

My father, also called Jose, was in the restaurant business for many years. He owned several cafeterias in San Juan and one of the first pizza places on the island, Joe's Pizza House. While he wasn't the chef in any of these places, he was a good cook and enjoyed entertaining at home. One of his specialties was this classic Spanish-style codfish with capers, olives, roasted red peppers, raisins, and almonds. Leave time for soaking the cod in the refrigerator for a day.

BACALAO A LA VIZCAÍNA

Codfish Biscayan Style

SERVES 4

- 1 pound salt cod
- 1 cup milk
- 4 yellow potatoes, sliced ½ inch thick
- ¾ cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 onions, cut into 1-inch wedges
- ¾ cup pitted green olives, sliced
- 2 large cloves garlic, mashed to a paste in a mortar
- ¾ cup tomato paste
- ¾ cup good-quality white wine
- 2 teaspoons capers
- ½ cup peeled and sliced roasted red bell peppers (see page 142)
- 1 cup raisins
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 teaspoon smoked paprika
- 4 hard-boiled eggs, peeled and sliced
- ¼ cup sliced almonds, toasted
- Fresh parsley or culantro sprigs, for garnish

Place the salt cod in a large bowl and cover with the milk and 2 quarts water. Cover and soak in the refrigerator for 24 hours. Drain the cod, discarding the soaking liquid, and cut the fish into bite-size pieces, discarding any skin or bones.

Place the potatoes in a medium saucepan, cover with water, and bring to a boil over high heat. Reduce the heat and simmer about 10 minutes, until tender. Drain.

In a large sauté pan, heat the oil over medium heat. Add the onions, olives, garlic, and tomato paste and sauté until the onions become translucent, 7 to 10 minutes. Add 1 cup water, the wine, potatoes, capers, roasted red peppers, raisins, bay leaf, and smoked paprika and cook for about 5 minutes. Add the cod pieces and continue to cook for 10 minutes, stirring occasionally.

Garnish with the slices of hard-boiled eggs, toasted almonds, and parsley. Serve immediately.

