

**Brandade de Morue au Gratin
(Whipped Salt Cod Spread with Cheese)**

**AF DuPage Cooking Demonstration
Saturday, August 27, 2022 11:00 am
Presented by Chef Chris Thielman & Karen Thielman**

Servings: 10-12 appetizer portions

Special Equipment needed: slotted spoon, food processor, Microplane, gratin dish (small baking dish)

***Note - This recipe requires at least two days preparation time.**

Ingredients:

8 oz. salt cod (or fresh cod - see variation below)

2 cups whole milk

1 ounce (about 6 medium size) garlic cloves, peeled

3 large sprigs thyme

1 bay leaf

8 ounces Yukon Gold potatoes - peeled after cooking and cooled slightly

1 Tablespoon unsalted butter, melted

Pinch of cayenne pepper

1/8 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

1/2 teaspoon fresh lemon zest

1 Tablespoon fresh lemon juice

¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil

6 ounces heavy cream, divided 3 ounces + 3 ounces

Salt to taste

Additional butter to grease the serving dish

1 Tablespoon grated Parmesan cheese for topping

1 Tablespoon thinly sliced chives for garnish (optional)

Thin baguette slices or garlic toasts, for serving

Method:

Rinse the salt cod under cold running water and put it in a large bowl containing about 2 quarts cold water. Let soak in the refrigerator for 24-36 hours, changing the water about 4 to 5 times during this period.

Drain the cod.

Place the cod in a medium saucepan with 4 cups cold water, bring just to a gentle boil, and drain immediately. Temporarily set the cod aside. Rinse out the pan and add the cod again along with 4 cups cold water. Bring to a gentle boil and gently simmer for 5 minutes. Drain. Wash out the saucepan before reusing.

In the same medium saucepan over medium-low heat, add the cod, milk, garlic, thyme, and bay leaf. Bring to a very slow simmer and cook, stirring occasionally, until the fish is tender and beginning to fall apart, about 20-25 minutes.

While the fish is cooking, boil the potatoes. In another medium saucepan over medium-high heat, add the potatoes and enough cold water to cover them by 2 inches. Bring to a simmer and cook until the potatoes are very tender when poked with a knife, about 30-35 minutes. Drain and cool slightly.

Peel the potatoes and cut into chunks.

Using a slotted spoon, transfer the fish and garlic to a food processor, discarding the cooking liquid and the bay leaf and thyme sprig stems.

Add the melted butter, cayenne pepper, black pepper, lemon zest, lemon juice and ½ of the cream (3 ounces) and then slowly add the olive oil, mixing at high speed.

Purée until the mixture is smooth, thick, and completely combined.

Add in the remaining cream (3 ounces).

Slowly add the potato chunks and pulse to fully incorporate the pieces. **Do not over mix or the brandade will be gummy.** Taste and adjust the salt and pepper.

Lightly butter a gratin dish (small baking dish) and transfer the brandade mixture to the dish, spreading it out evenly. Note - The brandade mixture can be made several hours ahead and stored in the refrigerator before adding the grated Parmesan cheese topping.

When ready to bake, sprinkle the Parmesan cheese on top.

Bake at 450° for 25 minutes or until golden brown. (If it was held in the fridge, add 10 minutes cooking time.)

If desired, garnish top with thinly sliced chives. Serve with toasted, sliced baguette slices or garlic toasts.

Chef's Notes:

*The process of soaking and then twice blanching the cod removes all the salt, so you may have to add some salt when you taste it at the end.

Variation using fresh cod for a less "fishy" flavor:

If you are not a big fan of a distinctive fishy flavor, or you cannot find salt cod, substitute fresh cod. If using fresh cod, do not soak it in water and do not bring the cod to 2 separate boils. Start from the milk stage and only simmer for 10 minutes instead of 20-25 minutes.

This variation will be a little looser and creamier because of the higher moisture content in the fresh cod.