



Cape Verde Horse mackerel

Ark of taste

Cavala preta

Cavala prete – horse mackerel – is a highly nutritional fish and has long been a key ingredient in the poor diet of Cape Verde. Its fat meat is an important source of proteins, B vitamins (B1, B2, B12 and B6), minerals, calcium, iron and fatty acids, which are very important to fluidify blood and therefore key in preventing heart diseases. Thanks to these features, cavala is the most sought after fish in Cape Verde. Despite the large fishing area of the country, about 734,265 square meters, the fishing sector only partially exploits its potential. Weather events, the surfacing of deep water and the lack of rain impact on the primary productivity, making it lower than its potential. In addition, several fleets of large boats with echosounders have marginalized artisanal fishing – now only 20% of all fishing activities – and have drastically reduced the presence of cavala in the seas. Authorities have thus been forced to ban its fishing for two months a year. In 2015 the ban to fish cavala from July 15th to September 14th was introduced. In addition, the arrival of other similar species, such as cavala portuguesa (*Scomber colias*) and cavala americana (*Decapterus tabl*) is a clear sign of the alterations in the migration flows and climate registered in the past years.

As mentioned, the nutritional properties of this fish were very important to ensure the food security of the poorest, who could afford it until a few years ago. However, the stock of cavala prete has drastically dropped and its price has multiplied, as it is now an ingredient of haute cuisine. Today, the poor can no longer easily go to the fish market and buy the cavala caught in local waters, but are forced to buy imported chicken.

The traditional products, local breeds, and know-how collected by the Ark of Taste belong to the communities that have preserved them over time. They have been shared and described here thanks to the efforts of the network that that Slow Food has developed around the world, with the objective of preserving them and raising awareness. The text from these descriptions may be used, without modifications and citing the source, for non-commercial purposes in line with the Slow Food philosophy.



COOKIE SETTINGS