

# MOTHER IN LAW'S TARAMASALATA

*George Biron*

They say that Melbourne has the second largest Greek population outside of Athens. When I started to cook professionally in the 1970s 'going to the Greeks' was one of the best dining options in that city. The atmosphere at these Tavernas was vibrant and welcoming, they cooked over real charcoal, and they were suited to our meagre student budgets. Most menus started with the 'Dips'—*Tarama*, *Tzatziki*, and *Eggplant Dip*, a form of *Babaganoushe*. Lonsdale street in the city had a very old Greek food enclave that had a number of good Greek delis and it was from one of these that I got the recipe for this delicious version of *Taramasalata*.

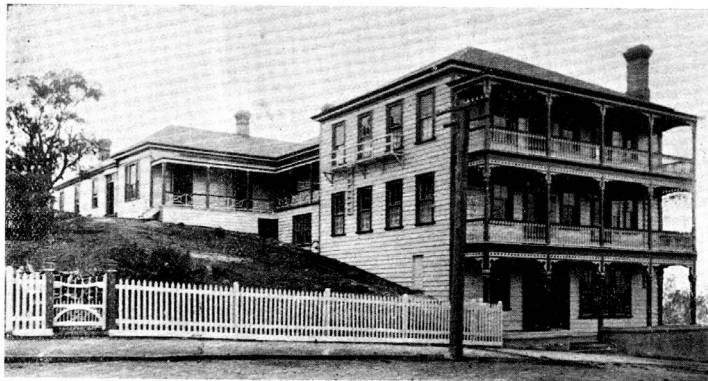
It took many years for the owner to divulge the recipe to me. She explained that before a traditional Greek marriage, when the groom's parents met the bride's family to discuss the arrangements, this version of *Taramasalata* was served in order to display the generosity and means of the family.

The secret lies in two things. Firstly, it has none of the soaked bread or potato of more common ones—only the good oil. Olive oil was always a special luxury in the village. Secondly you add a little cold water at the end, which counterintuitively lightens and aerates the emulsion.

*Taramasalata* is essentially fish egg mayonnaise and, in this case, salted fish eggs. It can be made with cod's roe, grey mullet roe, trevally, salmon roe—in fact any roe, even caviar.

The traditional Greek versions use all olive oil and don't use any garlic,

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