

HISTORY OF THE "CUCCHITELLA" OF SCIACCA (AG), SICILY, ITALY.

Ingredients: Almond paste, green zucchini jam, powdered or powdered sugar Production area: exclusively in Sciacca (AG), Sicily, Italy.

Denomination: in Italian it is called "cucchitella" in the singular, and in the plural "cucchitelle"; in Sicilian dialect "cucchitedda", and "cucchiteddi".

Technical details: The cucchitella is a typical Sicilian dessert, typical of the city of Sciacca. It is a dessert in the shape of a "spoon" and is considered a masterpiece of the Sicilian pastry tradition. Cucchitelle are produced all year round, they fear neither heat nor cold; if well stored in a cellophane bag these can keep their organoleptic properties unaltered.

Processing technology: It is a morsel of almond paste filled with "zuccata" or zucchini jam. Almond paste is a mixture of flour, sugar and ground and pulverized almonds, the same ones used to make Sicilian cassata, Martorana fruit, marzipan sheep and Easter lamb. The "zuccata" is a green zucchini jam. The green courgettes are left to boil and then seasoned with sugar until a very sweet jam is obtained. Once given, manually, the spoon shape, the "cucchitelle" are put in the oven; as soon as they are ready, let them cool and then put the icing or icing sugar on top.

Historical notes: The "cucchitella" was prepared for the first time around 1380 by the cloistered nuns of the Monastery of Santa Maria dell'Itria, called Badia Grande di Sciacca and founded in 1371. Once upon a time, the nuns were the only ones to dedicate themselves to the preparation of sweets; these delicacies were sold only to gentlemen who could buy them so that the nuns could provide for their own needs and the sustenance of the monastery.

City of origin: Sciacca is the most important seafaring city in the province of Agrigento, Sicily. It overlooks the Mediterranean Sea and is famous for several features such as pottery and majolica, thermal baths and vaporous caves, carnival, fishing, blue fish, anchovies, pink shrimp, coral, sea, beaches, and the very famous "cucchitelle".

Tip: although the cucchitella may seem cloying, we advise you to enjoy it with an excellent amaro, with fine almond wine, with Moscato sparkling wine, or with a delicious coffee.

Acknowledgments: Both the two components, that is almond paste and pumpkin are recognized as traditional Sicilian agri-food products and included in the P.A.T list (traditional agri-food products) approved by the Ministry of Agricultural, Food and Forestry Policies (Mipaaf); category: sweet; sector: fresh pasta and bakery, pastry, biscuit and confectionery products.