

THE CHEST GAZETTE

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”Pastéis de Nata” (Portuguese Pastry)

“Pastéis de Nata” or “Pastéis de Belém” are one of the most popular specialties of Portuguese sweets. Although “Pastéis de Nata” can be savored in many cafes and pastry shops, the original recipe is an exclusive secret of “Fábrica dos Pastéis de Belém”, in Lisbon (the only place whose sweets should receive the brand “Pastéis de Belém”).

In 1837, in Belém, near the Jerónimos Monastery, in an attempt to subsist, the clergy of the monastery offered for sale some custard tarts. At that time, Belém and Lisbon were two different locations with access guaranteed by steam boats.

The presence of the Jerónimos Monastery and the Belém Tower attracted countless tourists who contributed to spread those pastries. Following 1820 liberal revolution, in 1834 the monastery closed. The confectioner at the convent decided to sell the recipe to the Portuguese businessman from Brazil, Domingos Rafael Alves, continuing to this day in possession of his descendants.

In the beginning, the pastries were offered for sale at a sugar refinery located near the Jerónimos Monastery. In 1837, the premises were inaugurated in an annex, then transformed into a pastry shop, “Fábrica dos Pastéis de Belém”.

Both the original recipe and the name “Pastéis de Belém” are patented. the filling of the pastry cannot be too sweet and must have balanced flavors, the dough must be crispy and not very greasy. It has to be as warm as it is cold. It looks simple but requires a good pastry technique. Traditionally, the pastries are still eaten hot, sprinkled with powdered sugar and cinnamon.

Currently, in most of the cafes in Portugal it is possible to buy that kind of “Pastéis de Nata”, made by themselves, but only the originals can be called “Pastéis de Belém”.

The secret’s place keeps the old undercover recipe for the confection and preparation of the real ones, and the acceptance of an oath on how they pledge not to disclose the recipe.



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