

## Italian Holidays - Questions

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <p>1. <b>Name of the holiday in English</b><br/>All Souls Day</p> <p>2. <b>Date in English</b><br/>November 2<sup>nd</sup></p> <p>3. <b>A brief history of the holiday: What are the origins of this holiday in Italy? Why is it celebrated in Italy? What does it commemorate? What famous people are connected to this holiday?</b></p> | <p>1. <b>Name of the Holiday in Italian</b><br/>Il <b>Giorno dei Morti</b></p> <p>2. <b>Date in Italian</b><br/><b>il due novembre</b></p> |
|---|--|

Starting in 998 A.D. the 2 November date and customs spread from the Cluniac monasteries to other Benedictine monasteries and then to the Western Church in general. The abbot of Cluny had funeral bells rung after vespers on November 1 and the next day, November 2, offered the Eucharist for all the dead. The Diocese of Liège was the first diocese to adopt the practice under Bishop Notger (1008). November 2 was adopted in Italy and Rome in the thirteenth century.

4. **Is it more of a regional holiday or is it celebrated all over Italy?**

It is celebrated all over Italy, but is not a day off from work

In Sicily and other regions of southern Italy, families visit and clean grave sites, home altars are decorated with family photos and votive candles, and children are gifted a special basket or **cannistru** with chocolates, pomegranate, and other gifts from their “ancestors”. Because of the gifting of sugary sweets and the emphasis on sugar puppet decorations, these local Sicilian events in which communities celebrate the dead, are known as, the **Notte di Zuccherò** ("Nights of Sugar").

5. **How is this holiday celebrated in Italy? Is it celebrated differently in different regions?**

Italians will recall the dead by bringing flowers, particularly chrysanthemums to cemeteries. Chrysanthemum flowers are symbolic because they are the only flowers that need darkness to grow. Prayers are offered for the dead, as well as souls that are stuck in purgatory.

They also light candles at the gravesites and recite the following prayer three times

<<L'eterno riposo dona a loro Signore. Splendi ad essi la luce perpetua. Riposino in pace, Amen. (Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them. May their souls and the souls of all the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen.)>>

6. **Are there any special customs connected with the celebration of this holiday in Italy?**

See above. Number 5)

7. **Are there any special foods/meals connected with this holiday?**

Piada dei morti, a sweet focaccia topped with raisins, almonds, walnuts, and pine nuts, is traditionally eaten in November for All Souls' Day in the region of Rimini, in Emilia-Romagna.

Bones of the Dead Cookies, **Ossa di Morto**, are made in different regions.

## 8. Are there any specific recipes you can share of foods prepared for this holiday?

### Piada dei morti

Prep Time 15 minutes mins

Cook Time 15 minutes mins

Total Time 30 minutes mins

Servings: 36 cookies

Ingredients

- 1 cup raisins
- 1 cup dried figs or dates
- 1 ½ cups almonds or hazelnuts toasted and ground
- ½ cup Nocino or another Italian liqueur, or even orange juice
- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- ½ cup unsweetened cocoa powder
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- ½ teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 2 cups ground lady finger cookies
- 1 cup ground amaretti cookies
- 1½ cups sugar
- 5 eggs 3 egg yolks, 2 whole eggs
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- confectioner's sugar for dusting

Instructions

- Preheat oven to 350F. Line 3 cookie sheets with parchment paper.
- On a baking sheet, toast the almonds for about 5 minutes. When they are cool, grind them (you could use hazelnuts or a mixture of almonds and hazelnuts); set aside.
- In a small bowl, soak the raisins and dried figs in the liqueur.
- Place the amaretti and lady fingers in the bowl of the food processor and finely grind them; set aside.
- Reserve the liqueur from the dried fruit and grind the raisins and dried figs; set aside.
- In a large bowl, sift together the flour, baking powder and spices. Whisk in the ground cookies; set aside. Be sure to stop the mixture while mixing to scrape the sides of the bowl.
- In the bowl of a mixer, add sugar, the eggs, egg whites and vanilla. Mix until combined.
- Slowly add in the flour mixture. Mix until combined.
- Add in the dried fruit and a tablespoon of the liqueur. Keep adding the liqueur a teaspoon at a time until dough is combined (the dough shouldn't be too wet).
- Remove the dough from the bowl and wrap it in plastic wrap. Chill in the refrigerator for 30-45 minutes.
- Lightly flour the counter or a pastry board. Cut the dough into 6 parts. Flour your fingers if it helps you work with the dough. Roll the first part of the dough into a rope that is about 18 inches long. Cut the rope into 2 parts.
- Cut the first section of dough into pieces that are about 3 inches long and 1 inch wide. Line them up with some space between them on the first baking sheet. Press down a little on each cookie and fix their shapes (the dough can be messy).
- Continue the process with the other parts of the dough.
- Bake for about 15 minutes. Dust with confectioner's sugar.

### Ossi dei Morti

Prep Time 40 minutes mins

Cook Time 15 minutes mins

Total Time 55 minutes mins

Servings: 3 dozen cookies

Ingredients

- 3 tablespoons softened unsalted butter
- 1 ¼ cup sugar
- 1 egg white lightly beaten with 1 teaspoon of vanilla
- 1 ½ cups all-purpose flour
- ½ cup whole wheat flour
- ½ cup ground almonds

- grated zest of one lemon
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/4 teaspoon of ground cloves
- 1-2 Tablespoons Nocino or another Italian liqueur, white wine or even water
- confectioner's sugar for dusting

#### Instructions

- Line 3 cookie sheets with parchment paper.
  - Cream the butter and sugar. Add in the egg white mixed with the vanilla and beat on medium speed for a minute or two until combined.
  - In a small bowl, combine the flour, ground almonds, grated lemon zest and spices.
  - Slowly add in the flour mixture and mix until combined, stopping the mixer to scrape the sides of the bowl and combine all the flour.
  - Add 1 Tablespoon of the Nocino (or other liqueur or water). Add in more 1 teaspoon at a time if needed until the dough is combined (but not too wet).
  - Remove the dough and wrap it in plastic wrap. Let chill for about 30-45 minutes. While dough is chilling, preheat the oven to 350 F.
  - Lightly flour a clean counter or a pastry board. Cut the dough into 4 parts. Roll the first part of dough into a rope that is about 18 inches long. Cut the rope into two parts. Cut the first section into cookies that are about 3 inches long and about 1/2 inch thick. Line them up with some space between them on a first baking tray. Press down a little on the cookie. Continue the process with the other parts of the dough.
  - Bake for about 15 minutes or until the edges just start to turn golden brown. Dust with confectioner's sugar.
9. Are there special greetings Italians say to each other on this holiday? Any special Italian vocabulary connected with this holiday?

**Festa dei Morti**, "Commemoration of the Dead"

**U juornu rii morti**, dialect for the "Day of the Dead"

10. Did your family immigrant ancestors celebrate this holiday? Does your family still celebrate it with Italian traditions?
- My family still goes to church and lights candles. At our church we have the book of all souls where you can write the names of your family members that have died during the year. We also go to the cemetery.
11. Add any other information you consider pertinent or interesting.
12. List as many ideas as possible on how we can incorporate these holiday celebrations at our lodges to foster interest in Italian culture, heritage, and language. Think of activities that would appeal to different age levels (children, young adults, other members, families, specific interest groups).
- We can encourage members to attend a church service together.
  - We could have a gathering at our lodges and do a prayer service and then celebrate lives of the deceased.
  - Put flowers on the grave of members that have died through the years keeping their memories and contributions alive.
  - Create a memory garden to honor deceased loved ones.
  - Ask members to choose one or two members from their family to write a short snippet of fond memories they have of their Italian ancestors. Then create a collective book of their Italian stories with photos, if available. It would be an interesting way to begin a library of Italian history at the local level, while also celebrating All Souls' Day.
  - Recite the "Rest in Peace" prayer in Italian:  
 <<L'eterno riposo dona a loro Signore. Splendi ad essi la luce perpetua. Riposino in pace, Amen. (Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them.

May their souls and the souls of all the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen.)>>