DIRECT · EASY

Grilled Calçots on the Kamado with Romesco Sauce

A whole calçotada fits in a kamado: live flame to char the outer layer until it is completely black, then a rest wrapped in paper where steam finishes the job. Dipped in romesco of ñora, hazelnut and almond.



PREP	COOK	SERVINGS	TEMPERATURE
45 min	20 min	4	280 °C

Ingredients

- **40 ud** calçots (about 2 bundles), of even thickness
- **2 ud** ripe plum tomatoes
- **50 g** toasted, skinned hazelnuts
- **30 g** day-old bread
- **2 cda** red wine vinegar
- **1 ud** dried chilli (optional)
- **2 ud** dried ñora peppers
- **1 ud** head of garlic
- **50 g** toasted Marcona almonds
- **150 ml** extra virgin olive oil
- **1 cdta** sweet La Vera smoked paprika
- **1 pizca** flaky sea salt

Method

1 REHYDRATE THE ÑORAS

Split the ñoras open, pull out the stalk and seeds and cover them with very hot water for 30 minutes. Once soft, scrape the flesh from inside with a spoon and set it aside: it is what gives romesco its colour and depth. Meanwhile toast the bread in a pan with a little oil until golden on both sides.

2 LIGHT THE KAMADO

Light the Orework Carbón de Encina Española in a single spot and let the fire spread with the lid closed and both vents open. Set the Onlyfire grate in the low position, as close to the coals as it will go. You want live fire here, not embers: calçots are cooked by flame.

3 ROAST TOMATO AND GARLIC

Once the thermometer passes 200 °C, put the whole tomatoes and the halved head of garlic on the grate and close the lid. Roast for 20 minutes, turning the tomatoes halfway, until the skins split and black patches appear. Lift them off with the Rösle curved barbecue tongs and let them cool a little.

4 BUILD THE ROMESCO

Peel the tomatoes and squeeze out the roasted garlic. Pound the hazelnuts, almonds and toasted bread in a mortar to a paste, or pulse them in a blender without going as far as a smooth cream. Add the ñora flesh, tomato, garlic, paprika and vinegar, then pour in the oil in a thin stream, stirring constantly until it emulsifies. Season at the end.

5 TRIM THE CALÇOTS

Pull off only the loose outer layer and the roots from each calçot, and trim the green tops level so they end up around 25 cm long. Do not wash them or strip further layers: the soil comes away later with the charred jacket, and every layer you remove is one less shield over the flame.

6 CHAR OVER THE FLAME

Open both vents fully and let the dome climb to 280 °C. Lay the calçots side by side on the grate, white parts right over the coals. Grill for 8-10 minutes, turn the whole row in one pass with the curved tongs and give them another 7-10 minutes, until the outer layer is black all over and the stem yields when squeezed.

7 WRAP AND REST

Wearing the Grill Heat Aid gloves, stack the calçots on a double sheet of newspaper or a piece of baking paper, all pointing the same way. Fold the parcel shut like a cone and leave it 30 minutes off the kamado. The paper will darken with moisture: that steam is what softens the inside and loosens the burnt skin.

8 PEEL AND DIP

Hold the calçot by its green tops, pinch the black layer with your other hand and pull downwards: the white stem slides out clean. Dip it halfway into the romesco and eat it top to bottom, head tipped slightly back. Keep the rest inside the paper until the last moment so they stay hot.

Editor's tips

- Look for calçots of even thickness: mix thick and thin in the same batch and the thin ones turn to ash while the thick ones are still raw inside.
- Romesco improves after a few hours in the fridge; take it out 30 minutes before serving so it turns glossy again and does not flatten the calçot's sweetness.
- With no calçots to hand, fat spring onions take the same method, but need 4-5 minutes less over the fire because they are thinner.

- Put on an old apron and hand out plenty of napkins: peeling calçots blackens your hands and flicks romesco about, and that is part of the plan.

Gear for this recipe

Big Green Egg Large

mikamado.es/en/kamados/big-green-egg-large

Orework Spanish Holm Oak Charcoal 15 kg

Calçots are not cooked over embers but over live flame: you need to hold the dome at 280 °C through the 15-20 minutes of charring and, before that, through the 20 minutes it takes to roast the tomatoes and the head of garlic for the romesco. The holm oak in Orework Carbón de Encina Española sustains that long stretch with both vents wide open without collapsing halfway through the batch, and it leaves little ash right where the grate sits almost against the coals.

mikamado.es/en/accesorios/orework-encina-espanola-15kg

Onlyfire universal stainless steel kamado grate

Forty calçots cannot go on any old way: they are laid out in parallel, white ends right over the fire and green tops towards the edge. The Onlyfire stainless steel grate gives you that continuous surface and takes the kamado's low position, the one closest to the flame, which is what leaves the outer layer black all over with no green or lukewarm stretches. Before the charring it is where you roast the tomatoes and garlic for the romesco.

mikamado.es/en/accesorios/onlyfire-rejilla-acero-inoxidable-universal

Rösle Curved Barbecue Tongs

Calçots are turned one by one over live flame and pulled when the outer layer is black from top to bottom: that is tong work, not basket work. The curve of the Rösle barbecue tongs lets you grip by the bulb without crushing the tender inside, and 40 cm keeps your hand out of a flame that runs high here with the dome open.

mikamado.es/en/accesorios/rosle-pinzas-barbacoa-curvadas

H&H Mortaio: 18 cm white marble mortar with pestle

mikamado.es/en/accesorios/hh-mortero-marmol-blanco-18cm

Full recipe at: mikamado.es/en/recetas/calcots-brasa-romesco-kamado

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