

ITALEO Newsletter



"Supporting those who protect us"

UPCOMING EVENT

AAA CLASS FOR ITALEO

Saturday, January 21

Starts at 9:00 AM

Locust Club

1425 Lexington Avenue

\$29

Reservation deadline

1/7/2023 @ 11:00 PM

[Registration Survey](#)

UPCOMING EVENT

COMEDY SHOW



Saturday, March 11th
Italian Sports Club

We're bringing back
Frank Del Pizzo

More details to follow

UPCOMING EVENT

MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Tuesday, March 28, 2022

6:00 PM

TBD

RSVP

By 3/26 @ 11 PM



*Tanti Auguri
di Buon Anno*

NEW YEAR'S DAY - NATIONAL HOLIDAY

January 1st is a National Holiday in Italy. Most shops, museums, restaurants and other services are closed so that everyone can recover from New Year's Eve festivities.

Italian tradition dictates that seven dried fruits and nuts be eaten for good luck on New Year's Eve: almonds, hazelnuts, peanuts, walnuts, dates, raisins and dried figs. Some also eat pomegranate, its innumerable seeds suggest fertility and wealth since ancient Roman times.

While not an official public holiday in Italy, December 31st is widely celebrated across the twenty regions. City centers are crowded with the combined revelries of La Festa di San Silvestro and New Year's Eve, which include fireworks, concerts, festivals, dancing, bonfires and feasts.

Buon Capadanno!



EPIPHANY - JANUARY 6TH (National Holiday)

On January 6th, Italians celebrate the Feast of the Epiphany with a national public holiday. Epiphany marks the end of the Christmas period and commemorates the presentation of the infant Jesus to the Magi, or three wise men.

This the twelfth day of Christmas and the traditional Christmas holiday season in Italy last through Epiphany. All schools and businesses will be closed, but most stores remain open.

January 6th is also known as La Befana. In Italian folklore, Befana is an old soot-covered woman or witch who delivers presents to Italian children on the night before La Befana (Epiphany Eve).

The story goes that on the way to see the infant Jesus, the Magi stopped to ask Befana for directions and asked her to join them. She initially refused, but later had a change of heart and tried to find the manger. She was unable to find the baby Jesus and gave the gifts she had brought to other children. To this day, she travels on her broomstick every year on January 5th looking for the manger and giving her presents to any Italian child who leaves out a shoe or hangs up a stocking on Epiphany Eve. This legend arose in the 13th century and for a long time, La Befana was a tradition confined to Rome and the surrounding regions, but this festival has become popular across all of Italy in the last hundred years.

It wouldn't be a proper Italian festival without an excuse to bake some yummy food and La Befana is no exception. Special treats on La Befana include sweet coal, small cookies called *befanini* and Befana cake - a cake with a large, dried bean inside. Whoever gets the bean in their slice is king (or queen) for the day.

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Christmas Gala Recap



We had a great turn out at the ITALEO Christmas Gala. Thank you to everyone that came out to support our organization. We can't do it without you!

Congratulations to our award winners:

- *Cameron Barnebei - Scholarship Award*
- *Michael Brandenburg - Life Saving Award*
- *Michael DiCataldo - Businessperson of the Year*
- *Gary Galetta - Retirement Certificate*
- *Sino Seng - Officer of the Year*

We were thrilled to announce that due to the support of our membership and community, we raised over \$10,000 for the Mazurkiewicz family.

2022 was another successful year. We gained 38 new members, bringing our total membership to 193. We officially became a nonprofit 501 c3 organization. A special thanks to the Gallo & Iacovangelo Law firm for assisting us with this process. In October, we were selected as a designated donor organization with United Way. Since the creation of the Officer Relief Fund, ITALEO held three successful fundraising events.

Thank you to Rafael Barreto, owner of Hollywood Traders, and Dave & Dawn Amico for donating the wonderful raffle prizes.

We look forward to your continued support as we approach our 30th Anniversary.

**REMINDER:**

No January or February Membership Meetings.

La Befana Cake (Gather Style)

Ingredients:

1 & 1/4 cup cornmeal or polenta
 3/4 cup almond flour
 3/4 cup brown sugar (little extra or sprinkling on top)
 or 1/2 cup of honey
 1/3 cup softened butter
 3 & 1/2 cups of milk
 2 teaspoons lemon or orange zest
 2 tablespoons currants or raisins
 1 & 1/2 tablespoons candied orange peels (chopped)
 1 & 1/2 tablespoons minced candied ginger
 2 tablespoons dried apricots (finely chopped) or cranberries
 3/4 cup diced fresh apple
 1/4 cup of Grappa (or brandy)
 1 & 1/2 teaspoon fennel seeds
 1 & 1/2 teaspoon of anise seeds
 Teaspoon or so of sea salt
 2 tablespoons of almond flakes for garnish

Directions:

Put all the candied fruit, raisins, ginger, apricots in a bowl, pour over the brandy and allow to soften for an hour. Bring the milk to a boil with a pinch of salt. Once you have reached the boil, pour in the almond flour and polenta, slowly, mixing well with a whisk, so that it does not form lumps. Reduce heat to low, continue to cook, stirring constantly, for about 10-12 minutes. The mixture should be soft and non-gritty so add more milk if necessary. It will be thick.

Remove from heat, then add the butter in chunks, the diced apple, brown sugar, brandy-soaked dried fruit, fennel, and anise seeds. Mix well, then pour the mixture into a pre-greased round springboard cake tin (8 -9 inch). Level it, sprinkle the surface generously with brown sugar. Cook at 350 F for about 50-55 minutes, a beautiful golden-brown crust should form on the surface. If you used honey, you may need an additional 7-10 minutes but don't overbake as it will firm up and set once cool. Let sit overnight so flavors can intermingle and deepen!



RECIPE CORNER

BEFANINI

Befanini are small traditional shortbread cookies served in Italy on the day of Epiphany, that is known over there as La Befana.

Prep Time 50 mins

Cook Time 15 mins

Total Time 1 hr 5 mins

Servings: 50 cookies

Author: Vera Abitbol



INGREDIENTS

- 4 cups flour
- 14 tablespoons unsalted butter, soft
- 1 cup sugar
- 1/4 cup milk
- Zest of 1 lemon
- 5 eggs
- 1/2 teaspoon baking powder
- 1 pinch of salt
- 2 tablespoons rum
- Small multicolored sprinkles

INSTRUCTIONS

- Mix the eggs and sugar until frothy.
- Add the butter, flour, milk, baking powder, salt, lemon zest and rum (optional).
- Mix all the ingredients to obtain a smooth dough.
- Let stand 45 minutes in the refrigerator.
- Preheat oven to 350F/180C.
- Spread the dough with a rolling pin to about 1/3 inch (4mm) and cut into various shapes using cookie cutters.
- Place the cookies on a buttered and floured baking sheet or lined with parchment paper and brush them with egg yolk.
- Sprinkle with sugar sprinkles.
- Bake for about 15 minutes.
- Monitor the color of befanini as they must not be too dark.

If you'd like to submit an Italian Recipe to include in the next newsletter, please email us at:
italeorochester@gmail.com