



The granita



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The "granita" is a cold dessert typical of Sicily. It is a semi-frozen liquid prepared with water, sugar and fruit juice. Lemon, orange, mandarin and peach juices are the most common ones, but almonds, pistachios, coffee or chocolate can also be used. The Sicilian "granita" is very difficult to imitate. It's a refreshing dessert ideal for hot summer evenings.



The story ...

The origins of the "granita" date back to the Arab domination in Sicily. The Arabs brought with them the recipe of sorbets, iced drinks flavoured with fruit juice or rose water. In Sicily, snow was collected from the Etna volcano in the Peloritani, Iblei and Nebrodi Mountains, to be stored during the year in coolers, cold rooms built of stone and erected on natural caves. In summer, this ice was taken to cover it with fruit syrup or flowers.

Close to Acireale, a city east of Sicily and famous for its Carnival, since 2012, the "Nivaroli" festival is dedicated to the "granita" craft. The festival's name comes from the name given to the receptacles for the storage of snow, "nivalori". They were valuable at the time when the refrigerator did not yet exist.



Recipe

Ingredients

- 600 ml water
- 200 ml lemon juice
- 300 g sugar
- lemon peel



Preparation

Pour 600 ml water into a saucepan (1), bring to a boil and add the sugar (2). When the sugar is completely melted, the liquid will become clear (3), Turn the heat off and let the syrup cool.



Squeeze the lemons with a juicer (4) and filter the juice using a strainer (5). You should get about 200 ml of filtered juice. Pour this juice into the cold syrup (6).



Whisk the mixture well (7).

Place a lid on the plastic or metal container containing the "granita" and put it all in the freezer. After half an hour, remove the mixture from the freezer and stir it vigorously to break the ice crystals that have formed (8).

Repeat this operation every half hour or every quarter of an hour if the mixture hardened too quickly.

Repeat at least two or three times before obtaining the final product (9).



Originally the most traditional flavors of "granita" were lemon and jasmine.



But in eastern Sicily, granita becomes an object of worship and "granita with brioche" becomes an indispensable ritual that can not be resisted.

There are different varieties of granita throughout Sicily: Iced coffee with or without cream in Messina, almonds, chocolate, pistachios, blackberries, peach, strawberry, tangerine in Catania, ...

