



Stinchetti, also called “bones of the dead”, are biscuits, shaped like the tibia (shin bone) and typical of the Perugia area. They are typically found in the period around the festivity of Remembrance of the Dead and Christmas time.

Ingredients: For the outside (marzipan): sugar, egg whites, fish gelatine. For the inside: almonds (sweet and bitter), sugar or honey, cocoa, cinnamon, vanilla, grated lemon rind, egg whites, wafers.

Method of preparation: The egg whites are beaten until stiff with the sugar and fish gelatine, as for icing. It is mixed on a marble surface until the mixture is thick and smooth. Meanwhile, the almonds are finely chopped and toasted and the sugar, cocoa and a pinch of cinnamon are added, as well as the grated lemon rind and the vanilla. All the ingredients are mixed with the egg whites.

Two separate mixtures are thus obtained: One is white and the other is black, from which two different sized balls are taken. The larger one is white and is made into a 5-6 cm disk. The black ball, about the size of a walnut, is placed in the middle of this white disk. These two balls are rolled by hand so that they match and this is then rolled out until a 10 cm cylinder has been formed and the ends are squashed to look like a tibia (shin bone). These are left to dry on oven trays, covered with wafers, for a day. Once they are dry, the *stinchetti* are cooked in the oven at medium temperature for about 15-20 minutes.

Storage: The product does not keep for long and should be stored in a cool, dry place for no more than 2-3 days.

Stinchetti are about ten centimetres in size and, according to Lalande: “the fact that they are

shaped like bones of the dead doesn't make them less delicious", while Paul Valéry wrote in his book "L'Italie confortable": «Cet horrible bonbon, qui a sa moelle comme les ossements humains, rappelle, par sa forme et son nom, l'ancienne réputation de férocité des habitants, heureusement fort adoucie!». ("this horrible candy, with its centre like human bones, is reminiscent in shape and name of the inhabitants' old reputation for ferocity, but fortunately greatly softened!") Evidently, Valéry was unaware of the fact that the world of confectionary in Umbria and in Italy is dominated by sympathetic magic and that in the specific case of the stinchetti there is an animistic conception, according to which eating the reproduction fortifies the organ being reproduced".

CUNSOLO Felice, Guida Gastronomica d'Italia, vol. 6, Umbria – Lazio, Istituto Geografico De Agostini Novara, 1975.