

Christmas Baccala (Codfish Salad)
Michael J. Daley

Begin 3 days before you plan to eat the salad.

1 pound salt cod
2 celery hearts, ½ inch dice
1 jar oil cured black olives (8 oz.)
1 small jar HOT cherry peppers (pickled)
1 jar capers (3.5 oz.)
1 bunch flat leaf parsley, chopped (no stems)
¾ cup extra virgin olive oil (don't skimp!)
juice of 2 lemons

Desalt cod as directed on package, but leave it a little salty. Poach for a few minutes. Drain.

Put everything into a large, non-reactive bowl or pan that can be covered with a lid. I use a six-quart stainless steel pan. Mix well.

Place in refrigerator. Mix at least twice a day for the next three days. Tasting is fun at every stage! Flavor will develop wonderfully and is usually at its peak, I believe, in three days. The salad will keep days longer, of course, but diminishes in brightness. If the salad seems a bit dull after a couple days, it may need more lemon juice or more peppers---you are aiming for a bright, mildly hot tang on the tongue.

About the peppers. Be sure to seed them. Coarsely chop them. You may want to use gloves, but I just dissect them on a plate using knife and fork. The amount to use is hard to specify. They ARE hot, but blend into the salad and that heat is a necessary component of the flavor. Many people never eat the peppers themselves.

About the salt cod. It can be found in wooden boxes. At a real Italian market, you might actually find it in huge slabs. Lately, I have found it packaged as 'pieces'. These work quite well and are least expensive.