

How To Make Your Own Cake Donuts

BY LAUREN CHATTMAN
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A few weeks into January, and my New Year's resolution to eat oatmeal every morning has already gone out the window. But since my other resolution is to live without regrets, I'm certainly not going to punish myself for frying up a delicious batch of cardamom-spiced cake doughnuts over the weekend.

Although I'll never turn down a yeast-raised doughnut, I prefer doughnuts leavened with baking powder and baking soda. Yeast doughnuts have a light, bubbly crumb, the result of large air pockets that form during fermentation. Cake doughnuts are dense, sweet, and a little bit crumbly — just like cake. It doesn't hurt that cake doughnuts can be made on impulse and cooked off right away, while yeast-raised doughnuts can take hours to rise. What real doughnuts, whether yeast-raised or cake-style, have in common: They're always deep-fried, never baked.

Making cake doughnut dough is as simple as mixing dry and wet ingredients. For a tender result, take care not to overmix the dough, and roll it out quickly and gently. To shape cake doughnuts, you'll need a doughnut cutter, which you can find near the cookie cutters at a housewares shop. You'll also need a deep pot and the courage to fry.

Choose a bland vegetable oil with a high smoking point, the temperature at which oil begins to break down. Safflower and canola oil are both good picks. For safety's sake, make sure your pot is no more than halfway full of oil. Attach a deep-fat thermometer to the side. Heat the oil to 375 degrees. Don't drop the doughnuts into the pot. Lower them carefully with tongs or a slotted spoon to avoid splattering. When the doughnuts are added to the oil, it should drop in temperature to about 360 degrees, which is just right. Cook only a few at a time, checking the oil temperature during cooking and before you add a new batch, and adjusting the flame as necessary. Use a slotted spoon or frying basket to transfer them to a paper towel-lined rack to drain and cool. Make sure the paper towels are far from the flame.

Finishing your cake doughnuts is a matter of preference. For some people, nothing is more delicious than a naked doughnut fresh from the fryer. If this is you, wait 5 minutes to allow the doughnuts to cool and drain. If eaten immediately, they will still be doughy inside. As they cool slightly, they will cook to completion.

If you like some crunchy sweetness, coat your doughnuts in sugar while they are still warm, let them cool, then coat them again. Wait until the doughnuts are completely cooled to coat them in confectioners' sugar, or the sugar will melt. Likewise, glaze doughnuts (use 1 cup of confectioners' sugar mixed with 2 tablespoons milk) only after they have come to room temperature.

CARDAMOM-SPICED SOUR CREAM CAKE DOUGHNUTS

- Vegetable oil for frying
- 2 cups unbleached all-purpose flour
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1 1/2 teaspoons ground cardamom
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted
- 1/2 cup sour cream, room temperature
- 2 tablespoons milk
- 1 large egg, room temperature
- 1 cup confectioners' sugar (optional)

1. Pour 2 to 3 inches of oil into a deep pot or large Dutch oven. The oil shouldn't fill more than half of the pot. Attach a thermometer to the side of the pan so it dips into the oil. Heat over medium until it reaches 375 degrees. Set wire rack over a rimmed baking sheet. Place two layers of paper towels on top of rack.

2. While the oil heats, combine the flour, sugar, cardamom, salt, baking powder, baking soda and cinnamon in a large mixing bowl. Add the butter and mix on low with an electric mixer until the mixture resembles coarse meal. Add sour cream, milk and egg, and mix until a dough forms.

3. Roll dough to 1/4-inch thickness. Use doughnut cutter to cut into 12 doughnuts and 12 doughnut holes. Fry doughnuts in oil, 3 or 4 at a time, turning once, until golden on both sides.

Transfer cooked doughnuts to rack to drain and cool. Repeat with remaining doughnuts and holes, monitoring oil carefully and adjusting heat to maintain a cooking temperature of 360 degrees.

4. Place confectioners' sugar in a brown paper bag. Add 2 doughnuts, shake gently to coat, and transfer to a platter. Repeat with remaining doughnuts and doughnut holes. Serve immediately. Makes 12 doughnuts and 12 doughnut holes.



EVE BISHOP/NEWSDAY/MCT
To coat doughnuts completely with confectioners' sugar, shake them with the sugar inside a brown paper lunch bag. Add 2 doughnuts, shake gently to coat, and transfer to a platter.



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