

Zelten

Submitted by Mauro Rizzi.

Zelten is a typical Christmas cake from Trentino, it is prepared during the period of the advent and is then eaten at Christmas. This recipe comes from my Zia Cesarina (Valentini) of Iavr  in Val Rendena.

Ingredients for 2 Zelten of approx. 12 inches each

Note: this recipe is Italian, and therefore all ingredients are measured in weight (Grams = gr)

- 700 gr all purpose flour (not self raising)
- 5 whole eggs
- 1 egg yolk (optional for the top glazing)
- 250 gr of milk
- 200 gr of unsalted butter
- 200 gr of sugar
- 250 gr of dried figs
- 250 gr of sultanas
- 300 gr of whole walnuts
- 100 gr of candied orange and lemon peel
- 100 gr of pine nuts
- 1 dozen of almonds for the decoration
- 16 gr (1 sachet) of baking powder – in Italy we use “Lievito Paneangeli” (look it up on Amazon)
- Pinch of salt
- Rind of 1 lemon



Preparation:

Slice by hand all the figs and walnuts.

Pour the milk in small pot with the butter and a pinch of salt. Heat the milk on the stove until the butter is melted (medium heat, so it does not boil)

Separate the 5 egg yolks from their whites and set them aside.

Beat the egg whites until firm.

Mix the flour, sugar, salt and the baking powder in a bowl (you will need a big bowl for the whole recipe).

Add the egg yolks and the milk/butter mix until you have absorbed all the flour. The mix will be wet and tacky.

Add all the dried fruit (figs, walnuts, pine nuts, sultanas, candied peels and lemon rind).

Once all ingredients are mixed, fold in the egg whites (slowly so to incorporate as much air as possible into the mix).

Pour the divided mix into the prepared 12 inch pans. Alternatively, you can prepare a cookie sheet pan with parchment paper (unless is non-stick). You place the mix and shape it round as long as it has even thickness of about $\frac{3}{4}$ of an inch. You can also shape it rectangular if desired. Flatten the mix with a spatula to ensure its thickness is even and the edges are smooth.

Place the almonds and or walnuts on top as a decoration.

Place the mix in a static pre-heated oven at 365-370F (185C to 190C) for about 40 minutes. Optional - 10 mins before the end of the bake, brush egg yolk on top of the surface. Remove from the oven and let it cool on a grate.