

Polenta and Osei



In the Bergamo culinary panorama, two versions of Polenta and Osei are found: the salty and the sweet one. The latter uses sponge cake and creams to reproduce one of the typical Bergamo dishes whose excellence was extolled by writers such as Stendhal and other gourmets. The little birds of fresh catch, plucked, roasted on a spit and served with fuming polenta become in the sweet version chocolate marzipan birds placed over a cake decked with yellow marzipan that

reminds us of polenta.

A symbol of Bergamo gastronomy, today this cake is produced in different sizes. It is prepared with sponge cake using hemispherical moulds, chocolate butter and hazelnut cream. Rum is also added.

Its origins date back to the early years of the last century, and specifically to 1910, when Amadeo Alessio with his wife Giuseppina baked this cake for the first time. The two had run the Pasticceria Milanese since 1907.

Preparation and storage

Eggs, yolks, sugar and honey are beaten; flour, starch and yeast are added. For the preparation of chocolate butter and hazelnut cream, the butter is stirred until spongy, then rum and hazelnut paste are added. The cooked sugar is prepared by dissolving it in water and cooking it at 120° C. To prepare the cake, the mixture is poured into buttered crescent-shaped moulds; after baking at 200° C for about 25 minutes, the sponge cake hemisphere is cut into halves, slightly doused with curacao and stuffed with chocolate butter and hazelnut cream. The hemispheres are reassembled and topped with butter cream, then covered with a sheet of yellow marzipan. The cake is sprinkled with yellow castor sugar, and the centre is daubed with apricot jam. The chocolate marzipan birds are placed here, with “bacon” rashers made of pink and white marzipan sheets.

Characteristic

This cake, made with sponge cake layers filled alternately with creams and liqueurs and covered with marzipan paste, has always maintained a choreographic look that, combined with its delicacy, has made it famous outside Bergamo’s boundaries.

Sweet symbol of the Orobic land, Polenta and Osei can be served with Bergamo Moscato Giallo. It has a sweet taste, with a very delicate almond scent.