

Holiday Baking

A Traditional Favorite Returns

(NAPSA)—With the holiday season, a favorite treat is returning—panettone.

Enjoyed for centuries as a holiday staple in Italy, panettone—a moist, sweet specialty cake—has recently become widely available in the United States.

With its subtle sweetness and light texture, panettone is more versatile than traditional cakes. It can be enjoyed on its own or topped with ice cream or powdered sugar. It also pairs well with dessert wines or champagne for an after-dinner treat, or coffee or hot chocolate in the morning.

The Story of Panettone

While there are various versions of the origin of panettone, all of them take place in northern Italy, near Milan. One story centers around a baker's helper named Toni, who accidentally knocked raisins into a bowl of bread dough and then tried to remedy the situation by adding more dried fruit, sugar, butter and eggs. He baked it and gave it to his employer, who hailed the new creation and named it "pane di Toni" (Toni's bread, in Italian). In another legend, Toni the baker is deeply in love and concocts the recipe to win the respect of his beloved's father. In reality, the recipe developed from the Romans, who made a bread enriched with fruit similar to panettone.

In addition to being served to friends and family throughout the holiday season, panettone also makes a great hostess gift—a creative alternative to flowers or wine.

Panettone works well in recipes, as well—it makes delicious French toast, bread pudding and even stuffing.



A doubly delicious dessert at holiday time can be a hearty bread pudding made from sweet panettone.

Panettone Bread Pudding

6 oz. Bauducco Panettone, thinly sliced (about 8 slices)

2 cups whole milk

¾ cup sugar

1 cup heavy cream

¼ cup rum

¼ cup Marsala wine

3 eggs

2 tsp. grated orange zest

½ tsp. cinnamon

Confectioners' sugar

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Butter a shallow 3-quart baking dish. Layer the panettone slices in the baking dish. In a medium saucepan over medium-low heat, combine the milk and sugar. Bring the mixture to a simmer, stirring to dissolve sugar. Remove from heat and add the heavy cream, rum and Marsala wine. In a bowl, beat together the eggs, orange zest and cinnamon. Slowly stir in the milk mixture. Pour the mixture over the panettone slices, pressing the panettone down to keep it submerged. Let stand 10 minutes. Place the baking dish in a larger roasting pan. Pour hot

water around the baking dish to a depth of 1 inch. Bake for 30 minutes, or until a toothpick inserted midway into the pudding comes out clean and the top is golden. Cut into squares. Serve warm or chilled, sprinkled with confectioners' sugar.

While this recipe can be fun to follow, making the panettone itself can be a painstaking process. In fact, each Bauducco Panettone takes approximately 52 hours to make from start to finish. Made from a special "mother yeast" that is kept alive throughout the year, the dough must be allowed to rise for hours in a special temperature- and humidity-controlled fermentation room, a kind of "hothouse." Throughout the process, bakers mix in flour, eggs, sugar and other ingredients, and repeatedly return the dough to the fermentation room to rise. Finally, the panettones are baked, allowed to cool and packaged to be sent to retailers.

Made in the authentic Italian fashion, this panettone incorporates the highest-quality ingredients, like Sun-Maid raisins and—in a new take on an old tradition—Hershey's chocolate chips.

New this year is Bauducco Panettone Gran Natale, with almonds and a sugar glaze, that comes in a premium package for an especially impressive gift.

The company is the largest maker of panettone in the world, exporting to 80 countries.

More Recipes

For additional recipes and creative serving suggestions, visit www.bauducco.com.