

## Traditions of Salento: the St. Joseph`s table

There are traditions that, more than others, they can tell well the character of a territory, the heart of its people, and its history.

One of these, the Salento peninsula, is linked to the rite of the the "St. Joseph`s table", an ancient custom that is perpetuated with the march 19 of each year with the preparation of sumptuous and rich tables to share with friends, family, and... strangers. Try it yourself: if you are in Salento for a spring weekend, maybe to the discovery of typical villages or to the hunting of particular experiences, knock on the doors of families who carry on this custom. You will be greeted by a warm handshake and from an invitation to join the table, the typical flavours, fragrant bread, fried fish, seasonal vegetables and kind smiles.

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Hospitality and good food, the secret of the party

Discover a place by enjoying what is there on her table is always a great way to make an experience real and authentic. This is especially true in the South, where it is used to tie a tight knot good food and welcoming spirit.

One example is the ancient tradition of the Tables of San Giuseppe, the 19th of march every year in Salento. In honor of the Saint, by the grace received, or to request the intercession of a case, many families bring to the table the best that they have: food more tasty, the oldest recipes, tablecloths more beautiful. And then flowers, plants, decorations, and candles. Not a competition to see who makes the most, in fact, the true spirit of the festival is the sharing, the hospitality to help ensure that anyone who wants to sit at the table: everything that, according to the stories of older people, Joseph was not offered when he sought shelter with Maria for the birth of Jesus.

Where to find the Tables of San Giuseppe, in the Salento

The countries in which this tradition is most established are those in the adriatic around Otranto. Giurdignano is certainly the center in which this custom is more ancient and deeply rooted: between public and private, the tables are about 60. Beautiful also the plates of the Uggiano La Chiesa, Casamassella, Minervino, San Cassiano, Otranto, santa cesarea terme, Giurdignano, Minervino, Cocumola, in the province of Lecce. But there are also many other centres that carry on the memory: Sava, San Marzano and Lizzano for the province of Taranto; Erchie, San Donaci and San Pietro Vernotico for the province of Brindisi.

Some think that it is to the highest byzantine influence, since the Plates have a source that is truly ancient. According to some dates back to the times of basilian monks who, for the spirit of charity towards the poor people of the place, offered shelter and a hot meal. According to the theory prevailing, instead, it would be a practice put in use during the middle ages by the local nobles who offered food to the people of their lands, providing assistance to the poorest of the poor. Custom that in some way it was associated with the feast of St. Joseph. But there were also those who still pushes more back in the depths of our history, bringing back this kind of celebration to "Liberalia" of the roman era, that were celebrated on the 17th of march and in the following days.

The typical menu: well 169 food

The choice of dishes reflecting the traditions of each country and can to predict the presence of cooked dishes or in part, raw. Inevitable, in any case, large donuts bread, also of 3 or 5 kilos, with an effigy of Saint Joseph or of the Holy Family in the center.

On the table you can also find the "mass" or "vermiceddhi" with chickpeas, vegetables, cream of broad beans with fried bread, fried fish or stewed stock fish, wild onions, chickpeas, cartellate and "purciddruzzi" with the honey, olive oil and wine bottles, and usually Primitive.

Some of these foods have a and symbolic meaning in the ritual: the pasta and chickpeas, for the colors white and yellow that characterizes it, is the flower typical of spring, the daffodil; the grape hyacinth, however, the transition from winter to spring. The cauliflower reminds verga fiorita of San Giuseppe; the fried fish, the Christ himself; cartellate, the bands of the Child Jesus, while the cod, at one time, was the food of the great festive occasions.

Diners should be a minimum of 3 to a maximum of 13, always an odd number. Before eating, recite prayers and litanies dedicated to the saint. The maximum form of devotion, for the considerable effort which it incurs, consists in the preparation of the table of only cooked foods, especially if composed by the maximum number of the saints, thirteen: it requires, in fact, the preparation of 169 dishes (13 meals for 13 saints).

In vacation In the Salento to the discovery of the most ancient traditions

The climate is the right one, mild, and not too hot. The period extremely liveable, there is the throng of tourists, every corner of the Salento is enjoyable in a calm. The spring in Puglia is truly magical and can become more memorable if lived savoring the thousand initiatives that animate it: the patron feasts, festivals, open courtyards, villages in celebration. The attractions are certainly not lacking, and the offerings even: take a look at our holiday homes for rent in Salento , choose where and you choose when to leave, the price, and the fun is guaranteed.