



The Ciaramicola is a typical Easter cake of Perugia. It is a ring-shaped cake, with pastry in the shape of a cross placed in the centre and is red with white icing, covered with coloured sprinkles.

According to tradition, girls old enough to marry would give this cake to their sweethearts on Easter Day.

The cake is a beautiful bright pink colour inside, because of the alchermes liqueur that blends together the mixture of flour, eggs, butter and baking powder.

In a way, the *ciaramicola* is the symbol of Perugia: the bulge in the centre represents the *Fontana Maggiore*

fountain and the five corners symbolize the districts of the Città Vecchia (Old Town). Red and white are the town's colours (and those of the football team's jersey), while the yellow, green and blue sprinkles evoke the ripe grain, the mountain pastures and the waters of nearby Lake Trasimeno. The

*ciaramicola*

can now be enjoyed and bought throughout the year, in bakeries and also large retailers. Flour and baking powder are mixed together. Lard (or butter), sugar, eggs and alchermes liqueur are added. Once the ingredients are well blended, more flour is added. The dough must be quite soft. A part of the dough is kneaded into a long stick, about 5 cm in diameter, and is then shaped into a ring and placed onto a greased baking tray. Another part of the dough is used to make two little rolls of about 2 cm in diameter each and are placed in a cross shape on the centre of the ring. The remaining dough is used to make 5 balls which are placed on each junction and in the centre of the cross. Scissors are used to cut into the borders and the balls of the

*ciaramicola*

. All these operations are done quickly to ensure the yeast will not lose its raising properties.

The *ciaramicola* is cooked in a hot oven at 180° to 200° C. Once cooked and still hot, the *ciaramicola* is coated with icing and decorated with coloured sprinkles. The icing should harden with the warmth of the freshly baked cake, or otherwise it can be put back into a tepid oven for a few minutes.

Storage: This is a fresh product and should be kept at a temperature of about circa 6° to 8° C for a maximum of 2 to 3 days.

“The ciaramicola cake was created as an ode to Perugia, or rather as its interpretation. The five districts of Porta Sole, Porta Sant’Angelo, Porta Susanna, Porta Eburnea and Porta S. Pietro are represented by the five mounds that crown a sixth one in the centre, to which they are connected by little passages, representing the square of Piazza Grande, on which stands the Fontana Maggiore fountain, symbol of the city. The colours of the cake also refer to Perugia’s districts and its coat of arms - red inside (alcherme liqueur), covered with white icing (egg-white beaten until stiff) outside and embellished with small blue, white and green gems (coloured sprinkles). “Red, like the district of Porta S. Angelo, where the firewood was brought. White, like the district of Porta Sole, where stars were reflected in the marbles and travertines of Terra Vecchia. Blue like the district of Porta Susanna with its gateway leading to the blue of Perugia’s lake along the Via Trasimena road. Green like the district of Porta Eburnea, stretching towards the woods and vineyards that filled the valley it overlooks. Yellow, like the district of Porta S. Pietro where golden wheat, the main food of every table, was brought.”

(from: Emanuela Casinini, for Cerquiglioni, Perugia).