

CHRISTMAS TRADITIONS...

FOOD AND BEVERAGES

AN EXTRAVAGANZA OF TASTES

The sumptuous delicacies abounding in the Festive Season contribute in no small way to the prevailing cheerful atmosphere, and over the centuries, the people of Malta and Gozo crafted a bonanza of gastronomic traditions to experience in full the joy of Christmas.



SUGAR FRITTERS (MALTESE: XKUMVAT)

These consist of fried dough strips coated with sugar.



DATE FRITTERS (MALTESE: IMQARET)

Fried diamond-shaped sweet dough pockets filled with dates and citrus' rind.

CONSUMPTION OF CONFECTIONS

Up to a few decades ago, the greater part of the population could only afford sweets on special occasions. Naturally enough, Christmas was one, or better still the most important, of these out of the ordinary occasions as confirmed by the lavishness of traditional savouries and sweets.



BREAD PUDDING

Dried bread soaked in milk and water, and kneaded with sugar, butter, eggs, cocoa powder and variety of spices and fruits including sultanas, walnuts and citrus' rind.



IMBULJUTA

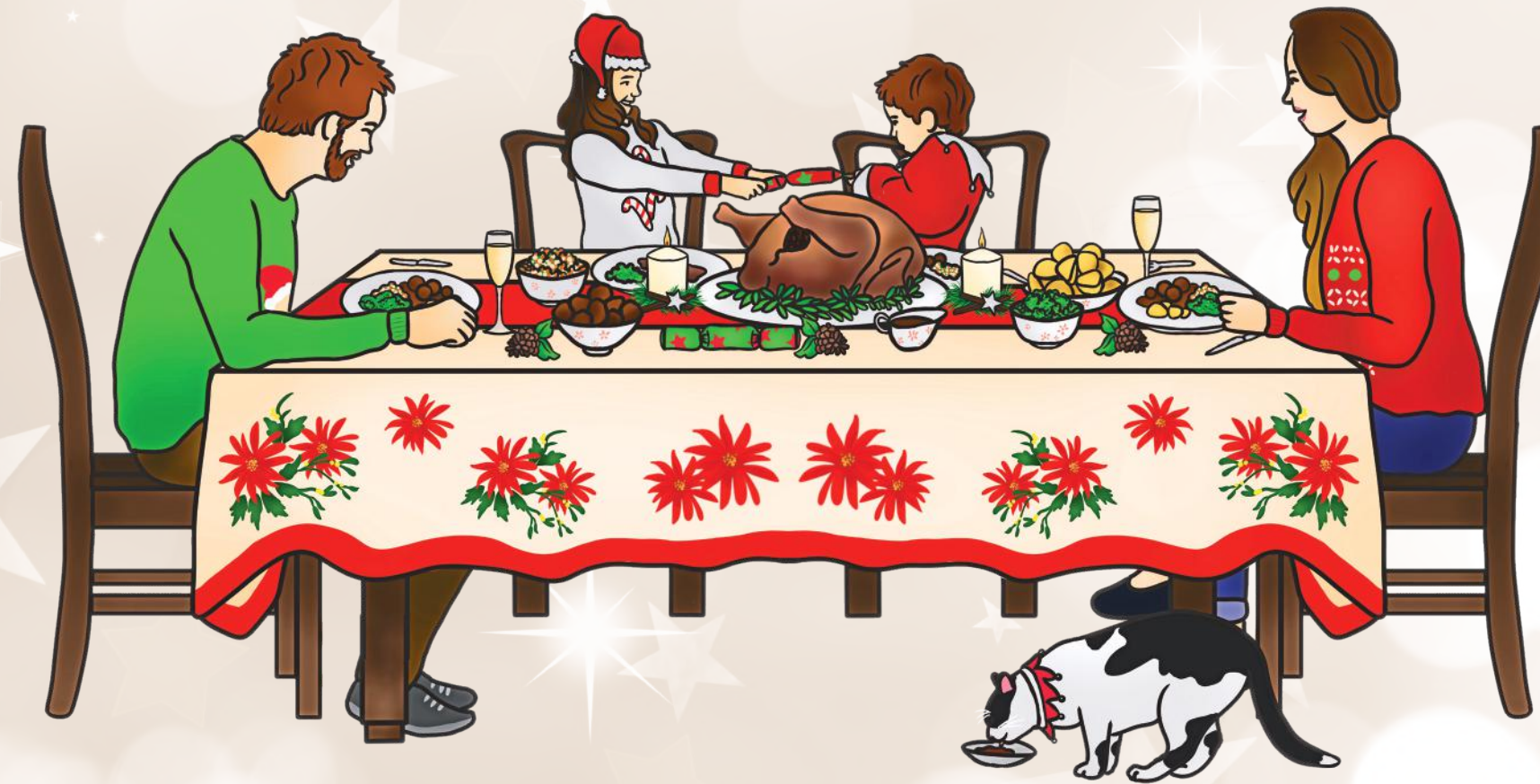
A warm chocolate drink seasoned with chestnuts, fruit, spices and citrus' rinds. Traditionally, it is served after the Christmas Holy Mass or on New Year.



HONEY RINGS

(MALTESE: QAGHAQ TAL-QASTANIJA)

Notwithstanding the popular name in Maltese, the filling of these rings is rich in honey. Their popularity is attested by the traditional carol 'Ninu Ninu tal-Milied'.



CHRISTMAS MEAL

The Christmas meal is traditionally the most extravagant of the year. By and large, the main dish consisted of roast lamb or stuffed rooster. Turkey gained popularity in the past decades. Likewise, many families are increasingly opting to eat out instead of organising the traditional Christmas meal at home.



FOREIGN PASTRIES

As expected, a host of new confections have been introduced along the years. These include the Christmas log, the Christmas pudding and the Panettone.