



These are small pastries made according to tradition on 2nd November, the day of remembrance of the dead. They are a mixture of sweet and bitter almonds, egg whites, sugar, and grated lemon rind. The almonds are blanched in boiling water, skinned, toasted and finely chopped. The almonds and egg whites are mixed (by hand or in a mixer) with the sugar and grated lemon rind and are shaped into little balls which are squashed slightly to make oval shapes. These are then placed on a greased and floured baking tray and cooked at 180°C for about 10-15 minutes. This is a fresh product which should be kept at a temperature of about 6° to 8°C for not more than 2-3 days. The use and name of these traditional pastries come from a long historical and cultural correlation between broad beans and the dead. This bond has its roots in the classical world, particularly because of the colour of the flower, which is white with black spots. In ancient times, it was thought that the souls of the deceased were held inside black broad beans. During funeral services, broad beans were scattered on the coffin and slaves threw them over their shoulders, lamenting the loss of their master. Broad beans were also offered to the Fates, to Pluto and to Proserpine. It appears that the Egyptians, as well as not eating them, did not even touch them and that priests, like those of Jupiter, didn't dare to look at the plants, as they considered them so unclean. In his poem "Fasti", Ovid describes how, during the "Lemuralia", which are ancient Roman feasts in honour of the deceased, the "pater familias" (the head of a Roman family) walked around the house at night, offering black broad beans to the spirits of ancestors, while throwing them back over his shoulders.