- PORTUGUESE RECIPES -

_Bacalhau dishes and Christmas desserts_
Bacalhau is the Portuguese word for codfish, but this word almost always refers to dried and salted cod, salt cod for short, since fresh cod is rarely consumed in Portugal. There are countless bacalhau recipes in Portugal’s history. Long before anyone thought of the modern invention we now know as the refrigerator, Portuguese discoverers dried and salted cod in order to preserve it for long voyages. Portugal being heavily Roman Catholic also meant there were many days throughout the year (Fridays, Lent, and other religious holidays) where only fish could be eaten, so the use of bacalhau became a staple in Portuguese cuisine and remains so to this day.

It is commonly said that there are more than 365 ways to cook bacalhau in Portugal, one for each day of the year; other people say there are 1001 ways, depending on region, tradition and creativity.

We have included here just a small sample of all the recipes where bacalhau, nicknamed Fiel Amigo (Faithful Friend) by us, is the main ingredient. These recipes were chosen by the students and are from the Entre Douro e Minho region, to which the town of Felgueiras belongs. The last three recipes are less traditional and could be described as “light”. Dried and salted cod is used in all of them. It is very important to desalt the cod properly before it is used in each recipe. The alternative is to buy cod that has been previously desalted. When desalting cod at home it is essential:

1. to soak the fish/ fish pieces in cold water for a number of hours. The thicker the cod is, the longer it should soak to lose most of its saltiness. 24 hours is the minimum period of time for any cod portion to desalt properly;

2. to change the water several times during the desalting process;

3. to guarantee that the water remains cold while the cod is soaking in it. That can be achieved by placing the recipient in the refrigerator.
**Christmas Eve Cod – Bacalhau da Consoada**

This is the traditional Christmas Eve supper of many families in Northern Portugal, namely in and around Felgueiras.

**INGREDIENTS:**

- 4 pieces dried salted cod
- 1 head green cabbage - *couve portuguesa*
- 4-8 medium-sized potatoes
- 4 eggs ( one egg per person )
- 2 dl olive oil
- 4 garlic cloves
- wine vinegar or lemon juice
- salt and pepper

**PREPARATION:**

1. Rinse the cod under cold running water to remove any surface salt. Leave the fish pieces to soak for at least 24 hours in a basin with cold water. Do not cover the basin and change the water several times.

2. About half an hour before the meal, drain the cod portions and cook them in a pan with water and a little salt ( if necessary ), together with the eggs and potatoes in their skins.

3. Meanwhile, prepare the cabbage leaves and when the cod and the potatoes are half cooked, add them and let them cook as well. Do not cover the pan with the lid so that the cabbage remains green.
4. To make the sauce, bring the olive oil and the roughly chopped garlic to a boil in a small saucepan, remove from the heat, add a little of wine vinegar or lemon juice, beat well and serve in a sauceboat.

5. Just before serving, peel the potatoes, shell and slice the eggs in halves.

6. Serve hot on a big platter and season with the olive oil sauce, salt and pepper. Some people prefer to prepare their own sauce, with the ingredients mentioned above, on their individual plates.

Codfish with Cornbread – Bacalhau com Broa

Broa is a bread made with yellow or white cornmeal that is very popular in Portugal, particularly in the North.

INGREDIENTS:

- 2 large thick cod fillets (600 g)
- 4 thick slices cornbread (1/2 loaf)
- 6 garlic cloves
- 4 onions, sliced
- 1 kg small new potatoes, roasted in their skins
- 3 dl olive oil
- salt and pepper, to taste
PREPARATION:

1. Cover the cod fillets with water and soak them for at least 48 hours, changing the water several times.

2. Drain the fillets, then rub them with 2 cloves of garlic, previously crushed.

3. Put the fish in a roasting dish, preferably one made of clay, together with the sliced onions and the small jacket potatoes. Pour a generous quantity of olive oil over the fish and let it cook in a hot oven for 10 minutes.

4. In a separate dish coarsely crumble the cornbread, add 4 cloves of finely chopped garlic, olive oil, salt and pepper. Then mix everything together.

5. When the cod is halfway the roasting process, remove the dish from the oven and pour the mixture of bread crumbs, garlic, olive oil, salt and pepper over it.

6. Put the fish again in the oven so that the crumbs on top will become golden brown. Serve in the roasting dish itself, with boiled spring greens called grelos.

Carla Patrícia Neto, 10G

→ Baked Codfish - Bacalhau Assado no Forno

INGREDIENTS:

4 salted codfish fillets (1/2 inch thick)
2-3 medium tomatoes
2 medium onions
4-5 garlic cloves
1/3 cup olive oil
1/4 cup olive oil
1/2 cup white wine
2 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley
1 kg small potatoes
1 bay leaf

PREPARATION:

1. After soaking the cod, remove from the water and dry well with a kitchen towel.
2. Peel your onions and slice them into half moons, also peel the garlic and chop it up.
3. Under hot water remove the tomatoes skins and slice them up.
4. In a rectangular casserole dish, place in some of the olive oil and of the white wine. Spread the onions, garlic, sliced tomatoes, bay leaf and the potatoes. If you can't find small potatoes, use normal ones and have them cut into quarters; you may also add more potatoes if you like.
5. Now place the cod on top of everything, and drizzle the remaining wine and some olive oil over each fillet.
6. Keep basting the cod with the remaining olive oil, so as not to dry out on you.
7. Bakes at 380 ºC for about 1 hour or when potatoes are cooked.
8. Remove from oven and sprinkle with parsley. Serve with green salad.

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Codfish, Potato and Onion Casserole - Bacalhau à Gomes de Sá

This is one of the most famous Portuguese bacalhau recipes. It was invented at the beginning of the 20th century by a cook named José Luiz Gomes de Sá Júni or (his father was a bacalhau trader himself), who at the time worked in a restaurant in the city of Porto. His innovation was to marinate the cod flakes in warm milk in order to give the fish a softer texture. This dish is popular all over the country.

INGREDIENTS:

- 450 g dried salt cod
- 6 cups boiling water
- 900 g small white or new potatoes
- 2 to 4 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 large onion, peeled and thinly sliced
- 2 to 3 garlic cloves, peeled and finely chopped
- 1/2 cup chopped fresh parsley
- freshly ground pepper, to taste
- 4 hard-cooked eggs, peeled and cut into wedges
- 12 to 18 oil-cured black olives
- additional chopped parsley

PREPARATION:

1. Soak the cod in water for some hours in the refrigerator, changing the water several times.

2. Drain and rinse well. Scald the cod portions for 3 minutes, until the fish flakes easily. Flake it into small pieces, removing any bones and bits of skin.
3. Place the cod in a pot or bowl, cover it with warm milk and let it rest for about an hour.

4. Boil the potatoes until tender, but firm, drain and allow to cool. Peel and slice the potatoes into 1/4 inch slices.

5. Heat 2 tablespoons of the olive oil in a large, heavy skillet over moderate heat. Add the onion and garlic and cook for 5 minutes, stirring frequently until tender but not brown. Remove the onions and garlic from the skillet and set aside.

6. Add the sliced potatoes to the skillet, along with more olive oil if necessary, and cook for 5 minutes, stirring frequently until golden brown.

7. Layer half the potatoes in a well greased 2-quart casserole or gratin dish. Sprinkle with parsley and pepper, add one third of the onion mixture, and half the cod. Repeat, ending with a layer of the onion mixture. Bake in a preheated 180 ºC oven for 30 to 40 minutes, until hot and lightly browned.

8. Arrange the egg wedges and olives attractively on top, and sprinkle with a little chopped parsley. Serve warm.

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→ Codfish Fritters – Bolinhos de Bacalhau ( in the North of Portugal ) or Pastéis de Bacalhau ( in the South )

The bolinhos de bacalhau or pastéis de bacalhau, literally “codfish cakes”, are a true national speciality, even though their real origin is the North of Portugal. They are deep-fried balls that traditionally contain less expensive parts of the dry salted codfish, mixed together with potatoes, eggs and parsley, in the same way as fishcakes. Cod cakes are ideal for snacks ( hot or cold ) and are present in every Portuguese event or ceremony, from the most sophisticated to the humblest. Snobs may be afraid of admitting that they too love this “poor-man’s dish”, but they probably eat them all the same, when nobody’s looking. Cod cakes are sold at delicatessens, patisseries, roadside cafés, taverns called tascas - everywhere in Portugal.
INGREDIENTS:

2 large thick cod fillets (600 g)  
650 g potatoes  
2 large onions (or 3 medium-sized ones)  
1 garlic clove  
4-5 eggs (the exact number of eggs will depend on their size and also on the quality of the potatoes)  
1 bunch fresh parsley  
1-2 bay leaves  
salt and pepper  
olive oil, or another oil, for frying

PREPARATION:

1. Leave the cod to soak at least for 24 hours in a basin with cold water. Do not cover the basin and change the water several times. Before cooking taste a few strands to make sure the cod is not overly salty, although it should retain some saltiness, or it will be too bland.

2. Boil the potatoes in their skins (not to absorb water), peel and mash them. Set aside.

3. In the meantime, cook the fish with the bay leaves for about 15 minutes on a low heat. Then, when it’s tender, drain, discard the skin and bones and flake it as much as you can with your fingers, then with a fork, to reduce it to threads. The traditional Portuguese way of doing this is to place the flaked cod inside a clean cloth, fold it and squeeze and pound the contents of the cloth with your fists.

4. In a large bowl mix the shredded cod with the mashed potatoes and add the eggs, one by one, then the onions, garlic and parsley, previously chopped. Season with salt and pepper, mix well and knead the mixture with your hands as if it were a dough. The mixture should be quite stiff, enabling a spoon to stand up in it. If it is too crumbly, add another egg. Allow this to cool completely before deep frying.
5. With two tablespoons, shape small portions of the mixture into small cakes and deep-fry them in the hot oil (190 °C), turning them three or four times to get nicely browned all over. When cooked, lift them with a big fork or slotted spoon, and place them on kitchen paper to absorb excess fat.

**Cod with Vegetables – Bacalhau com Legumes**

**INGREDIENTS:**

- 600 g cod fillets
- 1 dl milk
- 3 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 leek
- 2 carrots
- 300 g green beans
- 1/2 bunch sprouts
- 50 g melted butter
- Juice of 1 lemon
- Salt and pepper
- Flour
- Frying oil
PREPARATION:

1. Rinse the cod under cold running water to remove any surface salt. Place the fish pieces in a large plastic dish or glass bowl, cover with water and refrigerate for 24 hours, changing the water several times.

2. Pour off the water, remove the bones and skin of the cod, cut it into thick strips and place it in a bowl. Then season the fish with lemon juice, chopped garlic, ground pepper and milk. This mixture should marinate for about an hour.

3. Remove the cod from the marinade, drain it, dip it into flour and deep-fry the fish pieces in hot oil. Then drain them on absorbent paper to remove excess fat. Set aside.

4. Meanwhile, boil all the vegetables in a pan with water and a little salt.

5. Put the cooked vegetables in the centre of a platter, surrounded by the fried cod pieces, and drizzle with the melted butter and lemon juice.

Vera Cristina Teixeira, 10G

→ Codfish Salad – Salada de Bacalhau

INGREDIENTS:

220 g dry salted codfish, cooked and shredded  
1 large potato, boiled, peeled and cut into chunks  
1 medium onion, peeled and minced  
1 avocado, peeled and cut into chunks  
3 hard-boiled eggs, sliced  
1 red and 1 yellow bell pepper, seeded and cut into strips  
1 tomato, seeded and chopped  
1/3 cup white vinegar  
1 cup olive oil
PREPARATION:

1. Before cooking, place the salted codfish in cold water for at least 24 hours. You should change the water several times. Remove the fish from the water, place it in a pot with fresh water and cook for about 20 minutes. Let it cool and shred, removing tiny bones if any.

2. In a tray combine the codfish with the potato chunks, minced onion, avocado pieces, sliced eggs, stripped peppers, and chopped tomato.

3. In a separate bowl, combine the vinegar and oil, and season to taste.

4. Pour the dressing over the codfish mixture and toss well. Refrigerate for at least 1 hour, letting the ingredients combine well. Serve with white rice or with rice with beans.

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Codfish with Spaghetti - Bacalhau com Esparguete

INGREDIENTS:

900 g desalted codfish, cut in 4 slices
2 cups spaghetti, broken in pieces
3 tablespoons butter
1 teaspoon paprika
1/3 cup water
1 lemon, juice only
seasonings to taste
PREPARATION:

1. Boil the spaghetti in salted water for about 15 minutes and then drain off water.

2. Put codfish, seasonings, butter, paprika and water in a baking pan. Arrange spaghetti around the codfish.

3. Bake in hot oven for about 10 minutes.

4. Add the lemon juice just before serving.

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In Portugal Christmas is a very important festivity, because it joins families together and offers an excellent opportunity for everybody to socialise around a table full of delicious traditional dishes. The kind of dishes that are eaten in Portugal at Christmas vary from region to region and involve the use of ingredients that are popular in each part of the country. The recipes of Christmas desserts that follow are all typical of Northern Portugal, more specifically of the Entre Douro e Minho region, with the exception of the Christmas Cake, or literally “King’s Cake” (Bolo Rei) that is eaten all over the country, in many different mouth-watering versions. Today Bolo Rei is everywhere by late November and is sold well into January.

→ Christmas Cake / King’s Cake - Bolo Rei

Bolo Rei is a sweet bread with a large hole in the centre that looks like a large sweet bagel, decorated with candied fruit, nuts and raisins. Up until recently every Bolo Rei in Portugal had a dried fava bean and a small gift/trinket hidden in it. Most families had a tradition around the Bolo Rei and the fava bean. For some the person who got the slice of cake containing the fava bean had to buy or bake the next Bolo Rei, for others the finder of the fava bean was “the king” of the celebration or had to host the next celebration. The person who got the gift was just considered lucky. Unfortunately the European Union found this tradition too dangerous and forbade it by law.
INGREDIENTS:

130 g butter  
130 g sugar  
500 g wheat flour  
15 g active yeast  
1 pinch salt  
3 eggs  
2 dl milk  
2 soupspoons port wine  
candied fruit (e.g. cherries, pears, figs, orange peel), to taste  
chopped almonds, walnuts, pine nuts and raisins, to taste

PREPARATION:

1. Add yeast to a bit of lukewarm milk and stir to dissolve completely.

2. In a large bowl, mix flour and salt - make a well in centre of flour and pour in dissolved yeast. Gently fold some of surrounding flour into pool of yeast to form soft paste in centre of well.

3. In a separate bowl, beat butter and sugar until smooth and fluffy. Add eggs, 1 at a time, and beat well after each addition.

4. Incorporate butter mixture into flour mixture, add remaining milk and port wine, and continue bringing in sides to form a soft dough.

5. Lightly dust dough with flour, to handle, and turn out onto floured surface. Knead until soft, smooth and elastic.

6. Add some chopped candied fruit and the dried fruits, and knead to distribute evenly.

7. Put dough in a clean bowl and cover with dish towel. Let rise until doubled in size, for a few hours.

8. Once dough has doubled, punch down and let rest for 10-15 minutes.

9. Shape dough into ring and place on buttered baking sheet. Insert an ovenproof ramekin or cookie cutter in centre to keep hole while baking.

10. Cover with dish towel and set aside until doubled in size, about 1 hour.
11. Brush dough with an egg wash (egg yolk mixed with a little water) and decorate with strips of candied fruit and crushed sugar or confectioner’s sugar.

12. Bake at 180 ºC for about 45 minutes, until golden.

Formigos or Mexidos - There’s no English equivalent for these names!

Formigas are actually ants in Portuguese, but we guarantee you won’t find any in this delicious Christmas dessert, that is very popular in Northern Portugal.

INGREDIENTS:

250 g bread (the bread used in this recipe shouldn’t be too soft)
1 cinnamon stick
ground cinnamon
50 g raisins
50 g walnuts, chopped
50 g pine nuts
2-3 soupspoons honey
1 level teacup sugar (preferably brown)
5 soupspoons port wine
1,5 l water
lemon zest

PREPARATION:

1. Break the bread into very small pieces with your hands.

2. Boil the water with all the ingredients, except for the bread and the dried fruits, for a while.

3. Add the chopped walnuts, the pine nuts and raisins and allow to simmer for 10 minutes.
4. Add the bread and let it cook for some time until the mixture starts thickening and becomes uniform. Stir several times with a wooden spoon to avoid lumps.

5. Discard the lemon zest. Pour into individual dishes or onto saucers, which is more traditional, and decorate with ground cinnamon forming stencilled patterns on top of the mixture.

6. Serve warm or cold. The mixture will set into a solid mass and can be eaten in small cubes.

   Edgar Almeida, 10G

→ Fried Bread Slices - Rabanadas

INGREDIENTS:

1 French loaf (baguette) or the Portuguese equivalent called cacete
4-5 eggs
1/4 cup white sugar
about 1/2 liter water
ground cinnamon
lemon juice
2 spoonfuls honey
3 spoonfuls port wine
vegetable oil for frying
PREPARATION:

1. Cut the bread into slices (about 1 cm thick). Buy it the day before so that it is not too soft.

2. Boil water with sugar, lemon juice, honey and port wine, for a while. Let it cool down a bit and pour some of this mixture into a soup plate.

3. Beat 3 eggs (leaving no trace of the egg whites) and pour them into another soup plate.

4. Meanwhile, heat the cooking oil in a frying pan.

5. Dip the bread slices, one by one, first into the flavoured water, then into the egg mixture. Now and then it will be necessary to add more water and/or eggs.

4. Fry the *rabanadas* in hot oil until they get slightly golden brown on both sides.

5. Drain on absorbent paper and put them on a serving plate, in layers, sprinkling them with sugar, cinnamon, lemon juice and port wine.

6. Serve warm or cold. They are equally delicious!

*Agostinho Freitas, 10G*
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→ Portuguese Dreams – *Sonhos*

*Sonhos* are fried cakes like small doughnuts but much lighter in texture. There are many variations on the theme all over Portugal. Generally speaking, fried cakes are intended for the Christmas season, but, being so popular, *sonhos* are made at other times as well, and some speciality patisseries sell them freshly made on a daily basis.
INGREDIENTS:

113 g butter
2 tablespoons granulated sugar
1/4 teaspoon salt
1 cup water
2 lemon rinds
1 cup sifted all-purpose flour
4 large eggs
vegetable oil (for deep frying)
cinnamon sugar - 1/2 cup granulated sugar mixed with 2 teaspoons ground cinnamon

PREPARATION:

1. Bring the butter, sugar, salt, water and lemon rinds to a boil in a small saucepan over high heat.

2. When the water begins to boil, remove from the heat. Then remove the lemon rinds and add all the flour at once. Beat vigorously with a wooden spoon until the mixture comes together in a ball.

3. After cooling the mixture a bit (until it's lukewarm), add the eggs, one at a time, beating vigorously until each egg is absorbed by the dough, before adding the next. If the mixture is smooth enough that when introducing a knife it slides easily without falling, then the dough is ready. If it's a bit thick, then beat a fifth egg separately and add it cautiously to the dough, as it might not be necessary to add the whole egg.

4. Heat the vegetable oil to 180 °C in a shallow pan. Using two tablespoons, shape small portions of the dough into balls and drop them, one by one, into the oil. Fry gently until the sonhos become golden brown on all sides.

5. Pick them with a fork or a knitting needle and drain on paper towels. Then sprinkle with cinnamon sugar while still hot. Serve warm.

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