

Another January begins, my favorite “project” month. I know that I mention this nearly every year, but I must say it again: January is the perfect month. The rush of summer work and fall preparations for winter are all finished—or, at least, as much as they will be—and this first month of the year is my choice for “projects.” Like last year, one of our adventures to start this year involves food. We are taking another culinary trip around the world, preparing a dish from a different country every day. Last year, it seemed like the perfect way to sample some of the pleasures of travel without ever leaving home. It was so satisfying that we decided to do the same thing this January.

We will use the five star rating system this year to judge the dishes we make from recipes that supposedly are common from the countries we “visit.” Using the online resources for many of the recipes makes it possible to try dishes from countries for which I have no cookbooks. But, like much on the internet, the results of a search may well be problematic. A recipe might just be someone’s opinion of what a certain food should be. But, it is interesting, anyway.

On New Year’s Day, we made Chapalele, a potato bread from an island of Chile. It did not get many stars from us, maybe 1 1/2, but that may be due to a faulty recipe, inferior preparation, or some other factor. Containing a high ration of potatoes to other ingredients, it was abundant in one of my favorite foods, but it truly wasn’t very good. However, it was edible, nutritious, and the dogs were highly complimentary about leftovers. So, it was not a failure.

Today, we made a Spanish tortilla, a standard dish of Spain’s tradition of small dishes eaten with a glass of sherry before a meal. Not a bit like a Mexican tortilla, this was much more like an omelet, but not that, either. We planned on large portions, as it would be our main dish at today’s dinner. It was very tasty, and had we planned a little better, it would have been picture perfect as well as delicious. We should have made it smaller and thinner, because it requires a bit of skill to flip to cook the second side. Our frying pan was a very heavy one, and combined with the not insignificant weight of the ingredients, it made flipping the hot dish a challenge. We had a little mishap in that regard, but the dish was excellent. It gets five stars, though our execution of the recipe deserves only a three.

The recipe made a generous amount, so, once again, Blue and Kate were the recipients of the “leftovers.” They think it is their right to share in whatever we have on our plates. We may have to lock them in the kennel tomorrow. I’m not sure we will be ready to share the Canadian maple ice cream.