

The Legend of Panettone

and Serving Suggestions

Panettone means “big bread.” In Italian the suffix ‘-one’ is often used to describe a large size. (Padre = father...padrone = boss or landlord, Calza = stocking or legging...calzone = trousers). Following the same logic, ‘panettone’ is derived from adding ‘pane’ (loaf of bread) or ‘pannetto’ to ‘-one’ for ‘Panettone.’

Panettone is a cake-like bread that is filled with any number of fruit, nut or chocolate inclusions. It is traditionally an Italian Christmas dessert but has become so popular it is also enjoyed in France, Germany, Canada, Britain, Spain and the United States.

The stories of its history are varied. One legend says a Milanese nobleman, Ughetto degli Atellani fell in love with the daughter of a poor baker named Toni. To win her over, the nobleman disguised himself as a baker and invented a rich bread in which he added to the flour and yeast, butter, eggs, dried raisins and candied lemon and orange peel. After having the bread, the duke of Milan, Ludovico il Moro Sforza (1452-1508), agreed to the marriage, and encouraged the introduction of the new cake-like bread: Pan del Ton (or Toni’s bread).

Other historians claim to have found references to “pan del ton” as far back as the 1300s. In those days some families made a thick bread with wheat flour called “pan del ton,” which meant “luxury bread” in Milanese dialect.

Serving Suggestions

Panettone will remain fresh for three days, making it a wonderful addition to your family holiday meals or a delicious treat to bring along to someone else’s home. The cake-like dessert can be served alone or with mascarpone cheese, jams and butters. Once past its peak freshness, Panettone makes fabulous toast, French toast or bread pudding.

When serving Panettone, simply remove the paper liner and slice the loaf with a serrated knife. Cut across the top of the loaf as you would a cake slice. You can get at least 12-14 slices if cut in this manner. Another option is to place the loaf on its side after removing paper and cut ½ inch rounds which fit into a toaster or for easy dipping into French toast batter.

It is considered bad luck to remove the crusty top of the Panettone and consume on your own, much like removing a muffin top!

Following is a delicious recipe for you to make at home. Enjoy!

Panettone

Starter

Ingredients	Amount
Bread Flour	1 cup
Whole Milk	1/3 cup
Instant Dry Yeast	1/2 teaspoon

Final Dough

Ingredients	Amount
All of Above Starter	
Bread Flour	2 cups
Instant Dry Yeast	1/4 teaspoon
Whole Eggs	2
Sugar	1/3 cup
Butter	6 tablespoons
Dried Cranberries	1 cup
Candied Orange Peel	1/2 cup

- Combine the three ingredients for the starter and briefly mix until a cohesive dough is achieved, about two minutes by hand or 30 seconds with a stand mixer.
- Allow the starter to ferment, covered in a bowl for 6-8 hours at room temperature.
- In the bowl of a stand mixer, combine the fermented starter, the flour, eggs, milk, sugar, salt, butter and instant yeast.
- Turn the mixer on low speed and combine the ingredients, continuing to mix for approximately 5 minutes. Turn the mixer on medium-high speed and mix for 4 minutes more.
- Stop the mixer and add the cranberries and candied orange peel. Turn the mixer on low speed and combine for one minute or until the fruit is evenly distributed. Be sure not to over-mix and destroy the fruit.
- Remove the dough from the mixer and place in a large bowl with plenty of room for expansion. Cover the dough with either plastic wrap or a tightly woven cloth.
- After 30 minutes, uncover the dough and gently fold the dough upon itself two or three times as if you were folding a bed sheet. Place the dough back into the bowl and cover. Let ferment for one hour more.
- Remove the dough from the bowl and place on a very lightly flour-dusted work surface.
- Using a dough scraper or a very sharp knife, divide the Panettone dough in two equal parts by eye.
- Using cupped hands, form each piece of dough into two perfect round balls and place on a parchment paper-lined sheet pan. Cover the dough with cloth and allow to ferment, or “proof,” for approximately 1 hour. The properly proofed Panettone should give slightly to the touch as the pressure from a finger leaves an indentation that retracts only partially.
- Beat one egg and brush the surface of each Panettone evenly with a smooth coating of egg wash.
- With a sharp serrated knife, cut an “X” about 4” across the top of each loaf and immediately place into a 350°F oven for about 25 minutes or until a dark mahogany color is achieved.
- Remove from the sheet pan immediately after baking and place on a cooling rack. Lightly dust with powdered sugar after the bread is completely cooled (about one hour).