



ST. CATHERINE OF ALEXANDRIA'S KOULOURI WHEELS

Ingredients:

1 cup bread flour
1 cup whole-wheat flour
1 ½ tsp. salt
2 Tbs honey
1 tsp (8 gr.) dry yeast
1 cup (250 ml.) tepid water

For the coating:

2 cups water
3 Tbs sugar
2 cups sesame seed

It is said that St. Catherine was born in Alexandria, Egypt in 287 AD to a wealthy, noble family. When she was only 14 she had a vision of the Theotokos and the Christ child, in which the little one gave her a ring, signifying that she was betrothed to Him! After her conversion, she avidly denounced the persecution of Christians under Emperor Maxentius, debating and often converting those he sent to change her mind. He threatened her with martyrdom yet nothing would dissuade her. Because of her beauty, Maxentius offered to commute her sentence if she would consent to marry him. When she flatly refused, saying she had promised herself to Jesus alone, he sentenced her to a cruel death by being tied to a spiked wheel. When she touched the wheel, however, it shattered to pieces.

Directions:

1. Heat oven to 400 degrees F.
2. Dilute the honey with the tepid water (room temperature) and when completely combined, stir in the yeast. Set aside for 10 minutes for it foam.
3. In a large mixing bowl, combine the flours and salt, stirring together for a couple of minutes. Stir in the yeast mixture then beat well for 7 or 8 minutes until a soft dough forms; it should be elastic and easily lift from the bowl.
4. Lightly grease the sides of a bowl. Transfer dough, cover with plastic wrap, and let rest for 30-90 minutes. The dough should rise to about double.
5. Prepare coating: dissolve sugar in 2 cups water. Spread sesame seeds in a shallow pan.
6. Lightly grease kitchen counter or other work surface. Place dough on surface and divide into 10 pieces. Roll pieces into balls.
7. Knead each ball into a sausage shape, then gently turn ends towards each other to form a circle or koulouri. The rings should be roughly the same size.
8. Carefully dip each ring into the sugar water and then into the sesame seeds. Place koulouri on a baking sheet lined with paper and bake for 15-20 minutes until golden brown. (For deeper flavor and softer texture, add 2 tablespoons tahini to the dough.)

This Greek family recipe is shared with ByziMom courtesy of Mrs. Katherine Hayes and her Yiayia.