

The "panellet"

"Panellets" are little sweets with different shapes made with marzipan (almond bread) and other ingredients that give them different and special flavours.

"Panellets" are the traditional dessert for All Saints Day (November 1st) in a number of Catalan speaking regions including Catalonia, Valencia, Eivissa. We also usually eat chesnuts and sweet potatoes and drink sweet wine (known as "moscatell", "mistela", "vi de missa", "vi ranci" o Banyuls' sweet wine). We can find the origin of the panellet in the XVIII century when they had religious connotation.

"Panellets" dough is made with raw almonds, sugar and beaten egg white. Usually to make the mix cheaper we add boiled potatoes or boiled sweet potatoes.

"Panellets" are cooked in the oven. The most popular type are those which are rolled with pine nuts and varnished with yolk egg.

In All Saints Night the bell ringer used to ring it all night to remind people to pray for the deceases souls. At midnight the congregation would go to the church and share a glass of sweet wine, chesnuts and sweets with these men. From this tradition "La Castanyada" was created.

Nowadays the "panellets" have become very popular among all Catalan society. It is said that in 1807 they were already sold in the streets where they grilled the chestnuts and sell the "panellets". The first stands were placed close to the Hospital of Barcelona.

Today you can buy them in a bakery or you can make them at home. Friends and families gather together and a party is held. Some people like to give "panellets" a specific shape (for example bones in a clear reference to All Saints Day). Finally some new ingredients have been recently introduced to the old recipes such as orange or chocolate.

Happy Castanyada!