

Feast of the Seven Fishes: A Christmas Eve Tradition

The Feast of the Seven Fishes is a traditional Italian-American Christmas Eve meal that features seven different types of seafood. The tradition is said to have originated in Southern Italy, where it was customary to eat a large meal on the eve of a feast day. In the United States, the Feast of the Seven Fishes became popular among Italian immigrants in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.



Feast of the Seven Fishes: 40 Authentic Italian Recipes for a Christmas Eve Tradition by Valeria Ray

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There are many different theories about why the number seven is significant in this tradition. Some believe that it represents the seven sacraments of the Catholic Church. Others believe that it represents the seven days of creation. Still others believe that it simply represents the abundance of seafood that was available in Southern Italy.

Whatever the reason, the Feast of the Seven Fishes is a beloved holiday tradition for many Italian-American families. The meal is typically served on a large table, with each type of seafood arranged on a separate platter. The dishes are often prepared in advance, so that the family can focus on spending time together on Christmas Eve.

Here are some of the most popular seafood dishes that are served at the Feast of the Seven Fishes:

- **Baccalà** (salt cod)
- **Calamari** (squid)
- **Capesante** (scallops)
- **Gamberi** (shrimp)
- **Merluzzo** (cod)
- **Pesce spada** (swordfish)
- **Salmone** (salmon)

In addition to the seafood dishes, the Feast of the Seven Fishes often includes other traditional Italian dishes, such as pasta, bread, and vegetables. The meal is typically served with a variety of wines, and it is often followed by a dessert of cookies or pastries.

The Feast of the Seven Fishes is a unique and special holiday tradition. It is a time for family and friends to come together and celebrate the Christmas season. The meal is a symbol of abundance and joy, and it is a reminder of the importance of family and tradition.

Recipes

If you are interested in trying some of the dishes from the Feast of the Seven Fishes, here are a few recipes to get you started:

Baccalà (Salt Cod)



Ingredients

* 1 pound salt cod, soaked overnight in cold water * 1/2 cup olive oil * 1 onion, chopped * 2 cloves garlic, minced * 1 teaspoon dried oregano * 1/2 cup white wine * 1 cup crushed tomatoes * 1/2 cup water * 1/4 cup chopped fresh parsley

Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees F (175 degrees C). 2. In a large skillet, heat the olive oil over medium heat. Add the onion and cook until softened. Add the garlic and oregano and cook for 1 minute more. 3. Stir in the white wine, crushed tomatoes, and water. Bring to a boil, then reduce heat and simmer for 15 minutes. 4. Drain the salt cod and add it to the skillet. Stir to coat with the sauce. 5. Transfer the mixture to a baking dish and bake for 20 minutes, or until the fish is cooked through. 6. Sprinkle with fresh parsley and serve.

Calamari (Squid)



Ingredients

* 1 pound calamari, cleaned and cut into rings * 1/2 cup flour * 1/2 cup cornstarch * 1 teaspoon salt * 1/2 teaspoon black pepper * 1/4 cup olive oil * 1/4 cup lemon juice * 1/4 cup chopped fresh parsley

Instructions

1. In a large bowl, combine the flour, cornstarch, salt, and pepper. 2. Dredge the calamari rings in the flour mixture. 3. Heat the olive oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Add the calamari rings and cook until golden brown. 4. Remove the calamari from the skillet and drain on paper towels. 5. In a small bowl, whisk together the lemon juice and fresh parsley. Pour over the calamari and serve.

Capesante (Scallops)



Ingredients

* 1 pound scallops, shucked and deveined * 1/4 cup olive oil * 1/4 cup white wine * 1/4 cup lemon juice * 1 tablespoon chopped fresh parsley * 1/4 teaspoon salt * 1/4 teaspoon black pepper

Instructions

1. In a large skillet, heat the olive oil over medium heat. Add the scallops and cook until golden brown on both sides. 2. Add the white wine, lemon juice, parsley, salt, and pepper to the skillet. Bring to a boil, then reduce heat and simmer for 5 minutes, or until the scallops are cooked through. 3. Serve immediately.

Gamberi (Shrimp)



Ingredients

* 1 pound shrimp, peeled and deveined * 1/2 cup olive oil * 1/4 cup lemon juice * 1/4 cup white wine * 1 tablespoon chopped fresh parsley * 1/4 teaspoon salt * 1/4 teaspoon black pepper

Instructions

1. In a large skillet, heat the olive oil over medium heat. Add the shrimp and cook until pink and cooked through. 2. Add the lemon juice, white wine, parsley, salt, and pepper to the skillet. Bring to a boil, then reduce heat and simmer for 5 minutes. 3. Serve immediately.

Merluzzo (Cod)



Ingredients

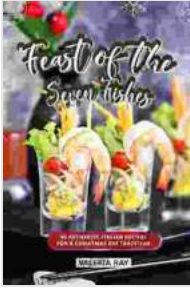
* 1 pound cod, cut into 1-inch pieces * 1/2 cup flour * 1/2 cup

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