# ANTONIO COELHO – OFFERING AUTHENTIC PORTUGUESE FOOD IN HIS OWN RESTAURANT ANTONIO SINCE 2008

**23 NOVEMBER 2018**

**Chef Antonio Coelho** opened Macau's beloved **Antonio** in 2008. The Michelin-recommended restaurant serves a wide variety of authentic Portuguese dishes and is the venue of choice for loyal locals and tourists wanting a taste of old Macau on this rapidly evolving island.

We chat to Chef Antonio about his background and how the dining scene in this former Portuguese colony, now Chinese island, is changing.

**Chef, before opening Antonio's you came from a military background – can you tell us a bit more about this?**

During the Portuguese Colonial War in the 1960s, I served in the Portuguese Army Forces for four years from 1969 to 1973. I left Lisbon as a Militia Sergeant for three years in Macau. Before the war, I had worked in the Government Health Department as an Officer and was later promoted to Health Inspector (ARS LISBON) in 1981 after returning the Army.

In January 1986, my life took a turn as I was invited to work in one of the big restaurants in Lisboa as a Food and Beverage Director. Later in 1995, I became F&D Director for the Grand Hotel Curia/Coimbra, and, after a year, I moved to Hotel Tropica in Cabo Verde, Africa in Praia City.

**How did you end up in Macau? When did you start living in Macau?**

When I was working at Hotel Tropica in Cabo Verde in 1996, I was offered the opportunity to work at Restaurant Nau do Trato in Macau as General Manager and Head Chef. Macau captured my heart and soul and has been my second home ever since.

**What made you decide to open a restaurant?**

I decided to open a restaurant as I believed I could offer a unique dining experience compared to what was already on offer in Macau.

**Macau has changed radically in the last decade, with huge hotels being built, largely spurred by the gambling industry. You have witnessed these developments from the start.**

Yes, Macau has seen dramatic changes with an increased population size and number of tourists. Today, 32 sq km is home to a population of 650,000 residents, in addition to the thousands of daily visitors coming and going. Both are sustaining and creating more businesses.

**How have these dramatic changes affected the dining scene in Macau?**

The dining experience at Antonio takes guests on an all-immersive food experience: our service is top-notch, food is high quality, authentic and uncompromised; we cook and serve with passion. Our consumer base is largely unaffected by the changes in Macau. If anything, we have seen more gourmands from all over the world come through our doors.

**Has your clientele changed from when you first opened in 2008?**

Since the restaurant's opening in 2008, I have received many international guests and continue to do so. We often see returning customers, both whom I recognise from past visits or when they show me photos taken from their previous visits.

**How would you describe your style of cooking?**

My cooking style is inspired by the different regions in of my home country with a touch of passion, serving authentic Portuguese dishes.

**Do you aim to be as traditional as possible in cooking Portuguese food, or do you integrate Chinese cooking in any way?**

Born and bred in Portugal, I'm very proud of my country. My cooking is heavily influenced by my culture and heritage and will remain as traditional and authentic as possible.

**You're now celebrating your restaurant's 10th anniversary – what's in the future? Any plans to expand to Hong Kong or elsewhere?**

Predicting the future is not easy; we are always open to any ideas of expanding the restaurant beyond Macau.

**Thank you so much, Chef Antonio!**

Chef Antonio Coelho shares his **recipe for Portuguese duck rice.**
But be careful! After reading you will surely be hungry!

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# PORTUGUESE DUCK RICE BY CHEF ANTONIO COELHO

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**Chef Antonio Coelho**, owner of **Antonio** restaurant in Old Taipa Village in Macau, shares his recipe for Portuguese duck rice.

The recipe calls for "paio", a traditional sausage of Portugal and Brazil made of pork loin, capsicum, garlic and salt, which is then smoked.

You might also read the **story about Chef Antonio Coelho** and more about his authentic Portuguese dishes.

**Ingredients:**
Serving size: 8

- 1 duck
- 2 onions
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 200 g bacon (optional)
- 800g rice
- 1 clove garlic
- 1 sprig parsley
- 1 small paio
- 1 lemon
- salt

**Preparation:**

1. Pluck the duck and prepare it in the usual way. Cut the onions and garlic into slices and place them in a pan with the olive oil and very thin slices of bacon (if used). Place the duck on top and turn it regularly so that it is well browned all over, careful not to burn it.
2. Remove the duck from the pan and add 2 litres of water to the onion sauce. Return the sauce to the heat and, when it begins to boil, add the duck again together with the paio. Continue to boil until the duck and the paio and strain the broth through a sieve.
3. Remove any excess fat and measure out the broth, which should be twice the volume of the rice. Add the juice of the lemon. Return the broth to the heat and bring to the boil.
4. Add the rice and cook over a very low hear. When the rice is almost ready and beginning to turn dry, remove from the heat and cover the bottom with an earthenware baking tray.

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