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dictionary

of the
English
Language



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ba·ca·lao 🐟 (bə'kə-lou) or **ba·ca·lhau** (-kəl-you)

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n.
Codfish, usually dried and salted.

[Spanish *bacalao* and Portuguese *bacalhau*, both from Basque *bakailao*, probably from alteration of Old French *cabillau*, from Gascon *cabelh*, head (in reference to the cod's large head), from Latin *capitulum*, diminutive of *caput*, head; see [CHAPTER](#).]

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Thousands of entries in the dictionary include etymologies that trace their origins back to reconstructed proto-languages. You can obtain more information about these forms in our online appendices:

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The Indo-European appendix covers nearly half of the Indo-European roots that have left their mark on English words. A more complete treatment of Indo-European roots and the English words derived from them is available in our [Dictionary of Indo-European Roots](#).

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