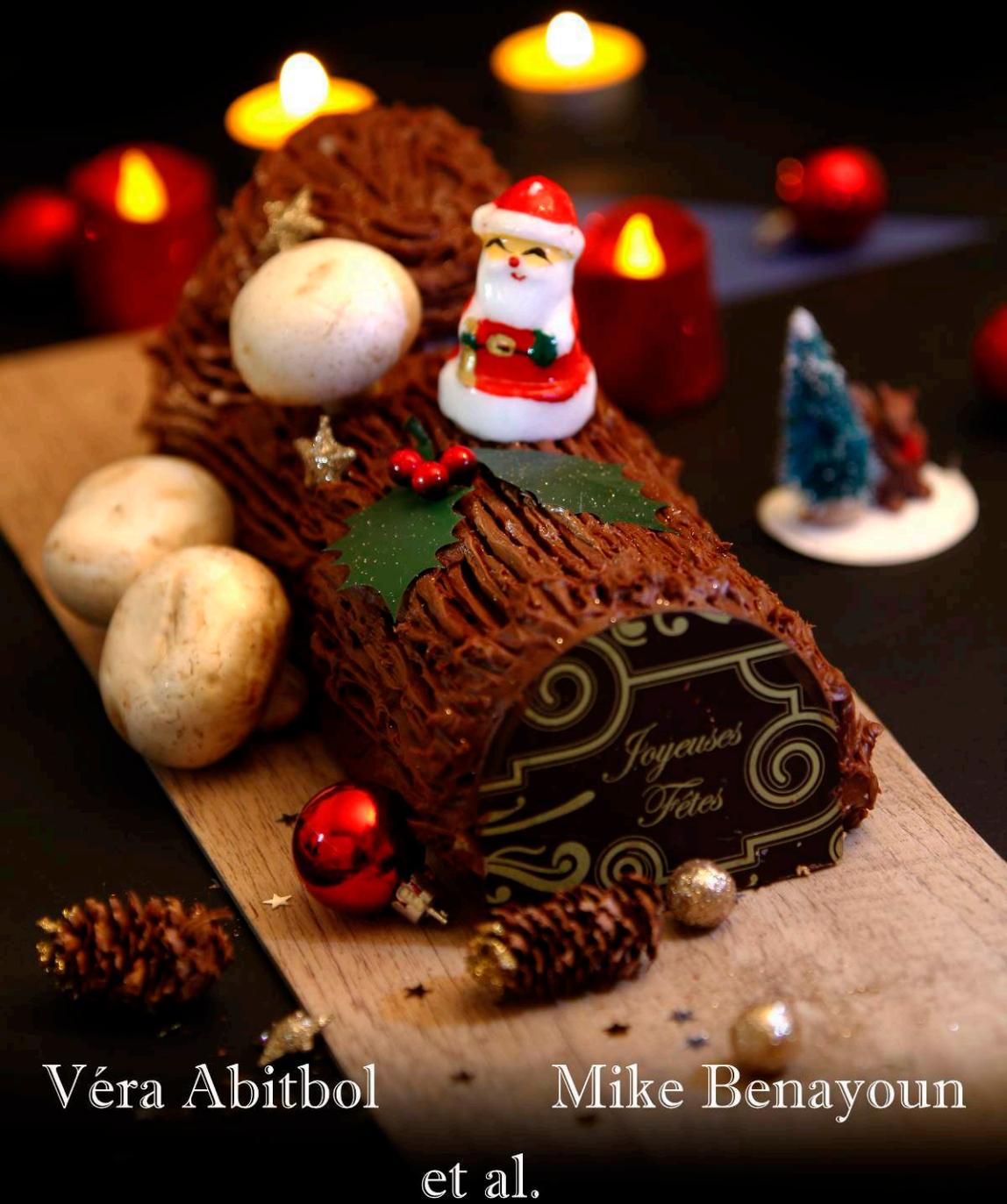


CHRISTMAS

A WORLD OF FLAVORS



Véra Abitbol

Mike Benayoun

et al.

Christmas - A world of flavors, by Véra Abitbol, Mike Benayoun et al.

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Vera Abitbol

Born in Fez, Morocco, Vera Abitbol begins to cook from an early age. When she is not even a teen yet, she runs away to go cook with her parents' neighbors. A few years later, as she finishes high school in Haute-Savoie (France), she cooks meals for all her friends from boarding school and it is there that she learns the basics of cooking. Since then she has attended numerous cooking classes but also taught a number of French and North African cuisines workshops. But she also knows how to cook under the harshest conditions and with minimum tools thanks to her scout years!

Vera lives in Paris and is now a private chef and food consultant for companies in France as well as outside of France.

Mike Benayoun

Born in Paris, France, Mike Benayoun was raised on his mother's and grandmother's North African cuisine. He has always been attracted by the exotic cuisines but it was only when he immigrated to Los Angeles in 1999 that he developed a passion for cooking. In the few years that followed, he began to replicate the recipes gleaned here and there at local restaurants but also at the ones he discovered during his many travels. Mike's friends call him the Devil as he loves to surprise but is also always looking for perfect execution. He is regularly looking for unusual ingredients, improbable techniques, recipes with unpronounceable names and incredible stories.

Mike lives in Los Angeles and is a Sales Director for a technology startup.

196 flavors

Vera and Mike are co-founders of 196 flavors, a French-English bilingual blog of world cuisine recipes whose objective is to document all the traditional and authentic recipes as well as the history behind the recipes of the 196 countries that cover our planet.

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INTRODUCTION

*Joyeuses
Fêtes*

For the past three years, we have virtually traveled the world from our kitchens. What started as a bet between friends turned into a real adventure for the three Epicureans that we are. Indeed, the initial bet was to cook at least one recipe from the 196 countries covering our planet, which we accomplished in just 18 months.

Vera, Joanne and I met in 2011 on an online recipe-sharing group. We quickly developed a strong friendship that pushed us to give birth to our baby that we named 196 flavors.

After publishing more than 350 authentic and traditional recipes on 196 flavors, we decided to release our first eBook to mark this holiday season.

“All I want for Christmas is ... an eBook”

Although I love Mariah Carey, I did not think that one day, I would (almost) quote her in a cookbook! We wanted to design a nice present for all our reader friends, some of whom have been following us since the beginning of our adventure. So, we reached out to chefs and bloggers from different countries to help us put together this book of authentic recipes that were passed down through generations and that will bring back childhood memories. It is this very authenticity that we have strived to maintain on our blog since its inception.

Our first Christmas eBook gathers 34 recipes from 30 different countries. This book showcases the most classic Christmas recipes from the 4 corners of our planet. To learn more about the origin of these traditional recipes, we invite you to visit 196 flavors as well as our friends' blogs, whose links are listed at the beginning of each recipe.

“The wonderful fragrance of Christmas tree...oops, Hanukkah bush”

Vera, Joanne and I are all of Jewish North African descent. I was personally born in Paris, where I lived until I was 26 and moved to California. For me, Christmas never had a religious meaning, even though my family used to celebrate it around a Christmas tree... or holiday tree as it's sometimes called nowadays.

My mom did not typically cook turkey, but the Yule log was definitely served

each year. However, what my brother and I preferred the most was Santa Claus' visit. I always wondered how he had the time to go through all those houses in one night... and even when I finally realized the "hoax", I think I pretended to believe a few more years.

Most of us have memories of odors and flavors that remind us of the feast of the Nativity. For me, this odor is associated with the gift unwrapping ritual on Christmas morning around the tree.

In this eBook, you will find recipes from the 5 continents, with varying degrees of difficulty, from the simple but oh so colorful and decorative Australian "Fairy Christmas tree bread" to one of the most emblematic Christmas desserts that is the French chocolate Yule log aka *Bûche de Noël*.

As a bonus, we included at the end of book additional recipes of festivals associated with Christmas, such as Saint Nicolas, who is celebrated in Eastern France and in neighboring countries. Saint Nicolas is the character that is at the origin of Santa Claus, as we know it today. It was therefore natural for us to give him a few pages. He can be a little touchy...

You will also find a recipe typical of Saint Lucia, a very traditional Swedish national holiday celebrated on December 13 and that is almost more important than Christmas.

Lastly, you will find traditional recipes of the Epiphany showcasing the beautiful story of the Magi. The wise kings, not the bouillon cube!

We hope you enjoy preparing and tasting these dishes as much as we enjoyed designing this collection of recipes.

Ready for a gourmet culinary journey? So, get ready to take off and fasten your seat belts ... and take an extra size, you never know.

Merry Christmas and happy holiday season!



APPETIZERS



Bulgaria



Banitsa

Author : Joanne Labadjone, [196 flavors](#)

Bulgarian banitsa is a delicious specialty prepared with phyllo dough, cheese and yogurt, which is traditionally eaten for breakfast. This slightly crispy and creamy appetizer is also served during the Christmas holidays.

For 6 people

Preparation: 1h10

Ingredients

10 sheets phyllo dough

8 Tbsp butter

1/2 lb sirene (Bulgarian cheese) or feta, coarsely crumbled

3/4 lb Bulgarian yogurt (preferably sheep's milk yogurt)

4 whole eggs + 1 egg yolk

Salt

Pepper

Equipment

10 inch spring form pan

Preparation

Whisk yogurt with 4 whole eggs.

Add cheese, salt and pepper and mix.

Melt the butter.

Take a first sheet of phyllo and brush with melted butter.

Superimpose a second sheet on the first and brush with butter.

Turn over and then brush the non coated side.

Divide 1/5 of the yogurt / egg / cheese mixture on top of the filo sheets.

Then roll the whole preparation like a long sausage. Roll lengthwise to get the roll as long as possible.

Repeat this process 4 more times to get 5 long rolls of two superimposed sheets of filo each.

Place the springform pan on a baking sheet (or just circle on baking sheet covered with parchment paper).

Begin by placing the first roll by sticking to the edge of the circle, then add the following forming a snail to the center.

Beat egg yolk with the remaining melted butter and brush the whole banitsa.

Bake at 400 F for about 25 minutes.

The banitsa should be golden.

It can be eaten either hot, warm or cold.



MAIN DISHES





Pork Curry

Author: Soe Thein, [Lime and Cilantro](#)

In Burma, pork is considered the queen of meat. Pork curry is a festive fragrant and spicy dish that is usually served in the south of the country, mainly in large southern cities like Yangon.

For 4 people

Preparation time: 2h20

Ingredients

2 lb organic pork butt with skin-off, cut into 1-inch chunks

1/2 large yellow onion, diced

4 cloves of garlic, minced

4 Thai chilies, minced

2 tsp ground turmeric

1 tsp paprika

1/2 tsp Cayenne powder

1/2 tsp ground cumin

1 Tbsp brown sugar

1 cinnamon stick

2 Tbsp oil

2 Tbsp fish sauce

1 large russet potato, cut into 1/2-inch thick rings

Preparation

Marinate the pork cubes with 1 teaspoon of salt, and 1 teaspoon of turmeric powder. Let the meat marinate in the room temperature for at least 30 minutes. If you are uncomfortable about leaving the raw meat at room temperature, you may marinate in the fridge over night.

Preheat the oven to 300 F.

In a Dutch oven, heat up the oil and sauté onions, garlic, and chilies under medium to high heat until the onion pieces begin to lose their opacity, about 5 to 7 minutes.

Add paprika, cumin, cinnamon stick and the rest of the turmeric powder and cook under medium heat until the spices become fragrant, about 5 minutes.

Add in the marinated pork, and turn up the heat to high, and brown the meat thoroughly for about 5 minutes. Add in water until it generously covers all the pork pieces.

Clamp the lid of the Dutch oven, and put it in the oven for 1 hour.

After an hour, add in potato rings, and put it back in the oven uncovered for another 1 hour.

After two-hour total of cooking time, most of the water will be evaporated, and you will see gorgeous magenta-tinged oil floating among the meat cubes. If you see potatoes disintegrating, please remain calm. It is actually a good omen since it will seep into the gravy, making it luscious and thick.

If you wish your gravy to be thicker, move the Dutch oven over the stovetop and simmer for additional 15 minutes. If you prefer thinner gravy, add in water until the gravy consistency matches your palate. I personally like to garnish mine with ample amount of cilantro, and serve with white rice.





Tourtiere

Author: Véra Abitbol, [196 flavors](#)

Tourtiere is a delicious meat pie traditionally served for Christmas and New Year's Eve in Quebec.

For 6 people

Preparation: 1 h 15

Ingredients

For the dough

- 4 cups flour
- 16 Tbsp butter, soft
- 1 tsp of salt
- 2 egg yolks
- 1/2 cup water
- 1 beaten egg yolk to brush dough

For the meat filling

- 1 lb beef, ground
- 1/2 lb veal, ground
- 1/2 lb lamb, ground
- 1/4 lb bacon
- 4 onions, grated
- 3 garlic cloves, crushed



4 potatoes, grated
2 bay leaves
1 cinnamon stick
4 cups of chicken broth
1 Tbsp of dried savory
1/2 tsp of allspice
2 cloves
Salt
Pepper

Preparation

Dough

Sift the flour.

Cut the butter into small cubes and add to the flour with the salt.

Incorporate flour to butter by kneading quickly with the fingertips.

Dig a well in the middle of the flour. Dilute the egg yolks with water. Combine with flour gradually.

Roughly form a ball.

Work the dough with the palm of the hand by pushing and crushing on the worktop. Form a ball. Wrap in a clean cloth.

Refrigerate for at least an hour or overnight, so that it is easier to roll.

Meat filling

In a large pot, sauté the bacon 1-2 minutes over medium heat.

Add onions and sauté for 2 minutes over medium heat, stirring constantly.

Add garlic and sauté 1 minute.

Add all the remaining ingredients and mix gently.

Season with salt and pepper.

Grind the meat one more time using a potato masher.

Cook covered over medium / high heat until half of the liquid is evaporated, about 15 minutes.

Preheat oven to 400 F.

Put the meat mixture into a baking dish and bake 30 minutes, stirring regularly.

Remove the bay leaf, cinnamon stick and the cloves.

Allow to cool.

Assembly of the tourtiere

Preheat oven to 450 degrees.

Grease an 8-inch diameter cake or pie pan.

On a floured surface, roll the dough into two unequal discs of about 11 inches and 9 inches in diameter.

Place the dough in the pan so that the dough overflows slightly.

Place the stuffing into the pie shell. Cover with the second disc of dough.

Attach the pie circles with a little water, pinching the edges or crushing them with the back of a fork.

Create a little chimney through the center of the pie shell to slide a small roll of parchment paper.

Brush the dough with egg yolk.

Bake 20 minutes at 450 degrees.

Lower the thermostat to 350 degrees and bake for another 15 minutes.

Wait 15 minutes before serving.



Argentina



Vitel Tone

Author: Mike Benayoun, [196 flavors](#)

Vitel tone is an recipe called vitello tonnato originally from Piedmont, Italy, made with beef or veal and covered in a creamy sauce prepared with tuna and anchovies. In Argentina, this recipe is typically served for Christmas dinner.

For 6 people

Preparation: 1h10

Ingredients (for 6 people)

1 piece of peceto, beef or veal round steak, roast eye of round, about 2-3 lb

1 onion, cut in 4

1 carrot, diced

1 celery stalk, cut in 4

1/2 bunch parsley, chopped

1 bay leaf

3 garlic cloves, crushed

For the sauce

8 hard-boiled eggs

1 cup olive oil

1 can anchovies (about 10 filets)

2 cans tuna (natural or oil)

Juice of 1/2 lemon

1 cup mayonnaise
2 Tbsp mustard
2 Tbsp capers
Salt
Pepper

Preparation

Remove fat from meat.

In a large pot, sear meat for a couple minutes on each side.

Add the onion, carrot, garlic, celery, parsley, bay leaf, and cover with water. Add salt to taste. Cook until just tender, about an hour and a half, or 30 minutes in a pressure cooker.

Allow meat to cool in the liquid. Take meat out and cut into very thin slices with an electric knife or a sharp knife.

Sauce

In a blender, add yolks of 8 hard-boiled eggs and well drained tuna. Add olive oil gradually while blending and blend until obtaining a smooth and homogeneous sauce.

Add about 1/2 cup of the strained cooking broth and continue blending. Add the mustard, anchovies, mayonnaise, lemon juice and black pepper. Blend until well mixed. If the sauce is not liquid enough, add more broth.

Arrange sliced meat on a large platter and cover with the sauce. Sprinkle capers on top.

Grate the remaining whites of the hard-boiled eggs, and sprinkle around the meat on the edges of the platter.

Leave the vitel tone a few hours in the refrigerator so the meat can absorb the flavors. Serve cold or at room temperature.

Note: You can also serve the vitel tone on a bed of salad or alfafa sprouts.





Glazed Baked Ham

Authors: Angela & Fay DeLeon , [Cook like a Jamaican](#)

Glazed baked ham is a must in just about every home for Christmas dinner in the Caribbean. This is the Jamaican version with a sweet and sour thick glaze.

For 12 people

Preparation: 2h

Ingredients

4-lb ready-to-serve ham
A few whole cloves

For glazing sauce

1 cup cranberry sauce or strawberry or raspberry jam
1/4 cup orange juice
1/4 cup pineapple juice
1 Tbsp lemon juice
1/2 cup brown sugar (if using cranberry sauce)
1 tsp mustard

Preparation

Remove wrapping from ham. Score fat in a diamond pattern and stud with cloves.

Bake ham in a 325 F oven for 2 hours or until a meat thermometer registers 130 F.

In a saucepan, stir together cranberry sauce or jam, orange juice, lemon juice (brown sugar if using cranberry sauce) and mustard. Simmer glaze uncovered for 5 minutes to thicken.

During the last 30 minutes of baking the ham, glaze by spooning glaze sauce it over every 10 minutes.

Any remaining sauce can be served on the side.





Tamales Negros

Author: Mike Benayoun, [196 flavors](#)

Tamales negros are banana leaf wrapped tamales with chocolate and chili pepper mole sauce traditionally prepared for Christmas in Guatemala.

For 16 tamales

Preparation: 2h30

Ingredients

For the mole sauce

- 2 Tbsp pumpkin seeds, toasted
- 2 Tbsp sesame seeds, toasted
- 1 pasa or pasilla chili pepper, toasted and seeded
- 1 guaque chili pepper, toasted and seeded (or other chili pepper)
- 1 tsp ground cinnamon
- 1/4 cup bread crumbs, toasted
- 2 ripe tomatoes, sliced
- 2 oz. bittersweet chocolate, melted
- 1/2 cup water
- 1 1/2 lb boneless chicken

For the dough

1-3/4 lb masa harina

6 cups water

4 Tbsp sugar

1/2 lb butter, margarine, lard or vegetable shortening (Crisco or equivalent)

For the tamales

16 banana leaves (12x12 in)

Raffia (or butcher's string)

16 small pitted prunes

32 raisins

32 pitted green olives

Preparation

Mole Sauce

Put all the sauce ingredients (except chicken) in a blender and blend for a few minutes until obtaining a smooth sauce.

Cook the chicken with the sauce in a covered pan over medium heat for 20 minutes.

Remove chicken and cut into thin slices or cubes.

Set aside the chicken and sauce.

Dough

Mix the dough ingredients together and simmer in a saucepan over low heat for 30 minutes, stirring often, until the dough is thick and smooth. Add water if necessary.

Set aside.

Tamales Making

Hover banana leaves over a flame for a few seconds on each side. Rinse them.

In the center of each leaf, place a handful of masa and spread over a rectangle of 4x5 inches and 1 inch thick.

Place prunes, raisins and olives.

Pour 2 tablespoons of sauce and a few pieces of chicken.

Fold the leaf toward the center, seal, then fold the other end.

Tie the package with raffia (or string) as pictured.

Place tamales in a steamer.

Steam over medium heat for at least an hour.

To serve, unfold the leaf and cut the edges with scissors, leaving the central portion of the leaf intact.

Optional: pour a little mole sauce on the tamale.





Zimbabwe



Nyama (Beef Stew)

Author: Rumbie Shoko, [ZimboKitchen](#)

Zimbabwean beef stew (nyama) is a simple dish typically served with sadza, a porridge made with cornmeal.

For 4 people

Preparation: 1h10.

Ingredients

- 2 lb beef
- 4 garlic cloves, finely chopped
- 1 onion, finely chopped
- 2 tomatoes, chopped
- 1 tsp salt
- 1/2 tsp curry powder
- 2 carrots, diced
- 1 cup fresh green beans, cut in 1-inch sections
- 1 tsp cornstarch (optional)
- Oil for frying

Preparation

Cut beef into medium sized chunks. Heat oil in pot. Add beef, garlic and salt. Fry until the meat is a lovely brown color.

Add enough water to just cover the meat and reduce heat. Allow to simmer gently and slowly uncovered until meat is tender.

When the water is entirely reduced, add the onions and curry powder. Fry for 2 minutes. Add the tomatoes and cook for another 3 to 4 minutes or until the tomatoes are tender and cooked through.

Add a little bit of water, the carrots and green beans and simmer for another 5 minutes, stirring regularly.

Note: You may add some cornstarch diluted in water to the stew to thicken it a bit or just enjoy it as is.



DESSERTS





Chocolate Yule Log

Author: Véra Abitbol, [196 flavors](#)

Yule log (Bûche de Noël) is a traditional festive cake served on Christmas Eve in France and many French-speaking countries. It can come in different flavors such as chocolate, as here, or chestnut, hazelnut, pistachio or various fruits.

For 10 people

Preparation: 3h

Ingredients

For the cake

- 9 egg yolks
- 3/5 cup caster sugar
- 5 egg whites
- 2/3 cup flour, sifted

For the chocolate buttercream

- 1-1/3 cup unsalted butter, softened
- 4/5 cup caster sugar
- 2 eggs
- 2 egg yolks
- 3-1/2 oz chocolate, 50% cocoa (or more, to taste)
- 1/4 cup water

For the syrup

2 cups water

1 cup caster sugar

1/3 cup liquor, such as Grand Marnier, rum or kirsh, and/or flavor extract of choice

Preparation

Cake

Preheat oven to 450 F.

Separate egg yolks from whites. In a bowl, whisk the yolks with 1/3 cup of cast-er sugar until they turn white and are firm.

In a second bowl, whisk the egg whites with the remaining caster sugar until they are firm.

Stir in sweetened yolks to whites, lifting the preparation from the bottom of the bowl, very gently, in order not to break the whites. Stir in the flour very gradually, proceeding in the same way.

Spread the batter in a rectangle baking sheet of about 12 x 16 inches covered with parchment paper. Bake for 5-6 minutes.

Remove from oven and let cool. Turn the cake over on a second parchment paper and peel off the first paper from the cake.

Chocolate Buttercream

Melt chocolate in double boiler and set aside at room temperature.

Beat the whole eggs and yolks with electric mixer for 4 minutes.

In a non-stick saucepan, bring the sugar and water to a boil and cook over low to medium heat until reaching a temperature of 244 F. Soak quickly the bottom of the pan in cold water to stop the cooking.

While whisking egg yolks, slowly pour the syrup to drizzle over the eggs and whisk briskly for several minutes until it is tempered. The mixture should at least

double in volume and whiten.

With the processor at medium speed, gradually and gently fold the butter. It is very important for the butter to be soft and not melted.

Finish by gently incorporating the melted chocolate.

Separate chocolate buttercream in two portions of $\frac{1}{3}$ and $\frac{2}{3}$.

Syrup

Combine water and sugar in a saucepan. Boil. Stir until sugar is completely dissolved. Cook over low heat for 3 minutes, stirring constantly.

Reserve the syrup in a glass container and allow to cool until reaching a temperature of about 60 F. When cool, add liquor and/or selected flavor extracts.

Assembly

Brush cake with syrup.

Spread evenly $\frac{1}{3}$ of the chocolate buttercream on the entire surface of the cake. Roll the log lengthwise. Wrap tightly in plastic wrap so that it keeps its shape. Place in the refrigerator for 3 hours.

Take the rolled cake out of the refrigerator. Cut one of the ends of the log. It will be used to make a "knot" (as in a real log).

Using a spatula, spread the remaining $\frac{2}{3}$ of the chocolate butter cream, then place the knot on top. Then coat the perimeter of the "knot" with cream.

Using a pastry comb or fork, make streaks to imitate the bark of the wood.

Optional:

Add decorations at will, including mushroom meringues or candies.





Gozinaki

Author: Véra Abitbol, [196 flavors](#)

Gozinaki, a nougat made from nuts and honey, is a Georgian treat traditionally made for Christmas and New Year.

For 25 gozinaki

Preparation: 1h15

Ingredients

1 cup honey

4 cups shelled walnuts

4 Tbsp powdered sugar

Preparation

Roast the walnuts and break them into small pieces with a knife.

Pour the honey in a non-stick pan, put on low heat and bring to a boil.

When the honey begins to foam, remove from heat and let cool.

Put it back on the stove and repeat this procedure twice to allow the honey to thicken.

Add the powdered sugar and stir until reaching boiling point again.

Pour the walnuts and mix well.

When the walnuts are starting to change color (about 3 minutes), remove from

heat.

First Method

Immediately pour the mixture on a wet and oiled wooden board.

Spread evenly on the board with a wet hand or the back of an oiled metal spoon.

Level with an oiled roll pin.

Adjust the edges with your hands or with a knife to obtain a square or round of about 1/2 inch thick.

Using a heated and oiled knife blade, cut equal triangular or diamond-shaped pieces.

Second Method

Immediately pour the mixture on a wet and oiled wooden board.

Form a cylinder of about 1-1/2 inch diameter.

Let cool for 10 minutes.

Using a heated and oiled knife blade, cut equal slices.





Fairy Bread Christmas Tree

Authors: Sarah Lawrie and Laura Turner, [Wandercooks](#)

Fairy bread is Australia's favorite Christmas snack for kids and nostalgic adults alike. Take a detour down memory lane with this bright and colorful fairy bread Christmas tree. It's fun, affordable, and easy to make with Santa's little helpers.

For 4 people

Preparation: 0h05

Ingredients

8 slices fluffy white bread

1/2 cup unsalted butter

1/2 cup sprinkles or 100's & 1000's

Preparation

Spread butter on each piece of bread all the way to the edge.

Cover with colored sprinkles or 100's and 1000's.

Cut all but one piece of bread into triangles and assemble into a Christmas Tree shape.

Cut the final piece of bread into a star shape and place at the top of your Tree.

Note

We recommend slicing two pieces of bread in half diagonally and the remaining pieces into quarters for triangular pieces in different sizes. Experiment with the layout and have fun!

Optional: Use the crusty end piece of your loaf of bread to make a nice trunk for your Christmas Tree.







Pan de Pascua

Author: Carolina Rojas, [Mi Diario de Cocina](#)

Pan de Pascua was probably brought to Chile by German or Italian immigrants. A close cousin of stollen and panettone, this fruit cake whose name literally means « Easter bread » has now become a Christmas classic in Chile.

For 8 people

Preparation: 1h

Ingredients

4 cups all-purpose flour
1 tsp baking powder
1 cup butter
1-1/4 cup granulated white sugar
3 eggs
3-1/2 oz raisins
3-1/2 oz chopped nuts
7 oz candied fruits
1/2 tsp ground cinnamon
1/4 tsp ground cloves
1/3 cup cognac
1-1/2 cup milk

Preparation

Preheat the oven to 400 F.

Stir the butter and the sugar together. Add the eggs one by one. Add the dry ingredients (flour, baking powder, cinnamon, cloves), alternating with the milk and cognac, combining the ingredients very gently. Add the candied fruits, raisins, and the nuts (previously rolled in flour).

Pour the mixture into an 8-inch round cake mold, ideally a tall one, just like those used for panettone, previously buttered and sprinkled with flour.

Bake for 50 to 60 minutes. Check the center to verify if it's properly baked, before removing from the oven.







Kourabiedes

Author: Ivy Liacopoulou, [Kopiaste](#)

Kourabiedes are cookies, similar to shortbread cookies, coated with icing sugar, that are traditionally prepared at Christmas in Greece as well as in Cyprus.

For 65 kourabiedes

Preparation: 0h40

Ingredients

1-1/8 lb ewe's butter, at room temperature

1/2 lb blanched and roasted almonds

2-1/2 cups icing sugar

1-1/2 lb all purpose flour

1 oz brandy

1/2 tsp vanilla essence

For coating

2 tsp rose or citrus blossom water

2-1/2 cups icing sugar

Preparation

Blanch and roast the almonds in a preheated oven to 350 F, for about 20 minutes. Allow to cool and then coarsely cut them into smaller pieces.

Sieve the sugar. Then sieve the flour separately.

Beat the butter with the icing sugar at low speed until incorporated and then beat at high speed for ten minutes until it becomes white and fluffy. Add the brandy and vanilla and stir.

Stop the mixer. Change the paddle to the dough hook, add the almonds and continue stirring, adding the flour gradually until the dough is soft but not sticky on the hands.

You can use a cookie cutter or manually shape them into crescents or round balls and place on a baking tin lined with parchment paper, spaced apart.

Bake for about 12 minutes, depending on your oven. They will be very soft but will firm up when cool.

Remove from the oven and set aside to cool.

Using a spray bottle, spray them on both sides with rose or citrus blossom water.

Turn them upside down on a dry surface and using a sieve, sprinkle some icing sugar. Turn them over again and continue dusting until they are coated.

Note: The leftover icing sugar may be sieved and used again.



Germany



Bremer Klaben

Author: Nadia Hassani, [Spoonfuls of Germany](#)

Bremer Klaben is a traditional German Christmas bread with dried fruits and almonds. It is protected by a European PGI and is a delicious alternative to the more famous Stollen.

For 8 people

Preparation: 1h10

Ingredients

3-1/2 cups golden raisins

1/3 cup golden rum

1/2 cup lukewarm milk

1 (1/4 oz) package active dry yeast

2/3 cup sugar

3-1/2 cups all-purpose flour

1/2 tsp salt

13 Tbsp unsalted butter, softened

1 Tbsp vanilla extract

3/4 cup plus 2 Tbsp candied orange peel, finely chopped

3/4 cup plus 2 Tbsp candied lemon peel, finely chopped

Finely grated zest of one organic lemon

1 tsp ground cardamom

3-1/2 oz finely chopped blanched almonds

Preparation

Place the raisins in a colander and rinse under hot water. Drain well. Place them in a bowl and mix with the rum. Set aside.

In a small bowl, mix the milk with the yeast and 1 teaspoon of the sugar. Let stand for 10 minutes until it starts to foam.

Mix the flour with the salt and the remaining sugar in a large bowl. Add the yeast mix and butter and knead into soft elastic dough that detaches from the bowl by hand or, preferably, with the kneading attachment of an electric mixer. Cover and let rise in a warm place for 20 minutes.

Add the orange and lemon peel, lemon zest, cardamom and almonds to the raisins and mix well.

Place the dough on a clean work surface. With your hands, gradually work in the dried fruit mix, including all of the liquid. It takes a while for the dough to absorb all the fruit, and the dough will be very sticky. Cover and let rise in a warm place for 40 minutes.

Preheat the oven to 400 F. Grease a 9 x 5 x 3-inch loaf pan (a meatloaf pan is ideal) as well as the shiny side of a large piece of aluminum foil. Place the dough in the loaf pan and push it down gently so it fills the entire pan.

Tightly cover the loaf with the foil, greased side down. Bake in the preheated oven for 40 minutes. Uncover, reduce the temperature to 350 F and bake for another 30 to 40 minutes, or until the top is lightly browned. If the raisins turn too dark and the loaf is not done yet, cover it loosely with aluminum foil.

Unmold the loaf immediately onto a wire rack, then gently turn it over so the bottom rests on the wire. Let cool completely and wrap tightly in aluminum foil. Store in a cool place.





Buñuelos

Author: Mely Martinez, [Mexico In My Kitchen](#)

Buñuelos are fried dough balls from Latin America typically prepared for Christmas. They are similar to other beignets prepared in North Africa and Southeast Europe that are traditionally made for Christmas as well as Ramadan and Hanukkah in some countries.

For 12 buñuelos

Preparation: 0:40

Ingredients

- 2 cups all purpose flour
- 1 tsp baking powder
- 1 tsp sugar
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 1 egg
- 1 Tbsp butter, melted then cooled
- 3/4 cup warm water *
- 1 tsp vanilla essence **
- 2 cups vegetable oil to fry the buñuelos
- Sugar to sprinkle

Notes

* Anise tea is very often used instead of plain water and vanilla lending a sweet aroma to the buñuelos. To make anise tea, place 1-1/2 cup of water in a small saucepan. Bring the water to a boil, add the anise seeds and set aside to cool. Strain and use the amount needed to make dough.

** You can also use orange liqueur or essence instead of vanilla.

Preparation

In a large bowl mix flour, baking powder, 1 tablespoon of sugar and 1/2 teaspoon of salt.

Form a well in the center and add the egg, melted butter and vanilla. Mix until mixture resembles a coarse meal. Slowly add the water a tablespoon at a time, mixing and kneading until you have a soft and smooth dough. This will take less than 5 minutes. Cover the dough with a kitchen towel and let it rest for 30 minutes.

While the dough is resting prepare your working area with a rolling pin, a large dish with paper towel or open paper bags, extra flour for rolling the circles, a large frying pan with the vegetable oil ready for the moment you start frying the buñuelos.

Divide the dough in 12 small balls and cover. Heat 3/4 inch of oil the large frying pan.

Place one of the dough balls in your already floured working surface and stretch with your rolling pin. Roll out each ball to form a circle as thin as possible without breaking the dough.

To give that extra stretching to the buñuelo, place on the inverted bowl or clay pot covered with the pastry towel and pull the edges very gentle. The buñuelo should be thin and almost transparent.

Fry the buñuelos in very hot oil until they are golden and crispy. This step will take a few seconds.

Place the buñuelos on a plate covered with paper towels to drain the excess oil. Serve warm or at room temperature and sprinkle with sugar. If you do not sprinkle the sugar right away they can still be nice and crispy for another day

and just add the sugar at serving time. If you prefer to serve them warm, place them in you oven in a low setting for 5 minutes.







Risalamande

Author: Mike Benayoun, [196 flavors](#)

Risalamande is a rice pudding with almonds topped with sour cherries stewed in Heering, typical Danish cherry liquor. It is served the night before Christmas Eve called lillejuleaften in the Nordic country. The person who finds the almond hidden in the dessert traditionally wins a prize.

For 12 people

Preparation: 1h20

Ingredients

- 2 cups whole milk
- 3 cups skimmed milk
- 10 Tbsp sugar (6 + 2 + 2)
- 1 cup risotto rice (Arborio)
- 1 vanilla bean, split lengthwise
- 1 cup almonds, crushed + 1 whole almond
- 1 cup heavy cream
- 1 jar pitted morello cherries in their syrup
- 1 Tbsp cornstarch mixed with 1 Tbsp water
- 1/4 cup (or more) cherry Heering liqueur

Preparation

Combine milk, 6 tablespoons of sugar and rice in a saucepan and bring to a boil.

Reduce heat to medium and simmer until the rice is tender and mixture is thick, stirring often, for about 30-40 minutes.

Pour the rice pudding into a bowl and let cool completely.

Add the chopped almonds and the whole almond.

Using an electric mixer, beat the heavy cream and 2 tablespoons of sugar in a medium bowl until stiff.

Scrape the vanilla bean to extract the seeds.

Add vanilla and cream in rice pudding mixture.

Cover and refrigerate for about 4 hours.

Drain the cherries and collect the syrup in a saucepan. Add 2 tablespoons of sugar (or more depending on syrup) into the pan. Add the cornstarch mixture and bring to a boil, stirring constantly.

Reduce heat.

Add the reserved cherries and cherry Heering liqueur and continue to simmer, stirring occasionally, about 5 minutes.

Pour the rice pudding into bowls. Top with warm cherry sauce.



Brazil



Rabanada (Brazilian French Toast)

Author: Denise Browning, [From Brazil to you](#)

Rabanada is a dessert or afternoon snack soaked in flavored milk, coated in beaten eggs, fried, and sprinkled with sugar-cinnamon. It is also a Christmas favorite in Brazil.

For 24 rabanadas

Preparation: 0h40

Ingredients

24 slices of stale French baguette, 3/4-inch thick (about 1-1/2 baguettes)

2 cups whole milk

1 Tbsp pure vanilla extract

1/2 to 3/4 cup granulated sugar

4 large eggs, lightly beaten and homogeneous

Vegetable oil for frying

1/2 cup sugar

1 Tbsp ground cinnamon

Honey or maple syrup to serve with (optional)

Preparation

Line a large baking sheet with a double layer of paper towel. Set aside.

Divide bread slices between 2 large, shallow baking dishes, arranging them in one single layer each. In a jar or pitcher, mix well the milk, vanilla, and sugar. Pour milk mixture over the bread slices, distributing the liquid evenly over all the slices. Let bread slices soak for about 20 minutes, allowing it to soak up as much of the milk mixture as possible.

In a large heavy skillet, heat about 2 inches of vegetable oil over medium-high until oil is hot enough that it sizzles.

By hand, pick up each one of the milk-soaked bread slices (handling it gently) and dip it into the beaten eggs, coating both sides and allowing the excess to drip back into the egg bowl. Place the bread into the hot oil, and cook until well-browned on one side, about 1 to 1-1/2 minutes. Flip the bread and cook until both sides are golden brown. Carefully transfer rabanadas to the sheet lined with paper towels.

Repeat with remaining slices of bread, cooking several simultaneously if the skillet is large enough. NOTE: Cook in batches and do not overcrowd the pan! You may have to lower the heat a bit for the next batches or cook slices in less time since temperature will be higher.

In a medium bowl, mix sugar and cinnamon together. Dredge all sides of the bread slices into mixture. Any excess cooked eggs threads can be removed before dredging bread slices into the sugar cinnamon mixture.

Brazilian French toast can be served either warm or at room temperature, by itself or drizzled with honey or maple syrup. I garnished mine with berries. In Brazil, it is served as a Christmas dessert or an afternoon snack, but it can be enjoyed any time of the year!



Portugal



Pão-de-Ló

Author: Joane Labadjone, [196 flavors](#)

Pão de ló is a famous easy-to-make Portuguese cake. This traditional cake, also served at Christmas, is very airy and comes in different regional and international versions.

For 6 people

Preparation: 1h

Ingredients

6 large eggs

1-1/2 cup icing sugar, sifted

1-1/2 cup flour, sifted

Preparation

Preheat oven at 350 F.

Beat the eggs at high speed for about 20 minutes, incorporating the icing sugar gradually.

Gently incorporate the flour.

Place in a pan lined with parchment paper.

Bake for about 30 to 35 minutes.

Allow the cake to cool before unmolding.



New Zealand



Pavlova

Author: Vera Abitbol, [196 flavors](#)

Pavlova is the emblematic dessert from New Zealand named after Russian ballerina Anna Pavlova, with meringue and topped with fresh fruits. This national dessert, also famous in Australia, is often served at Christmas.

Pour 8 people

Preparation: 2 h30

Ingredients

5 egg whites + 1 pinch of salt
1 cup powdered sugar
1/2 cup caster sugar
2 tsps cornstarch
2 Tbsp white vinegar
1 vanilla pod
2 cups heavy cream
1 tsp vanilla extract
2 Tbsp sugar
Fruits, e.g. kiwis and strawberries
Food coloring (optional)

Preparation

Meringue

Preheat oven to 200 F. Spread butter and sugar on the edges of a spring form pan.

Beat the egg whites with a pinch of salt, while slowly adding sugars, cornstarch, vinegar, and the seeds extracted from the vanilla bean.

Beat until stiff peaks form. The meringue should be shiny and firm.

Line a baking sheet with parchment paper.

Place the springform pan on the parchment paper (or on the removable base).

Using a pastry bag, form meringue sticks (or other shape) around the springform pan.

Coat the entire bottom with a thick layer of meringue (about 2 in). Make sure to create a well where the cream will be placed after cooking.

Bake for 2 hours.

Turn off the oven and leave the meringue inside until completely cooled.

Unmold the meringue gently and set aside.

Cream

Whip the heavy cream while gradually adding coloring and vanilla extract.

Spread the whipped cream on the meringue with a spatula or a pastry bag.

Place fruits on top (kiwis, strawberries or others).





Vánočka

Author: Sarah-Eden Dadoun, [Les Trois Madeleines](#)

Vánočka is a braided bread, popular in Czech Republic as well as Slovakia that is traditionally prepared for Christmas. Its name actually comes from the word vánoce, which means Christmas in Czech.

For 8 people

Preparation: 2h40

Ingredients

6 cups flour
10 Tbsp sugar
1/2 cup butter, at room temperature
1 Tbsp yeast
1 cup lukewarm milk
1 yolk
1 tsp salt
1 lemon rind
3 tsp raisins
1 egg

Preparation

Activate yeast with one tablespoon of lukewarm water in the bowl of a stand mixer. Add lukewarm milk and 1 yolk. Combine. Add butter, sugar and salt. Stir to combine.

Add the flour. Knead for 15-20 minutes. When the dough no longer sticks to the side of the bowl, add the raisins, lemon rind, almonds and mix.

Place the dough in a greased bowl. Cover with plastic wrap and let rise until double in size, about 1 hour.

Punch down the dough and turn over onto lightly floured board. Divide dough into 6 pieces. Roll each piece into a rope, about 14 inches long. On a parchment-lined baking sheet, braid the pieces loosely and pinch the ends together. Cover with a cloth or greased plastic wrap and let rise 1 to 1 1/2 hours in a warm place.

Heat oven to 400F. Brush vanoccka with 1 beaten egg. Bake 15 minutes, reduce heat to 375 degrees and bake for another 25 minutes.

Let cool completely before slicing. Dust with confectioners' sugar before cutting, if desired.





Multekrem

Author: Mike Benayoun, [196 flavors](#)

Multekrem is a traditional Norwegian Christmas Eve dessert, prepared by mixing cloudberry jam with whipped cream and sugar. Multekrem is traditionally served with cookies called krumkake and kransekake.

For 4 people

Preparation: 0h05

Ingredients (for 4 people)

1 cup whipping cream

2 Tbsp sugar

1/2 tsp vanilla extract

3/4 cup cloudberry jam

Mint for garnish

Preparation

Whip the cream with sugar and vanilla extract until soft peaks form.

Fold in the cloudberry jam and divide the dessert between small serving bowls.

Garnish with a couple of cloudberry jam (or a spoon of cloudberry jam) and a mint leaf.



United Kingdom



Trifle

Author: Mike Benayoun, [196 flavors](#)

Despite the thousands of variants of this traditional sweet dessert, trifle remains one of the most authentic and emblematic recipes of British cuisine. Although trifle can be prepared year-round, it is a staple of Christmas tables in the United Kingdom.

For 8 people

Preparation: 0h40

Ingredients

About 15-20 Savoiardi biscuits

4 Tbsp Sherry, or a mix of Sherry and Brandy

4 cups fresh or frozen berries, e.g. strawberries, raspberries, blueberries, blackberries

1/2 cup sliced almonds, toasted

1/2 cup crushed Gavottes

Zest of 1 lemon

For whipped cream

2 cups heavy cream

1 Tbsp Brandy

3 egg whites

For custard

2 cups milk
1 cup heavy cream
10 egg yolks
1 cup sugar
4 Tbsp cornstarch
1 tsp Sherry
Trifle and berries

Preparation

Custard

Heat the milk and heavy cream in a saucepan over medium heat and bring almost to a boil. Remove from the heat.

Beat the egg yolks and sugar in the bowl of an electric mixer for about 5 minutes until pale and thick.

Add the cornstarch. Beat on medium-low speed until combined.

Slowly pour the hot milk mixture into the egg mixture.

Pour the mixture back into the saucepan. Cook over low heat, stirring constantly, until the mixture thickens, for about 5 minutes.

Pour the mixture through a fine sieve into a large bowl.

Stir in the Sherry. Place plastic wrap directly on the custard and refrigerate for about 30 minutes until cold.

Whipped cream

Beat the heavy milk in the bowl of an electric mixer for a few minutes.

Add the Brandy and continue to whip until stiff.

Separately, beat the egg whites until reaching soft peak.

Fold in beaten egg whites into the whipped cream.

Assembly

Thickly slice strawberries and set aside with the rest of the berries.

Mix toasted almonds and crushed Gavottes in a bowl.

Add the zest of 1 lemon to the almond mixture.

Place Savoirdi biscuits at the bottom of the bowl.

Sprinkle with Sherry.

Top with a layer of berries and custard.

Sprinkle toasted almonds and Gavottes mixture.

Repeat with 1 or 2 layers of Savoirdi, berries, custard and almond mixture depending on the size of the trifle bowl.

Top with whipped cream.

Garnish with toasted almonds and a few whole berries.







Polvorones

Author: Véra Abitbol, [196 flavors](#)

Polvorones are small Mexican shortbread cookies originally from Spain and also called Mexican wedding cookies, that be found in the Philippines and South Texas as well. Their name comes from the icing sugar dust (polvo) on the cookies.

For 25 polvorones

Preparation: 0h35

Ingredients

- 1-2/3 cups flour
- 2 sticks butter, softened (or lard)
- 1-1/2 cup icing sugar
- 1/2 cup almond flour
- 1/2 cup chopped almonds, lightly toasted
- 2 cinnamon sticks
- 1/2 cup water
- 1 tsp anise liqueur or vanilla extract
- Icing sugar for decoration

Preparation

Boil the water and steep cinnamon sticks for 30 minutes.

The day before, or the morning of if you make polvorones in the afternoon, sift the flour and almond flour in a baking sheet and toast gently while stirring often, in an oven preheated at 250 F for 30 minutes. The result should be light brown.

Add the icing sugar and crushed almonds to the flour and almond flour and stir well.

In a mixer bowl, whip butter (or lard) until frothy.

Stir in the mixture of sugar, flour and almonds and mix.

Add the cinnamon-infused water.

Form a dough and refrigerate for 2 hours.

Remove the dough from the refrigerator and bring to room temperature.

There are two options to shape the polvorones:

Option 1

Flour the work surface, roll out the dough with a rolling pin to a thickness of $\frac{3}{4}$ inch and cut out small circles of 1 inch diameter with a cookie cutter. Place on a parchment paper.

Option 2

Flour a work surface and form a cylinder of 1 inch diameter. Cut $\frac{3}{4}$ inch wide sections and lay flat on a parchment paper. If dough is too soft, put the cylinder in the freezer for about 30 minutes in order to facilitate cutting.

Preheat oven to 480 F for 15 minutes.

Then lower the temperature to 350 F and bake for 10-15 minutes.

Allow to cool before handling. Polvorones are very brittle.

Dust with icing sugar.





Chruściki

Author: Véra Abitbol, [196 flavors](#)

Crunchy or soft, chruściki are Polish donuts that are traditionally prepared on Christmas Day. They are also called chrusty, faworki or even «angel wings » because of their shape.

For 25 chruściki

Preparation: 2h

Ingredients

- 4 cups flour, sifted
- 1 tsp baking powder
- 5 egg yolks
- 6 Tbsp heavy cream
- 2 Tbsp butter
- 1 tsp sugar
- 2 large pinches of salt
- 1 tsp alcohol of your choice or white vinegar
- 4 cups vegetable oil
- Icing sugar or sugar for sprinkling

Preparation

On a work surface, mix the baking powder, sugar and flour.

Make a well in the center and add the eggs, cream, salt, butter, and alcohol.

Knead until reaching a smooth and homogeneous dough, about 10 minutes.

Wrap the dough with plastic wrap and let stand for 2 hours at room temperature.

On a lightly floured surface, knead the dough vigorously (incorporate 1-2 tablespoons of flour if the dough sticks too much) and roll it with a rolling pin to a thickness of 1/8 inch (or thinner for crispier chruściki).

Using a pastry wheel or knife, cut rectangles of about 2 x 1 inch and make an incision in the center of each rectangle. Take each rectangle and spread the incision to move one of its two smaller sides in this incision.

Fry in an oil bath at 350 F, turning chruściki halfway through cooking until very lightly browned about 1 minute per side. Fry a few pieces at a time without overcrowding.

Drain and place on a plate covered with paper towels. Sprinkle with icing sugar or sugar.



Belarus



Kutia

Author: Joanne Labadjone, [196 flavors](#)

Kutia is a dish from Belarus made from grains traditionally prepared for Orthodox Christmas dinner on January 7th.

For 6 people

Preparation: 6h

Ingredients

3 cups wheatberries (or precooked wheatberries)

3/4 cup poppy seeds

3/4 cup raisins

1 cup walnuts

1/2 cup honey

4 cups milk

Preparation

The use of non-precooked wheatberry requires to start this recipe the day before. Pour 2 cups of boiling water over the previously rinsed grains, cover and let the grains swell overnight.

The following day, boil the wheatberries for 3 hours. Then cook them for 30 minutes in the milk.

With precooked wheatberries, simply cook them for 15 minutes in the boiling milk.

Cover raisins with boiling water and let stand for 30 minutes so they rehydrate.

Boil the poppy seeds for a few minutes.

Drain all the ingredients separately, then mix the wheatberries with the poppy seeds.

In a saucepan, heat the honey with a teaspoon of water, add the rehydrated and drained raisins. Cook on low heat for 5 minutes, then pour over drained wheat and poppy seeds.

Mix well before topping with the walnuts.

Refrigerate until ready to serve. This preparation is eaten cold.







Bustrenngo

Author: Mike Benayoun, [196 flavors](#)

Bustrenngo is a dried fruits cake that is eaten year-round but is also a traditional Christmas cake in San Marino, the third smallest country in Europe after the Vatican and Monaco.

For 8 people

Preparation: 1h15

Ingredients

- 1/2 cup cornmeal
- 2 cups flour
- 1-1/2 cup bread crumbs
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 3 eggs
- 1/4 cup olive oil
- 2 cups milk
- 5 Tbsp honey
- 1 lb apples, peeled, cored and diced
- 3-1/2 oz dried figs, diced
- 3-1/2 oz raisins
- Zest of a lemon, grated
- Zest of an orange, grated

Preparation

Preheat oven to 325 F. Grease a 9×13 inch baking dish.

Mix cornmeal, flour, breadcrumbs, salt, eggs and oil.

Stir in milk and honey.

Add the diced apples, dried figs, raisins and zests, stirring gently.

Bake for 50 to 60 minutes.



A warm, sepia-toned photograph of a bowl of hot chocolate. The bowl is white and sits on a matching saucer, which is placed on a white napkin. A cinnamon stick is tucked into the dark, frothy beverage. In the background, two lit candles in holders provide a soft glow, and a fireplace with a crackling fire is visible. The overall mood is cozy and inviting.

BEVERAGES



Malta



Imbuljuta tal-Qastan

Author: Mike Benayoun, [196 flavors](#)

Imbuljuta tal-Qastan is a traditional Maltese drink served after midnight mass at Christmas and at New Year's Eve. This drink is perfect for those special nights when you feel like something hot, spicy and deliciously seasonal.

For 6 people

Preparation: 1h05

Ingredients

- 2 cups dried peeled chestnuts
- 1 cup sugar
- 2/3 cup cocoa powder
- 1 cinnamon stick
- 6 cloves
- 1/2 tsp spice blend (cinnamon, nutmeg, cloves, etc.)
- Rind of 1 tangerine
- 1/4 cup cornstarch
- 3 Tbsp sour cream (optional)

Preparation

Wash and soak the chestnuts for at least 8 hours.

Drain and put the chestnuts in a pan. Add 4 cups of water, cinnamon, cloves, cocoa powder, sugar, spice blend and mandarin rind cut in small pieces.

Bring to a boil and simmer until the chestnuts are tender, about 1 hour.

At the end of cooking, break the chestnuts into small pieces with a large spoon without crushing them.

Dissolve the cornstarch in a little water and add to slightly thicken the sauce.

Serve hot in a cup or a bowl.







Coquito

Author: Véra Abitbol, [196 flavors](#)

Coquito is a sweet and spicy alcoholic beverage from Puerto Rico that is traditionally associated with Christmas and holidays.

For 4 people

Preparation: 0h05

Ingredients

3 cups coconut cream
1-1/2 cup rum
3 cups condensed milk
6 egg yolks
1/2 tsp ground cinnamon
1 cinnamon stick
1 vanilla pod, split and scraped
1/2 tsp nutmeg or cinnamon

Preparation

Mix all the ingredients in a blender for 4 minutes.
Put the drink in the refrigerator for 4 hours.
Serve coquito chilled, sprinkled with nutmeg.



**SAINT NICHOLAS
SAINT LUCIA
EPIPHANY**



France (Lorraine)



St Nicholas Gingerbread Cookies

Author: Mike Benayoun, [196 flavors](#)

Those very visually appealing Saint Nicholas Gingerbread Cookies are a famous tradition in the East of France, specifically in Lorraine and Alsace, where they are offered during St Nicholas holiday on December 6th.

For 12 gingerbread cookies

Preparation: 0h35

Ingredients

For the gingerbread cookies

- 4 cups flour
- 2-1/2 tsp baking powder
- 1 cup sugar
- 3/4 cup honey
- 1 Tbsp ground cinnamon
- 1/8 tsp ground cloves
- 1/2 tsp ground anise
- 1/4 tsp grated nutmeg
- 1/2 cup water

For the frosting

1 cup icing sugar

1 egg white

Preparation

In a small bowl, mix all the spices (cinnamon, anise, cloves, nutmeg)

Pour the spices in a bowl. Add flour, baking powder and sugar. Mix.

Add honey.

Knead the dough by hand or with the food processor.

Add half of the water.

Continue to knead the dough without adding the remaining water even if it may seem a bit dry at first.

After a few minutes, add the remaining water, if necessary. The dough should not be sticky. If this is the case, add a little flour.

Form a ball with the dough, cover with plastic wrap and set aside for at least 1 hour at room temperature.

Preheat oven to 350 F.

Roll the dough to about 1/3 inch thick on a floured work surface.

Cut out shapes with cookie cutters or a knife with the help of this template.

Arrange the gingerbread on a baking sheet lined with parchment paper, leaving enough space between them.

Bake for about 15 minutes.

Cool cakes on a wire rack.

Frosting

Prepare the frosting by mixing the icing sugar and egg white.

Whisk the mixture with an electric mixer until reaching a smooth, bright and

very white cream.

Add a little water if the frosting is not thin enough.

Decorate with a pastry bag or a squeeze bottle.

For the gingerbread cookies that will be covered with the Saint Nicolas printed image, spread some icing on the gingerbread in a zigzag shape as it will act as a glue. Place the printed image on the Saint Nicolas gingerbread cookie when the icing is still fresh.





France (Alsace)



Mannala

Author: Véra Abitbol, [196 flavors](#)

Mannala, a delicious small brioche shaped like a little man is a traditional recipe prepared in Alsace for Saint Nicolas holiday.

For 16 mannalas

Preparation: 0h35

Ingredients

6-1/2 cup flour

8 Tbsp butter, cold

1 Tbsp salt

4-1/2 tsp active dry yeast

1/2 cup powdered sugar

1 tsp baking soda

1-3/4 cup milk, warm

2 eggs

Chocolate chips

To brush on mannalas

1 egg yolk diluted in a little milk

Preparation

In a large bowl, mix the yeast with $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of milk and sugar.

Add egg and beat well.

Add the remaining milk and mix. Set aside for 2 minutes.

In the bowl of the food processor, combine flour and baking soda.

Stir in the diced butter with your fingertips.

Make a well in the flour and add the milk, sugar and egg mixture.

Knead on low speed until reaching a dough that does not stick.

Moderately increase the speed, add the salt and knead for 8 minutes.

The dough should not stick to the edges of the container. Add a few tablespoons of flour if necessary.

Cover the dough with a damp cloth and let rise in a warm place, free from drafts, for 1h30.

Place the dough on a floured surface and work a few minutes.

Line a baking sheet with parchment paper.

Divide the dough in pieces of about 3 oz.

Cut a quarter of each piece of dough into a ball to form the head.

Then shape the rest of each piece of dough into a cylinder and place on the baking sheet. Lightly flatten.

Using a sharp knife, cut the legs and arms of the mankala.

Place the head of the mankala above its shoulders and place 2 chocolate chips for the eyes and one for the mouth.

Place no more than 8 mankalas per baking sheet.

Cover the mankalas with a slightly damp cloth and let raise in a warm place, free from drafts, again for 30 minutes.

Preheat convection oven to 430 F.

Brush mankalas with the egg yolk and milk mixture.

Place in the oven and reduce oven temperature to 390 F.

Bake for about 15 minutes.

The mannalas should be golden brown.





Belgium



Speculoos

Author: Joanne Labadjone, [196 flavors](#)

Speculoos is a traditional cookie of Flemish origin. Often in the shape of Saint Nicolas or with seasonal patterns, it is eaten during Advent and especially on Saint Nicholas Day in Belgium and the Netherlands.

For 50 speculoos

Preparation: 0h40

Ingredients (about 50 cookies)

4 cups flour, sifted
1-1/2 cup brown sugar
1 cup butter, softened
3 eggs
1 tsp baking powder
1 Tbsp ground cinnamon
1/2 tsp ground ginger
1/2 tsp ground nutmeg
1/2 tsp ground cloves
1/4 tsp ground cardamom
1/4 tsp white pepper
1/4 tsp ground anise
1/4 tsp salt

Preparation

Mix the softened butter with the sugar, salt and spices.

Add the eggs one at a time and mix well after each one.

Gradually add flour mixed with baking powder until obtaining a smooth dough.

Cover the dough with plastic wrap and let it rest in the fridge for 12 hours.

Cut dough into 4 equal parts.

Roll out the first part of the dough to 1/4 inch thick on a floured surface.

Cut the dough with a knife or with a special speculoos cookie cutter then press on with a previously floured mold.

Place the cookies on a baking sheet lined with parchment paper and bake for about 10 minutes in an oven preheated to 375 F.

Repeat until all the dough has been used.

5 minutes after taking them out of the oven, let the speculoos cool completely on a wire rack.

Speculoos can be stored in a metal box.



Sweden



Lussekatter

Author: Mike Benayoun, [196 flavors](#)

Lussekatter are small saffron buns that are popular in Sweden during Saint Lucia Day's national celebrations on December 13th.

For 24 lussekatter

Preparation: 0h35

Ingredients

1/2 tsp saffron

1 oz Cognac (or Brandy)

2 Tbsp sugar

3 Tbsp instant dried yeast

2 cups milk, cold

6 cups flour

3/4 cup sugar

12 Tbsp butter, soft

1 pinch of salt

1/2 cup raisins

1 egg, beaten

Preparation

In a small glass cup, dissolve the saffron and 1/8 cup sugar in Cognac. Infuse overnight.

Dissolve the yeast in milk and add the other ingredients: dissolved saffron, sugar, butter and half the flour.

Work the dough with in a stand mixer for 10 to 12 minutes, or by hand for 15 minutes, until the dough becomes smooth and elastic.

Add the remaining flour gradually until the dough does not attach to the sides of the bowl.

Transfer the dough to a large bowl and cover with a clean cloth.

Let rise until the dough has doubled, about 1 hour.

Punch down dough. Lightly knead two or three times on a floured surface.

Divide dough into twenty-four equal portions (about 2-1/2 oz per bun for this recipe).

Roll each portion of dough into a 10-inch long cylinder and make an S shape wrapping each end around the middle.

Preheat oven to 430 F.

Put two raisins on every little S-shaped bun and brush with beaten egg.

Bake for 10 to 12 minutes or until the saffron buns are lightly browned.





Galette des Rois (Pithiviers)

Auteur: Mike Benayoun, [196 flavors](#)

Galette des Rois or king cake is a staple of French tables around the Epiphany but also throughout the month of January. This recipe uses almond cream instead of frangipane for a more authentic version called Pithiviers.

For 8 people

Preparation: 0h45

Ingredients

25 oz puff pastry

1-1/2 cup ground almonds

3/4 cup sugar

6 Tbsp butter, at room temperature

3 eggs

A few drops of almond extract

Preparation

Divide the pastry into two if necessary, and spread to a thickness of 1/6 inch so as to obtain two doughs which cover a circle of desired size.

Combine the ground almonds and sugar in a bowl and stir.

Add butter, almond extract and continue stirring.

Beat 2 eggs separately.

Add eggs slowly in the preparation. Stop when reaching a consistency that can be spread and is not too liquid.

Roll out the first disc of dough on a baking sheet lined with parchment paper.

Separate the last egg.

Brush the egg white around the circle over a width of 1/2 inch from the edge.

Spread the almond cream inside the circle leaving 1/2 inch space from the edge.

Place the second circle of dough on top.

Tap around the circle to ensure that the two circles are well bonded.

Dilute the egg yolk in a teaspoon of water.

Brush the egg yolk all over the top circle.

Draw patterns on the top circle using a knife or other sharp utensil.

Bake in a preheated oven at 380 F. Check galette des rois after 25 minutes and continue baking for a few minutes if necessary until the top is golden brown.





Befanini

Auteur: Véra Abitbol, [196 flavors](#)

Befanini are small traditional shortbread cookies served in Italy on the day of Epiphany known over there as La Befana, whose name comes from a kind witch.

For 50 befanini

Preparation: 1h

Ingredients

4 cups flour
14 Tbsp butter, soft
1 cup sugar
1/4 cup milk
Zest of 1 lemon
5 eggs
1/2 tsp baking powder
1 pinch of salt
2 Tbsp rum
Small multicolored sprinkles

Preparation

Mix the eggs and sugar until frothy.

Add the butter, flour, milk, baking powder, salt, lemon zest and rum (optional).

Mix all the ingredients to obtain a smooth dough.

Let stand 45 minutes in the refrigerator.

Preheat oven to 350 F.

Spread the dough with a rolling pin to about 1/3 inch and cut into various shapes using cookie cutters.

Place the cookies on a buttered and floured baking sheet or lined with parchment paper and brush them with egg yolk.

Sprinkle with sugar sprinkles.

Bake for about 15 minutes.

Monitor the color of befanini as they must not be too dark.





Spain



Roscon de Reyes

Author: Joanne Labadjone, [196 flavors](#)

Roscon de reyes also known as the crown of kings is a Spanish brioche with Mediterranean flavors prepared in honor of the feast of Epiphany.

For 6 people

Preparation: 1h10

Ingredients

For the crown

2-1/4 cup flour

3 tsp active dry yeast

1/2 cup whole milk, warm

1/2 cup sugar

8 Tbsp unsalted butter, at room temperature

1 egg yolk

Zest of 1 orange

Zest of 1 lemon

1 Tbsp dark rum

1 Tbsp orange blossom water

Pinch of salt

For the garnishing

1 egg yolk

1 Tbsp milk

Candied fruits

Pearl sugar

Preparation

Dissolve 1 teaspoon sugar and yeast in warm milk. Cover and let stand 20 minutes in a warm place until a foam forms on the surface.

Mix the flour with the zests, remaining sugar and diluted yeast. Then add the softened butter, egg yolk, rum, orange blossom water and salt.

Knead until the dough detaches itself from the container edges.

If the dough seems really too sticky, it can be adjusted by adding a little flour at a time, making sure that the dough is not particularly too compact. The more malleable and sticky the dough is, the softer the bun will be.

Cover the ball of dough and place in a warm, dry place, away from drafts for 2 to 3 hours. The dough should double in size at a minimum.

Knead the dough to degas for a minute.

Shape roscon de reyes by creating a hole in the center and using your two inches to rotate the dough while enlarging the hole to give the cake its crown shape.

Place the crown on a baking sheet lined with parchment paper.

Cover with a cloth and let rise in a warm, dry place, away from drafts for 30 to 60 minutes, the crown should again double in size.

Mix the egg yolk and milk and brush the entire roscon de reyes.

Decorate with candied fruit and pearl sugar.

Bake in an oven preheated at 320 F for 30 minutes.