source difference is real but small; the oil + salt differences carry most of the Tier B flavor uplift.

CHANGE	ORIGINAL	UMAMI VERSION	WHY
TECH	Boil octopus in seawater-salinity water for 45-60 min until tender	SV 77°C for 5 hours in vacuum bag with optional aromatics (bay, peppercorns, garlic), chill in bag, finish with 60-sec plancha sear	Traditional boiling has a narrow doneness window that's hard to hit at home — the octopus is rubbery until it isn't, then dry shortly after. SV eliminates the timing problem: at 77°C you can hold for 3-6 hours with nearly identical results, and the chill-and-hold option lets you finish to order days later. The 60-second plancha sear adds the charred-exterior flavor that boiled pulpo lacks, so you get both the textural precision of SV + the crisp-crust satisfaction of fire, with no compromise. This is the modern restaurant approach to pulpo.

CHANGE	ORIGINAL	UMAMI VERSION	WHY
TECH	—	Freeze the octopus 24 hours before cooking (even if bought fresh)	This is a universal pulpo rule from Galician tradition: freezing pre-ruptures muscle cell walls via ice-crystal formation, which pre-breaks the chewiness and dramatically reduces cook time + improves final texture. The traditional susto (three-dip shock) accomplishes something similar via thermal shock. Commercial frozen octopus is already texture-pre-broken and is actually preferable to 'fresh' octopus that hasn't been frozen. For fresh-caught octopus, freeze 24-48 h first. This rule applies to cuttlefish and squid at smaller scales too.
ADD	—	Include a tablespoon of olive oil + 2 garlic cloves + 5 black peppercorns + 1 bay leaf in the SV bag	Aromatics in the bag infuse the octopus with flavor during the 5-hour cook. They're mild — octopus's own flavor carries the dish — but the oil also helps lubricate the tentacles when pulling them from the bag, prevents sticking, and provides a tiny bit of fat that distributes through the muscle during the long low-temp cook. Skip the salt in the bag — octopus is naturally salty enough from its marine origin, and adding salt to the bag during SV draws too much moisture out.

CHANGE	ORIGINAL	UMAMI VERSION	WHY
ADD	—	Chill the bag in an ice bath for 20 minutes after SV before opening	Chilling halts any continued cooking, firms the tentacle texture for cleaner plancha slicing, and — critically — sets up the cold-start plancha sear. A cold tentacle hitting a 280°C plancha gets a mahogany crust in 60 seconds without any interior reheating, preserving the SV-perfect center. A hot-just-out-of-bag tentacle would cook through the center by the time the exterior browned. Always chill before finishing. Bonus: chilled tentacles slice more cleanly if you want to portion before the sear.

CHANGE	ORIGINAL	UMAMI VERSION	WHY
ELEV	Cast-iron skillet for finish	Cast-iron plancha, 10-15 mm thick, preheated to 280°C (verified with infrared thermometer)	Cross-reference with merluza-a-la-plancha-refrito (Batch 8 · this workspace): the plancha's thermal mass and Leidenfrost-vapor-layer surface temp are what make the 60-second sear work. A skillet of the same size has about a third the thermal mass; when cold octopus tentacles hit it, the pan temperature crashes and the sear turns into a slow brown. A plancha holds through the sear. If you cook octopus or fish regularly, the 30×40 cm cast-iron plancha is a single-purpose tool that pays for itself. For kamado owners, the kamado-grate-plancha setup at 300°C produces an even better finish — adds subtle trace-smoke.
SKIP	Make a complex sauce (allioli, chimichurri, green sauce)	Finish with pimentón dulce + flake salt + a fast drizzle of good oil — nothing else	Galician pulpo a feira tradition is radically minimalist: boiled octopus, sliced on a wooden board, salt, pimentón, oil, done. The technique upgrades (SV + plancha) deserve the same minimalism. Sauces obscure the octopus. Let the five hours of precision cooking and the one minute of fire be the entire flavor architecture. If you want a sauce, serve alioli on the SIDE for guests to optionally use — never plated. This is a dish that tastes best with nothing extra on it.

# What You Need

## ● Everyday

### The Octopus

- 1 kg (~2.2 lb) **frozen whole Spanish octopus** OR 700-800 g pre-portioned tentacles — **Casablanca Seafood (Hialeah)**, **Marky's Gourmet Market (Aventura)**, or **Pao Gourmet**. Frozen is preferred (or buy fresh and freeze 24-48 h). See [sourcing/03-seafood](#).

### The SV Bag

- 2 cloves garlic, smashed
- 1 bay leaf
- 5 whole black peppercorns
- 1 tbsp **good EVOO** — **California Olive Ranch Arbequina** or similar

### The Finish

- 1 tbsp EVOO (for wiping the plancha)
- Flake salt — **Maldon** or similar
- **Pimentón Dulce de la Vera** — **La Chinata** or **Carmencita Dulce**, 2 tsp for dusting
- 1-2 tbsp finishing olive oil (same or better quality than cooking oil)
- Optional: ½ lemon for a squeeze at the plate
- Parsley for garnish (optional — traditional is just salt + pimentón + oil)

### Service (Galician Tradition)

- Wooden board or round wooden plate (*tabla*) — traditional Galician presentation
- Wooden picks / toothpicks — instead of forks, Galician-style
- Optional: boiled fingerling potatoes as a bed (*pulpo con cachelos*)

## ● No Limits

### The Octopus (Tier B)

- 1 kg **Galician or Portuguese fresh octopus** (freeze 24-48 h before use for texture; defrost before SV). **La Tienda** carries frozen-from-Spain packages periodically; **Marky's Aventura** occasionally has Spanish-import. For Pablo: call both 48 h ahead.

### The SV Aromatics (Tier B)

- 2 cloves **Las Pedroñeras DOP purple garlic**
- 1 fresh Turkish bay leaf (not the stale supermarket version)
- 5 Tellicherry black peppercorns
- 1 tbsp **Rincón de la Subbética summit Arbequina** OR **Castillo de Canena Family Reserve Picual**

### The Finish (Tier B — where the dinner-party uplift lives)

- Finishing oil: **Rincón de la Subbética summit Arbequina** (1-2 tbsp, drizzled at plate)
- **Las Hermanas de la Vera DOP Pimentón Dulce** — the premium-tier version of La Chinata; brighter color, cleaner flavor, slightly smokier
- **Fleur de sel de Guérande** OR **Sal de Ibiza** — the salt matters here because it's one of only three ingredients at plating
- Optional: a few grains of **Regalis cuttlefish ink** dusted for visual drama (● flex, non-traditional)

## EQUIPMENT

### Your Kit

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- Sous-vide circulator (any home brand: Joule, Anova, Inkbird) — capable of 77°C stable
  - Vacuum sealer + bags (heavy-gauge; FoodSaver works) OR quality zip-top bags + water-displacement method
  - Large stock pot or SV container (~8-10 L)
  - Ice bath — large bowl + ice + cold water for chilling bag
  - Cast-iron plancha, 10-15 mm thick (cross-reference: merluza recipe)
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- Infrared thermometer — verify 260-280°C plancha surface temp
- Sharp chef's knife for slicing
- Tongs for handling hot tentacles
- Wooden board or round plate for service

#### MISE EN PLACE

## Before You Start

- Octopus frozen 24-48 h if fresh; defrosted overnight in fridge if frozen-commercial
- SV circulator + water bath at 77°C, 30 min before bag goes in (stabilization time)
- Aromatics prepped and ready to go in the bag
- Ice bath prepped 20 minutes before SV end-time
- Plancha on burner (or kamado grate) preheating 10 min before finish
- Finishing oil decanted + brush or spoon ready
- Pimentón + salt in small bowls at the ready
- Service board/plate warmed slightly if the kitchen is cold

#### MAKE - AHEAD

## Timeline

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undefined
- undefined  
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- undefined  
undefined



## METHOD

# The Cook

### 1 Phase 1 · Prep + Bag — 10 minutes

1. If using whole octopus: Lay on a cutting board. Cut the tentacles away from the mantle with a sharp knife. Discard the head (or reserve for caldo — boiled head makes excellent seafood stock). Discard the beak (the hard spherical bit at the center of the tentacle cluster).
2. Rinse tentacles under cold water to remove any surface grit.
3. Pat dry with paper towels — the dryer the better for vacuum sealing.
4. Place tentacles + garlic + bay + peppercorns + 1 tbsp olive oil into a vacuum-sealer bag. Arrange tentacles in a single layer, not stacked, so heat distributes evenly.
5. Vacuum-seal. If using water-displacement: zip bag to almost-closed, submerge slowly in water to push air out, seal the last bit above water. Make sure there are no trapped air pockets against the tentacles.
6. Check the seal: squeeze gently; if air bubbles appear, re-seal.



#### WHY THIS WORKS

Vacuum sealing eliminates the air-water thermal conductivity mismatch — in a sealed bag, water bath temperature transfers directly to the food. Any air pockets create insulation zones where parts of the octopus cook more slowly. The aromatics' flavor transfers via the bag's olive oil, which acts as a fat-based flavor solvent — more efficient than water-based flavor transfer at 77°C.

## 2 Phase 2 · Sous-Vide Cook — 5 hours

1. Circulator water bath should already be at 77°C and stable.
2. Submerge the sealed bag fully. Clip to the side of the container if needed to prevent floating.
3. Set timer for 5 hours. The minimum for good tenderness is 3 hours; 5 hours is the safe zone; anywhere in the 3-6 hour window produces nearly identical results.
4. Walk away. There's no constant-attention step here. No stirring, no checking, nothing.
5. Optional: at the 3-hour mark, you can remove the bag and chill-and-hold for use within 3-4 days. For same-day eating, continue to 5 hours.
6. At 5 hours, remove the bag from the bath with tongs. The bag will be hot; handle with care.
7. Take a moment to inspect: tentacles should look a deeper red-purple than when they went in, with the flesh slightly contracted. This is normal. They've shed significant water into the bag.



### WHY THIS WORKS

At 77°C, octopus collagen (primarily Type I in the muscle's endomysium and perimysium) dissolves slowly into gelatin. The process is temperature-dependent and time-dependent: 77°C × 3+ hours produces near-complete conversion. Above 85°C the process is faster but muscle moisture loss becomes excessive (the flesh goes dry). Below 72°C the conversion is too slow for reasonable cook times. 77°C is the sweet spot that's been validated by restaurant-kitchen research (e.g., the Ideas in Food, Modernist Cuisine, Serious Eats bodies of work) and matches traditional Galician boil-and-simmer endpoint temperatures.

### 3 Phase 3 · Chill — 20 minutes

1. Prepare an ice bath: large bowl filled with half ice, half cold water.
2. Plunge the sealed bag directly into the ice bath. Press down to ensure full submersion.
3. Leave 20 minutes. The bag + tentacles should cool from 77°C to roughly 5-10°C.
4. After 20 minutes, remove the bag from the ice bath. At this point you have two choices: (a) finish immediately for same-day service, or (b) refrigerate the sealed bag for 3-4 days and finish later.
5. For immediate finish: open the bag, carefully lift tentacles onto a paper-towel-lined plate to drain and pat dry.
6. Discard the bag liquid (it's flavorful but too watery to use as a sauce; if you want to use it, reduce it hard in a small saucepan first — but for this dish, discard).

#### WHY THIS WORKS

Rapid chilling halts residual cooking and firms the gelatin structure within the muscle. A warm SV tentacle dropped directly onto a 280°C plancha would continue cooking internally during the 60-second sear, overshooting the perfect texture zone. Cold tentacles brown on the exterior without any interior temperature change. This is the same cook-then-chill-then-finish logic used in restaurant kitchens for every batch-cooked protein — duck confit, short ribs, even steaks for reverse-sear.

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## Phase 4 · Plancha Finish — 90 seconds

1. Plancha should already be preheated to 260-280°C surface temp. Verify with infrared thermometer.
2. Pat the tentacles bone-dry with paper towels. Any surface moisture steams rather than sears.
3. Slice tentacles into 4-6 cm pieces on a slight bias — Galician tradition is angle-cut to expose the inner surface for sauce contact and visual variety.
4. Wipe the plancha with an olive-oil-soaked paper towel — a thin film, not a pool.
5. Lay tentacle pieces on the plancha, suction-side (the convex underside) down first. They'll immediately start sizzling.
6. 60 seconds undisturbed. The suction cups should char to dark mahogany.
7. Flip each piece. 45-60 seconds on the second side.
8. Transfer to a warm wooden board or serving plate. Do NOT crowd — leave space for dressing.



### WHY THIS WORKS

Cross-reference: merluza-a-la-plancha-refrito Phase 3. The Leidenfrost effect at 260-280°C creates a vapor barrier that lets the tentacles release cleanly while developing crust. The octopus's suction cups are particularly rich in flavor compounds (concentrated by the 5-hour SV) and Maillard-brown to a deep mahogany that's visually and texturally central to the dish. Cold-start on the plancha means the interior barely changes temperature during the sear — the 60-second cook is entirely surface-level.

## 5 Phase 5 · Dress + Plate — 60 seconds

1. Arrange seared tentacle pieces on a warm wooden board or round plate. Spread out, not piled.
2. Dust generously with pimentón dulce — aim for visible red coverage, not a sprinkle. Pimentón is an ingredient here, not a garnish.
3. Flake sea salt liberally — Maldon or fleur de sel; a meaningful pinch on every piece.
4. Drizzle finishing olive oil across the whole plate. Don't be shy — the oil is part of the dish, not a finish.
5. Optional: a tiny squeeze of fresh lemon across the plate (not mandatory; traditional is oil + salt + pimentón only).
6. Optional: a few small parsley leaves scattered (traditional minimal version skips herbs).
7. Serve immediately with wooden picks. Tradition: no fork, no knife — pick up a piece with a toothpick-style wooden pick, bite directly.



### WHY THIS WORKS

The pimentón is genuinely structural to the dish, not decorative. Its fat-soluble aromatics (carotenoids + capsaicinoids) bloom in the finishing oil's warmth at the plate, releasing color and flavor that hit the eater's nose before the first bite. Flake salt provides concentrated bursts of salinity that the octopus's muscle salt can't match — the octopus is saline but not sharply salty; flake salt adds the punch.

### QUICK REFERENCE

## Timing Cheat Sheet

STEP	TIME	CUE
Freeze fresh octopus (if applicable)	T- 4 8 h	Pre-ruptures muscle cells
Defrost in fridge	T- 2 4 h	Overnight, covered
Circulator stabilize	T- 5 h 3 0 m	77°C, 30 min pre-heat of water bath
Bag + submerge	T- 5 h 2 0 m	Aromatics + oil, no salt

STEP	TIME	CUE
SV cook	5 hours unattended	3-6 h window all work
Plancha preheat	T- 3 0 m	10-min ramp to 280°C
Ice bath chill	T- 2 5 m to T- 5 m	20 min; bag fully submerged
Open bag + pat dry	T- 5 m	Slice into 4-6 cm pieces
Sear	T- 0 to T+ 1 m 3 0 s	60 sec suction-down, flip, 45-60 sec
Plate + dress + serve	T+ 1 m 3 0 s to T+ 2 m 3 0 s	Oil, salt, pimentón, immediate service

#### TROUBLESHOOTING

## Emergency Protocols

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DEEP DIVES

## Technique Notes

### ● **Universal: 77°C Is the Octopus Collagen Sweet Spot**

CEPHALOPOD SCIENCE · PRECISION-COOK · UNIVERSAL

Octopus muscle is ~20-30% collagen by dry weight — among the highest ratios of any edible protein. The narrow temperature band where collagen converts to gelatin (tenderizing the muscle) without moisture destruction is 75-82°C. Below that, conversion takes 10+ hours; above, moisture loss becomes excessive. 77°C × 3-6 hours is the validated restaurant-kitchen standard. This principle extends to every gelatin-dense muscle: oxtail (same temp window), pork shoulder (80°C × 24 h for SV pulled pork), chicken thigh (74°C × 2 h for confit-texture), beef cheek (79°C × 24 h for braise-texture). Master this temperature logic and you unlock precision versions of every traditionally-stewed dish. Reference: Protein Encyclopedia §Collagen Conversion; Sous Vide §Temperature Tables.

### ● **Universal: SV-Then-Sear as a Workflow Pattern**

TWO-PHASE COOKING · CROSS-PROTEIN

The SV-cook-then-chill-then-sear pattern is one of the most leveraged technique workflows in modern home cooking. It decouples (a) cooking-to-doneness from (b) crust-development, which are in tension when done simultaneously. At home it transforms: fish (SV 55°C × 20 min → plancha 60 sec), duck magret (SV 57°C × 2 h → kamado 60 sec), pork belly (SV 78°C × 12 h → crisp skin in hot oven), short ribs (SV 57°C × 72 h → kamado char), octopus (this recipe). The cross-product of SV temperatures × finishing heat sources = a substantial percentage of restaurant cooking done at home. Reference: Cross-Technique Workflows §Two-Phase; Sous Vide §Finishing Strategies.

## ● Galician Tradition: The Freeze-First Rule

PRE-COOK PREP · CEPHALOPOD-SPECIFIC

Every Galician pulpo cook knows: freeze the octopus before you cook it. The ice-crystal formation during freezing ruptures muscle cell walls at a microscopic level, pre-breaking the chewiness and dramatically reducing cook time + improving final texture. The traditional susto (triple-dip into boiling water) accomplishes a similar thermal-shock effect. Commercial frozen octopus from a Spanish or Portuguese importer is actually preferable to most 'fresh' octopus available in the US because it's already texture-pre-broken. For fresh-caught (rare in Miami): freeze 24-48 hours minimum before use. This rule applies to smaller cephalopods too (though less dramatically). Reference: Protein Encyclopedia §Cephalopods; Food Science Core §Cell Wall Rupture.

## ● Universal: Cold-Start Finishing — Why Chill Matters

FINISHING PHYSICS · CROSS-PROTEIN

A protein that goes from SV bath to plancha while still hot continues cooking internally during the sear. A chilled protein (5-10°C) allows crust development in 60 seconds without any interior temperature change. This is the whole point of the chill step. It applies universally to SV + finish workflows: cold-start steaks sear cleaner than room-temp steaks (counterintuitive but true once you know); cold-start duck magret crisps faster than warm; cold-start fish doesn't crumble in the pan. Home cooks skip the chill because it feels wasteful ('I just cooked it, now I'm making it cold?'); restaurants never skip it. The chill IS the technique. Reference: Sous Vide §Chill-and-Hold; Cross-Technique Workflows §Sear Physics.

## ● Spanish Minimalism: Three Ingredients at Plating

FLAVOR ARCHITECTURE · SPANISH UNIVERSAL

Galician pulpo a feira plates with three ingredients: flake salt, pimentón, olive oil. That's it. The protein is the whole point; the seasoning amplifies without distracting. This minimalism principle extends to: lubina a la sal (salt-crust finish + oil only), gambas al ajillo (garlic + chile + oil only), jamón ibérico on bread (bread + oil + jamón). Spanish cooking at its best is characterized by ingredient restraint + technique precision. When the protein is perfect, less is more. Contrast with French cuisine (often 7-10 ingredients on the plate) to see what Spanish brings. Reference: Spanish Foundations §Plating Tradition; Flavor Architecture §Minimalism.

## ● No Limits: Fresh Galician/Portuguese Octopus

INGREDIENT QUALITY · SOURCING EXTENSION

The true Galician product — pulpo caught off the Rías Baixas coast, processed + flash-frozen at sea within hours — is genuinely different from generic Spanish imports. Firmer muscle structure, more mineral-ocean flavor, cleaner finish. Pablo can source via La Tienda (periodic imports; check stock) or Marky's Aventura (call-ahead for Spanish-import days). Still freeze before use (24 h even for already-frozen commercial); the freezing is about texture, not just preservation. The Tier B octopus shines most at plating with Tier B oil + salt + pimentón — the minimalism of the Galician plate amplifies each ingredient's quality. Reference: Sourcing §Premium Seafood Suppliers; Protein Encyclopedia §Octopus.

## ● No Limits: Kamado Plancha vs Indoor Plancha

VESSEL EXTENSION · CROSS-KAMADO

Cross-reference: merluza-a-la-plancha-refrito ● card (this workspace). For kamado owners, preheating the cast-iron plancha on the kamado grate at 300°C produces a superior finish versus indoor burner: (a) radiant-heat surround + grate contact holds plancha temperature more uniformly; (b) trace wood-smoke (from the lump charcoal alone, even without added chunks) penetrates the tentacle surface during the sear — subtle but distinctive; (c) outdoor service vibe for weekend dinner parties matches the Galician beach-tavern spirit of this dish. Summer-Miami-dinner version: full kamado setup, outdoor table, Albariño in a pitcher. Reference: Kamado Technique §Plancha Setup; Cross-Technique Workflows §Kamado Extensions.

## PAIRING

# What to Drink

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### **Wine — The Galician Pour**

Tier A: Martín Códax Albariño (grocery, Rías Baixas) · Tier B: Pazo de Señoráns Selección de Añada Albariño (aged Rías Baixas, deeper + more structured)

*Albariño is the canonical Galician pulpo pairing. The wine's citrus-saline-mineral profile mirrors the octopus's Atlantic origin — both come from the same coast and evolved together. Tier A works fine; Tier B's aged variant has the structure to match the pimentón-smoke of the finish. Absolutely avoid oaky whites, heavy reds, or anything above 13.5% ABV.*

### **Wine — The Red Alternative**

Young Mencía (Bierzo) served slightly cool (12-14°C)

*Mencía — the red grape of Galicia and the Bierzo region — is the traditional red pairing when you want a red wine with pulpo. Slight body, bright acidity, low tannin, smoky notes that echo the pimentón. Pour cooler than a typical red. This is the insider's Galician choice.*

### **Starch — Cachelos (Traditional)**

Boiled fingerling potatoes, peeled, sliced 1 cm thick, tossed with olive oil + flake salt + pimentón

*In Galicia, pulpo is often served on a bed of cachelos (simple boiled potatoes). The potato absorbs the olive oil + pimentón + octopus juices that pool on the plate. Turns the dish from a tapa into a full meal. For Pablo's home kitchen, this is the dinner-party extension — pulpo alone is a tapa; pulpo con cachelos is a main.*

### **Bread — The Sopping Vehicle**

Pan de payés (Batch 7 · this workspace) OR a good crusty country loaf

*The oil + pimentón + octopus juices pool beautifully on the plate. Good bread with an open crumb sops everything. Non-negotiable accompaniment. Slice thick, serve on a separate small plate.*

### **Side — Keep It Spare**

Either nothing (tapa mode) or cachelos (main mode). If adding: blistered padrón peppers with Maldon OR a simple mixed-greens salad with sherry-vinegar dressing.

*The dish is minimalist by design. Any side should match that register. Never tomato-heavy (pimentón covers the red note), never starch-heavy (cachelos or bread do that), never rich-creamy (nothing in the dish is creamy). Spare + aligned.*

### **Starter or Companion — The Galician Arc**

Mejillones en escabeche (Batch 5) as tapa opener OR merluza a la plancha con refrito (Batch 8) as follow-up main

*Pulpo sits perfectly in a Galician-coast arc. Mejillones-en-escabeche opens (preserved seafood, Atlantic origin, pimentón echo). Merluza-plancha follows if making a multi-course (different protein, same region, different technique). Skip if pulpo is the main event — it can stand alone at 1 kg.*

## CONTEXT

# Menu Ideas

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### **Weekend Cook-Ahead · The Pulpo Rhythm**

Sunday 10 AM: start SV cook. Sunday 3 PM: chill + bag-store. Weekday evenings: finish 2-3 tentacle pieces per night for quick plancha-tapa dinners. One 5-hour cook = 3-4 dinners worth. This IS the restaurant-kitchen model, scaled home.

### **Saturday Dinner Party · 6-8 guests · Galician Night**

1. Mejillones escabeche (Batch 5 pantry tapa). 2. Pulpo SV-plancha (this recipe, main). 3. Cachelos on the side. 4. Simple green salad. 5. Tarta de queso vasca (Batch 6). Full Galician-arc dinner, most of it cook-ahead.

### **Tapa Night · 8-12 guests**

Scale to 1.5-2 kg octopus; SV in a larger container. At service, sear in batches of 4-6 pieces. Plate on a single large wooden board (tabla) with heavy pimentón-dust + flake salt + a central pool of olive oil. Guests pick with wooden picks. Bubbles or cold Albariño in the glass. High-impact, low-maintenance tapa centerpiece.

### **SV Technique Dinner · 4 guests · Batch 9 Pair**

The sous-vide-focused menu: 1. Yema curada SV (Batch 9 · this workspace) as opener on toast. 2. Pulpo SV-plancha (this recipe) as main. 3. Dessert of choice. A dinner that teaches two SV techniques back-to-back at different temperatures (63°C egg yolk vs 77°C octopus).

#### YOUR NOTES

## Cook Log

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### **Session Notes**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ · Serves: \_\_\_\_ · Rating: \_\_ / 5

*Use this space to record what you changed, what worked, and what you'd do differently next time. Your future self will thank you.*



Stop following recipes. Start understanding food.

