



You must remember this, a kiss is still a kiss...

... or is it? Let's look at Italy's famous kiss...

In Italian, un bacio is a kiss. But in Italy, besides the kisses given on the cheeks in greeting, they have another famous kiss. In Perugia, Umbria region, there's a chocolate company that was founded in 1907 by Francesco Buitoni, Annibale (Luisa) Spagnoli, Leone Ascoli and Francesco Andreani. Luisa Spagnoli, the only woman founder, actually created the chocolate brand "Perugina" and was instrumental in the chocolate factory setup. (She was one smart cookie and the success of the company is attributed to her!)

You may not be familiar with this particular candy, but maybe you'll recognize the box.



The well-known (in Italy anyway) blue box with silver stars.

Now for the kiss

Luisa and Giovanni Buitoni were carrying on a love affair. Their clandestine affair was carried out with love notes hidden in chocolates. Aha! The birth of the Baci chocolate kiss!



Luisa Spagnoli

It was Luisa Spagnoli who came up with the recipe for Baci. She combined fine cocoa and lots of fragrant hazelnuts to get a soft *gianduja* center. (Gianduja was invented by a chocolatier in Turin who didn't have much chocolate so he extended his supply by adding finely chopped hazelnuts. Napoleon caused this problem, but that's another story). The gianduja filling was topped with a whole hazelnut and then covered with her special chocolate, called "Luisa dark chocolate."

The result was a mini masterpiece with a rich flavor and a knuckle-like shape, which is why it was originally given the name "cazzotto," meaning "Punch." Giovanni, however, could not picture a young man visiting a chocolate shop to get some chocolate for his love and asking for a "punch" or two (he might end up with a black eye!). He thought "un bacio" sounded much better. He was right.

To this day, everything in the Baci is unique: the gianduja filling, the exclusive Baci recipe, and the Luisa dark chocolate coating made using a technique that is closely guarded. In the same way, the shape--perfectly imperfect--remains true to Luisa Spagnoli's tradition.

In 2018, Perugina added two different Baci. The black wrapper with the gold stars is a more intense dark chocolate (70%). And the white wrapper is called White and Milk, a white chocolate version.

There are only eight ingredients in a Baci.

The hazelnuts, the main ingredient, are hand-selected and roasted bring out their fragrance and crunchiness.

Some are used for the crushed hazelnut which

enriches the gianduja filling, others win the honorary position at the top of the chocolate; no two are placed in exactly the same position. The Luisa dark chocolate

that coats the entire candy is prepared according to an old secret process. It is the result of a mixture of different types of cocoa, including fine Arriba cocoa.

Madagascar vanilla gives the Baci its distinctive aroma. There are no artificial flavors—period.

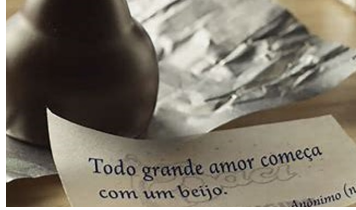


So how about the love notes? They were added to the Baci in 1922 and today the notes are written in Italian, English, French, German, Greek, Spanish, Portuguese, Arabic and even Chinese! Sometimes the notes are written in several languages on one piece of paper (probably to save paper).

Here's a really old one and a few new ones, too.



(If you can kiss the owner, don't kiss the servant)



In Spanish: All great loves start with a kiss.



Four languages on this one.

This video will probably make you get in your car and go to the store...

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