



The Rooster of Barcelos (Galo de Barcelos)

A story from Portugal

Once upon a time the inhabitants of Barcelos were quite alarmed with a crime. One day a stranger from the neighboring Spanish province of Galiza, appeared in the village. Suspicion fell on him at once. The authorities seized him even though he swore he was innocent, nobody believed the stranger. Finally the stranger was condemned to death.

As a last request before his execution, he asked to be brought once more into the presence of the Judge. The request was granted and they lead him to the residence of the magistrate, who was just banqueting with some friends.

"So you are innocent, are you?" laughed the Judge.

"Yes Sir, I am. Before God, I swear it," answered the stranger.

"Ah, but you have been accused and sentenced to death, and I can't change the sentence on just your word without proof. How do you think you can prove your innocence, my good man?" the Judge responded.

"But Sir, I swear that I am innocent," the man insisted.

He looked around the banquet room in desperation, seeking some way, some help. His eyes fell on a servant carrying in a large platter of fowl, steaming with seasonings. He fell to his knees.

"Lord God," he prayed, "as Peter, your servant, denied you at the cock's crow, would that you show my innocence as your humble servant by this rooster's crow..."

All eyes turned to the platter of steaming cooked fowl and widened in wonder and amazement as the rooster got up, ruffled his feathers and crowed loudly.

"The Lord has indeed spoken," the Judge said in awe, and rising to his feet, he proclaimed, "Let this be a lesson to each of us never to sit in quick judgment of our fellow man. The rooster, henceforth, shall be a reminder to us and to our children after us, of this, the Lord's message. So shall it be in our land forever!"

To this day the Galo de Barcelos is the national symbol of honesty and the national symbol of Portugal, symbolizing honesty, integrity, trust and honor. One of the most typical baked clay items is the renowned rooster of Barcelos. The people at Barcelos keep worshipping the rooster, and an ancient legend has been passed on from generation to generation.