

## Baccalà Mantecato Cicchetti – Creamy Cod Spread

Ingredients	Preparation
<p>1 pound Fresh or Salted Cod  <u>Extra Virgin Olive Oil</u>            Salt/Pepper            (Optional: 1-2 Well Boiled Potatoes)</p> <p><b>To Serve:</b>            Baguette or Toasted Bread Slices            Capers            Olives</p> <p><b>Suggested Wine Pairings:</b></p> <p><u>Sandro de Bruno   Lessini Durello 36 Months   Champagne Method Sparkling Wine</u></p> <p><u>Sandro de Bruno   Lessini Durello 60 Months   Vintage Riserva Champagne Method Sparkling Wine</u></p>	<p>1. If starting with fresh cod, skip head to step two. If beginning with salted cod, soak the cod in cool water in fridge for 24 hours minimum, or until soft to the touch. Change the water at least twice. Just before cooking, remove from the water and rinse gently under cool water. Cook the fish in one of two methods a) boiling or b) steaming.</p> <p>2a. <b>Boiling:</b> Remove any pin bones and skin, and cut the filet into large pieces just right to fit into your pot. Place your cod in a pot, cover with water and bring to a light simmer. Once simmering, let cook over low heat for 25-30 minutes. Occasionally, skim away with a slotted spoon any white foam that forms on the top of the water. When the cod is beginning to fall apart and fork tender, gently remove the fish from the water with a slotted spoon or strainer. When cool enough to touch, gently feel for any missed pin bones to remove.</p> <p>2b. <b>Steaming:</b> Remove pin bones. Place the cod filets skin on in the steamer basket and let the fish steam for approximately 25-30 minutes. When easily pulled apart by a fork, remove from the steamer. When cool enough to handle, remove the skin and any missed pin bones.</p> <p>3. After removing the cod, leave it to drain well, or gently pat with paper towels to remove any pooling water.</p> <p>4. In a food processor or with a mixer, begin to whip the cod pieces. If desired, you can add your potatoes, smashed with a fork at this</p>

	<p>time. As the cod (and optional potatoes) are whipped, slowly drizzle in some olive oil until the mixture begins to take on a creamy consistency. When creamy, add salt and pepper to taste (beware of salt usage, especially if using salted cod).</p> <p>5. This dish can be served warm or cold. If desired cold, let chill in the fridge for a little while. To serve, spread on baguette slices, or any other desired toast slices and garnish with capers, olives, or a drizzle of olive oil.</p>
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Traditionally from Venice, *cicchetti* are small bites served with drinks (like an Italian tapas) in a *bacaro*, or wine bar. They cover a wide variety of appetizer/happy hour-esque foods, but one of the most recognizable are various dips and spreads and toppings served on pieces of bread or toast. A classic topping is this creamy cod spread, or *baccalà mantecato*. A common food in Venice, *baccalà* is salted cod, similar to *stoccafisso*. Before cooking with it, it needs to be soaked in water to help remove salt and soften it. For this recipe, however, one can also use fresh cod filets without the need to soak the fish for many hours or several days.

As well, depending on several variables (quality of fish or cooking technique as steaming tends to produce less moist fish), you may find your spread to be watery or runny. If this is the case, add in the optional well-cooked potatoes. They will help soak up the extra liquid and add a little consistency to the spread.