

# FOOD52

## Fave dei Morti (Almond Cookies with Cinnamon & Rum)

By Emiko

Fave dei morti, beans of the dead, are macaroon-like cookies made in various regions around Italy, from the north to the south for the festivals All Saints Day and All Souls Day (Ognissanti and Tutti i morti, held on November 1 and November 2, respectively). There are as many variations as cooks and depending on the region you'll find a difference in the spices, the proportions and the shape, for starters. It can be made without the wheat flour (easily becoming gluten-free by replacing the weight of the flour with almond meal), with the addition of ground pine nuts, with unpeeled almonds (you'll get that speckled-brown look), with just the egg whites (or indeed just a yolk) instead of a whole egg, or with lemon zest instead of spices. Trieste's fave are famous and always recognisable by their pastel hues – the mixture is divided into three, with one part left plain white, one part made mocha-coloured with cocoa, one part rosy-pink with Alkermes (more traditionally) or red food coloring. In some parts of the Marche aniseed is popular, or a local, usually homemade aniseed-flavoured liqueur called Mistrà. Pellegrino Artusi himself published three variations of Fave dei Morti (which he calls “Roman beans”) recipes in his 1891 cookbook. This recipe below is based on his second recipe as well as the typical Fave dei Morti found in the area around Ancona in the Marche, where they like a shot of rum in their biscotti. The mixture should be smooth and compact and easy to roll. Marchegiani make their fave into round balls, squashed with a thumb or other utensil, rather than oval shaped. These are meant to be crunchy but you can find a variety of fave dei morti that are soft.

Makes about 24

- 7 ounces (200 grams) almonds or almond meal
  - 3/4 cups (100 grams) flour
  - 1/2 cup (100 grams) sugar
  - 1 medium-large egg
  - 2 tablespoons (30 grams) butter
  - 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
  - 1 shot rum
1. If using whole almonds, peel the almonds by blanching them first, then pop the skins off. Let them air dry or place in a warm oven until dry, then blitz in a food processor until extremely fine and it resembles sand. If using pre-prepared almond meal, head straight to the next step.
  2. Combine all the ingredients together until you have a smooth, compact dough. If it is too crumbly, add some warm water, a very little bit at a time until the dough comes together.
  3. Roll walnut-sized pieces of dough into balls and place on a lined baking tray. Flatten each ball into a disc and bake at 350°F for 10-15 minutes or until dry to the touch and hardened but not too browned. Once

cool, keep in an air tight container. These go very well with coffee or dessert wine.