

La Colomba di Pasqua

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Every year, we eagerly anticipate the return of la colomba di Pasqua, or the “Easter dove.” In Italy, this artisanal cake is a sweet sign of spring.

[Easter](#) [2]'s counterpart to the Christmastime [panettone and pandoro](#) [3], the rich and fluffy cake is traditionally made with high-quality flour, farm-fresh eggs, sugar, butter, and natural yeast that takes at least 30 hours to rise. After curing, the dough is then baked into the iconic dove shape and finally topped with pearl sugar and almonds.

Sound complicated? It is. Like panettone, colomba is one of the rare exceptions to Italian cuisine; even the most traditional nonna will buy her colomba from the store, rather than make it herself. Expert bakers rise to the occasion, often adding their own twist by studding regional ingredients into the dough, from IGP hazelnuts in Piemonte to Amarena cherries in Emilia-Romagna.

Great, you say. But...why the dove?



Good question. We know that the first colomba came from Milano, but the story doesn't end there. The cake has inspired legends of peace stretching back to the Middle Ages. And they're all different.

In one version, the colomba marks the 1176 Lombardian victory over the Holy Roman Empire, when two doves miraculously appeared on the battleground. Another legend suggests that the peace-inspiring cake was first baked in the sixth century by a young girl, successfully pacifying the wretched King Albion of the Lombard tribe who was demanding tribute from her hometown of Pavia. He loved the colomba so much that he set her free and spared Pavia.

...dramatic, right? While we don't know the real story, we can tell you one thing for certain: one slice of colomba is worth a legion of legends.

Delicious on its own, colomba is often served with fresh berries, drizzled in dark chocolate, slathered in sweet spreads, or paired with whipped cream. Italians even will enjoy a slice with coffee for [breakfast](#) [4] or an afternoon pick-me-up! And at Eataly, we love to pair the festive cake with a glass of Prosecco or dessert wine.

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