

Artoklasia - The Service of Five Loaves

- ❖ Artoklasia, which means “breaking of bread” is a special prayer service offered by an individual or family typically on a Feast day or special family occasion. The service takes place at the end of Orthros, the Divine Liturgy or at Great Vespers. It includes hymns, petitions and prayers for health, well-being and strength to endure all of life’s difficulties. The five loaves are reminiscent of the five loaves that Jesus Christ blessed in the desert and by which five thousand of His followers were fed.
- ❖ Items required for the service are five loaves of Artoklasia bread, a small container of oil, a small container of wine and the names of loved ones. The bread is divided among the faithful in the congregation in the hopes that God’s blessings be shared and multiplied. The wine symbolizes the blood of Christ and the olive oil symbolizes the healing of our bodies and souls.
- ❖ Prayer before preparing the Artoklasia bread
”Lord, please help us prepare this Artoklasia which I am about to begin and bring it to completion according to Your will so that we can pray for the well-being of our loved ones whose names we are about to offer and so that we can share the blessing of these five loaves with the faithful who join us in asking for Your great mercy and Divine grace. Amen”
- ❖ Ingredients for 5 (8 inch) Artoklasia bread loaves (Lenten)
 - 2 packages of dry yeast
 - 12 - 14 cups all-purpose flour
 - 1 1/2 cups sugar
 - 3 teaspoons salt
 - 2 1/2 - 3 cups lukewarm water
 - 1/2 cup vegetable oil
 - 1 teaspoon cinnamon
 - 1 teaspoon aniseed (optional)
 - honey (optional)
 - 3/4 cup confectioner's sugar
- ❖ Preparation of the Artoklasia bread
Dissolve yeast in 1/2 cup of the 2 1/2 - 3 cups lukewarm water. Add sugar and salt and stir well. Add remaining water, oil, cinnamon and 6 cups flour and stir the mixture until creamy. Slowly add enough of the remaining flour to make medium consistency dough.

Divide dough into 5 parts; shape into round loaves and place in 5 round slightly oiled pans. Cover with towels and let rise in warm place until doubled in bulk (about 1 hour). Bake loaves in hot oven (about 350° F) for about 45 minutes or until brown. Remove from oven and let cool.

Boil aniseed in 1 cup water and brush the tops of loaves with the liquid or lightly brush the loaves with honey. Sprinkle with confectioner's sugar.

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❖ Ingredients for 5 (8 inch) Artoklasia bread loaves (non-Lenten)

- 6 packages of dry yeast
- 20 to 25 cups all-purpose flour
- 3 cups sugar
- 5 teaspoons salt
- 5 cups lukewarm water
- 6 large beaten eggs
- 1/2 cup butter
- 2 cups corn oil
- 2 ½ cups milk

❖ Preparation of the Artoklasia bread

Dissolve yeast in the lukewarm water and stir 3 cups of flour. Heat the sugar, milk and salt, butter and oil and stir well. Add to the flour mixture and mix well. Add the beaten eggs. Continue adding flour until dough can be kneaded. Knead dough until smooth and elastic. Let it rise until it doubles in size.

Divide dough into 5 parts; shape into round loaves and place into five 8 inch round, slightly oiled pans. Let the loaves rise again and then bake them in a hot oven (about 350° F) for about 45 minutes or until brown. Remove from oven and let cool.

❖ Prayer while listing the names

"Lord, shed Your Divine grace and mercy upon your servants, (names)"

❖ Hymn in church

Participants sing one of our most beautiful hymns during Artoklasia services: "Wealthy have become impoverished, but those who seek the Lord shall never be deprived of any good things." ("Πλουσιοι επτωχευσαν και επεινασαν, οιδε εχζητουντες τον Κυριον; ουκ ελαττοθησονται παντος αγαθου")

❖ Offering

Our priest asks that you bring the Artoklasia loaves before the Liturgy or Vespers service - either on Saturday or by 8:30 am. You may also provide a list of names of the living you'd like the priest to read during the service. You can use the name form found on our site at www.st-demetrios.org/participating.htm.