

Recipe

The History of Rosca de Reyes King's Cake (and How to Make It)



Gillie Houston January 6, 2016



The traditional Rosca de Reyes is served as a celebration of the King's Day in many cultures. (Photo: @baketotheroots)

While for many, the beginning of the New Year means taking down the tree, tossing out mounds of wrapping paper, and removing twinkle lights, for some cultures the Christmas season is still in full force. January 6 marks the El Día de Reyes, or King's Day, which celebrates the arrival of the three wise men

back to the middle ages. The tradition of hiding figures within the dough represents the flight of the Holy Family during King Herod's Massacre of the Innocents, and the reward for finding the figurine varies from culture to culture. For some, whoever finds the baby Jesus is considered blessed and must take the figure to the nearest church. For others, the finder is declared King and thus responsible for hosting a dinner of tamales and atole for their guests on February 2, also known as Candlemas, or the day the infant Jesus' was blessed in the temple.

"The children of Mexico look forward to this holiday as traditionally, gifts are exchanged on this date, not Christmas day," says Chef Roberto Santibañez of FONDA restaurants in NYC, who adds a King's Ring Cake to his menus from January 5-10 as an ode to this beloved childhood tradition. Throughout Texas, Roscas De Reyes are also a popular bakery item in early January, as many of the Latino population prepare to celebrate the holiday. While some keep the cake simple, others get creative, stuffing their dough with fruity fillings, cream and cajeta cheese.

in Bethlehem and the day Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist. In Spain, Latin America, and many Hispanic communities in the U.S., children open gifts, parties are thrown, and joyous guests dig into one sweet special treat: the Rosca de Reyes. The Rosca de Reyes, or King's Ring, consists of an oval of sweet, chewy egg bread, often filled and dressed with figs, quinces, cherries, or dried and candied fruits.

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Though most have a buttery French sugar and condensed milk filling, the Carnival season royal treat. However, traditions.

In French culture, the youngest child is blindfolded and sits under the table as the King's Cake is served, blindly assigning slices of the cake to different family members, each hoping to uncover the porcelain nativity trinket within. Clemence Danko, owner of **Choc O Pain Bakeries** in New Jersey, keeps this playful tradition alive by serving a Galette de Rois with a light frangipane filling all January long.

members, each within. Clemence Danko, owner of Galette de Rois.

Also known as the Galette de Rois in southern France or the Tortell in Catalonia, where the holiday is also celebrated, this festive treat has a long and diverse history that dates

dried citrus rinds, this Epiphany dessert is a favored tradition for many — especially those lucky few who unearth a little plastic deity and become ruler of the cake kingdom for a day.