



FRICO: Memories of past and present

A song, a book, a film—all can arouse emotion, provoke sensation, revive memory. Nothing, however, comes close to the association received from food; a specific or typical taste that allows memory to blossom with sensory stimulation, becoming visual, tactile, olfactory.

It is indeed, in moments of gathering, around the dinner table that one refines and redefines their roots. It is exactly this way with Frico. Frico is an aromatic and fragrant dish that signifies, without a doubt, the true essence of Friuli-Venezia Giulia (F.V.G., or Friuli as it's more commonly known), and north-east Italy. A piece of Frico, the taste of Montasio cheese, to the people of this region, young and old, near or far from their land of origin, relives particular moments—with all its colour, its sounds, its scent that accompanies it.

Frico brings to mind, past times or recent moments of home-cooked meals, dinners in local 'osterie' (taverns), picnics through flowered fields, hikes through dense forests, azure rivers like the Isonzo or the Tagliamento, majestic hills painted green, perfectly manicured vineyards, tight pined forests or seas of blue-green. The people of the Friuli region can without a doubt associate a specific personal memory to this traditional treat. Frico has become an instrument of communication—a method of reviving emotion and reliving memories.

Frico proposes one of the region's simplest and tasty ingredient: cheese—an important staple in the diet of the mountainous region. The gastronomy of the area, moreover, dawned the recipe from the necessity of having to preserve precious and perishable milk. Typically, it is a dish made with local Montasio cheese. The plateau of Mount Montasio, with its pristine pastures, borders the countries of Slovenia and Austria.

In the middle of the XIII century, the Di Prampero family proudly owned various shepherd's huts and over 5,000 cattle in the plateau area. With time, the Benedictine monks of Moggio Udinese adopted techniques from these shepherds, perfecting the quality and fame of Montasio cheese. Hereby the initiation of the typical regional production of cheese began, and had given name to the unmistakable cheese named for the plateau area.

To say that Frico is newborn idea, however, would certainly be an understatement. With a little bit of fantasy, and flight of the imagination, creativity gave way to the ingredients available and to the techniques born of necessity. Despite economic conditions, the people of Friuli never renounced taste and with the passing of time, were paid with the birth of the antique and simple Frico, popularly called serozvar, fried cheese.



Crispy Frico: light, digestible, and low in fat.
An ideal accompaniment with apéritifs or as a snack at any moment of the day.

In the past, a breakfast for farmers-- today, a specialty for all.

The traditional recipe 'frico dal boscador' was born from farmers' tradition of leaving remains of breakfast cheese and crusts in a pan over cooling open coals. Upon returning from the fields, the labourers discovered that this left-over cheese, had become a golden torte in their breakfast pans. Later, the woodmen of the region began cooking Frico when working in the mountains because of its heartiness. The region's famous author Giuseppe Rupil (1858-1931), didactic director and maestro, stated '**frico c'al fà ai muarz trà lu flat**' ('frico makes the dead breathe') giving delicious and substantial energy to those who eat it in preparation of a hard day's work.

The recipe has since defused throughout the whole region of Friuli. One needs, however, the art behind the recipe. No people from the alps or north Europe has attempted to copy it. The identity is typical to Friuli. Aged (6-10 months), the hardened cheese is placed in a lightly greased pan (traditionally with butter). One cooks a thin and uniform layer of the Montasio or latteria cheese mixture as is, for a simple, but tasty Frico. There are also numerous variations to the recipe: Frico can also be 'spiced-up', eventually cooked with condiments such as potatoes or onions (previously pan-fried and added to the cheese mixture) for a more substantial treat. The particularity consists in the fact that there is no uniformity to the shape of the pieces of cheese used for cooking. The end of the cooking process should have the consistency of a golden torte.

Traditionally, Frico supplied a hearty breakfast, whatever was not eaten, was saved for dinner accompanied with area staples such as side potatoes or radicchio. Today, it is served as antipasto, in first or second courses, during special occasions or festivities, or as a snack at any time of the day.

Frico is also an excellent accompaniment to local and prestigious wines of Friuli, such as Tocai Friulano, Pinot Bianco, Pinot Grigio, Riesling Renano, and Prosecco, for 'simple' Frico, or local reds such as Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon, Refosco, Pinot Nero, and Raboso del Piave for the more hearty 'spiced-up' Frico.

For information visit: www.fricosavio.it
For regional recipes: www.fricosavio.it/en/ns_ricette.php
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