

Cod

Cod live in offshore ocean waters, are generally harvested by fishermen throughout the Northeast, and can be found in the western side of the Atlantic Ocean from the Arctic Circle to Virginia and Maryland. Locally caught cod is most abundant during the winter and spring with peak landings at New York ports from January to April. Cod is the most familiar type of the lean white fish fillets with a mild flavor and a firm flaky texture that is preferred by most Americans.

Available year-round in the New York marketplace in many different forms, cod is very versatile in the kitchen. It can be cooked by almost any method, and common choices include baking, broiling, frying and microwave cooking. In addition, it is a good choice for hearty seafood stews, soups or chowders. Cod's mild flavor makes it especially suitable for a variety of sauces and condiments from traditional cream and tomato based sauces to simple preparations with herbs or vegetables.

Cod's popularity has carried over to such other lean white-meat fish as pollock, monkfish and halibut. Its appeal is also shared with two of its smaller cousins, red hake and silver hake (whiting), which are abundant in New York from late fall through spring.

—Paul C. Focazio

Hearty Fish Stew

Ingredients

- 2 tbsp. olive oil
- 2 cloves garlic, chopped
- 2 tbsp. butter
- 2 cups coarsely chopped fresh tomatoes
- 2 tbsp. minced fresh parsley
- 1 cup tomato puree, unsalted
- 3 medium onions, sliced
- 1/2 cup dry white wine
- 1 tbsp. minced fresh basil or 1 tsp. dried basil
- 1-1/2 lbs. cod filets, cut into chunks
- 2 bay leaves
- 1/2 cup Greek olives, pitted and halved
- pinch crushed red pepper (to taste)
- black pepper (to taste)

Method

In large skillet, heat olive oil and butter. Sauté parsley, onions, basil, bay leaves and crushed red pepper over medium heat until onions are soft and translucent. Add garlic and sauté a bit longer. Add tomatoes, tomato puree, and wine. Simmer to blend flavors. Add fish chunks and olives. Continue cooking over low heat until fish begins to flake. Season to taste. Serve with French Bread.

Other lean white fish such as hake, whiting, pollock, monkfish or halibut can be substituted for cod.

For information on a variety of seafood-related issues, surf over to the newly-created "Seafood Technology" pages on the NYSG web site, www.seagrant.sunysb.edu. Also included on this seafood site is a link to the World Wide Web address of the New York Seafood Council, for which NYSG's seafood specialist Ken Gall is technical advisor.



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