Italy - Panettone

PANETTONE IS TRADITIONALLY PRESENTED IN COLORFUL BOXES, METALLIC PAPER, OR DECORATIVE TINS. MANY FAMILIES REWRAP STORE-BOUGHT LOAVES IN FABRIC OR CRAFT PAPER TO ADD A PERSONAL TOUCH.

Panettone – Italian Christmas Bread

⏱ Prep: 20 mins 🍴 Serves: 8

500 g flour
150 g sugar
150 g butter
4 eggs
150 ml milk
20 g fresh yeast (or 7 g dry)
1 tsp salt
Zest of 1 lemon & 1 orange
200 g candied fruit
100 g raisins
1 tsp vanilla
[2–3 tbsp rum (optional)

1. Soak raisins and candied fruit in rum (optional).
2. Mix yeast with warm milk and a little sugar, let foam 10 min.
3. Mix flour, sugar, salt, zest; add eggs, butter, milk-yeast mix, vanilla; knead 10 min.
4. Fold in soaked fruit.
5. Let dough rise 2–3 h until doubled.
6. Place in tall mold, let rise 1–2 h.
7. Bake 180 °C for 40–50 min; cover if browning too fast.
8. Cool upside down before slicing.

Germany – Stollen

TRADITIONALLY DUSTED WITH POWDERED SUGAR "SNOW," STOLLEN IS WRAPPED IN PARCHMENT OR FESTIVE PAPER AND GIVEN AS A HEARTFELT CHRISTMAS GIFT.

Stollen – German Christmas Bread

⏱ Prep: 30 min + rising 🍽 Serves: 10–12 slices

330 g flour
85 ml milk (lukewarm)
7 g dry yeast
165 g butter (soft)
50 g sugar
⅓ tsp salt
Cinnamon, Cardamom, Mace, Cloves
1 tsp lemon zest
200 g raisins (soaked in rum)
80 g candied orange peel
40 g candied lemon peel
30 g ground almonds
(opt.) 200 g marzipan log
Butter & powdered sugar

1. Soak raisins and peel in rum.
2. Activate yeast in warm milk with sugar, 10 min.
3. Combine flour, sugar, salt, zest, spices, butter, milk mix; knead smooth.
4. Add fruit and almonds; knead briefly.
5. Let rise 2–3 h.
6. Shape (add marzipan if used), rise 1–2 h.
7. Bake 180 °C ≈ 45 min; cover if darkening.
8. Brush with butter, coat in powdered sugar; cool before slicing.

Spain – Turrón

TURRÓN IS A CLASSIC SPANISH NOUGAT, MADE WITH ALMONDS AND HONEY. TRADITIONALLY ENJOYED DURING THE HOLIDAYS AND OFTEN WRAPPED IN FESTIVE PAPER OR BOXES TO GIVE AS GIFTS.

Turrón – Spanish Christmas Nougat

⏱️ Prep: 20 min + cool 🍽️ Serves: 10–12

250 g almonds (toasted)
200 g honey
200 g sugar
1 egg white (stiffly beaten)
(opt.) lemon zest or cinnamon

1. Toast almonds until light golden.
2. Warm honey + sugar until syrupy.
3. Beat egg white until glossy peaks. Fold into syrup.
4. Mix in almonds (and zest/spice if using).
5. Press into small mould / flat pan. Let cool & harden. Slice thin.

France – Bûche de Noël

A FESTIVE CENTERPIECE OF FRENCH CHRISTMAS TABLES, THE BÛCHE DE NOËL IS A ROLLED SPONGE CAKE SHAPED LIKE A YULE LOG. TRADITIONALLY DECORATED WITH CHOCOLATE, CREAM, AND SEASONAL ORNAMENTS.

Bûche de Noël – French Christmas Log

⏱ Prep: 40 min + chilling 🍴 Serves: 8–10

- 4 eggs
- 100 g sugar
- 100 g flour
- 50 g cocoa powder
- 200 ml heavy cream
- 50 g powdered sugar
- 100 g dark chocolate (for ganache)
- Butter (for greasing)
- Optional: berries, meringue mushrooms, powdered sugar

1. Preheat oven 180 °C. Line baking tray with buttered parchment.
2. Beat eggs + sugar until fluffy. Fold in flour + cocoa.
3. Spread batter on tray; bake 10–12 min. Cool slightly.
4. Whip cream with powdered sugar.
5. Roll sponge carefully with cream inside; unroll and spread more cream outside.
6. Cover with melted chocolate ganache; decorate with festive toppings.
7. Chill before serving.

Mexico - Tamales

TAMALES, WRAPPED IN CORN HUSKS, ARE A TRADITIONAL MEXICAN CHRISTMAS TREAT - MADE IN BATCHES AND GIVEN AS GIFTS TO SPREAD HOLIDAY CHEER.

TAMALES – MEXICAN CHRISTMAS TREAT

⏱ Prep: 45 min + 1–1.5 hr steaming 🍽 Serves: 6–8

- 2 cups corn dough
- 1 ½ cups chicken or vegetable broth
- 1 tsp baking powder
- ½ tsp salt
- ½ cup lard or vegetable shortening
- 12–15 dried corn husks, soaked in warm water
- 1 cup cooked shredded chicken (pork, beef, vegetables)
- ½ cup red or green salsa
- Optional: olives, raisins, or cheese for stuffing

1. Soak corn husks in warm water for 30 minutes.
2. Mix corn dough, baking powder, salt, and broth until smooth.
3. Spread a thin layer of the corn dough mixture on each husk.
4. Add 1–2 tbsp filling in the center, fold sides over, then fold the bottom.
5. Steam upright for 1–1.5 hours, until firm and easy to peel.
6. Let cool slightly, serve warm, or wrap to gift.

Philippines - Bibingka

BIBINGKA IS A SOFT, SWEET RICE CAKE BAKED IN BANANA LEAVES, A BELOVED FILIPINO CHRISTMAS TREAT. TRADITIONALLY ENJOYED AFTER SIMBANG GABI, IT'S OFTEN TOPPED WITH BUTTER, SALTED EGG, AND CHEESE FOR A FESTIVE TOUCH.

BIBINGKA – FILIPINO CHRISTMAS CAKE

⏱ Prep: 15 min 🍽 Serves: 6–8

2 cups rice flour
1 cup coconut milk
½ cup sugar
2 tsp baking powder
½ tsp salt
2 eggs
½ cup melted butter
Banana leaves (for lining)
Optional toppings: salted egg slices, grated cheese, shredded coconut, butter

1. Preheat oven to 350°F (175°C). Line a baking pan with banana leaves.
2. In a bowl, mix rice flour, sugar, baking powder, and salt.
3. Add eggs, coconut milk, and melted butter; stir until smooth.
4. Pour batter into prepared pan. Top with salted egg slices, cheese, or coconut.
5. Bake 25–30 minutes, until firm and lightly golden.
6. Serve warm or wrap in banana leaves to gift.

Sweden – Almond Rice Pudding

IN SWEDEN, CREAMY RICE PUDDING IS A CHERISHED CHRISTMAS DESSERT, OFTEN SERVED WARM WITH CINNAMON AND MILK. A WHOLE ALMOND IS HIDDEN INSIDE THE PUDDING – WHOEVER FINDS IT IS SAID TO RECEIVE GOOD LUCK FOR THE COMING YEAR.

ALMOND RICE PUDDING – SWEDISH CHRISTMAS DESSERT

⏱ Prep: 15 min 🍽 Serves: 6–8

- 1 cup short-grain rice
- 4 cups milk
- ½ cup sugar
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- ¼ tsp salt
- 1 whole almond
- Optional: cinnamon, extra sugar, or milk for serving

1. Rinse rice and place in a pot with milk and salt.
2. Simmer gently over low heat, stirring often, until rice is soft and creamy (about 40–50 minutes).
3. Stir in sugar and vanilla.
4. Hide one whole almond in the pudding before serving.
5. Serve warm with a sprinkle of cinnamon or a little milk.