

The 29th Day of the Month- Day of Gnocchi

In this article, I would like to tell you about an interesting and unusual culinary tradition that many people in Uruguay and Argentina celebrate, which is the 29th of each month and is celebrated as “the day of gnocchi.” On the 29th, families get together and deposit money underneath the plate representing the wish that there will be enough money and to have better economic expectations in the future.

Also, the term “gnocchi” is used in Argentina for those persons who receive a salary without working, referring to the fact that without going to work, they receive a salary on the 29th day of the month.

There are various legends attributed to the origin of this custom, which date back to the eighth century.

One of these legends started with a pilgrim coming to the north of Italy, converted to Christianity, named Pantaleon. It is said that he practiced miracle cures and was canonized. On this occasion, he asked for bread from some townspeople in Venice, who invited him to share in their meager food offering. He was very appreciative, and he predicted a year of harvests and good fishing. His prophecy was fulfilled among other miracles. Saint Pantaleon was blessed along with Saint Marcos, who was the patron Saint of Venice. This occurred on the 29th day of the month, and for this reason, a simple meal is offered, represented by the gnocchi.

Also, it is known that in Argentina on June 29th, the Italian immigrants get together to commemorate Saint Peter and Saint Pablo by eating gnocchi.

Another story of its origin tells about the tradition that originated around the year 1690, in the town of Piamonte because of the loss of the wheat harvest. During that time, the potato was only cultivated for feeding the animals, but because of the famine, potato gnocchi was eaten as an alternative for the lack of wheat, thereby saving the population during the famine. Since this date, the settlers had the habit of getting together in the central plaza on the 29th day of each month, giving thanks for the potato harvests, preparing gnocchi for the celebration and placing coins under each plate. At the end of the ceremony, the coins were given out as symbolism for the wish for prosperity.

Recipe for Gnocchi

The word for gnocchi means ball or little ball in Italian, and it frequently occurs in Spanish as ñoqui or ñoquis. The gnocchi or ñoquis are found under the pasta category and are prepared with potato and wheat semola (flours such as corn or chestnut, etc.) and Ricotta cheese (with or without spinach).

Directions

Boil the potatoes and drain when they are cooled, peel and mash. Add the same amount of flour to equal the amount of mashed potatoes. Add 2 egg yolks and 3 tablespoons of grated cheese to the potatoes, plus one teaspoon of butter, salt, freshly ground pepper and nutmeg to taste. Mix well, forming a paste. Work the paste until it doesn't stick to the hands. Form gnocchi as you wish, which is forming little rolls and cutting it with a knife, and then press a fork into it to form folds, or make little balls with the dough.

You may use whatever sauce you are accustomed to having, or you can serve them with olive oil, peperoncino (spicy aji) and garlic, with olive oil and garlic, with butter, with butter and sage, with white sauce (Bechamel), with tomato sauce (pomodoro), with pink sauce (tomato sauce with cream), Bolognese (tomato sauce with chopped beef), a la vongole (tomato sauce with seafood), a la putanesca (tomato sauce with black olives, capers and anchovies), with seafood, with a mushroom sauce, with cream of lobster sauce or with a spinach sauce. 🇪🇺

Ingredients

3 medium unpeeled potatoes

Flour

2 egg yolks

3 tbsp. of grated cheese

1 tsp. of butter

Salt, pepper and nutmeg

