

December – Saint Lucia's day – Christian

On 13th December Christians across Europe celebrate the festival of St. Lucia. St. Lucia is the patron saint of light. Lucia lived in Sicily in 2nd Century AD and devoted her life to Christ; she was killed by the Romans because of her faith.

In Italy 'Lucia' means 'light' and there are huge candle-light processions all across the country as part of a 'fire' festival!

In Sweden her feast day is celebrated by lighting candles, eating special Lussekatter or gingerbread biscuits and singing carols, bringing warmth and joy to one of the darkest winter nights! Children take part in St. Lucia pageants, everyone dresses up in white with tinsel around their waists and carries candles. The girls wear tinsel around their heads and the boys wear cone-shaped hats decorated with shiny stars. Someone is chosen to be the Lucia Queen and wears a long white dress tied with a wide red sash. They also wear a crown made of brass or evergreen twigs and lit candles! Why not make crowns from gold card and attach card candles and paper leaves around the edge to represent the sprigs of an evergreen plant!

Lussekatt Biscuits

Ingredients

325g plain flour (plus extra for dusting!)
1/4 teaspoon baking powder
2 eggs
125g caster sugar
250g margarine
vanilla essence

Equipment

bowl
plastic jug
spoon/fork
baking tray
baking parchment/pen
cooling rack



Method

- Cream the sugar and margarine together in the bowl.
- In the plastic jug beat the eggs and gradually pour into mixture.
- Add a few drops of vanilla essence.
- Add the flour and baking powder and slowly mix together to form a firm dough. Add a little more flour if needed.
- Divide the dough into balls. Lussekatter are usually rolled into a sausage shape and then curled into an 'S' shape. Give each Beaver a ball of dough to make into their own Lussekatter - they may like to make a traditional 'S' but they could make their own initial or another shape completely! Dust some flour on their hands to stop the dough from sticking to their fingers!
- Arrange the biscuits on the baking parchment on the baking sheet - write each Beaver's name beside their biscuit.
- Bake at 180°C/350°F/Gas Mark 4 for 10 minutes.
- Cool on a wire cooling rack.
- *Not in the traditional recipe but these biscuits are delicious dipped in melted chocolate then 100s and 1000s!*