

# How to Cook Lutefisk

Place it flat in a pan, put some salt on it, seal the lid tightly, and let it steam cook under a very low heat for 20–25 minutes. You can also use aluminum foil to cover the pan and bake at 435 °F for 40–50 minutes.



Lutefisk sold in North America may also be cooked in a microwave oven. The average cooking time is 8–10 minutes per whole fish (a package of two fish sides) at high power in a covered glass cooking dish. The cooking time will vary, depending upon the power of the microwave oven.

When cooking and eating lutefisk, be sure to clean the lutefisk and the residue off pans, plates, and utensils immediately. Lutefisk that is left overnight becomes nearly impossible to remove. Sterling silver should never be used with lutefisk, which will permanently ruin silver. Stainless steel utensils are recommended.

*Lutefisk is a traditional Scandinavian way of preserving cod for use during winter months. Norwegians and Swedes dried cod during the fishing season, a process that preserved the fish but made it inedible. During the winter, they soaked the dried cod several times in lye made from wood ashes and cool water to soften it and ready it for eating. The soaking turned the cod into lutefisk with its characteristic strong smell and gelatinous texture.*



## LUTEFISK



*Every country has its culinary specialties. Nostalgic memories tug at your heart strings if, when separated by distance, these favorites are set before you. Norway's lutefisk is such a specialty to many.*

Lutefisk (dried cod treated with lye) must surely be the strangest culinary effort credited to the Norwegians, but what a treat when prepared properly. Everyone of course is not a devotee of lutefisk, but those who are defend it vehemently. Others go to the opposite extreme and claim it's a national disgrace. In years past, the homemaker had to go through the complicated task of treating the dry fish with lye, but now, even in America, frozen lutefisk is readily available at selected fish markets and at Scandinavian delicatessens.

**Cooking lutefisk the old fashioned way:** Do not cook in aluminum vessels as it will darken the kettle. Use three level tablespoons salt to each quart water. Bring water to boil, add salt and return to boil. Add fish which has been sliced into serving pieces and again return to boil, then remove from the heat. Skim, and let fish steep for 5 to 10 minutes depending on thickness. Serve at once.

**Without adding water:** Put the serving pieces of lutefisk in a kettle, season each pound (450 g) of fish with 1/2 tablespoon of salt and place over low heat. This allows the water to be "drawn" out. Bring to a boil and remove from heat. Let steep 5 to 10 minutes. Serve at once.

**Baking in foil:** Heat oven to 400 degrees F (205 degrees C). Skin side down, arrange lutefisk on a sheet of double aluminum foil and season with salt. Wrap foil tightly about fish and place on rack in a large pan and bake 20 minutes. Cut corner from foil and drain out excess water. Serve at once.

Lutefisk with a firm texture can be obtained by first sprinkling with coarse salt and allowing to stand several hours. Rinse well in cold running water, and soak in unsalted water. Then cook or bake as desired.

Lutefisk must be served hot on piping hot plates. Accompaniments vary from bacon or pork drippings, white sauce, mustard sauce, or melted butter which seems to remain a favorite. Boiled and steamed potatoes, stewed whole, dry green peas are a must as a vegetable accompaniment. The only other necessary additions are freshly ground pepper, lelse, or flatbread. In some parts of Northern Norway, lutefisk is served with melted goat cheese.