

La « cassata » sicilienne



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« *La cassata siciliana* » : origins

" Sicilian Cassata " as its name indicates is a cake of Sicilian origin. Its name comes from the Arabic, meaning "ball" or from the Latin meaning "cheese".

There are numerous varieties. Some include additional ingredients like pistachio nuts, pine nuts and cinnamon.

- The "palermitana" (city of Palermo) (the most widespread)
- The "messinese" (city of Messina)
- The "catanese" (city of Catania)
- The "nissena" (city of Caltanissetta)

The origins of the "cassata" date back to the IXth and XIth centuries during the Arabic domination in Sicily. Indeed, the Arabs had introduced the tillage of sugar cane, lemon, citrus fruit, orange, mandarin and almonds.

About the recipe's last ingredient (the ricotta), it is a soft white ewe cheese that was produced in Sicily since the prehistoric times.

Here are the ingredients of the recipe which, originally, was a crust pastry sugar cake stuffed with ricotta.

During the Normans domination, in the Martorana Convent in Palermo, the nuns prepared at Easter the "pasta reale": a dough of almonds flour and sugar, coloured by herbs which replaced the original sugar crust pastry.

The candied fruit-based decoration was introduced in 1873, on the occasion of a demonstration in Vienna.

Recipe

Ingredients

For the Genoese dough:

- 5 eggs at room temperature
- 160 g sugar
- 160 g flour
- a knob butter



For the ricotta:

- 700 g ricotta
- 180 g sugar
- 60 g chocolate granules.



For the almond paste:

- 150 g almonds flour
- 125 g sugar
- 50 ml water



For the side dish:

- 300 g icing sugar
- water in sufficient amount
- candied fruits and pumpkin



Preparation:

1. Place eggs in the bowl of a food processor, add sugar and rise mixture at high speed until its volume increases.



2. In the meantime, sieve the flour.



3. When the mixture is ready, add the sifted flour and mix slowly with an upward movement.



4. Pour the Genoese dough into a floured cake pan



5. Cook at 180°C during 20 minutes.



When the Genoese dough is cooked, pull it from the oven.

6. In the meantime, mix the ricotta with the sugar and the chocolate granules ...

And prepare the almond paste.



7. To prepare the almond paste: Cook the sugar and the water at low heat, rise the mixture at 121 C° (use a precision thermometer),



8. Then pour the almonds flour and cool.



9. When the mixture is tepid(warm), add the food colouring agent...



10. and by mixing form a rectangle ...



11. and put it at the edge of the cake pan.



12. Thinly slice the Genoese dough



13. Arrange the slices around the edges then ...



14. Fill the center with the ricotta and the remnants of the sponge cake



15. Put it in the refrigerator for a night.

16. The following day, transfer the "cassata" cake on a tray and prepare the glazing.

17. Warm the icing sugar and the water without boiling them and pour the mixture on the cake.



18. Decorate the cake with candied fruit and pumpkin.

