

The festivity of Saint Lucia

by Kicki/kroker

In Sweden, we celebrate the Saint Lucia today. She was a young martyr in Syracuse around 310 AD. According to legend, she used to bring food to Christians hiding in the catacombs, and she'd wear a wreath with candles on her head, to keep her hands free to carry more.

In Scandinavia, the day of St. Lucy has been a celebration of light since the Middle Ages. School children dress up in white and glitter and bring light and song in a procession led by Lucia and her candle wreath leading the way. Afterwards, there's coffee and "lussebullar", a sun-coloured, sweet wheat bun seasoned with saffron and raisins.

Lussebullar

makes 50

50 g fresh yeast,
or the equivalent dried quick yeast
150 g butter or margarine
500 ml milk
250 g quark cheese or cream cheese
1/5 tsp (1 g) ground saffron
3 tbsp sugar
1/2 tsp salt
1.7 l plain flour
1 egg to glaze
raisins for decoration



Crumble the yeast into a bowl (or follow instructions for dry yeast, using milk as fluid). Melt the butter in a pan. Pour in the milk and stir until the mixture is warm to the touch. Pour some of the liquid over the yeast and stir until dissolved. Add the rest of the fluid.

Mix in the quark cheese, saffron, sugar and salt.

Add most of the flour and work the dough in a machine or by hand, until it releases from the edges of the bowl and is smooth. Take care not to use too much flour, since the dough will easily become too dry.

Cover the bowl with cling film and rise for 30 minutes.

Tip the dough onto a lightly floured surface. Knead it lightly until it is smooth and shiny.

Split the dough into 5 parts, then 10.

Roll the dough into approx. 20 cm long rolls and shape into an infinity sign, or 8 (see picture).

Place the buns on baking parchment on baking trays, and push a raisin into the centre of each loop.

Cover with cloth and allow to rise to double size for approx. 20-30 minutes.

Whisk the egg with a fork and paint the buns.

Cook in preheated oven, 440°F/225°C for approx. 8 minutes.

Allow to cool under a cloth.

The saffron does tend to make the buns dry out quickly, so eat soon or freeze the rest!

God Jul!