



Bicerin (Piedmont)

The Bicerin is one of the most beloved symbols of Turin and, over time, of the entire Piedmont region. This elegant drink of hot chocolate, espresso, and lightly whipped cream, served in a small glass that gives it its name, originated in 18th century Turin, when the city's refined café culture was at its height under the Kingdom of Savoy. It evolved from the bavareisa, a similar beverage of coffee, chocolate, and milk once served separately. Around 1763, at the historic Caffè al Bicerin near the Sanctuary of the Consolata, the recipe found its definitive form—layered, harmonious, and served in a “bicerin,” the small glass typical of the period.

Though its roots are deeply Turinese, the Bicerin has gradually spread beyond the city's borders as part of the region's shared culinary heritage. Each place pays homage to the original while celebrating local character—some using regional chocolate or fresh alpine cream, but always preserving the distinctive three layers that define it. Recognized today as a traditional Piedmontese Product, the Bicerin embodies centuries of artistry, hospitality, and taste, representing both Turin's sophistication and the timeless charm of the Piedmontese table.

Recipe— Bicerin

Serves 2–3

Ingredients

200 ml / 7 fl oz / $\frac{3}{4}$ cup + 2 Tbsp

150 ml / 5.1 fl oz / $\frac{2}{3}$ cup

100 ml / 3.4 fl oz / $\frac{1}{3}$ cup

2 tsp sugar (optional)

strong espresso coffee (freshly brewed)

thick hot chocolate (Italian-style, dense & rich)

fresh cream

Method

- [1] **Prepare the chocolate**— in a small pan, warm the hot chocolate until smooth and dense— it should coat a spoon slightly.
- [2] **Whip the cream**— lightly whisk the cream just until thickened but still pourable (soft peaks).
- [3] **Assemble layers**— in a small glass or heatproof cup, pour the hot chocolate first.
Add the hot espresso gently over the back of a spoon to create a separate layer.
Finish with a slow pour of the cream on top.
- [4] **Serve immediately, without stirring**— the pleasure is in tasting each layer as they gently blend.

Tips & Variations

- For a **vegan version**, use almond or oat milk for the chocolate & a coconut-based cream.
- Add a teaspoon of **hazelnut liqueur** (*Nocciolino* or *Frangelico*) for an indulgent Piedmont twist.
- For true authenticity, serve it in a **small, clear glass without a handle**— just as it's done at *Caffè Al Bicerin* in Turin, where the recipe was born in 1763.