

Scientists Invent a Schrödinger Spanish Omelette

28th May 2020

As bars begin to reopen around the Basque Country, an old debate has been reignited: should a Spanish omelette include onion or not? ECP coach Rob investigates.

Some of my students say that, after living in Vitoria-Gasteiz for over 25 years, I have become a 'patatero' (someone who grows or regularly eats potatoes). While that is, I hope, a lovely compliment and attests to my integration into local culture and life, I have to correct them. "I was born a patatero," I reply, "My dad grew potatoes in the garden and as a family we ate **spuds** almost every day." You see, I'm from the British Isles where potatoes are an integral part of our cuisine and culture. So imagine my delight when I first arrived in Gasteiz and discovered 'tortilla de patata'. I was in heaven and it soon became a **staple** in my diet.

Over the years, when talking about favourite bars and restaurants with friends and students, I largely ignored the debate about whether Spanish omelette should include onion or not. I didn't really care. But I eventually realised that, to truly integrate, I needed to **come down off the fence** and take a stance. So here, in ECP's Weekly English Practice, I publicly declare my preference: with onion. And if you really want to win my heart, add a little green pepper and I'll be yours forever! But hold the front page! [El Mundo Today](#) has some incredible 'breaking news'! Here's the article in English:

Scientists create a Schrödinger Spanish omelette both with and without onion.

A team of scientists has managed to create a Schrödinger Spanish omelette with and without onion at the same time. Named after Erwin Schrödinger's [famous thought experiment involving a cat, a box and a deadly poison](#), the invention was presented in public last week, along with some

Before you read the article, find this vocabulary in the text:

- spuds:** an informal word for potato
- staple:** the main or an important element of something
- to sit on the fence:** to not decide which side to take in a debate or argument
- crusty:** to have a hard outer layer
- to tear apart:** to rupture, split or destroy
- hid (to hide):** to position yourself so that other people cannot see you

delicious Iberian ham and a **crusty** breadstick.

This new omelette promises to unify Spanish cuisine which has been radically divided between those in favour and those against adding onion to potato omelettes. This age-old conflict has **turned apart** entire families. Hopefully, they can now be reunited in the same way that the controversial omelette has been reinvented

to reconcile different flavours and tastes. Quantum chef Txema Tipulabarria explained: "The superposition of the electrons of the atoms that make up the onion make the herbaceous plant both be and not be inside the tortilla at the same time. But when we eat it, we alter that duality and create a disturbance that makes the onion appear or not appear inside our mouth. It has been a complicated and risky investigation, but you can't make an omelette without breaking eggs, can you?"

The technique is still in its final testing phase however, and, on occasions, scientists have found that the duality switches to a distinct Spanish/French one. And recently, there was an added complication. "Unfortunately, Schrödinger's cat ate Schrödinger's omelette and then **hid** itself in a box," lead researcher Kitty O'Nions told reporters. "We believe it'll get bored and come out of the box soon, however, at the same time, we're pretty sure it'll die inside."

It is not the first time that a team of scientists has experimented with a typical dish from Spain. In 2012, chefs at the staff canteen in the Cern laboratory in Geneva created a paella that could be both meat or seafood depending on the observer (an experiment by UK scientists using chorizo had to be abandoned). Ok, that was a satirical article but hope springs eternal. Bon appétit!



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Schrödinger's cat waits for its omelette to arrive

Let's chat about that!

Write your opinions in an email and send them to your ECP coach!

What 'side of the fence' are you on in this debate?

Explain what you know about 'Schrödinger's cat'?

Rob is a 'patatero'. How do you identify yourself?

Describe your favourite recipe to cook at home.

Do you read any satirical websites/magazines?

Social Events In English

Real-Life English in Vitoria-Gasteiz



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Friday 29th May

CINEMA NIGHTS!

Come and socialise in English!

Watch **High Fidelity** on Google Play (other platforms are available) before Friday. Join John on **Friday 29th May at 19'30** for a drink and chat about the film and your Top 5s.

Google Meets

<https://meet.google.com/jej-grid-pdb>

A comedy about fear of commitment, hating your job, falling in love and other pop favorites.

John Cusack **High Fidelity**



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JACK BLACK LISA BONET JERILE CARTER JOAN CUSACK SARA GURBERT BEN HALEK THOM LOUGHEE TIM ROBBINS LILI TAYLOR NATASHA GREENIN WAGNER



Here are the winners of
ECP's first
FLASH FICTION
competition!

Winner: **The Final Big Joke**

Runner-up: **It Might Be Worse**

Congratulations to Gema and Mario! Your ECP coach will be in touch with you to organise how to get your prize to you. We hope you enjoy your food and drinks!

Honourable mentions: *The Japanese Maple Tree, Stative Verbs, The Survival Song, and The Mock Star*

A big thank you to Joxan, Idoia, Javi and Yolanda for your entries. Your ECP coach has a treat for you!

So let's hear a round of applause for everyone! It was an honour and a pleasure to read your stories, songs and musings! Look out for the return of ECP's Flash Fiction competition in 2021!

Saturday 6th June

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Learn the different meanings of 'tea'



Click [here](#) to watch the quick joke and learn how to talk about meal times in English.

How can we say 'tapa' or 'pintxo' in English?

- a snack - a bite to eat
- nibbles - finger food
- appetisers - hors d'oeuvres
- a little something
- canapés - munchies
- titbits - treats