

Cod Acqua Pazza with Olives (Italian Fish in Crazy Water)

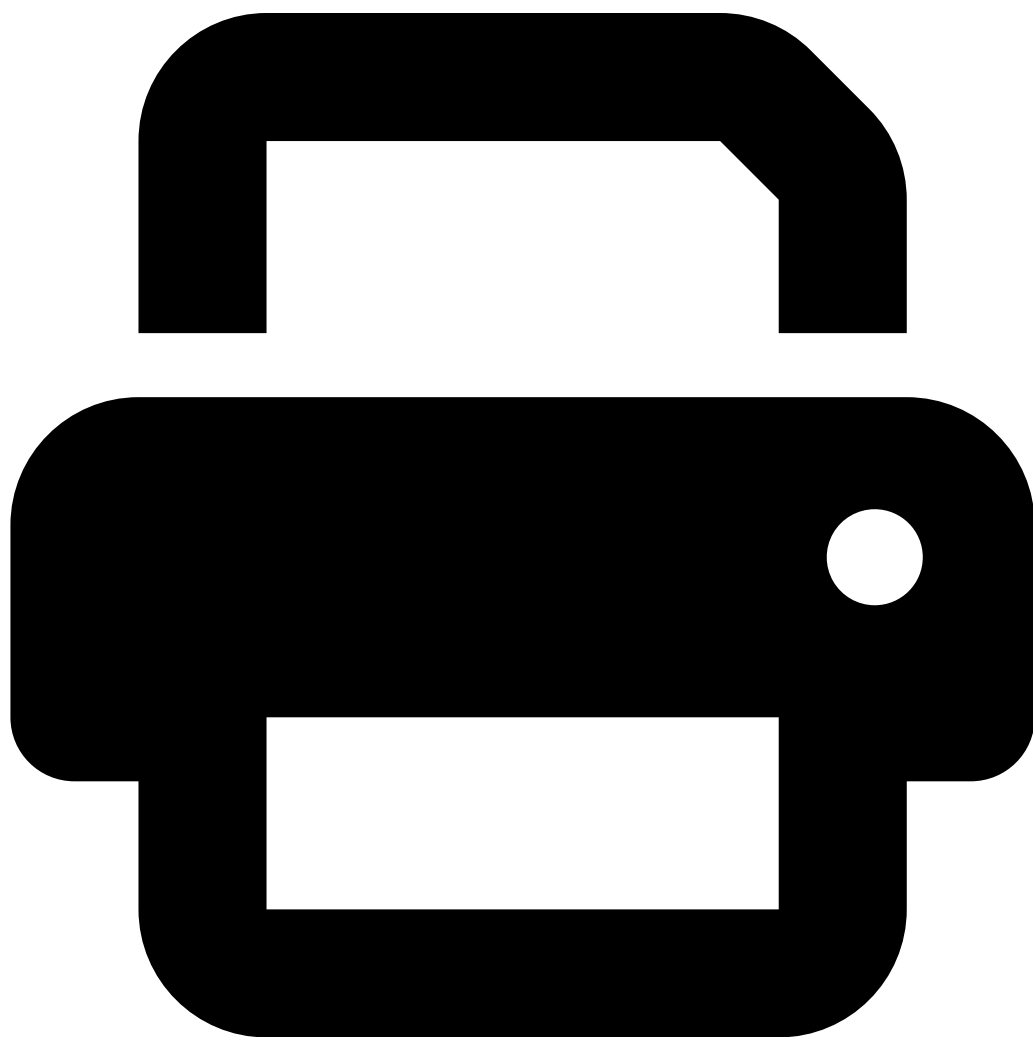
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The first time I heard Acqua Pazza translated as “fish in crazy water,” I expected something elaborate. But this classic Southern Italian seafood dish is actually one of the simplest and freshest ways to cook fish.

I actually grew up with a version of this dish. It wasn’t always called acqua pazza in my home, but the idea was the same: fresh fish gently simmered in a light tomato and garlic broth, always served with bread to soak up every last bit of sauce. It’s the kind of meal that feels both rustic and special at the same time.

In this version, I’ve added cherry tomatoes, white wine, and briny olives for extra depth, but it still stays true to that coastal Italian style – light, fresh, and full of flavor.

Tender cod cooks right in the broth until it’s flaky and delicate, soaking up all the flavors of the Mediterranean in

every bite.

Things to know about this Cod Acqua Pazza with Olives (Italian Fish in Crazy Water) recipe

Tips for the Best Acqua Pazza

- Don't boil the fish – keep the broth at a gentle simmer.
- Use good-quality olive oil since the broth is simple.
- Cherry tomatoes work best because they naturally sweeten the sauce.
- Cod, halibut, sea bass, or snapper all work well here.

What to Serve with Cod Acqua Pazza

- Crusty Italian bread
- Roasted potatoes
- Simple arugula salad
- Angel hair pasta
- Grilled vegetables

Storage

Store leftovers in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to 2 days. Reheat gently over low heat so the fish stays tender.

You might also love

If you enjoyed this Cod Acqua Pazza, here are a few more light

and flavorful Italian recipes from the blog:

- **Sicilian-Style Potato Salad (No Mayo)** – a bright, tangy side that pairs perfectly with seafood
- **Italian Shrimp and Orzo** – quick, garlicky, and full of coastal flavor
- **Zucchini alla Scapece** – fried zucchini marinated in vinegar, garlic, and mint
- **Roasted Zucchini Pasta with Tomatoes** – a simple summer pasta packed with flavor
- **Italian classic Tomato Bruschetta** – perfect for serving alongside this fish dish
- For this recipe, I love using a heavy-bottomed frying pan like my all clad 12 inch non stick saute pan – it holds heat evenly, keeps the garlic from burning, and gives you that perfect gentle simmer for the fish broth.

□ If you make this recipe, leave a comment and rating below – and tell me if you added capers, extra olives, or a splash of lemon at the end.

Cod Acqua Pazza with Olives (Italian Fish in Crazy Water)



Tender cod simmered in a light tomato, garlic, white wine, and olive broth in this classic Italian acqua pazza recipe ready

in 30 minutes.

- 2 lbs. cod fillet
- salt and pepper to taste
- 3 Tbsp. olive oil
- 3 cloves minced garlic
- 2 Tbsp. minced shallots
- 1 pint cherry tomatoes halved
- 1 tsp red pepper flakes (more or less according to taste)
- 1/2 cup white wine
- 1 cup water or light fish sauce (if using water add 1 teaspoon of salt to the water)
- 1/2 cup pitted, and chopped Castelvetrano, Kalamata, or mixed olives
- 1/2 cup capers
- 2 Tbsp. chopped Italian parsley
- lemon slices and crusty bread (for serving)

1. Pat the cod dry and season both sides with salt and pepper.
2. Heat the olive oil in a large skillet over medium heat.
3. Add the shallots and garlic cook for about 1 to 2 minutes until fragrant .and soft but not brown
4. Stir in the cherry tomatoes and red pepper flakes. Cook for 5–7 minutes until the tomatoes begin to soften and release their juices.
5. Pour in the white wine and simmer for 2 minutes.
6. Add the salted water or fish stock along with the olives and capers. Bring to a gentle simmer.
7. Nestle the cod into the broth. Spoon some of the liquid over the fish, cover, and cook gently for 8–10 minutes,

or until the cod flakes easily with a fork.

8. Finish with chopped parsley and an extra drizzle of olive oil.
9. Serve immediately with crusty bread, grilled bread, or roasted potatoes.

Main Course

Italian

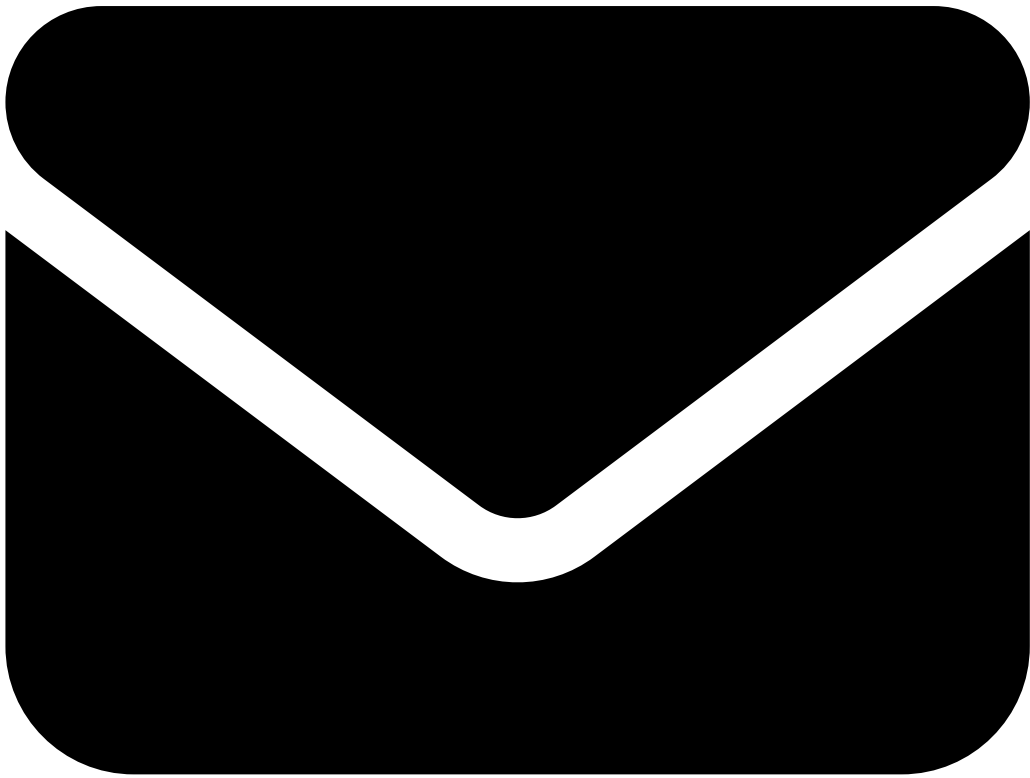
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15 Weeknight Italian Meals: Easy Recipes in Under 45 Minutes

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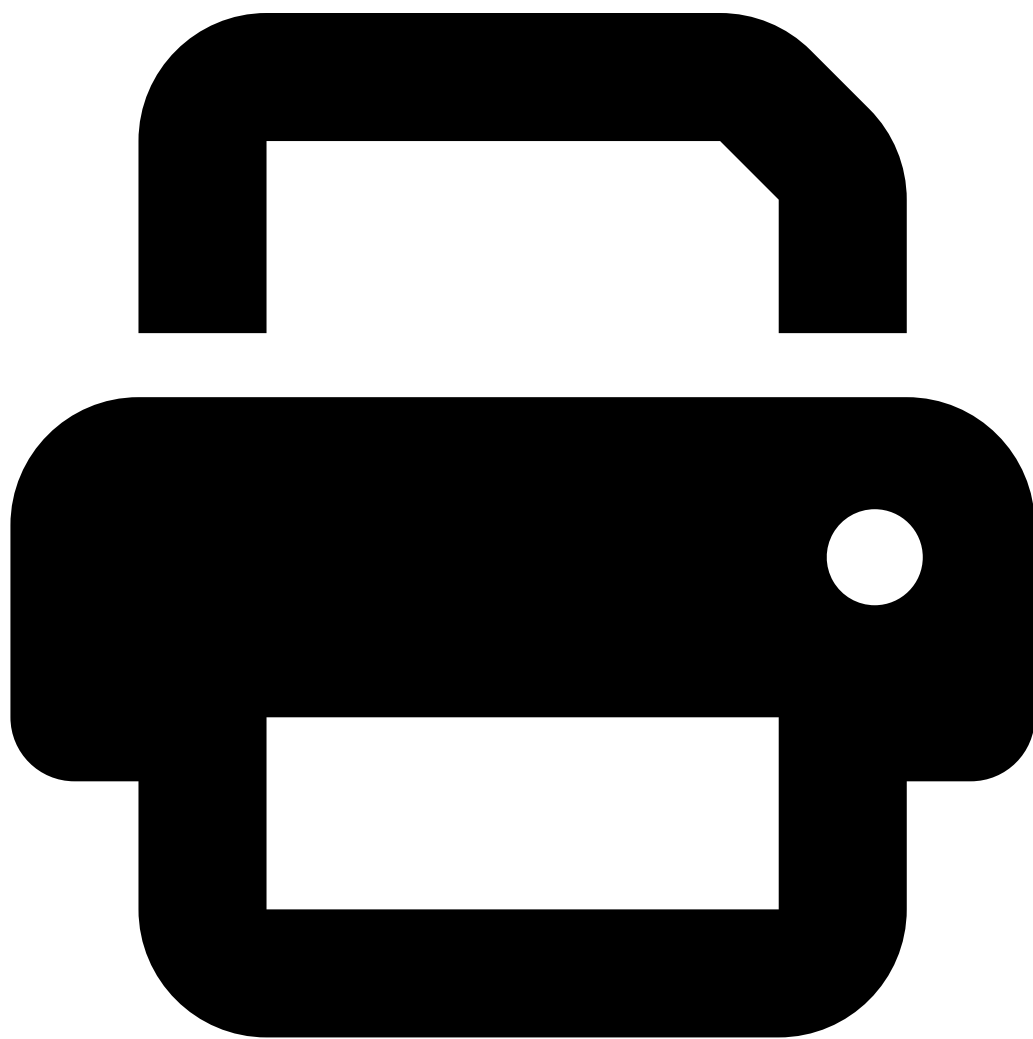
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Weeknight cooking doesn't need to be complicated to be good. Some of the best Italian meals are built on simple ingredients, cooked well, and brought to the table without overthinking it.

This is the kind of food you make when you want something real—pasta that comes together in one pan, sauces that don't take all day, and meals that feel comforting without being heavy. It's not about perfection, it's about flavor, timing, and knowing a few go-to recipes you can rely on.

Inside this 15 weeknight Italian meals guide, you'll find a collection of easy weeknight Italian meals—from quick pastas and skillet dinners to cozy baked dishes and fresh, seasonal sides. Everything here is designed to work in real life, with recipes you can make in under 45 minutes and come back to again and again.

Lemon Asparagus Ricciarelle Pasta

Light, fresh, and full of spring flavors! This **Lemon Asparagus Pasta** features tender sautéed asparagus, bright lemon sauce, and Parmesan, perfect for an easy weeknight dinner or elegant spring meal.

[GO TO RECIPE](#)

One-Pot Creamy Zucchini Pasta (Pasta e Zucchini)

This one-pot creamy zucchini pasta is a traditional Italian recipe where pasta cooks directly with zucchini, onion, and olive oil, creating a naturally creamy sauce with Parmesan and pasta starch.[GO TO RECIPE](#)

Spicy pasta Norcina Spicy Italian sausage pasta

Spicy pasta alla norcina is an Italian pasta dish made with sausage in a creamy cheese sauce. There are different variations, some have mushrooms or different cured meats. The recipe is easy to make and takes about as much time to make as it takes the pasta to cook[GO TO RECIPE](#)

Pesto tortellini pasta salad

If you're looking for the perfect summer pasta salad, this pesto tortellini pasta **Salad** is one of my favorites. Full of Mediterranean flavors and hearty enough to be a meal on its

own, it's one of those dishes that always disappears quickly when ever I bring it to potlucks, or Sunday lunches.[GO TO RECIPE](#)

Authentic Italian Pasta e Fagioli

Authentic Pasta e fagioli is a humble, hearty and soul-warming Italian pasta dish that brings back vivid childhood memories of the smell of simmering beans, tomatoes, and garlic. for many Italian families, pasta e fagioli was the meal that could feed everyone on a tight budget. It's the ultimate "cucina povera" dish- poor kitchen.[GO TO RECIPE](#)

Air Fryer Parmesan chicken Spiedini

Air fryer parmesan chicken spiedini are Italy's version of skewers or kabobs. In this spiedini recipe boneless, skinless chicken thighs are marinated in a blend of Italian spices, cooked in the air fryer, and basted with a delicious garlic, parmesan butter sauce.[GO TO RECIPE](#)

Chicken Meatballs with marry me orzo

Tender chicken meatballs are always a hit at the dinner table, and when you pair them with creamy *Marry Me Orzo*, you've got the ultimate comfort meal. This dish brings together juicy baked chicken meatballs and orzo pasta simmered in a rich Parmesan and sun-dried tomato cream sauce. It's the kind of meal that feels special enough for date night yet easy enough for a weeknight family dinner.[GO TO RECIPE](#)

Pollo al Limone Italian lemon

chicken

Lemons are in peak season right now, and there's no better way to celebrate their bright, zesty flavor than with this Italian Lemon Chicken. Known as *Pollo al Limone*, this dish is simple, rustic, and full of Southern Italian charm. With a golden sear, a light pan sauce, and a fresh lemon-parsley drizzle, it's the kind of meal that tastes like summer.GO TO RECIPE

Best cod Francese Recipe- in 30 minutes

Best Cod Francese Recipe – in 30 Minutes is a lightly battered, pan-fried cod fillet in an elegant lemon, butter and white wine sauce. It's similar to chicken piccata—but without the capers and with a velvety, lemon-butter sauce that clings to the golden crust. Cod Francese is a classic restaurant-style dish that's surprisingly simple to make at home. The hallmark is the light coating of flour and egg that gives the fish a delicate, crisp texture—perfect for soaking up that tangy, buttery sauce.GO TO RECIPE

Shrimp spaghetti with basil tomato sauce

This Shrimp Spaghetti with Tomato Basil Sauce is a simple, fresh pasta dish made with sautéed shrimp, juicy summer tomatoes, garlic, and plenty of fragrant basil. The sauce is created right in the pan by combining the tomato juices with starchy pasta water and a generous handful of grated parmesan, giving you a light flavorful coating that clings to the pasta.GO TO RECIPE

<https://lorianasheacooks.com/shrimp-tomato-basil-spaghetti/>

Authentic Italian shrimp oreganata

Crispy, garlicky, and straight out of an Italian kitchen.

This shrimp oreganata is all about simple ingredients—olive oil, lemon, breadcrumbs, and a heavy hand with oregano—baked until golden and perfect for scooping with bread.

It's fast, it's bold, and it tastes like something you'd order at your favorite spot... but better at home.

[GO TO RECIPE](#)

Crispy pan fried chicken cutlets

These crispy breaded chicken cutlet recipe are pan fried and they were a staple in my childhood growing up and in many Italian kitchens. They are juicy, crispy delicious and so easy to make. Serve the cutlets along side a salad for a light lunch or dinner.[GO TO RECIPE](#)

The Best Italian-Style Fried Calamari

Golden, crispy, and impossible to stop eating.

This Italian-style fried calamari is light, crunchy, and finished with lemon and a pinch of salt—just the way it should be. No heavy batter, no fuss—just fresh squid, a quick fry, and that perfect crisp.

Serve it hot with marinara or straight up with lemon... either way, it's gone in minutes.

[GO TO RECIPE](#)

Braised Fennel Oreganata with Pancetta

Braised fennel oreganata with pancetta is one of those simple Italian side dishes that feels both rustic and elegant – the kind of recipe that tastes like it came out of a cozy countryside kitchen. Fennel is one of my favorite seasonal ingredients to cook with this time of year. When it's in season, it's sweet, aromatic, and incredibly versatile, and I love finding ways to let its natural flavor shine.

[GO TO RECIPE](#)

One pan orzo with summer vegetables

Some meals just feel easy—especially when they come together in one pan. This one-pan orzo with summer vegetables is one of those simple, feel-good recipes that checks all the boxes: quick to make, minimal cleanup, and full of fresh summer flavor.[GO TO RECIPE](#)

At the end of the day, weeknight cooking should feel manageable—not like a project. These are the kinds of Italian meals you can lean on when you want something good without spending hours in the kitchen. Simple ingredients, a few solid techniques, and recipes that actually work on a busy night.

Whether it's a quick pasta, a one-pan skillet, or something baked and cozy, this is the kind of cooking that becomes part of your routine—the meals you make without thinking twice, and the ones everyone looks forward to.

Save this guide so you always have a go-to list of easy weeknight Italian meals.

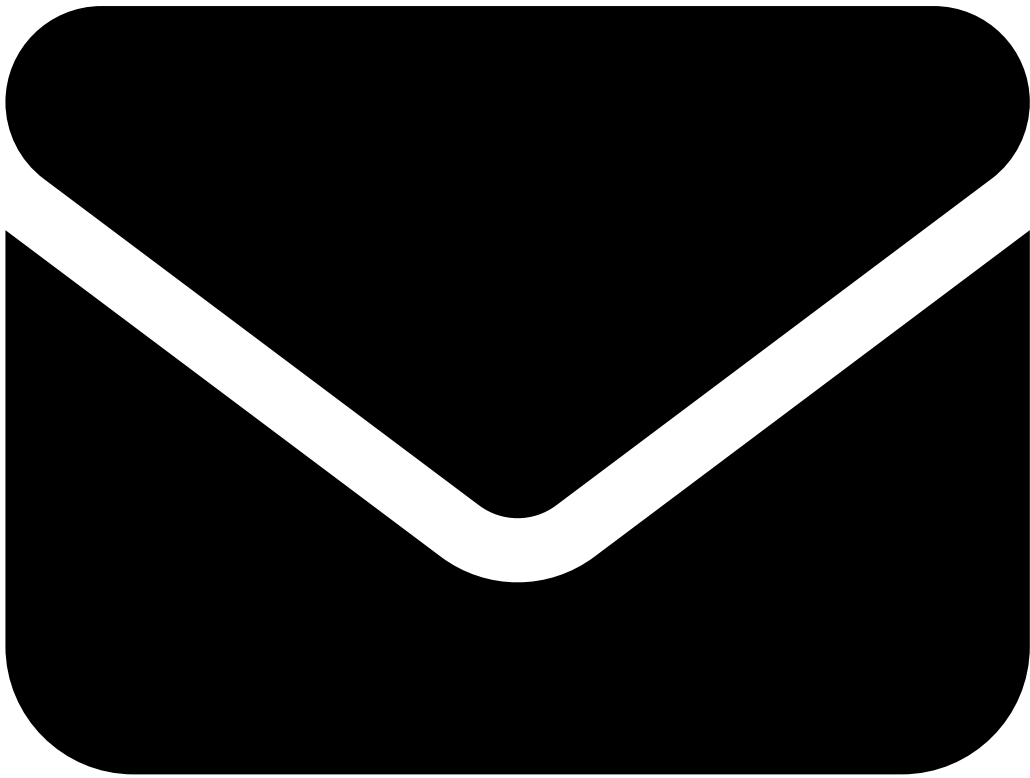
Pick a recipe to try this week, and come back when you need something new. For more simple, flavorful Italian recipes, explore the blog and find your next favorite.

Italian Lemon Cod Bites

Italian Lemon Cod Bites

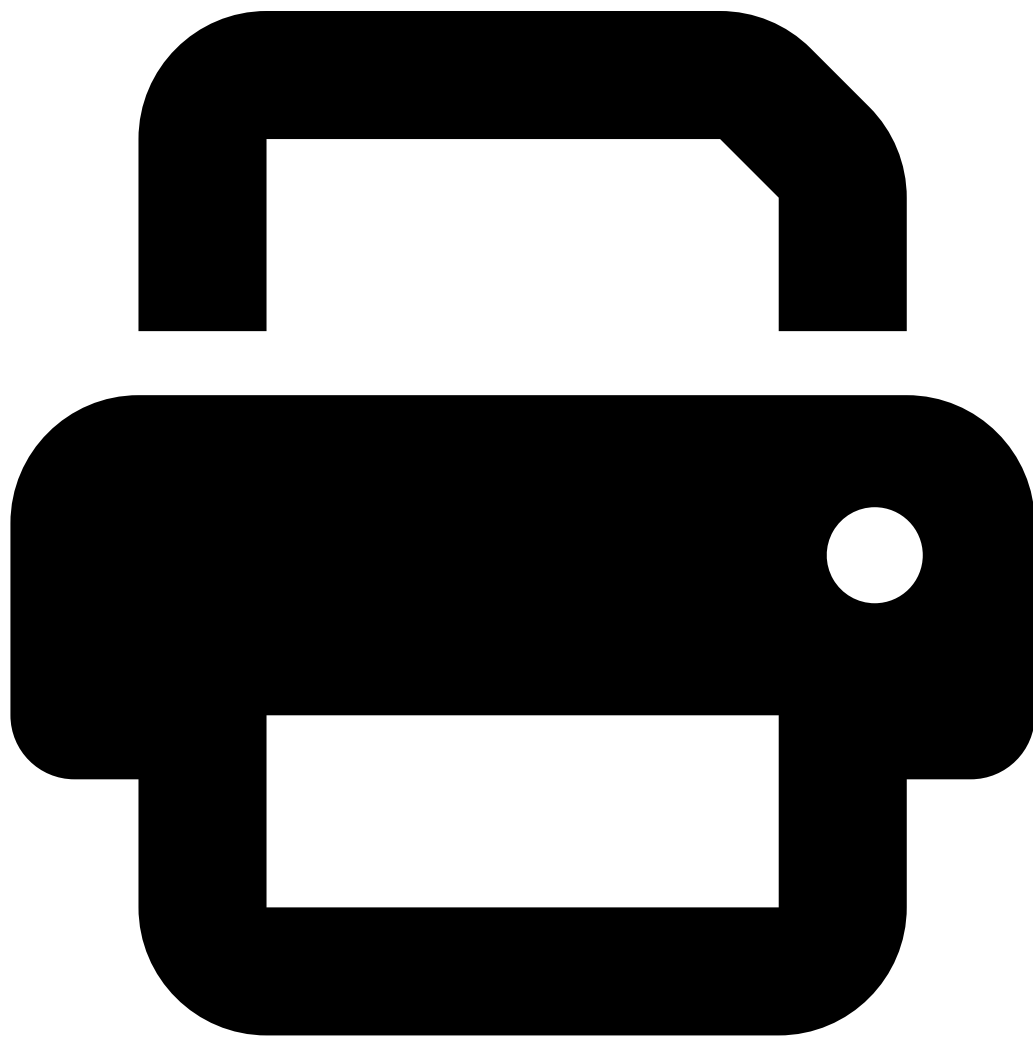
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This **Italian Lemon Cod** is a dish that brings me right back to my restaurant kitchen. It was one of those simple plates we made all the time—fresh, bright, and incredibly satisfying. Inspired by the same style used for classic lemon chicken in many Italian-American restaurants, tender cubes of **Pacific Cod** are lightly seared and finished in a silky lemon, garlic, and white wine sauce.

What made this dish so popular at the restaurant was its simplicity. With just a handful of ingredients and a quick cook time, the cod stays delicate and flaky while soaking up that vibrant lemon flavor. It's the kind of dish that tastes elegant but is actually very easy to make at home.

If you love light seafood dishes that come together quickly, this restaurant-style lemon cod is one you'll want to keep on repeat.

Things to now about this Italian lemon cod recipe

- **Use firm, fresh cod.** Cubes of **Pacific Cod** should look bright and smell clean like the ocean, not fishy. Fresh fish will hold its shape better when seared.
- **Pat the fish dry before cooking.** Removing excess moisture helps the cod develop a light golden sear instead of steaming in the pan.
- **Cook quickly over medium-high heat.** Cod is delicate and cooks fast. About 1–2 minutes per side is usually enough to keep it tender and flaky.
- **Use fresh lemon juice.** Fresh lemon gives the sauce its bright flavor and keeps the dish light and balanced.
- **Serve immediately.** This dish is best right out of the pan while the sauce is glossy and the fish is tender.

Storage

- **Refrigerate:** Store leftovers in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to **2 days**.
- **Reheat gently:** Warm in a skillet over low heat with a splash of water, broth, or lemon juice to loosen the sauce. Avoid microwaving too long, as cod can become tough.
- **Freezing is not recommended.** Cooked cod tends to become watery and lose its delicate texture after freezing.
- Love simple seafood dishes like this **Italian Lemon Cod**? Be sure to explore more of my seafood recipes for easy,

Mediterranean-inspired meals you can make at home. From light pasta dishes to classic Italian fish preparations, there's plenty of inspiration for your next dinner.

☐ Browse more of my seafood recipes : Easy Italian lemon shrimp

or for a restaurant quality meal at a fraction of the cost try my easy broiled lobster tails for two

Italian Lemon Cod Bites



Tender cubes of **Pacific Cod** are lightly seared and finished in a bright lemon, garlic, and white wine sauce. This simple Italian-style lemon cod recipe is light, fresh, and ready in just 20 minutes.

- 2 Lbs. wild cod (cut into 2 inch cubes)
- salt (to taste)
- pepper (to taste)
- 1/2 cup flour (for dredging)
- 2 Tbsp. olive oil
- 2 Tbsp. butter
- 2 cloves garlic (finely minced)
- 1/3 cup lemon juice (juice from 1 lemon)
- 1/2 cup white wine
- 1/2 cup chicken stock
- 1/4 cup Italian parsley (chopped)

1. **Pat the cod dry** and season with salt and pepper.
2. **Lightly dredge** the cubes in flour and shake off excess.
3. Heat olive oil and 1 tbsp butter in a skillet over medium-high.
4. Add the cod cubes and **sear about 1–1½ minutes per side** until lightly golden. Remove and set aside.
5. In the same pan add garlic and cook 30 seconds.
6. Deglaze with **white wine and lemon juice**, scraping the pan.
7. Stir in remaining butter and return cod to the pan **just 30–60 seconds** to coat in the sauce
8. Finish with parsley.

Main Course

Italian

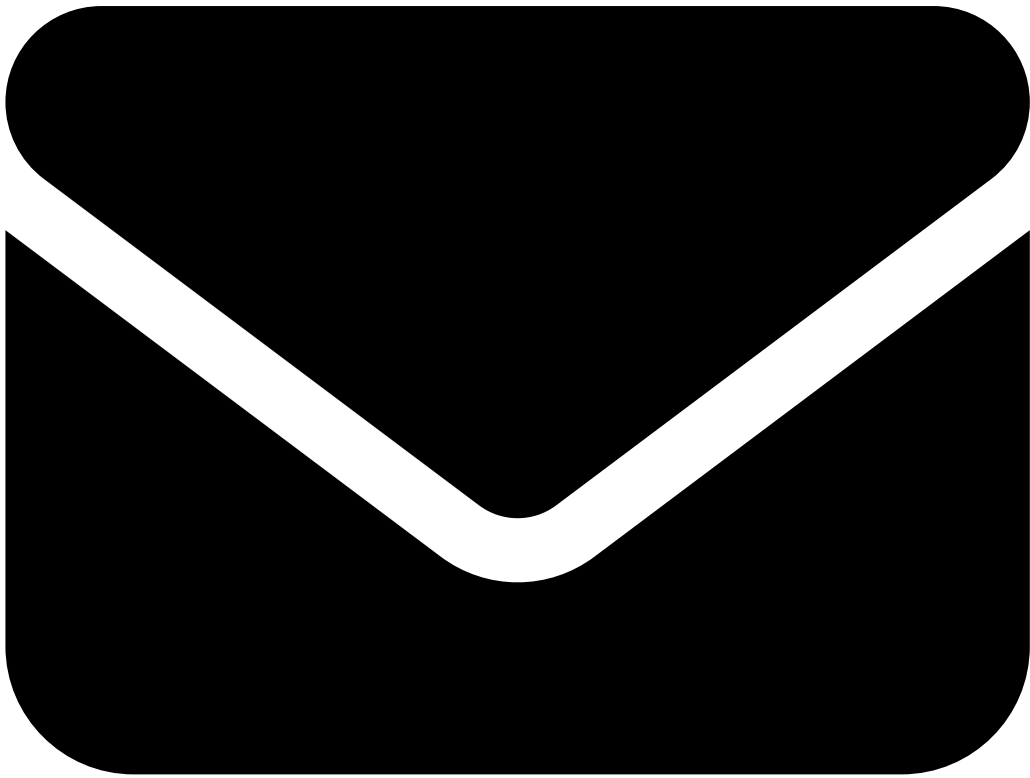
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Lemon Cod Piccata (Light Italian Seafood Dinner)

Easy 30 minute Lemon Cod Piccata

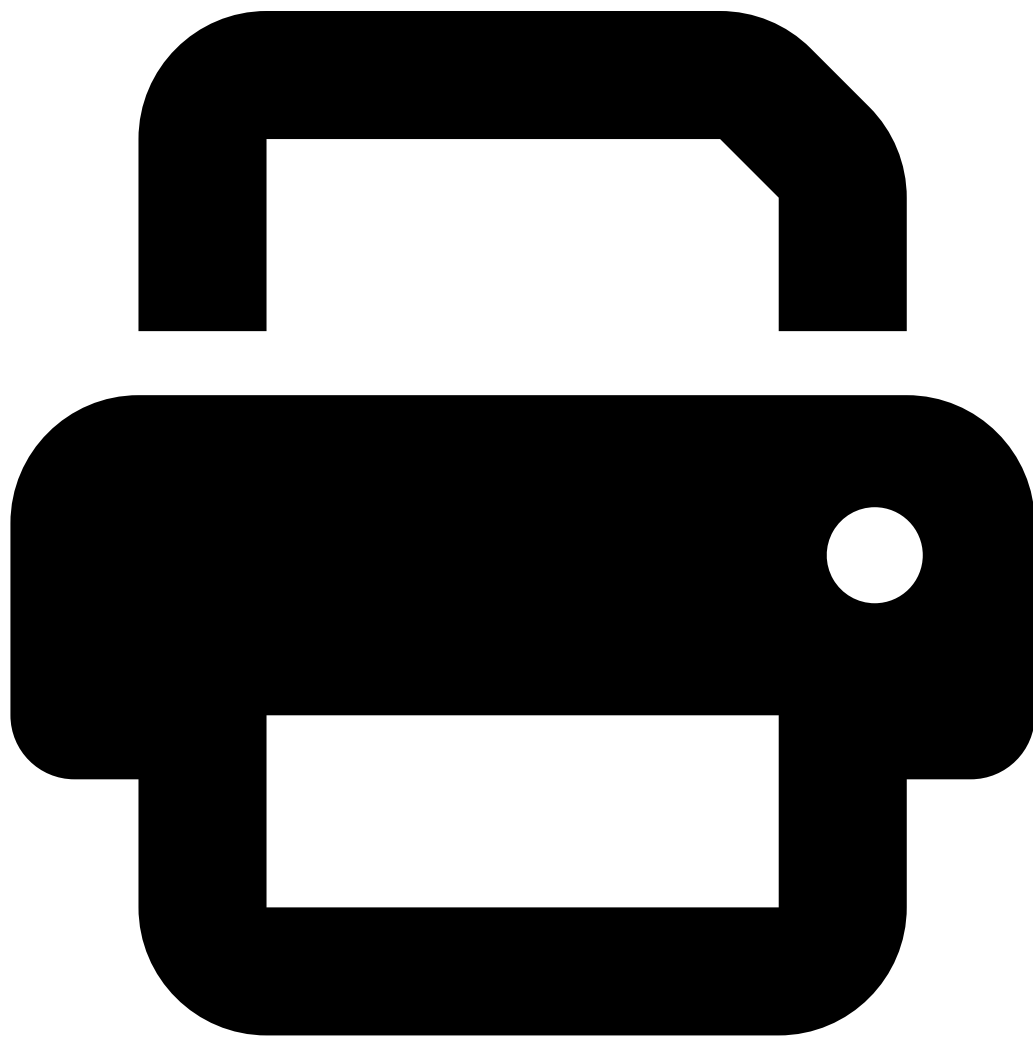
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If you love the bright, buttery flavors of **Italian piccata**, this **Lemon Cod Piccata** is a lighter seafood twist on the classic. Traditionally made with veal or chicken, piccata features a silky **lemon, butter, and caper sauce** that's both tangy and rich. When paired with delicate **pan-seared cod**, the result is a restaurant-quality dish that comes together in about **30 minutes**.

This recipe is perfect for weeknights when you want something elegant but easy. The cod is lightly dredged in flour and seared until golden, then finished in a **lemony white wine piccata sauce** packed with briny capers and fresh parsley. Serve it with **pasta, roasted potatoes, or crusty bread** to soak up every drop of the sauce.

It's simple, flavorful, and a great way to bring a classic **Italian seafood recipe** to your dinner table.

Things to know about this Lemon Cod Piccata (Light Italian Seafood Dinner)

Choose the right cod

Fresh cod works best for this recipe, but high-quality frozen cod (fully thawed and patted dry) also works well.

Don't skip drying the fish

Removing moisture helps the fish develop that beautiful **golden crust** when searing.

Use fresh lemon juice

Bottled lemon juice won't give the same bright flavor that makes piccata sauce so special.

Control the sauce thickness

If the sauce becomes too thick, add a splash of broth. If it's too thin, simmer it another minute or two.

Great side dishes

This cod piccata pairs beautifully with:

- Angel hair pasta
- Garlic mashed potatoes
- Sautéed spinach
- Roasted asparagus

If you loved this **Cod Lemon Piccata**, be sure to explore more classic Italian recipes on the blog. Try my **Chicken Parmesan**, **Tuscan Kale and Potatoes**, or Italian – style meatloaf with roasted potatoes for more comforting Italian flavors.

And if you make this recipe, leave a comment and rating below—I'd love to hear how it turned out for you!

Lemon Cod Piccata (Light Italian Seafood Dinner)



Light and flavorful **Cod Lemon Piccata** made with pan-seared cod, lemon, butter, capers, and white wine. A quick Italian seafood dinner ready in 30 minutes.

- 4 6 oz. cod fillet
- salt and pepper to taste
- 1/2 cup flour
- 3 Tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- 3 Tbsp. butter
- 2 Tbsp. finely minced shallots
- 1 cup dry white wine
- 1 cup chicken stock
- 1/3 cup lemon juice
- 1/2 cup capers
- 1/3 cup freshly chopped Italian parsley

1. **1. Prepare the cod**Pat the cod fillets dry with paper towels. Season both sides with salt and pepper, then lightly dredge them in flour. Shake off any excess flour.

2. **2. Sear the fish** Heat olive oil and 1 tablespoon butter in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add the cod fillets and cook for about **3–4 minutes per side** until golden and flaky. Remove from the pan and set aside.
3. **3. Build the piccata sauce** In the same skillet, melt another tablespoon of butter. Add the minced shallots and cook for about **30 seconds** until fragrant.
4. **4. Deglaze the pan** Pour in the white wine and scrape up the browned bits from the bottom of the pan. Let the wine simmer until reduced by about half.
5. **5. Add the lemon and capers** Stir in the chicken broth, fresh lemon juice, and capers. Let the sauce simmer for **3–4 minutes**.
6. **6. Finish the sauce** Whisk in the remaining tablespoon of butter to create a silky texture.
7. **7. Return the cod** Place the cod back in the skillet and spoon the sauce over the fillets. Let them warm in the sauce for **1–2 minutes**.
8. **8. Garnish and serve** Top with fresh parsley and lemon slices. Serve immediately with pasta, potatoes, or crusty bread.

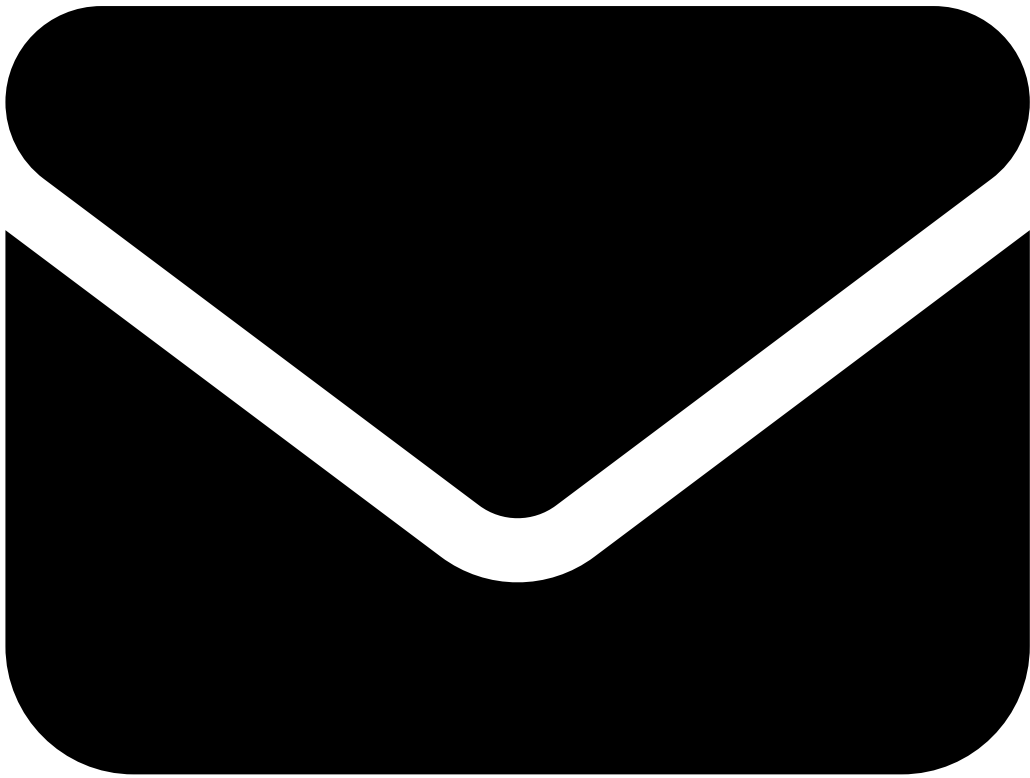
Main Course
Italian

Broiled Lobster Tails for Two – Easy Recipe

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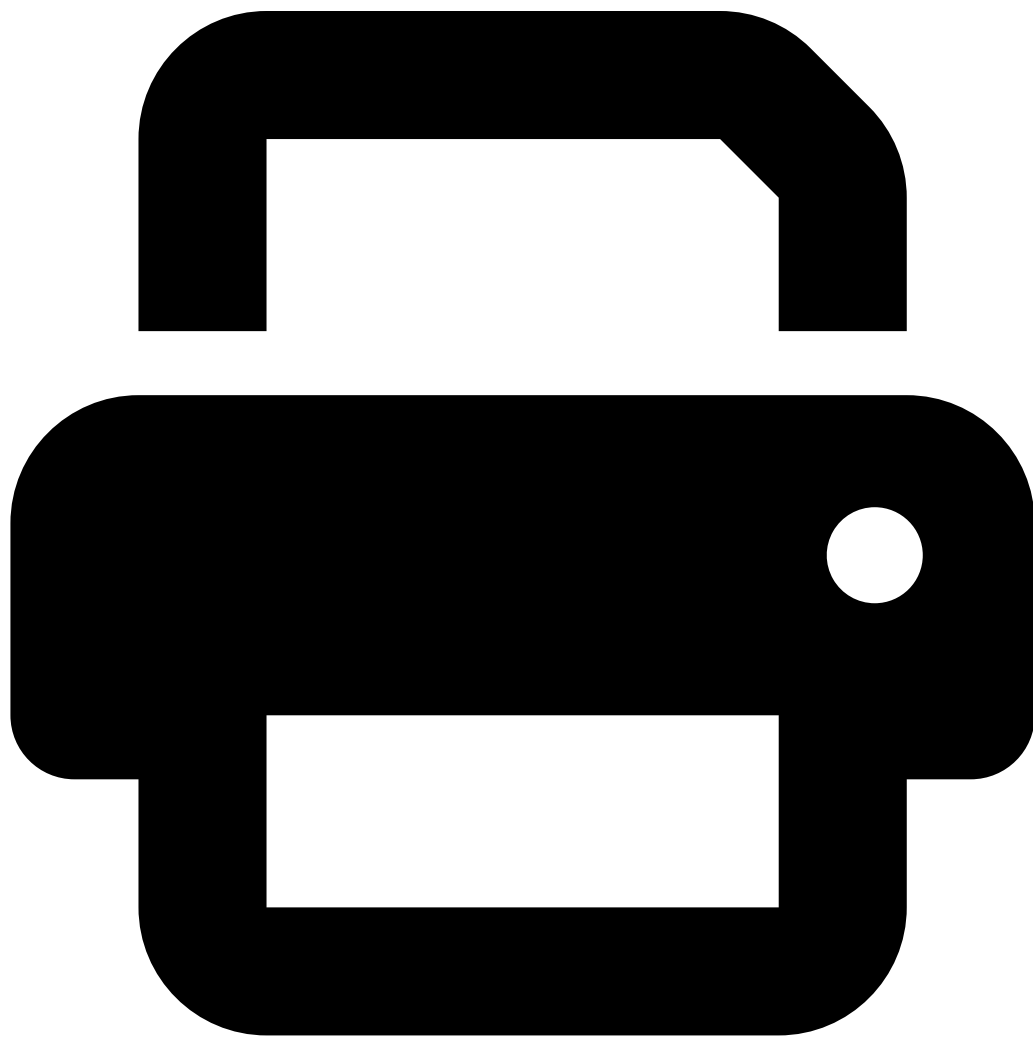
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Looking to make a restaurant-quality lobster dinner at home? These **broiled lobster tails** are simple, elegant, and full of flavor. With **butter, lemon, white wine, and a silky pan sauce**, this recipe is perfect for any special occasion—or just a treat-yourself night.

Even if you've never cooked lobster before, this method is easy to follow and yields a beautifully tender, juicy lobster tail every time. By propping the meat on top of the shell and broiling just long enough, you get a gorgeous presentation and maximum flavor with minimal effort. This is a recipe that feels fancy but doesn't require hours in the kitchen.

Things to know about this Broiled Lobster Tails for Two – Easy Recipe

- **Lobster tails cook quickly** – 6–8 minutes is usually enough for 4 oz tails; overcooking will make them tough.

- **Pan sauce tip:** Let the butter and wine emulsify after broiling for a silky, rich sauce.
- **Make it fancy:** Garnish with fresh herbs like parsley or chives for a beautiful presentation.
- **Scaling up:** This recipe can easily be doubled or tripled for a larger dinner party.

Tips & Variations

- Serve with pasta, roasted vegetables, or a simple salad.
- Garnish with lemon wedges for extra brightness.
- Perfect for **date nights, celebrations, or a special weeknight dinner.**
- Ready to complete your seafood dinner? Try pairing this broiled lobster with:
 - creamy leeks, peas and asparagus risotto—the perfect pasta side for buttery lobster sauce
 - Italian Roasted potatoes – add color and crunch to your plate
 - Homemade classic Italian tiramisu – creamy comfort to elevate your meal

Don't forget to **save this recipe for your next special dinner night !!**

Broiled Lobster Tails for Two – Easy Recipe



- 2 lobster tails (4 oz each)
- 3 tbsp butter
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup white wine
- 1 lemon sliced
- Salt, to taste
- Black pepper, to taste
- Paprika (optional)

1. **Preheat the broiler**, rack about 6 inches from the heat.
2. Add **butter, lemon slices and white wine** to a broiler-safe pan.
3. **Prep the lobster tails:**
 - Cut down the center of the shell with sharp kitchen shears, or knife. Cut away the legs from underneath
 - Loosen the meat away from the shell with your finger and lift it up, resting it on top of the shell to prop it up.
4. **Season** with salt, pepper, and paprika if using.
5. **Place lobster over butter, lemons and wine** in the pan.
6. **Broil 6–8 minutes** until the meat is opaque and lightly

golden (internal temp ~140–145°F).

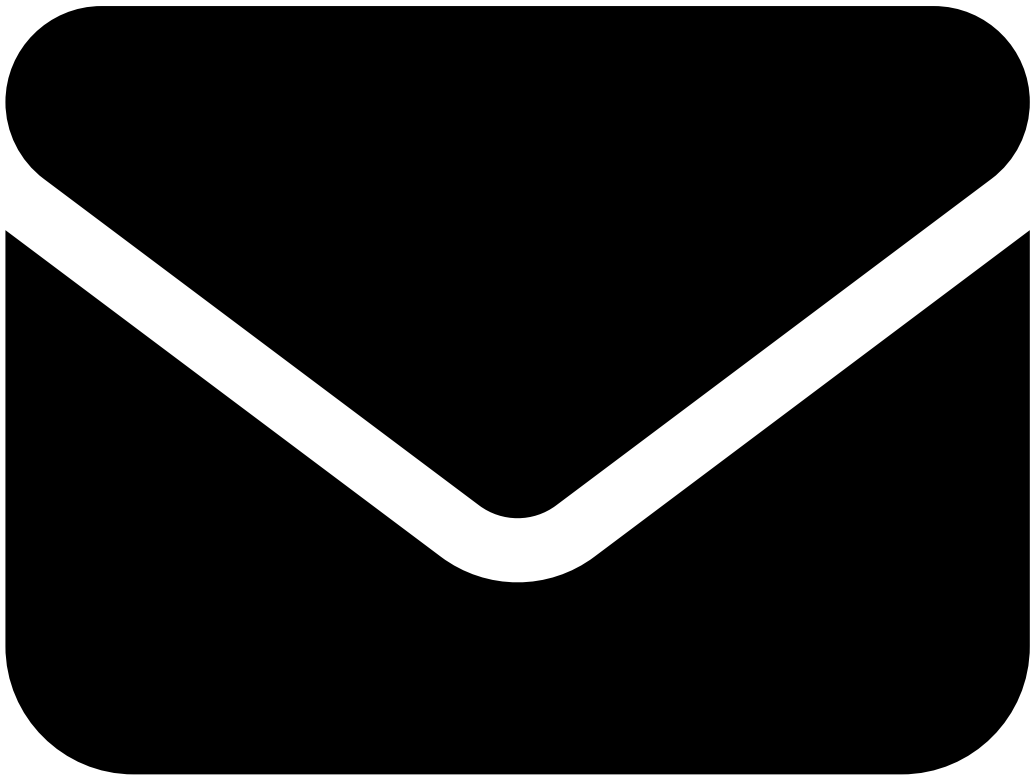
7. **Remove lobster**, return the pan back to the oven let pan sauce emulsify, about 5-7 minutes and spoon over before serving.

Crispy Italian Fried Baccala

Crispy Italian Fried Baccala

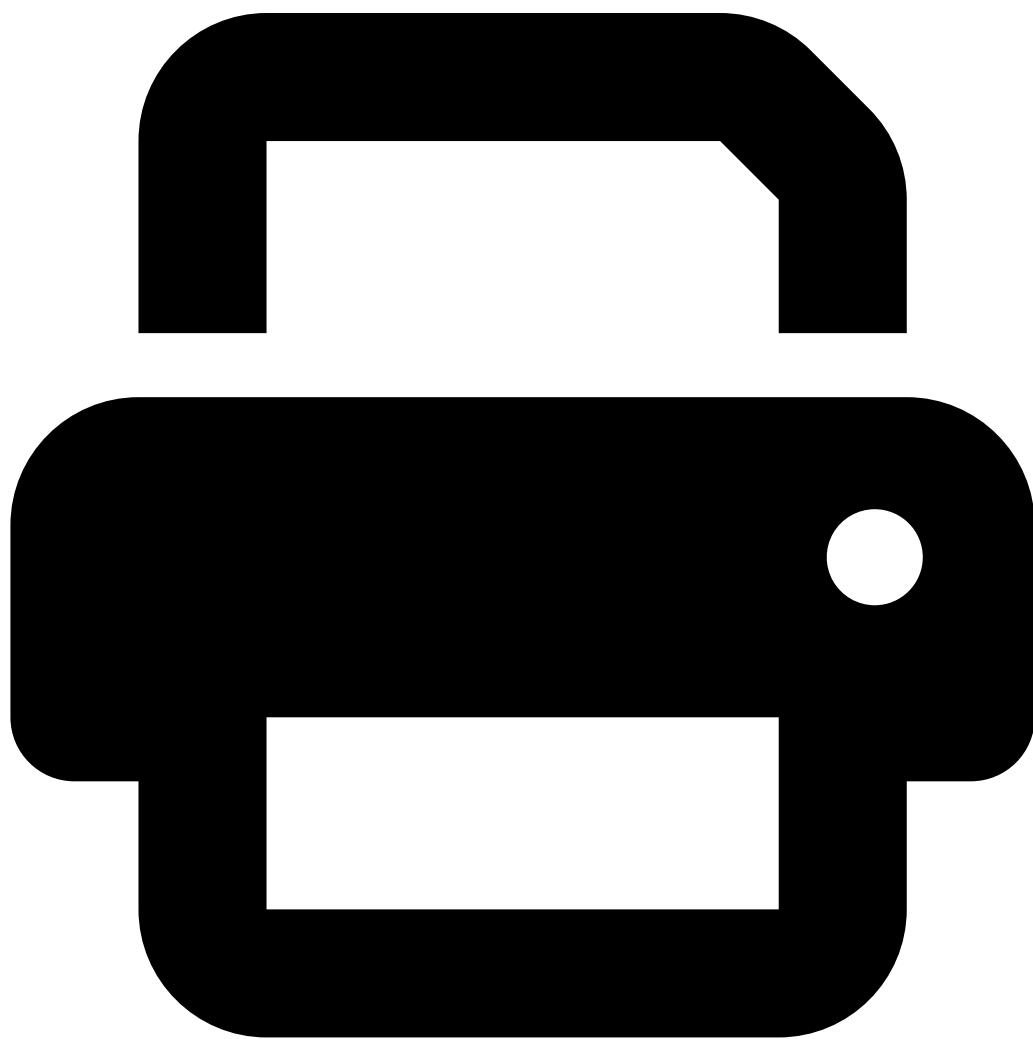
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Fried baccalà has always meant tradition in our home. It's one of those dishes that instantly brings me back to the kitchen during the holidays, where the smell of hot oil and salt-cured cod filled the air and everyone hovered nearby, waiting for the first crisp piece to come out of the pan. This wasn't fancy food—it was humble, honest cooking, passed down through generations and made with care and patience.

Baccalà itself has a long history in Italian cooking. Long before refrigeration, salt-curing cod made it possible to preserve fish for months, making it accessible even in inland regions of Italy. Over time, it became a staple for special occasions and meatless days, especially Christmas Eve. Each region has its own way of preparing it, but fried baccalà—lightly battered and golden—remains one of the simplest and most beloved preparations. With just flour and cold water, the batter stays delicate, allowing the fish to shine, exactly the way it was always meant to be enjoyed.

Things to know about this crispy Italian fried baccalà

- **Soaking time matters:** Properly desalted baccalà should taste mild, not salty. Start tasting after 24 hours and continue soaking if needed.
- **Keep the batter cold:** Using ice-cold water creates a lighter, crisper coating when it hits the hot oil.
- **Don't overcrowd the pan:** Fry in batches so the oil temperature stays steady and the baccalà fries evenly.
- **Serve immediately:** Fried baccalà is best enjoyed hot and crisp, straight from the pan.
- If you love traditional Italian seafood dishes, don't miss my **Baccala with Potatoes** recipe or the best Italian- style fried calamari another classic that's always on our table for Christmas Eve. Serve them together for a truly authentic Italian meal, and be sure to explore the blog for more time-honored Italian recipes passed down through generations.

Crispy Italian Fried Baccalà



Crispy Italian Fried Baccalà is a traditional dish made with

salt cod that's been soaked, flaked or cut into pieces, lightly battered, and fried until golden and crisp. Popular throughout Italy—especially during Christmas Eve (La Vigilia)—this classic seafood recipe is simple, rustic, and full of flavor. The salty richness of the cod is balanced by a light, airy coating, making it perfect served with lemon wedges, aioli, or a simple marinara sauce.

- 1½ pounds salt-cured baccala (cod), soaked and desalted
- 1¼ cups all-purpose flour
- 1 – 1¼ cups **ice-cold water**
- ½ tsp salt
- ¼ tsp black pepper (optional)
- 3 cups Vegetable oil or light olive oil, for frying
- Lemon wedges, for serving
- 2 Tbsp. Chopped fresh parsley (optional for garnish)

1. Soak the Baccalà

Rinse the salt-cured baccala under cold running water. Place it in a large bowl, cover completely with cold water, and refrigerate for **24–48 hours**, changing the water **2–3 times daily**. Taste a small piece to ensure it's properly desalted.

2. Prepare the Fish

Drain the baccala well and pat it **very dry** with paper towels. Cut into **2–3 inch pieces** of similar thickness for even cooking.

3. Make the Batter

In a bowl, whisk together the flour, salt, and pepper if using. Gradually add the **ice-cold water**, whisking just until a smooth, pourable batter forms. The consistency

should be similar to a light pancake batter—thin enough to drip, but thick enough to coat the fish.

4. **Heat the Oil**

Heat about **1 inch of oil** in a wide, heavy skillet over **medium-high heat** until it reaches **350°F**. (If you don't have a thermometer, a drop of batter should sizzle and float immediately.)

5. **Batter the Baccalà**

Dip each piece of fish into the batter, letting excess drip off, then carefully place into the hot oil. Fry in batches—do not overcrowd the pan.

6. **Fry Until Golden**

Fry for **3–4 minutes per side**, turning once, until the baccalà is crisp, golden, and puffed. The interior should be tender and flaky.

Second

And so on

Main Course

Italian

crispy Italian fried baccalà fried salt cod recipe

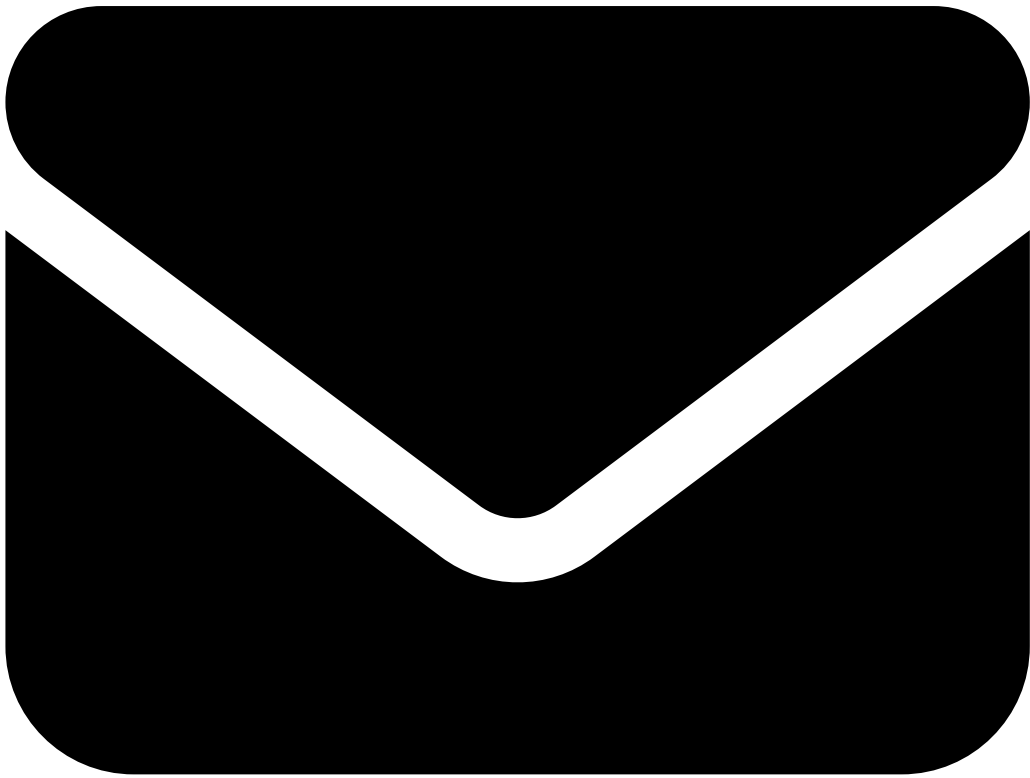
The Best Italian-Style Fried

Calamari

The best Italian style fried calamari

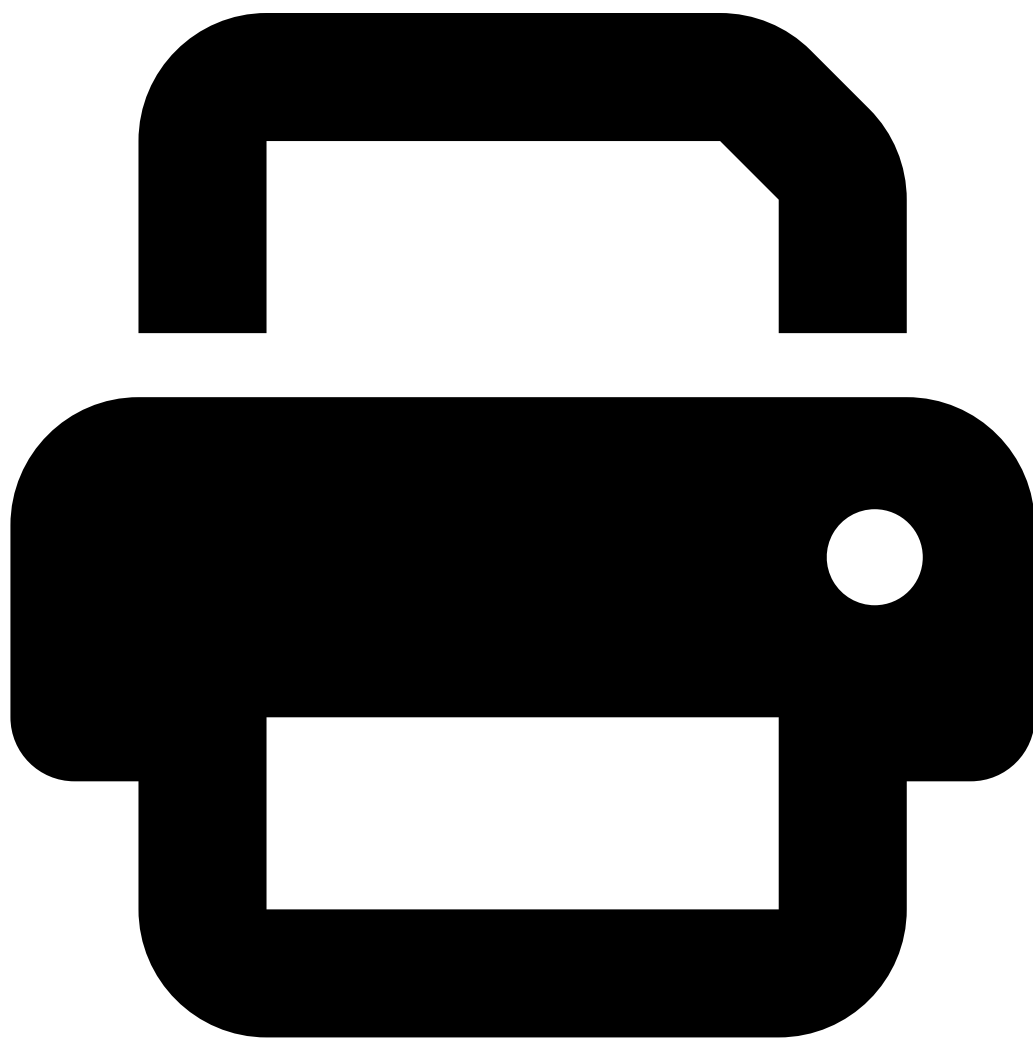
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Growing up, fried calamari was a true family affair. My mama always bought whole squid and cleaned every single one by hand – separating the tentacles, pulling out the quill, and rinsing everything until it was spotless. I can still see her at the sink, humming while she worked, making sure each ring would fry up perfectly tender.

These days, we're lucky. Most grocery stores and fish markets sell **calamari already cleaned** – tubes and tentacles prepped and ready to slice. And while nothing beats the love and tradition of doing it the old-school way, I'll be the first to admit that buying it cleaned makes this recipe come together in minutes instead of an hour.

Fried calamari has also always been a cherished part of our **Feast of the Seven Fishes** celebration – that beloved Italian Christmas Eve tradition where the table overflows with seafood. Whether you make this dish once a year for the feast

or all year long for your family, this recipe brings that same crisp, golden bite we all grew up loving.

Whether you're using ready-to-cook calamari or honoring the way our mamas did it, this classic Italian fried calamari delivers that same crisp, golden bite we all grew up loving.

Things to know about this Best Italian-Style Fried Calamari

- **Dry calamari = crisp calamari.**

Pat the rings and tentacles *really* well with paper towels. Any moisture will make the coating soggy and cause the oil to splatter.

- **The flour mix matters.**

A 50/50 blend of all-purpose flour and semolina gives that classic Italian trattoria crunch. Semolina helps the coating stay light instead of heavy or bready.

- **Keep the oil hot.**

The magic temperature is **350–365°F**. If the oil drops too low, the calamari absorbs oil and turns greasy. Fry in small batches to keep the heat consistent.

- **Fast frying keeps it tender.**

Calamari only needs **1½–2 minutes** in the oil. Any longer and it becomes chewy. Pull it out the moment it turns light golden.

- **Season immediately.**

Sprinkle with a little salt right after frying – it sticks better while the calamari is still hot.

- **Serve right away.**

Fried calamari is best eaten fresh from the fryer. It doesn't stay crisp long, so have your lemon wedges and marinara ready before you start cooking.

- If you love this crispy Italian fried calamari, don't miss my other seafood favorites!

Try my **Shrimp Oreganata**, , and **Shrimp Stuffed Calamari Steaks** for more Italian coastal flavors. And if you make this recipe, tag me on Instagram—I love seeing your kitchen creations!

The best Italian style Fried Calamari



This crispy fried calamari recipe delivers tender squid with a light, golden coating that's perfectly seasoned and irresistibly crunchy. Served with fresh lemon wedges and marinara sauce, it's an easy Italian seafood appetizer that's perfect for entertaining, holidays, or a restaurant-quality meal at home.

- 1½ pounds **calamari**, cleaned, **rings + tentacles**
- 1 cup **all-purpose flour**
- 1 cup **semolina flour**
- 1 tsp **kosher salt**, plus more for finishing
- 1 tsp **black pepper**
- ½ tsp **paprika** (optional, for color)
- 1 tsp **garlic powder**

- **Oil for frying** (peanut or light olive oil)
- **Lemon wedges**, for serving
- **Marinara**, for dipping

1. **Prep the calamari**

Slice tubes into $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch rings. Pat rings **and tentacles** completely dry with paper towels. (Drying is key for crispness!)

2. **Make the coating**

In a shallow bowl, whisk together: 1 cup all-purpose flour, 1 cup semolina flour, Salt, pepper, paprika, and garlic powder

3. **Heat the oil**

Pour oil into a heavy pot or deep skillet about 2 inches deep. Heat to **350–365°F**.

4. **Coat the calamari**

Toss the rings and tentacles in the flour–semolina mixture until lightly coated. Shake off excess.

5. **Fry in batches**

Add calamari in small batches so the oil temperature stays stable. Fry **1½–2 minutes**—just until pale golden. (Over-frying = chewy.)

6. **Drain & season**

Transfer to a paper towel-lined tray and sprinkle immediately with a pinch of salt.

7. **Serve**

Enjoy hot with lemon wedges and marinara.

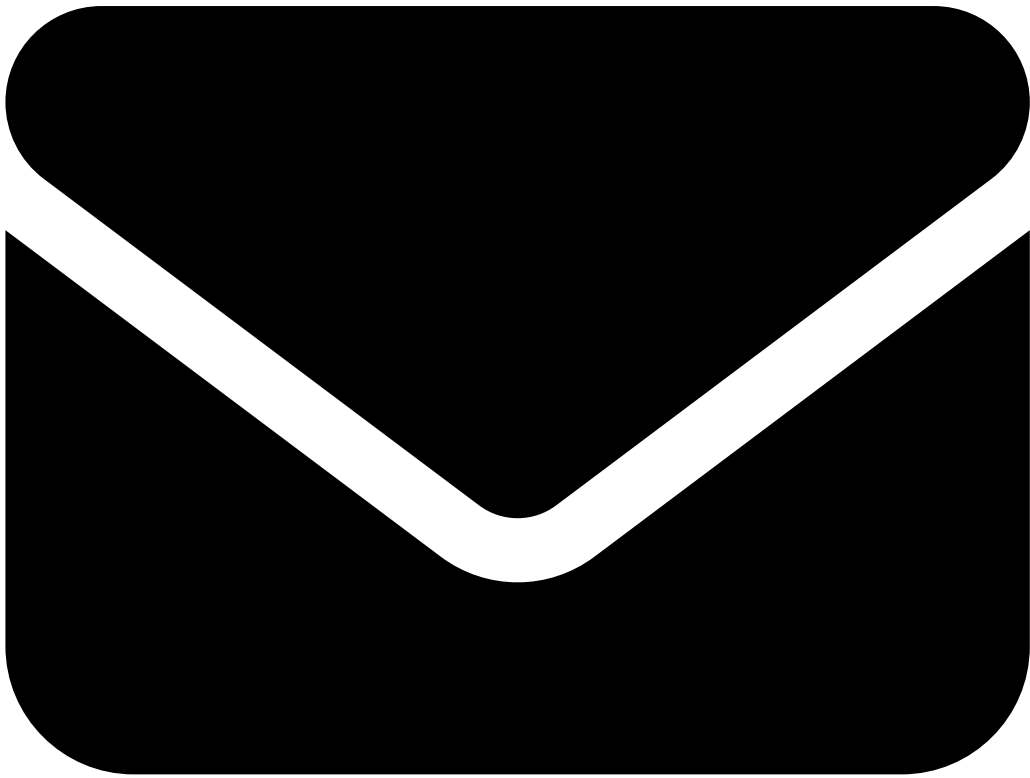
Appetizer
Italian
Best Fried Calamari Recipe

Pan-Seared Salmon with Dill Sauce

Pan-Seared Salmon with Dill Sauce

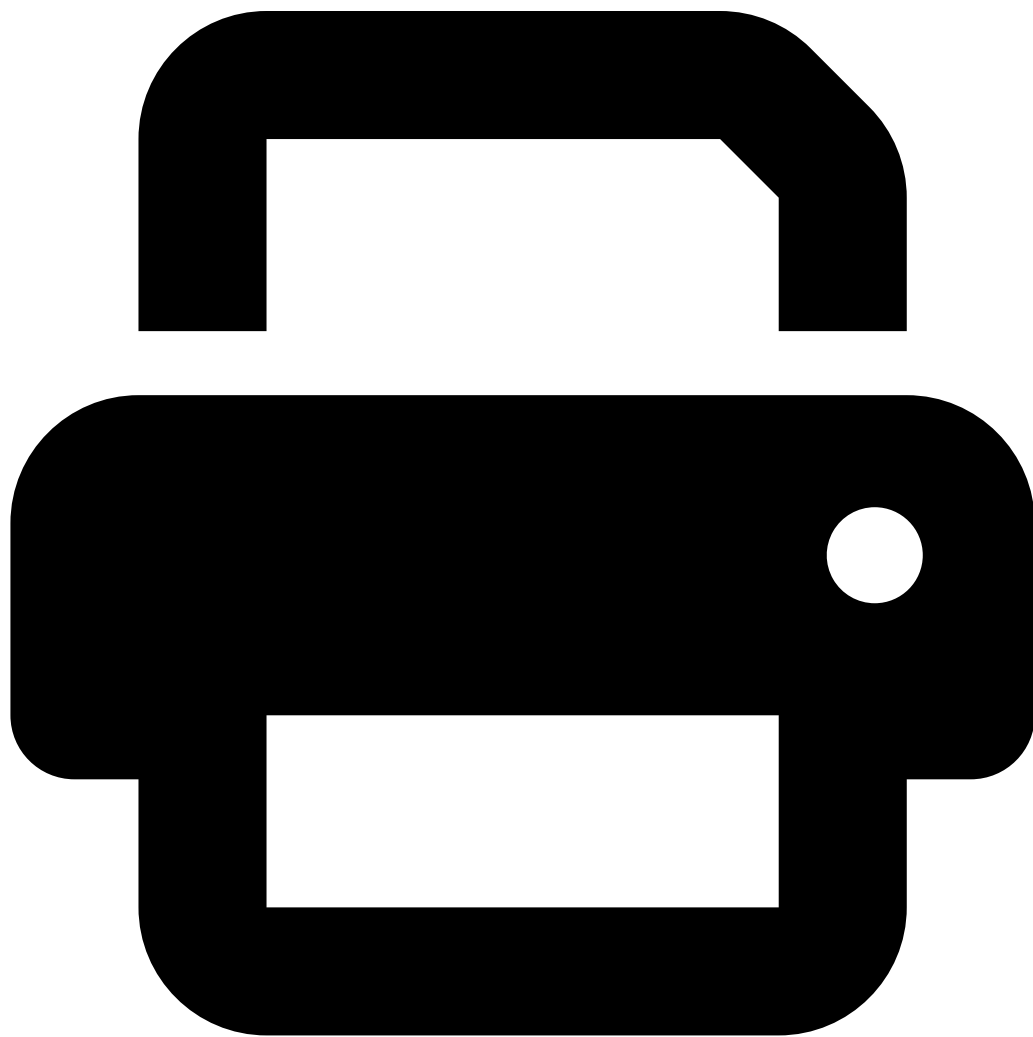
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There's nothing quite like a perfectly seared piece of salmon with a rich, creamy sauce – it's the kind of dish that used to fly out of the kitchen at our Sonoma County restaurants . With a busy place, I always loved keeping things simple but flavorful. This pan-seared salmon with a warm dill cream sauce is just that: restaurant-quality flavor made easy at home, ready in under 30 minutes.

Things to know about this Pan-Seared Salmon with Dill Sauce

- **Quick & Easy:** From start to finish, this meal comes together in under 30 minutes – perfect for weeknights or a special weekend dinner.
- **Make-Ahead Options:** You can prep the dill cream sauce ahead of time and gently reheat it before serving.

- **Pan Choice:** A nonstick or stainless steel skillet works best for a crisp, golden sear.
- **Serving Ideas:** Pair with steamed asparagus, roasted potatoes, or a light rice pilaf for a complete meal.
- **Storage:** Leftover salmon and sauce can be stored separately in the fridge for up to 2 days. Reheat gently on low heat to avoid overcooking.

Variations

- **Herb Twist:** Swap dill for tarragon, parsley, or chives for a different fresh flavor.
- **Cream Swap:** Use half-and-half for a lighter sauce.
- **Citrus Kick:** Add orange or lime juice instead of lemon for a subtle twist.
- **Garlic-Free:** Omit the garlic for a milder sauce; caramelized onion alone adds plenty of flavor.
- Love easy, restaurant-quality dinners at home? Try this creamy dill salmon and check out more salmon favorites on the blog: **Salmon Florentine with Mushrooms** or **Salmon alla Puttanesca** for a bold spicy kick. And my personal favorite quick and easy salmon piccata for a light bright flavor Don't forget to save this recipe and share it with friends!

Pan-Seared Salmon with Dill Sauce



This Pan-Seared Salmon with Dill Sauce is a simple yet elegant dish that comes together with restaurant-quality results at home. Perfectly seared salmon fillets develop a golden crust while staying tender and flaky inside, then are paired with a creamy, fresh dill sauce brightened with lemon. This easy seafood recipe is perfect for a quick weeknight dinner, special occasion, or a light Mediterranean-inspired meal

For the Salmon

- 2 salmon fillets (about 6 oz each)
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- Salt & black pepper, to taste
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1 lemon wedge (for finishing)

For the Dill Sauce

- 2 tbsp butter
- 1 grated garlic clove
- 2 tbsp grated onion
- 1 cup heavy cream
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup white wine
- 1 tbsp Dijon mustard
- 1 tbsp lemon juice
- 1 small garlic clove, grated
- 2 tbsp fresh dill, finely chopped
- 2 tbsp sour cream or plain Greek yogurt
- Salt & pepper, to taste

Sear the Salmon

1. Pat the salmon fillets dry and season both sides with salt, pepper, and garlic powder.
2. Heat the olive oil in a skillet over medium-high heat.
3. Place the salmon skin-side down (if using skin-on) and cook for 4–5 minutes without moving, until the edges turn opaque and the skin is crisp.
4. Flip and cook another 2–3 minutes, or until cooked to your liking. Transfer the salmon to a plate and set aside.

Make the Creamy Dill Sauce

1. In the same skillet, lower the heat to medium and add the butter .
2. Add the grated onion and grated garlic, sautéing until soft and fragrant, about 1–2 minutes.
3. Add a small splash of lemon juice (optional). Deglaze the pan with the wine waiting until absorbed before continuing with the recipe.
4. Pour in the heavy cream and bring to a gentle simmer. Let it cook for 2–3 minutes until slightly thickened. Stir in Dijon mustard, then season with salt and pepper.
5. Remove from heat and stir in the fresh dill and 2 Tbsp. of sour cream or plain Greek yogurt

Serve

1. Return the salmon to the pan or plate the fillets and spoon the warm dill cream sauce over top and more fresh dill. Serve with lemon slices

Main Course

Mediterranean

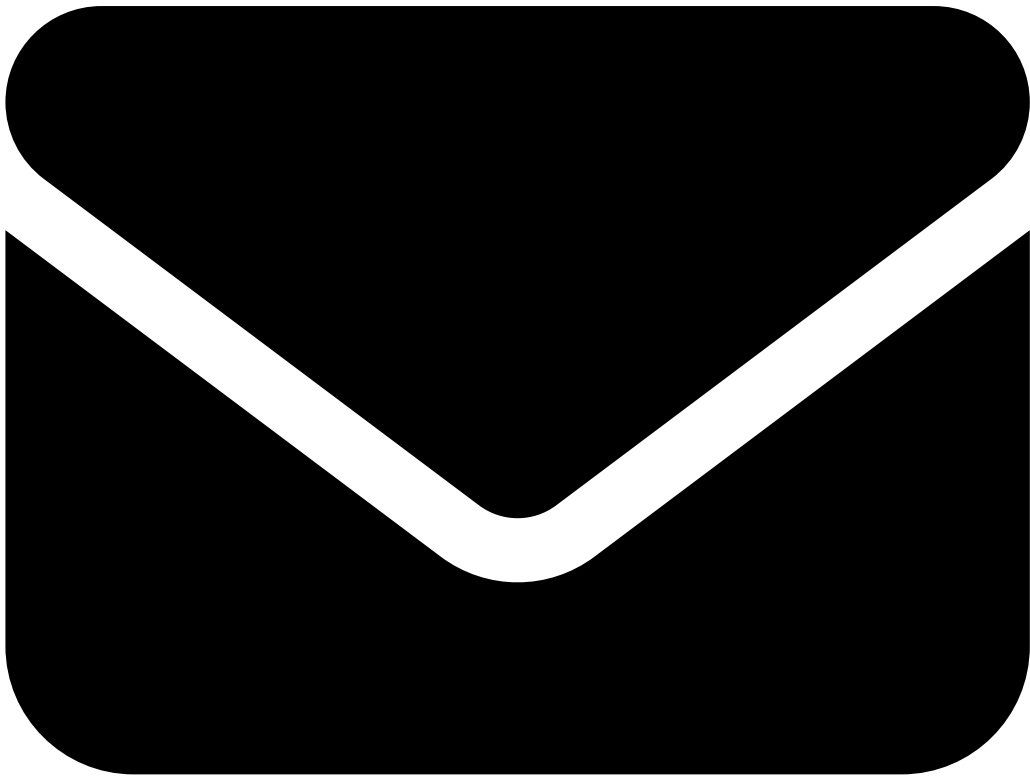
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Salmon Florentine with Mushrooms

Salmon Florentine with Mushrooms

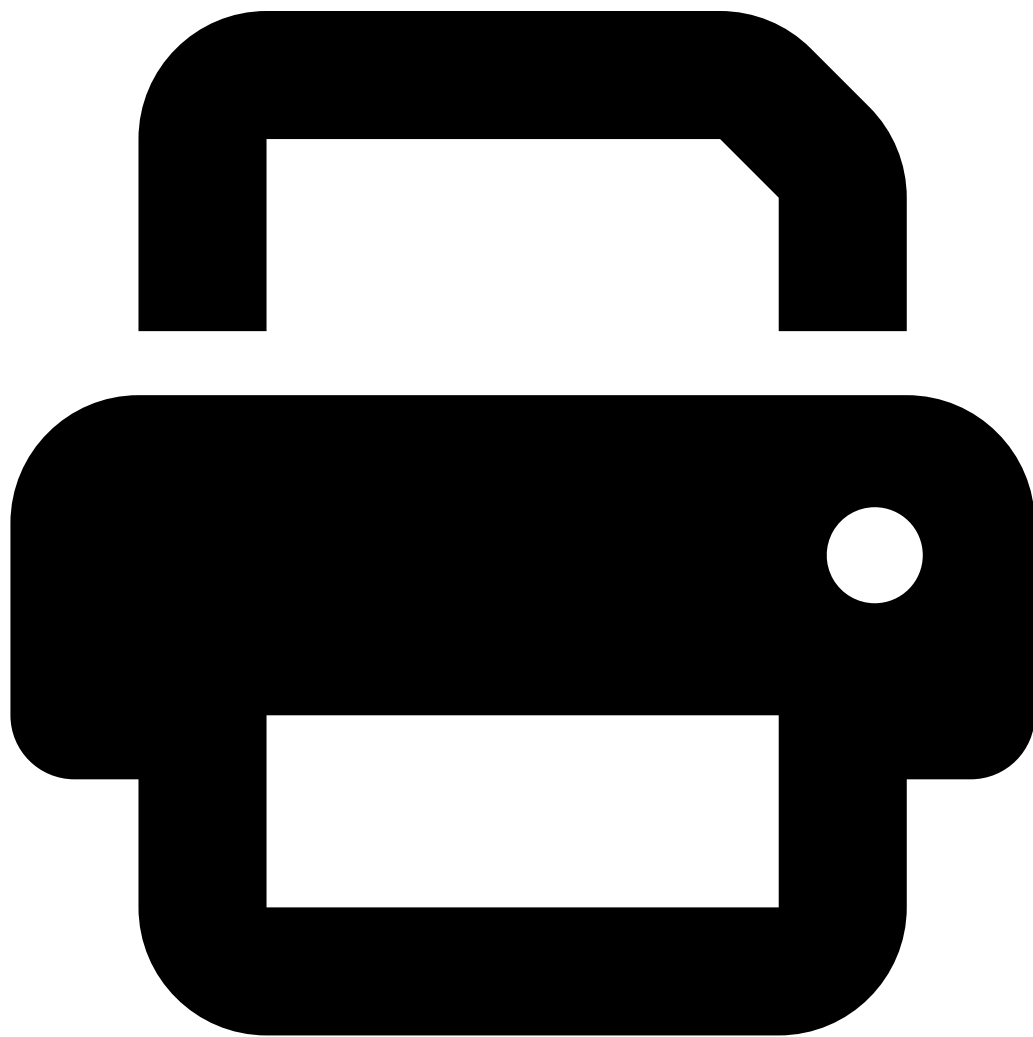
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When you want a meal that's both elegant and comforting, this Salmon Florentine with Mushrooms is the perfect choice. Tender seared salmon fillets are nestled into a creamy garlic-Parmesan sauce with fresh spinach and earthy mushrooms, creating a dish that's rich, flavorful, and satisfying without being heavy.

This classic Italian-inspired recipe gets its name from "Florentine," which refers to dishes prepared with spinach, a favorite ingredient in Florence. The addition of mushrooms gives the sauce extra depth, making it perfect for spooning over pasta, rice, or even with a side of crusty bread to soak up every drop.

Things to know about this Salmon

Florentine with Mushrooms

- **What “Florentine” Means:** In Italian cooking, “Florentine” refers to dishes prepared with spinach, a nod to the city of Florence where spinach is a beloved ingredient.
- **Best Salmon to Use:** Choose skin-on fillets if you like a crisp sear, or skinless if you prefer easier serving. Thicker fillets work best for this recipe so they don’t overcook.
- **Mushroom Varieties:** Cremini or baby bella mushrooms add a deeper, earthier flavor, while white mushrooms give a lighter taste. You can even use a mix for more complexity.
- **Make-Ahead Tip:** The sauce can be prepared a few hours in advance and reheated gently. Add the spinach just before serving to keep it vibrant and fresh.
- **Pairings:** This creamy salmon dish pairs beautifully with a crisp Pinot Grigio, Sauvignon Blanc, or a light Chardonnay. For a non-alcoholic option, try sparkling water with lemon.
- **Serving Ideas:** Spoon over pasta, creamy mashed potatoes, or rice—or serve with crusty bread to soak up the sauce.
- **Storage:** Leftovers keep well in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to 2 days. Reheat gently over low heat, adding a splash of broth or cream to loosen the sauce.
- This **Salmon Florentine with Mushrooms** is one of those recipes that feels special without requiring a lot of effort. The creamy garlic-Parmesan sauce, tender salmon, and earthy mushrooms come together in just 30 minutes, making it a dish you’ll want to make again and again. If

you enjoy this recipe, you'll also love my cod puttanesca recipe and Bone-In Pork Chop Piccata—both are simple, flavorful Italian-inspired meals perfect for any night of the week.

Salmon Florentine with Mushrooms



This **Salmon Florentine with Mushrooms** is an elegant Italian-inspired dinner that comes together beautifully in one pan. Tender salmon fillets are nestled in a creamy sauce with sautéed mushrooms, garlic, spinach, and Parmesan for a meal that feels restaurant-worthy but is simple enough for a weeknight. The combination of rich salmon, earthy mushrooms, and creamy Florentine sauce creates a comforting dish that's perfect served with pasta, rice, or crusty bread to soak up every delicious bite.

- 4 6 oz. salmon fillet skinless or skin-on)
- 2 Tbsp. olive oil (divided)
- 2 Tbsp. unsalted butter
- 1 clove garlic (minced)
- 2 Tbsp. shallot (finely chopped)
- 8 Oz. cremini or white mushrooms (sliced)
- 4 cups chopped fresh baby spinach
- 1/2 cup heavy cream
- 1 cup chicken or vegetable broth

- 1/2 cup grated Parmesan cheese
- 2 tsp. Dijon mustard
- 1 tsp. red pepper flakes (optional)
- 2 Tbsp. lemon juice
- Salt and black pepper (to taste)

1. Cook the salmon.

Pat salmon dry with paper towels, season with salt and black pepper.

Heat 1 tablespoon olive oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat.

Sear salmon 3–4 minutes per side, until golden and nearly cooked through. Remove to a plate and cover lightly.

2. Sauté mushrooms.

In the same skillet, add remaining 1 tablespoon olive oil and butter.

Add mushrooms and cook 5–6 minutes until they release their juices and turn golden brown.

Stir in shallot and cook 2 minutes. Add garlic and cook 30 seconds more.

3. Make the creamy sauce.

Pour in chicken broth, scraping up browned bits. Simmer 2 minutes.

Stir in cream, Parmesan, Dijon mustard, and red pepper flakes. Cook 3–4 minutes until slightly thickened.

4. Add spinach.

Stir in spinach and let wilt, about 1–2 minutes.

Add lemon juice and adjust seasoning with salt and pepper.

5. Finish with salmon.

Return salmon fillets to the skillet, spooning sauce over them.

Simmer gently 2–3 minutes until salmon is cooked through.

Main Course

Italian

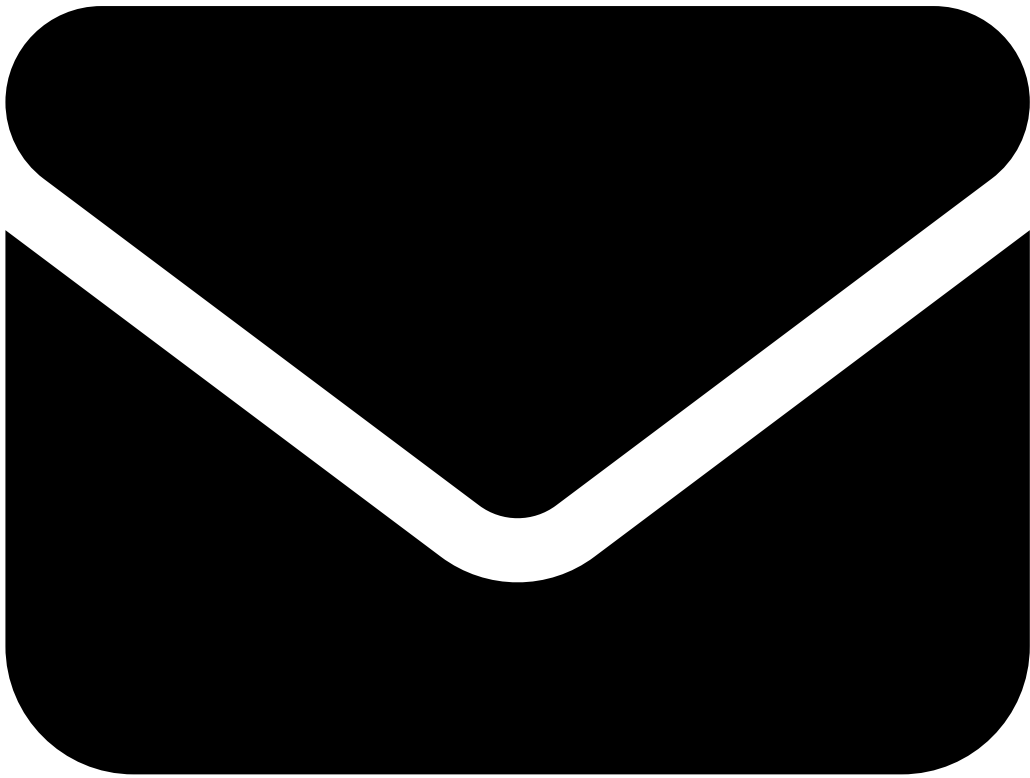
salmon florentine with mushrooms

Italian Cod Puttanesca Recipe

Italian Cod Puttanesca Recipe

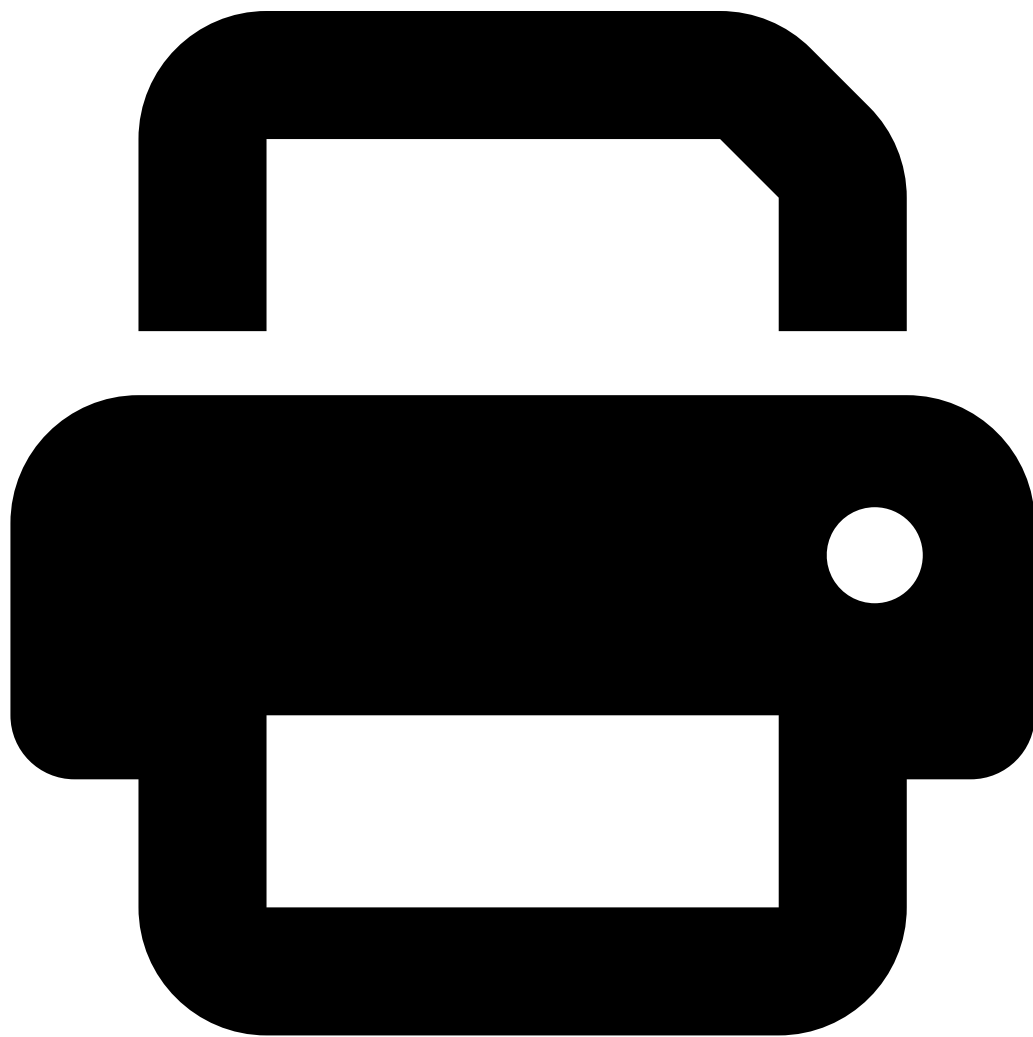
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Cod Puttanesca is a delicious twist on the classic Italian pasta sauce known as *sugo alla puttanesca*. This bold, savory sauce originated in Naples in the mid-20th century and is famous for its briny mix of olives, capers, garlic, and anchovies simmered in tomatoes. Some say it was invented by resourceful cooks who threw together whatever pantry staples they had on hand, while others believe its name comes from the lively neighborhoods where it first became popular. Traditionally served with pasta, this rustic sauce also pairs beautifully with fresh fish. In this recipe, delicate cod fillets are gently simmered in puttanesca sauce, creating a light yet hearty meal that's full of authentic Italian flavor.

Things to know about Italian Cod Puttanesca Recipe

- **Cod cooks quickly:** Unlike salmon, cod is delicate and only needs a few minutes to finish in the sauce.

Overcooking will make it dry.

- **Anchovies add depth:** Even if you're not an anchovy fan, they melt into the sauce and give it an authentic, savory flavor.
- **Best tomatoes to use:** Whole San Marzano or high-quality canned tomatoes give the richest flavor.
- **Make it ahead:** The puttanesca sauce can be made a day in advance; just add the cod when ready to serve.

More Recipes You'll Love

If you enjoyed this **Cod Puttanesca**, try some of my other Italian favorites:

- **Salmon Puttanesca** – another light and flavorful take on this classic sauce.
- **Shrimp Scampi Spaghetti** – garlicky, buttery, and perfect with pasta.
- **Tuscan Orzo with Pan-Seared Salmon** – a hearty one-pan Italian dinner.
- **Serving ideas:** Pair with crusty bread, spoon over pasta or orzo, or keep it light with a side of roasted vegetables.

Italian Cod Puttanesca Recipe



This Italian Cod Puttanesca Recipe features flaky cod simmered in a bold tomato sauce with olives, capers, garlic, and herbs. It's a classic Italian-inspired seafood dinner that's easy enough for weeknights yet elegant enough for entertaining.

- 4 6 oz. cod fillets (skinless)
- 3 Tbsp. olive oil, divided
- 1 clove cloves, thinly sliced
- 3 Tbsp. onion finely chopped
- 1 14 oz. can whole peeled tomatoes, crushed by hand
- 1/2 cup pitted Kalamata olives, halved
- 2 Tbsp. capers, rinsed
- 4 fillets anchovy fillets, chopped (optional but traditional)
- 1 tsp. red pepper flakes (adjust to taste)
- 1/2 cup dry white wine
- 1 Tbsp. Fresh parsley, chopped (for garnish)
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste

1. Prepare the cod

Pat cod fillets dry and season lightly with salt and pepper.

Heat 2 tbsp olive oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat.

Sear cod on each side for about 2–3 minutes, until golden. Remove to a plate (it will finish cooking in the sauce).

2. Make the sauce

In the same skillet, add remaining 1 tbsp olive oil.

Sauté garlic and onion until fragrant and softened, about 3 minutes.

Add anchovies (if using) and cook until they melt into the oil.

Stir in red pepper flakes, capers, and olives. Cook 1–2 minutes.

Deglaze with white wine (optional), scraping up any browned bits.

Add crushed tomatoes, stir, and simmer uncovered for about 10 minutes until slightly thickened.

3. Finish with the cod

Nestle the cod fillets into the sauce.

Spoon some sauce over the top, reduce heat to low, and cover.

Cook 5–7 minutes, until cod is opaque and flakes easily with a fork.

4. Serve

Garnish with fresh parsley.

Serve with crusty bread, pasta, or over a bed of orzo to soak up the sauce.

Main Course

Italian

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