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## Bacalhau con Natas / Codfish and Cream

Preparation time - about 90 minutes

Cook time - about 60 minutes plus 10 minutes needed for broiling

Serves - 6 to 8

### Ingredients

2 pounds of desalted codfish

4 pounds (about 8 cups) of russet or red skinned potatoes, peeled and cubed into 1 inch cubes

1 large onion

8 garlic cloves

10 tablespoons of olive oil

2 medium bay leaves

1 pint heavy cream (2 cups)

1 cup milk

1/2 teaspoon of nutmeg

1/2 teaspoon of salt

1/2 teaspoon of black pepper

2 tablespoons of arrowroot

### Desalting your dried Codfish

The salted cod can be purchased in most supermarket seafood departments. It can be purchased de-salted or salted and dried. If you purchase the dried salted cod you will need to de-salt it before using it. The process can take a few days. First place the salted cod in a bowl or pot large enough to fit the amount of cod you plan to de-salt. Add cold water, make sure that the entire pieces of the cod are covered with the water. The water should be changed several times per day for up to two days, depending on the thickness of the dried cod. The thinner the pieces the shorter the soaking time to remove the salt. After the desalting process the fish is ready to be used.

### Preparation

Preheat your oven to 400 degrees F

Pre Boil the desalted Codfish for about 10 minutes in boiling water. Remove and drain the water. Remove the bones. I leave the skin on the fish as it adds extra flavor. You can remove the skin if you wish. Flake the codfish or cut it into 1 or 2 inch pieces.



Heat the 8 tablespoons of olive oil in a large frying pan and saute the cubed potatoes until they are partially cooked. Do not let them brown. When they can be easily pierced with a fork, remove from the pan and set aside. Cut the onions in half and slice them into 1/8 inch slices. Finely chop the garlic. Saute the garlic and sliced onions in the remaining olive oil. You may need to add a few more tablespoons of olive oil if it appears that there isn't enough. You can never have too little oil. Add the bay leaves. Once the onions are translucent add the codfish pieces and the sauteed potatoes and mix. Cook under medium heat for about 10 minutes. Turn off the heat and set aside.

While the oven preheats, we now prepare the sauce. In a medium saucepan melt the butter under medium heat and slowly add the arrowroot flour while stirring the melting butter. Now add the milk and the heavy cream and slowly stir. **DO NOT LET THE MIXTURE COME TO A BOIL.** Add the salt and black pepper. Add the nutmeg when the sauce is hot. Reduce the heat to low and continue to stir until the sauce turns into a thick creamy texture. This should take about 10 minutes.

With the cream mixture prepared now add about two thirds of the cream mixture into the cod, onion and potato mixture. Mix until the cream mixture is blended well with the cod, onion and potatoes. Now place all of this mixture into a large oval or rectangular casserole dish. Place the remainder of the cream sauce evenly over the remainder of the cod, onion and potatoes and then place in the preheated oven. Let cook for 10 minutes at 400 degrees F and then reduce heat to 350 degrees F. Allow to cook for an additional 50 minutes. In order to make the golden brown crust, turn the broiler of the oven on to medium (or a setting of 5) for five minutes. The high, direct heat of the broiler will brown the top of the codfish and cream casserole.

**BE CAREFUL NOT TO BURN IT!** Now you are ready to serve.

Remove from the oven and garnish with chopped parsley. Serve with a side of your favorite steamed veggies. I use broccoli rabe, string beans and carrots for added color.

