

THE GREEK ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN TRADITION OF THE KOLLYVA (BOILED WHEAT) IN REMEMBRANCE OF THOSE WHO HAVE FALLEN ASLEEP IN THE LORD

The Greek Orthodox Christian tradition of boiling wheat and offering it to the church in remembrance of those who have “fallen asleep in the Lord” is an ancient practice.

The Lord taught us about death when He mentioned that a seed must fall into the ground and die in order to bring forth new life. This is an image of resurrection and hope for His people. Placing the seed in the ground is a symbol of death and burial, and the new plant that sprouts up from the seed is an image of new life and resurrection. The Lord wisely uses earthly images in order to teach us heavenly mysteries.

In the Biblical references, death is referred to as “falling asleep.” Our Lord Jesus Christ uses these words when He speaks about the death of Jairus’ daughter and in reference to the death of His friend Lazarus. Saint Paul also uses this phrase in his epistles to the Christian communities entrusted to his pastoral care. The death of a pious and faithful Christian is called “falling asleep in the Lord”, and their resurrection is likened to arising from sleep.

Kollyva is a Greek word that means “boiled wheat.” In today’s practice, kollyva is brought to the church in remembrance of our Orthodox Christian relatives who have fallen asleep in the Lord. The tradition of making kollyva is shared by many of the Orthodox Christian churches throughout the world.

The kollyva is brought to church near the date of the anniversary of the person’s death, and the priest reads special prayers and chants special hymns remembering them by name. It is essential that we remember our relatives and all our brothers and sisters in Christ in this way. Making offerings to the church in remembrance of those who have fallen asleep in the Lord is a practice that has been established from the beginning. The tradition of the kol-

lyva, like so many other traditional practices, should be maintained by all Orthodox Christians so that it is not lost in time.

We have included the general recipe for making kollyva with this pamphlet. The recipe in this pamphlet is for a large batch of kollyva. You can make more or less depending on your need. If you are making kollyva for the first time, practice making a small batch first. You can alter the recipe depending on your personal tastes. Also, some areas or villages where our people are from have variances in customs with the recipe. This pamphlet gives you some specifics, but is offered as a general idea of the traditional practice and the recipe used.

Looking at the finished kollyva from the top, it might look like this:



SATURDAYS OF SOULS

Throughout the Church year, the Orthodox Christian Church traditionally sets aside special days to remember all our Orthodox Christian relatives (“brothers and sisters in Christ”) who have “fallen asleep” in the Lord. These days are called “Saturdays of Souls”. The two Saturdays before the beginning of Great Lent as well as the first Saturday of Great Lent are Saturdays of Souls. The day before Pentecost Sunday is also a Saturday of Souls. On these days, we bring kollyva to church along with a list of all our relatives who have “fallen asleep” in the Lord. After the celebration of the Divine Liturgy, the priest will read all the names, chanting special hymns and prayers.

The tradition of the Kollyva is a very beautiful and deeply meaningful tradition of our Church. In order to keep the practice of the Kollyva alive, we offer you this small pamphlet and hope you will use it when it comes time to make Kollyva in remembrance of your relatives who have fallen asleep in the Lord.

Use the lines below to keep a personal record of all your relatives who have fallen asleep in the Lord. It would be best to keep this pamphlet and the list of names near your icons for convenience. When the time comes to make kollyva and submit names to the church, re-write the names to another sheet of paper.

†KEEP THIS PAMPHLET AT HOME WITH YOUR HOLY ICONS†

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## GENERAL RECIPE FOR KOLLYVA:

(This recipe can be adjusted for amount and personal taste).

5 lbs. of whole wheat (hull removed)  
2 cups of flour (browned)  
3 lbs. powdered sugar  
Large tray  
Large bowl  
Waxed paper  
Roasted almonds (optional)  
1 lb. crushed walnuts (optional)  
1/4 cup chopped parsley (optional)  
1 cup sesame seeds (optional)  
2 cups pomegranate seeds (optional)  
3 tablespoons cinnamon (optional)  
Confectionery candies (optional)  
Clean white sheet

- † Before boiling the kollyva, make sure that there are no other strong odors in the house. The wheat is very absorbent of any and all odors in your house. Be sure that all cookware, utensils, and countertops are very clean.
- † Spend a few moments in personal prayer. Remember the Lord's Holy Resurrection. Be grateful for the inspiration of the Holy Spirit for this traditional practice.
- † Place the wheat in a large pan and wash it thoroughly with cold water. If you want to reduce the cooking time, you can choose to soak the wheat in cold water overnight in a covered pan.
- † Actual cooking time: about 30-45 minutes. Taste a few kernels after about 30 minutes to determine whether or not they are cooked enough.
- † When the wheat is cooked enough, empty it into a colander and let it drain thoroughly. While

the wheat is draining, rinse it out with cold water. Then, spread the clean white sheet out on the table. When the water has finished draining from the wheat, pour the wheat out onto the sheet and spread it out evenly to dry overnight.

- † In the morning, before services, gather all the wheat and empty it into a large mixing bowl. Add the optional ingredients according to your own taste and mix thoroughly. Empty the mixture out onto a large tray, creating a mound.
- † Take two cups of flour and brown it lightly in a dry frying pan or in the oven. After the flour has been browned, sift it carefully over the wheat mixture.
- † Sift the powdered sugar evenly over the layer of browned flour. Using a piece of wax paper, smooth the surface.
- † Decorate the surface with a cross and initials of the person being remembered.

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IN REMEMBRANCE OF THOSE WHO HAVE  
FALLEN ASLEEP IN THE LORD

May their memory be eternal!  
Αἰώνια ἡ μνήμη!



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