

# New Year's Eve greek traditional sweet: Vasilopita

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# Vasilopita: The Christmas essential



- Before we leave 2018 behind we decided to present one of the most widely known Greek Christmas customs. An essential item in the Greek Christmas cuisine is the “Vasilopita”.

# What exactly is the Vasilopita?

- The Vasilopita is a sort of pie that contains a fake coin, it is produced in only some countries by the Christians. We “cut” the Vasilopita on New Year’s Eve, a few minutes after the year changes..



# Where does this custom originate from?

- This custom is in fact a very old one, it dates back to ancient times. According to Christian writings, the custom of placing a coin inside the pie started in the times of Saint Basil the Great. According to Christian traditions, the vasilopita has its roots in Caesarea, located in Asia Minor, its name was taken from Saint Basil himself.





# The Vasilopita's Myth

So according to legend, Saint Basil, which was the despot of Caesarea at the time, asked the people to bring him a few precious items, such as gold and jewelry. He needed to gift the items to the greedy tyrant of Caesarea in order to ensure the city's safety from the tyrant that had intentions to loot and pillage it. Although, the tyrant was defeated with the help of God before he could sack and destroy the city. So Saint Basil had to come up with a plan in order to return the precious items to the people without being unjust to anyone. Then, he prayed to God, and he answered, telling him to bake small pieces of warm bread and hide the valuables inside the food. The Saint obeyed God's order and it is said that each citizen received the exact item that he had given to the Saint.

# The cutting of the pie

- So, annually, when new year comes in, every Greek family sets the pie on the dinner table. The head of the family cuts the pie in a cross shape three times and then begins to cut pieces for the family members. The first piece belongs to the house, to Christ or to Saint Basil. Then comes the houseowner's, his wife's and then the rest of the family gets a piece in order by age.



# The Different types of Vasilopita

In Greece, most families tend to bake the Caesarean Vasilopita, although there are many different types of this pie which are baked throughout Greece:

- In Western Macedonia the vasilopita is usually a cheese pie.
- In Kastoria, families bake baklava instead of the actual vasilopita.
- In Naousa people bake meat pies.
- In Chios, they make vasilopita with gum from Chios.
- Finally, in the Peloponnese they bake a type of cake.



# Recipe

- 500 gr. of self-raising flour
- 1 flora with butter in aluminum foil
- 3 big eggs
- 2 tea cups of sugar
- 1 teaspoon of baking powder
- ½ teacup of walnuts
- ½ teacup of almonds
- ½ teacup of currants
- ½ teacup of brandy (warm)
- 250 ml. of milk
- 1 teaspoon of orange zest
- ½ tea cup of orange juice
- Icing sugar for décor

The materials





# How to make

- Preheat the oven to 170°C. Pour the pan with a little Flora butter and sprinkle it with some flour. Pour the raisins with the hot cognac and let them soak. Sprinkle the nuts with a little flour and leave them aside. Pour the Flora butter into the mixer bowl and beat it with the sugar until the sugar melts well and the mixture becomes white. Add one by one the eggs, the vanilla scent and the orange zest. Mix and add milk and juice. Then add the flour mingled with the baking powder. Once the mix is homogenized, stop the mixer and pour the raisins and nuts. Stir well with a spatula.

The  
procedure



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