

## HISTORY OF ALFAJORES - ALAJU

The alfajor is a traditional Arabic biscuit found in some regions of Spain and then made with variations in countries of Latin America including Argentina, Uruguay, Venezuela and Mexico, after being taken there by the colonists.



The alfajor was introduced to Iberia during the period of Al-Andalus (sometime between 711 and 1492). It is produced in the form of a small cylinder and is sold either individually or in boxes containing several pieces. Alfajores became common in southern Spain during the 12th and 13th centuries, being developed in Andalusia since the days of Al-Andalus until today.

In Spain they are completely different recipes, but the most traditional contain flour, honey and almonds and several spices such as cinnamon. It is most commonly sold around Christmas.

In Medina Sidonia (Spain) alfajores are sold the whole year round. The real alfajores were made in this town since ancient times and their development, called "alajú", passed from father to son.

Today they are still made by craftsmen and developed by the same procedure. The manufacturing process has been refined to respect a recipe found by Mariano Pardo de Figueroa in 1786.

Medina Sidonia was the confectionery capital of the Arabic world. The alfajor has centuries of history there, with a recipe that has been handed down from generation to generation.

Due to the popularity of this food they were already in the warehouses of the first Spanish ships when they sailed to America. The earliest references to the alfajor in Latin America referred to Venezuela and Peru, where they were given as rations to the Spanish troops. However the ingredients differed to those used for the traditional Spanish alfajores, so they tasted different.