

## Julia Quintana PhD

The science in her heart



### Home, the Great Unknowns and Chestnuts

I was born in the amazing village **Allariz** in the North-West of Spain. Growing up in a small town made me crave meeting new people, to experience life beyond that place. My vocation to become a scientist was strong since very early ages, and somehow I knew that **science will be the place where I would definitely fit**. I moved to **Madrid** to join Complutense University, where I completed my Bachelor Degree in Biology. Later on, I did my Master and PhD in Polytechnic University, also in Madrid. My area of expertise became Plant Molecular Biology. I took advantage of the knowledge I gained during field trips to fund with my family a business that promotes the use of chestnut nuts in our diet. In the last 3 years, already as a Postdoc, I have broaden my experience with Microbiology and got to live in **Finland** and **USA**.



### About SCIENCE

Science is my life. I cannot imagine myself doing anything else. I feel **passionate** about my job, and I feel I am doing exactly what I wanted to do. But, there is a lot to unpack here. How to fulfill your **ambition** without risking your health? How to live a life where **failure** is a continuous threat? How to cope with a very unfair compensation for your efforts? Well, in my case the answer of these questions is coming with the **experience**. And everything is about **trusting** yourself and finding out the environment that gives you the balance between life and the lab.

When a child asks **How does our hair grow?** what do you say?

Uf, ok... As a scientist, you should not be fully satisfied with an explanation coming from only one source. Check for further info. Scientists, we are skeptical by nature. So I think that hair is a part of our skin, which is continuously under renovation. It grows when a new layer is added at the bottom to the existing ones, as if you were preparing a super tall birthday cake.

### She recommends: Galician Octopus



1. Pour plenty of water in a pot (2 - 3 times the size of the animal).
2. Wash the octopus with water.
3. Bring water to boil and put in the octopus.
4. Boil for 30-35 min depending on the desired tenderness. Try a little piece to check.
5. Keep the octopus in the warm water until you will serve it
6. Serving suggestions: cut the octopus in little pieces (3 cm approx) and spread a bit of paprika and olive oil.

“ I do not know exactly what keeps my motor going; maybe just very deep inside I am convinced that being surrounded by scientists is my place in the world.

