

Name of dish: Puerto Rican Bacalaitos

Bacalaitos (BACK-AL-EYE-IT-OZ) (fried cod fritters) are a revered food in Puerto Rico for all seasons and occasions. At almost every Catholic church event, Bacalaitos are sold to help raise funds for the local parish given how widely popular they are. They can easily be eaten while walking in the town square or enjoyed at a sit-down meal. Enhance your Lenten fish fries this year by adding this amazing Puerto Rican classic to your rotation of fried “surf.”

Ingredients

- 1 ½ lb of salted cod (or salted pollock)
- 1 ½ cups of flour
- 1 teaspoon of baking powder
- 1 ½ cups of water
- 1 pinch of ground pepper
- 2 garlic cloves (finely chopped)
- 3 long-leaf coriander (cilantro) (finely chopped)
- 1 small, sweet cachucha pepper (finely chopped)
- ½ teaspoon of fresh oregano (finely chopped)
- Vegetable oil (for frying)



Note: Please make sure the cod has no spines as they could impose a serious health risk.

Directions

Step 1

In a bowl, place the salted cod and let it rest in cold water for at least 2 hrs.

Step 2

Drain water and taste to make sure it's not extremely salty. If it is, place it in fresh, cold water and let rest for 2 more hrs.

Step 3

Drain water and manually crumble the cod apart to small pieces. Make sure you remove all spines.

Step 4

Mix the flour with all ingredients (including the cod). Mix well until you have a pancake-like mixture. More Water = thick mixture = thick cod fritter.

Step 5

Using an iron, aluminum pot or frying skillet, add about $\frac{1}{4}$ inch of vegetable oil over medium-high heat. The oil should be hot and just enough to cover one full side of each fritter, otherwise the fritter will break apart or soak in too much oil and not be as tasteful.

Step 6

Using a big, metal (frying) spoon, add about $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of the mixture to the hot oil.

Step 7

Let it toast on one side and carefully turn over (kind of like a pancake).

Step 8

Remove from the oil and let it drain the excess fat by placing on paper towel. You may also use wooden sticks to hang and drain.