

Worldwide Doughnut Recipes

*An Amazing collection of Authentic Recipes
from Europe, Asia and Beyond*

Diane Romano

© Copyright 2023 by Diane Romano - All rights reserved.

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced, distributed, or transmitted in any form or by any means, including photocopying, recording, or other electronic or mechanical methods, without the prior written permission of the publisher, except in the case of brief quotations embodied in critical reviews and certain other noncommercial uses permitted by copyright law.

This book is intended for informational purposes only. While the author and publisher have made every effort to ensure the accuracy and completeness of the information contained in this book, they assume no responsibility for errors, inaccuracies, omissions, or any inconsistency herein. Any slight to people, places, or organizations is unintentional.

Table of Content

INTRODUCTION	4
EUROPE.....	5
Pets de nonnes (France).....	5
Berliner pfannkuchen (Germany).....	8
Zeppole (Italy)	12
Struffoli (Italy)	15
Paczki (Poland).....	18
Oliebollen (Netherlands)	21
Churros (Spain)	24
AMERICAS	27
BeaverTail (Canada).....	27
Picarones (Perù)	30
ASIA.....	33
AnPan (Japan)	33
Sel Roti (Nepal).....	36
Balushahi (India)	39
Youtiao (China).....	42
OCEANIA & AFRICA	45
Koeksisters (South Africa)	45
Sfenj (North Africa).....	48
Firi firi (Polynesia)	51
CONCLUSION	54

INTRODUCTION

Hello there, my fellow doughnut aficionados! I'm Diane, your culinary guide, and I'm absolutely thrilled to take you on an extraordinary journey—a tantalizing tour through the diverse and delicious world of doughnuts. Picture this: a globetrotting adventure, right from your kitchen, where each recipe unfolds a story, each bite a new discovery. Welcome to our "Doughnuts Around the World" bonus feature!

Now, let's talk doughnuts, or as I like to call them, the universal language of joy. Across continents and cultures, these delightful treats have a special place in our hearts (and our taste buds!). From the bustling streets of Asia to the cozy cafes of Europe, each region boasts its unique take on this beloved pastry. It's not just about a sweet snack; it's a window into the soul of a culture, its traditions, its celebrations, and its everyday pleasures.

As a passionate home baker, I've always marveled at how a simple mix of flour, sugar, and butter can transcend cultural boundaries, creating something magical. In this collection, we're not just making doughnuts; we're embarking on a culinary exploration. Imagine biting into the light, airy texture of a French 'Pets de nonnes', the sweet, rich glaze of a Polish 'Paczki', or the crisp, sugary strands of an Italian 'Struffoli'. Each doughnut we encounter is a piece of art, a masterpiece of flavor and tradition.

Our journey will take us to the charming churro stands of Spain, where these long, golden treats are a testament to the joy of simplicity. We'll wander through the markets of Nepal, savoring the unique, ringshaped delight of 'Sel roti'. In the vibrant streets of India, we'll discover 'Balushahi', a delectable, flaky creation that embodies the richness of Indian sweets. And let's not forget the iconic 'Beaver Tail' of Canada, a flat, doughy canvas for an array of sweet toppings. Each stop on our journey will unveil new ingredients, techniques, and stories.

As we travel from country to country, I encourage you to embrace the unfamiliar. Don't just follow these recipes; play with them! Experiment with new flavors, tweak traditional techniques, and most importantly, have fun. Remember, in the world of doughnuts, there are no rules, only endless possibilities for creativity and enjoyment.

I want this journey to be more than just a collection of recipes; I want it to be a celebration of the world's diversity and beauty. As you mix, knead, fry, and glaze, think of the hands that have done the same for generations, the families and friends who have gathered around these treats, sharing stories and making memories. With each doughnut, we're not just indulging in a snack; we're partaking in a global tradition, rich in history and love.

So, my friends, are you ready to roll up your sleeves, dust off your apron (mine's already sprinkled with flour!), and dive into this doughnut adventure? Let's turn our kitchens into a melting pot of global flavors, where each recipe is a passport to a new corner of the world. Together, we'll laugh, learn, and of course, indulge in the world's most delightful doughnuts. Welcome to "Doughnuts Around the World" – let the adventure begin!

EUROPE

Pets de nonnes (France)



Let me introduce you to the whimsically named and utterly delightful "Pets de nonnes," a traditional French delicacy that's as intriguing in its story as it is delicious in taste. These little treasures, known in English as "nun's farts" or "nun's puffs," are bitesized doughnuts made from choux pastry, deepfried to golden perfection, and rolled in sugar. They are about 1 ½ inches in diameter and hollow on the inside, creating a light and airy texture that's simply irresistible.

The name "Pets de nonnes" carries a humorous and somewhat mysterious history. According to one legend, the name, which translates to "nun's peace" in English, was given by a nun who offered the recipe to a rival convent as a gesture of peace. The name's pronunciation closely resembles "pets de nonne," leading to the humorous moniker. Another tale recounts the accidental creation of these doughnuts in the kitchen of the Archbishop of Tours. A novice cook named Agnès, embarrassed by an unexpected bodily sound, accidentally dropped a spoonful of choux pastry dough into hot oil, inadvertently creating this nowbeloved treat. This story also explains why these doughnuts are sometimes referred to as "wind donuts" or "old lady's fart" in certain French regions.

The making of "Pets de nonnes" is an exercise in the art of French pastry. The process begins by combining water, milk, cubed butter, salt, and sugar in a saucepan, brought to a boil. Off the heat, sifted allpurpose flour mixed with baking powder is added all at once. The mixture is then cooked over medium heat, constantly stirred until it forms a smooth choux pastry dough. After cooling and the addition of eggs, the dough is either rested in the fridge or used immediately for frying. Small, walnutsized balls of this dough are then fried in hot oil until they puff up and turn golden brown. Once cooked, they are drained and rolled in superfine caster sugar, resulting in a sweet, crisp exterior that complements the soft, airy interior perfectly.

In crafting these delightful treats, one experiences the joy of French culinary tradition, where simplicity meets elegance. The "Pets de nonnes" is a testament to the creativity and resourcefulness of traditional cooks, turning basic ingredients into a dessert that has stood the test of time. As you indulge in these light, sugary puffs, remember the stories and laughter that have accompanied their creation through the ages. Whether enjoyed as a snack or a dessert, "Pets de nonnes" offers a taste of France's rich culinary history and a delightful treat that's sure to bring a smile to anyone's face.

How to make Pets de nonnes:

Prep time: 30 mins

Cooking time: 30 mins

Yield: 25

INGREDIENTS:

- All-purpose flour: 1 cup + 3 ½ tablespoons (150 g)
- Water: ½ cup + ½ tablespoons (125 ml)
- Milk: ½ cup + ½ tablespoons (125 ml)
- Salt: 1 pinch
- Unsalted butter: 1.8 oz. (50 g)
- Granulated sugar: 8 ½ teaspoons (40 g)
- Baking powder: 1 teaspoon (5 g)
- Large eggs: 3
- Frying oil: 4 ¼ cups (1 liter)

For serving:

- Caster sugar: ⅓ cup (75 g)

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Combine water, milk, cubed butter, salt, and sugar in a small saucepan. Bring to a boil, then remove from heat.
2. Off the heat, add sifted all-purpose flour and baking powder. Mix with a wooden spatula.
3. Return the saucepan to medium heat, stirring constantly until the dough detaches from the bottom and sides of the pan.
4. Transfer dough to a mixing bowl. Allow to cool for 5 minutes.
5. Add eggs one at a time, mixing well after each addition.
6. Cover the dough with plastic film and let it rest in the fridge for at least 2 hours, or start frying immediately.
7. Line a large plate with paper towels. Heat oil to 350°F (175°C) in a large pot or skillet.
8. Form small dough balls (about ½ tablespoon each) using two spoons or a small cookie scoop.
9. Fry the dough balls in batches, ensuring they don't touch, until puffed and golden brown.
10. Remove donuts with a metal spider and drain on paper towels.
11. Roll warm donuts in caster sugar and serve immediately.

NOTE:

- Dough Resting: Fry immediately or let the dough rest in the fridge, covered with plastic film, for a minimum of 2 hours or overnight.
- Testing Oil Temperature: Immerse a wooden spoon handle in oil; if bubbles form, it's ready.
- Alternative Serving: Sprinkle with powdered sugar or roll in cinnamon sugar for variety.

Berliner pfannkuchen (Germany)



Let me whisk you away to the charming streets of Germany, where this delightful treat is more than just a doughnut; it's a cultural icon. Known fondly as the "Berliner," this soft, fluffy pastry is a staple in German bakeries, beloved by people of all ages. Typically enjoyed for breakfast, dessert, or during the famous German coffee hour, the Berliner is a versatile treat that has captured hearts and taste buds alike.

The Berliner Pfannkuchen is traditionally made from a yeast dough, fried to a golden brown, and then generously filled with various types of jams, spreads, and creams. Imagine biting into this warm, airy doughnut, the sweet burst of jam mingling with the soft, pillowy texture – it's a moment of pure bliss! Often coated with powdered sugar or other glazes, each Berliner is a work of art, a perfect balance of flavors and textures.

But where did this delightful doughnut originate? The history of the Berliner Pfannkuchen is as fascinating as it is delicious. According to popular legend, the Berliner was invented in 1756 by a Berlin confectioner who, unable to serve in the military, became a field baker instead. As a token of gratitude, he created the first Berliner, shaping the yeast dough pieces round like cannonballs. Since no oven was available, he ingeniously fried them in a pot full of oil over an open campfire, giving birth to this beloved pastry.

In Germany, the Berliner goes by various names, including "Kreppel" or "Krapfen," depending on the region. But no matter what it's called, the joy it brings remains the same. Whether filled with smooth, high-quality preserves, hazelnut spread like Nutella, or even cream, each variation of the Berliner offers a unique and delightful experience.

Making a Berliner is an act of love, a celebration of tradition. The process involves carefully kneading the dough, allowing it to proof to perfection, and then skillfully frying it to achieve that signature fluffy texture. The final step, filling the doughnuts with your favorite jam or spread, is like adding the last piece to a beautiful puzzle.

So, let's embrace the spirit of German baking and indulge in the delightful world of Berliner Pfannkuchen. Whether you're enjoying it as a sweet start to your day, a treat during a cozy coffee break, or as a dessert to end your meal on a high note, the Berliner is sure to bring a smile to your face. It's not just a doughnut; it's a taste of German heritage, a sweet reminder of the simple joys in life.

How to make Berliner pfannkuchen:

Prep Time: 30 mins

Cook Time: 10 mins

Total Time: 2 hrs 40 mins

Yield: 14

INGREDIENTS:

Pre-Dough:

- All-purpose flour: 4 cups (500 g)
- Sugar: 1 tbsp. (15 g)
- Yeast: 2 ¼ tsp. (one package) (7 g)
- Milk: ¼ cup (60 ml)

Dough:

- Lemon zest: 1 tsp.
- Sugar: ½ cup (100 g)
- Milk: ⅔ cup (160 ml)
- Egg: 1
- Egg yolks: 2
- Butter, soft but not melted: 6 tbsp. (85 g)
- Fine salt: ½ tsp.
- Rum: 3 tbsp. (45 ml)
- Vinegar: 1 tbsp. (15 ml)
- Vanilla extract: 1 tsp.

Frying:

- Vegetable oil, lard, or clarified butter: 2 quarts (approx. 1.9 liters)

Filling & Decoration:

- Granulated sugar: ⅔ cup (130 g)
- Jam or hazelnut spread (e.g., Nutella): 1 small glass
- Powdered sugar (optional): ⅛ cup (15 g)

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Heat milk until lukewarm.
2. In a stand mixer bowl, add flour and form a well. Add sugar, yeast, and lukewarm milk to the well. Gently mix, incorporating some flour. Cover and let sit for 10-15 minutes.
3. Add lemon zest, sugar, milk, egg, egg yolks, and salt to the bowl. Knead on medium-low for about 10 minutes until the dough is smooth and elastic.
4. During the first few minutes of kneading, add rum, vinegar, and vanilla extract. Gradually incorporate the soft butter while kneading.
5. Cover and let the dough rise in a warm place for 1.5-2 hours, or until doubled in size.
6. Dust the countertop with flour. Divide the dough into 12-14 pieces and shape each into a ball. Place on a parchment-lined baking sheet and flatten slightly. Cover with a kitchen towel and let proof for about 1 hour.
7. Remove the towel and let sit uncovered for 30 minutes.
8. Heat oil in a large pot to 330°F (165°C). Prepare a cooling rack with paper towels.
9. Fry the dough balls in batches for 1 ½ to 2 minutes per side until golden.
10. Remove and drain on paper towels. Roll in sugar while slightly warm.

11. For filling, cool completely and use a piping nozzle to inject jam or Nutella.
12. Optionally, dust with powdered sugar.

NOTE:

- Use smooth preserves for easier piping. If your jam has chunks, strain it through a fine mesh sieve.
- If you prefer not to use alcohol, substitute milk for the rum. The vinegar is a secret ingredient for a pillowy texture but won't affect the taste.

Zeppole (Italy)



Zeppole, a quintessential Italian treat, are not just doughnuts; they are a delightful journey into the heart of Italian culinary tradition. Originating from the Roman Empire, these sweet snacks are deeply rooted in Italy's rich history and culture. Particularly popular in southern regions like Campania, Apulia, and Calabria, Zeppole are traditionally made during festivities and celebrations, embodying the joy and warmth of Italian hospitality.

The name "Zeppole" itself is thought to derive from the Latin word "Serpula," meaning snake, a nod to their original shape: a twisted log of dough resembling a coiled serpent. Over time, this shape evolved into what we now recognize as the doughnut, but in Naples, they are still affectionately called "Graffe," meaning paper pin in Neapolitan dialect.

Traditionally, Zeppole are sweet, though there are savory variations as well. Their preparation is an art, a delicate balance of flavors and textures. The dough is typically infused with the zest of lemons and oranges, giving it a distinctively bright and refreshing flavor. This citrusy base is then deep-fried until golden and crispy on the outside, while remaining soft and airy on the inside.

One of the most famous variations of Zeppole is the "Zeppole di San Giuseppe," prepared especially for Father's Day in Italy on March 19th. These are typically topped with pastry cream and black cherries, turning them into a decadent and indulgent treat.

In making Zeppole, one engages in a time-honored tradition that has been passed down through generations. The process involves careful kneading of the dough, allowing it to rise and develop its flavors, and then shaping

it into the desired form before frying. The result is a delightful confection that is as pleasing to the eye as it is to the palate.

In Naples, the traditional street food seller is known as the "Zeppularo," a testament to the Zeppole's enduring popularity as a beloved street food. Whether enjoyed as a sweet snack while wandering through the streets of Naples or as a special treat during festive occasions, Zeppole are a symbol of Italian culinary artistry and heritage.

Zeppole are not just doughnuts; they are a celebration of life's simple pleasures, a reminder of the joy that can be found in the flavors and traditions of Italy. As you savor each bite, you're not just tasting a pastry; you're experiencing a piece of Italy's soul, a sweet connection to its rich and vibrant history.

How to make Zeppole:

Prep Time: 2 hours

Cook Time: 20 to 30 mins

Yield: 8

INGREDIENTS:

- All-purpose flour: 1 lb (450 g)
- Golden potatoes, peeled and boiled: 7 oz (200 g)
- Organic lemon: 1
- Organic orange: 1
- Eggs: 2
- Vanilla extract: 1 drop
- Active yeast: ¼ oz packet (7 g)
- Butter: 5.5 tbsp (80 g)
- Sugar: ½ cup (115 g) (plus extra for decoration)
- Whole milk: 2 tbsp (30 ml)
- Table salt: 1 tsp
- Sesame or peanut oil: 1.5 Qt (1.5 Lt)

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Chop the butter and soften it in a turned-off oven with the light on (soft, not melted).
2. Dissolve yeast in room temperature milk with a pinch of sugar.
3. Mash the boiled potatoes.
4. Grate lemon and orange peel, avoiding the white part.
5. Sift flour into a bowl. Add mashed potatoes, citrus peels, eggs, vanilla extract, milk with yeast, softened butter, and sugar. Knead to a smooth, consistent dough, adding salt halfway.
6. Form the dough into a ball, place in a bowl, and cover with plastic. Let it rise for 30 minutes in the turned-off oven.
7. Divide dough into 2 oz balls, cover with a kitchen towel.
8. Shape each ball into either:
9. A ribbon (Graffa): Shape into a log, then pinch to create an eyelet.
10. A doughnut: Flatten slightly and create a hole in the center.
11. Place Zeppole on a floured parchment paper, spaced out. Cover and let rise for 60-90 minutes until doubled.
12. Heat oil in a deep saucepan to 330°F 345°F (165°C 175°C).
13. Gently deep fry 3-4 Zeppole at a time for 2-3 minutes per side.
14. Drain on paper towels, then coat with sugar while hot.
15. Serve immediately or store at room temperature for up to two days.

Struffoli (Italy)



Struffoli, the traditional Italian honey balls, are more than just a dessert; they are a celebration of Italian culture and festivity. Originating from Naples, Struffoli are a classic sweet, particularly popular during Christmas. These crispy honey balls, tender at heart, are seasoned with candied fruit and sugar decorations, embodying the spirit of Italian culinary tradition.

The creation of Struffoli is an art form. The dough, moderately sweet due to the honey, sugar decorations, and candied fruit, is crafted into tiny spheres, no larger than $\frac{3}{4}$ inch in diameter, to ensure perfect frying and a crispy texture. These little delights are not only scrumptious when freshly glazed but become even more flavorful a few days later, as the honey further penetrates and enhances their taste.

Struffoli's recipe has evolved from its Ancient Greek and Medieval Spanish origins, drawing from dishes like Greek Loukoumades and Spanish Piñonate. The term "Struffolo" itself is derived from the Greek "Strongoulos," meaning "rounded," and reflects the dish's historical roots. The Spanish Piñonate, similar in ingredients but different in shape, influenced Struffoli as well, adding depth to its flavor profile.

Historically, Struffoli were prepared all year long and not just for Christmas. This tradition, especially prevalent in Naples, was popularized in the 18th century by nuns who prepared these honey balls as gifts for the city's nobility. Today, beyond Naples, Struffoli are still prepared for major festivities, particularly Mardi Gras, showcasing their versatility and enduring popularity.

In contemporary times, Struffoli have undergone subtle changes in their preparation. Initially kneaded and fried with lard, modern recipes often use butter and sesame oil, with recent additions like baking soda to the mixture. The traditional liquor for flavoring Struffoli is a Neapolitan anise brew, though it is often replaced with rum or brandy due to availability.

These delightful honey balls are typically served in a domed glass plate, shaped into a cone or a wreath, particularly during Christmas. An attractive serving option includes placing them inside a horn of plenty made with caramel and crushed hazelnuts, adding a decorative and festive touch.

Struffoli are not just a treat; they are a link to Italian heritage, a testament to the country's rich culinary past, and a beloved symbol of celebration and joy. As you indulge in these honey-coated spheres, you experience a piece of Italy's heart, a sweet journey through time and tradition.

How to make Struffoli:

Prep Time: 30 mins

Cook Time: 10 mins

Yield: 8

INGREDIENTS:

- Eggs: 2
- All-purpose flour: $\frac{3}{4}$ lb (340 g)
- Caster sugar: 2 oz (55 g)
- Unsalted butter: 2 oz (55 g)
- Organic lemon: 1
- Organic orange: 1
- Candied fruit: 3 tbsp
- Honey: 1 cup (340 g)
- Sugar decorations: 2 tbsp
- Rum or Brandy: 2 drops
- Anise flavor: 1 drop
- Table salt: 1 pinch

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Soften the butter in a turned-off oven with the light on for 30 minutes. Cut into pieces and stir until smooth.
2. Grate the zests of the lemon and orange.
3. In a bowl, mix eggs, sugar, softened butter, lemon and orange zests, Rum or Brandy, Anise flavor, and a pinch of salt until consistent.
4. Gradually add flour to the wet mixture, pinching with your fingers until it forms a dough. Wrap and refrigerate for at least 2 hours.
5. Roll a portion of the dough into a $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch thick log. Cut into $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch pieces.
6. Heat sesame oil to 356°F (180°C) and fry the Struffoli until golden. Drain on paper towels.
7. Warm honey in a nonstick pan until fluid, then remove from heat. Mix in Struffoli and sugar decorations.
8. Serve immediately or store for enhanced flavor over the following days.

Paczki (Poland)



Pączki, the beloved Polish doughnuts, are more than just a sweet treat; they are a rich tapestry of tradition and celebration, woven deeply into the fabric of Polish culture. Originating in Poland, these delectable pastries are a staple during festive occasions, especially on Fat Thursday and Fat Tuesday, marking the last moments of indulgence before the Lenten fasting begins.

The journey of making Pączki begins with a rich, yeasty dough, traditionally infused with a hint of spirits like rum or brandy, which not only adds flavor but also aids in creating a tender and light texture. The dough, enriched with eggs, sugar, and butter, is meticulously kneaded and allowed to rise, embodying the patience and care that goes into each batch.

Once risen, the dough is shaped into smooth, plump rounds, ready to be fried to a golden perfection. The cooking process is a delicate dance—the doughnuts must be turned at just the right moment to achieve the characteristic golden hue and perfectly cooked interior. This meticulous frying process ensures that the Pączki are crispy on the outside yet soft and airy on the inside.

The true magic of Pączki, however, lies in their filling. Traditional fillings include stewed plum jam or wild rose hip jam, embodying the flavors of Poland's rich culinary heritage. Over time, a variety of other fillings like raspberry, apple, or custard have also become popular, offering a delightful burst of flavor with each bite.

Once fried and filled, the Pączki are often rolled in granulated or powdered sugar, adding a sweet, crystalline crunch that contrasts beautifully with the soft dough and luscious filling. This final touch of sugar not only adds to the taste but also enhances the visual appeal, making Pączki an irresistible sight on any festive table.

In Poland, the making and sharing of Pączki are steeped in tradition and community. These doughnuts are not just a culinary delight but a symbol of shared history and joy. As one indulges in a Pączek, they are not merely savoring a pastry but partaking in a centuries-old tradition, a celebration of culture, family, and the simple joys of life.

So, as you bite into the soft, sweet dough of a Pączek, let it transport you to the heart of Poland, where each doughnut is a story, each bite a celebration of tradition and communal joy. The Pączki is not just a doughnut; it is a taste of Polish heritage, a sweet memento of life's fleeting pleasures.

How to make Paczki

Prep Time: 30 mins

Cook Time: 30 mins

Total Time: 2 hrs 30 mins

Yield: 12

INGREDIENTS:

- Dry active or instant yeast: 2 1/4 tsp (7 g)
- Whole milk (3% b.f.): 1 cup (227 ml), scalded and cooled
- Large egg yolks: 2
- Granulated white sugar: 1/4 cup (50 g)
- Butter, melted: 2 Tbsp
- Vanilla extract: 1/2 tsp
- Salt: 1/2 tsp
- All-purpose flour: 3 – 3 1/2 cups (360 – 420 g)
- Oil, for frying
- White granulated sugar, for dusting
- Jam or custard, for filling (e.g., raspberry, blueberry, cherry, or strawberry jam)

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Heat milk in a small saucepan until steaming with small bubbles around the edges (about 180°F). Cool to lukewarm (about 105°F).
2. Dissolve yeast in lukewarm milk in a large bowl or stand mixer bowl. Add 1 cup flour, mix, and let stand for 20-30 minutes until bubbly.
3. Beat egg yolks in a small bowl until light and fluffy.
4. To the yeast mixture, add melted butter, sugar, salt, vanilla, and egg yolks. Gradually add remaining flour to form a soft, moist dough.
5. Knead dough on a floured surface for 1 minute, form into a ball, place in a greased bowl, cover, and let rise until doubled (about 90 minutes).
6. Roll dough on a floured board to 1/2-inch thickness, cut out circles with a 3-inch biscuit cutter. Place on a parchment-lined baking sheet, cover, and let rise until doubled (about 30 minutes).
7. Heat oil to 360°F. Fry Paczki until golden on each side, then roll in granulated sugar and cool.
8. Once cooled, fill with jam or custard using a pastry bag.

NOTE:

- Freeze any extra Paczki for up to 3 months.
- Refer to additional notes and step-by-step photos in the original recipe link for more tips.

Oliebollen (Netherlands)



Oliebollen, the quintessential Dutch doughnuts, are a delightful culinary tradition deeply embedded in the Netherlands' festive culture, particularly celebrated on New Year's Eve. These treats, known for their crispy exterior and soft, juicy interior, are a symbol of warmth and celebration, marking the end of the year with their delicious presence.

Originating from a time-honored tradition, Oliebollen have a rich history that dates back to the early Christian era. The Germanic tribes, Friesen, and Bataven, would prepare these fried dough balls as offerings to their gods, particularly the goddess Perchta. The belief was that the grease in the food would prevent harm from the goddess's sword and ward off evil spirits. This early form of Oliebollen was a spiritual offering, representing protection and blessings.

By the 17th century, Oliebollen evolved into a form of sustenance for the less fortunate, often distributed on November 11th, Sint Maarten's day, as a symbol of luck and goodwill. This transformation marked the beginning of Oliebollen's journey from a ritualistic offering to a popular culinary delight.

The 19th century saw Oliebollen becoming a staple during New Year's celebrations, a tradition that continues to this day. The cold winter months made these fried, nutrient-rich dough balls an ideal treat, providing warmth and sustenance. Though traditionally consumed on New Year's Eve, Oliebollen are also a common sight at fairs throughout the year, their warm, comforting presence drawing people together.

Oliebollen are typically about 5 cm in diameter, fried in hot oil until they achieve a golden brown color. The dough, airy and moist, often includes fillings like currants and apple pieces, adding a sweet and tangy dimension to the flavor. After frying, they are generously dusted with powdered sugar, enhancing their appeal and taste.

The process of making Oliebollen is both an art and a tradition. The batter, often made with yeast, flour, eggs, and sometimes beer for extra airiness, is deep-fried to perfection. The addition of beer not only gives the dough a unique flavor but also contributes to the light and fluffy texture of the Oliebollen.

In contemporary Dutch culture, Oliebollen are more than just a treat; they are a symbol of festivity, unity, and tradition. On New Year's Eve, families and friends gather together, sharing these delicious doughnuts as they bid farewell to the old year and welcome the new. Oliebollen stands become a common sight, their inviting aroma filling the air, drawing people to enjoy these beloved treats.

While Oliebollen are indulgent, their cultural significance and the joy they bring outweigh any concerns about their richness. They represent the spirit of celebration, the warmth of community, and the continuation of a tradition that spans centuries. As the Dutch say, an Oliebollen is not just a doughnut; it's a taste of history, a bite of culture, and a piece of culinary heritage that continues to bring joy and warmth year after year.

How to make Oliebollen:

Prep Time: 2 hours

Cook Time: 30 mins

Total Time: 2 hrs 30 mins

Yield: 25

INGREDIENTS:

- Raisins (optional): 2 cups (300 g)
- Unsalted butter: ½ stick (50 g)
- Milk: ¼ cup (50 ml)
- Instant yeast: 1 oz (30 g)
- Flour: 8 cups (1 kg)
- Large eggs: 2
- Sugar: 1½ tablespoons
- Salt: ½ oz. (15 g)
- Beer: 3 cups (750 ml)
- Cinnamon: ⅛ teaspoon
- Apple (optional), peeled and cubed: 1
- Sunflower oil for frying: 1 gallon (3.5 L)
- Confectioners' sugar: 4 tablespoons

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Soak raisins in water for 1 hour.
2. Melt butter and warm milk to 100 °F (37 °C).
3. Stir yeast into the milk.
4. In a bowl, mix flour, salt, and sugar. Stir in eggs one at a time.
5. Gradually whisk in the beer until smooth.
6. Add the milk-yeast mixture, butter, and cinnamon. Mix well.
7. Stir in raisins and apple cubes with a wooden spoon.
8. Cover dough with a damp towel and plastic wrap.
9. Let rise for 1 hour in a warm place.
10. Heat sunflower oil to 350 °F (180 °C).
11. Gently stir batter, then use two spoons to form balls and fry in oil for 3 minutes per side.
12. Drain on kitchen paper to remove excess oil.
13. Dust with confectioners' sugar before serving.

NOTE:

- Yeast: Use 1 oz. (30 g) instant, 2 oz. (60 g) fresh, or 1 oz. (30 g) dry yeast. For fresh and dry yeast, first dissolve in lukewarm milk.
- If you don't have an ice cream scoop, use oiled tablespoons for shaping.
- Raisins and apples are optional and can be omitted.
- Store at room temperature and reheat in the oven the next day, then sprinkle with confectioners' sugar.

Churros (Spain)



Churros, the beloved fried dough pastry, have a special place in the hearts and culinary traditions of Spain and beyond. Often thought of as Spain's answer to doughnuts, churros are simple yet irresistible. Made from a straightforward dough of flour, water, and salt, they are deep-fried to golden perfection, resulting in a delightfully crispy exterior and a soft, airy interior.

The origins of churros are steeped in history and folklore. One theory suggests that Spanish shepherds created churros as a portable snack that could be easily cooked over an open fire. Another story traces their roots to the Portuguese, who allegedly discovered a similar treat in China and introduced it to the Iberian Peninsula. Regardless of their true origin, churros have become an integral part of Spanish culture.

In Spain, churros are typically enjoyed as a breakfast treat or a snack, often paired with a thick hot chocolate or a side of sugar for dipping. Contrary to popular belief outside Spain, traditional Spanish churros are not served stuffed with fillings like chocolate or cheese. Instead, they are savored in their plain, unadorned form, allowing the delicate balance of crispy and soft textures to shine through.

Churros have also found a home in Latin America, where they have been adapted to local tastes. Here, it's common to find churros filled with sweet delights such as dulce de leche, chocolate, or sprinkled with cinnamon and sugar. These variations, while not traditional in Spain, have become beloved treats in their own right.

Interestingly, in Spain, not all churros are made fresh on-site. Many are delivered from large bakeries to local churrerías each morning. This practice underscores the importance of visiting a dedicated churros shop for an authentic experience.

A close cousin of the churro is the porra, a thicker and chewier variant that includes baking soda in its recipe. While both are popular, preferences between the svelte churro and its heftier relative, the porra, vary among individuals.

Churros, in their traditional Spanish form, are a versatile snack, enjoyed at various times throughout the day. From a special breakfast treat to a mid-morning or afternoon snack, and even as a late-night indulgence after a night out, churros are a beloved part of Spanish culinary life.

The traditional recipe for churros is deceptively simple, requiring only basic pantry staples. This ease of preparation makes homemade churros an achievable delight, bringing a taste of Spain into kitchens around the world. Whether enjoyed in their plain, sugar-dusted form, dipped in rich hot chocolate, or savored as a stuffed Latin American variant, churros are a testament to the enduring appeal of simple, well-made food.

How to make Churros:

Prep Time: 10 mins

Cook Time: 15 mins

Total Time: 25 mins

Yield: 6

INGREDIENTS:

- Water: 1 cup (255 ml) + 1 tablespoon
- All-purpose flour: 1 cup (120 g)
- Baking powder: 1 tsp
- Salt: ½ tsp
- Cinnamon (optional): ¼ tsp
- Olive oil: For frying

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Sift flour and mix in baking powder, salt, and optional cinnamon.
2. Boil water, then remove from heat and whisk in the dry ingredients.
3. Stir for 2-3 minutes until the dough is smooth.
4. Let the dough cool for 5 minutes.
5. Fill a churrera or a pastry bag with a star tip with the dough.
6. Heat oil over medium heat. Pipe dough in a circular motion into the hot oil.
7. Fry until golden, flipping as necessary.
8. Drain churros on paper towels.
9. Cut into stick shapes and serve with hot chocolate or sprinkle with sugar.

AMERICAS

BeaverTail (Canada)



BeaverTails, a quintessentially Canadian treat, are a culinary emblem of the nation's diverse and rich food culture. These delectable pastries are a unique type of fried dough, shaped to resemble the tail of a beaver, Canada's national animal. The story of BeaverTails begins with a ball of whole-wheat dough, which is hand-stretched into a long, flat oval and deep-fried in canola oil. The result is a pastry that's both crispy and chewy, offering a delightful textural contrast.

The concept of BeaverTails was conceived in 1978 by Grant Hooker and his wife Pam. The recipe, derived from Grant's German-Canadian grandmother, initially featured treats called "keekla" topped with sugar, cinnamon, butter, jam, or honey. The name "BeaverTails" emerged when the couple's daughter pointed out the resemblance of these pastries to actual beaver tails. This rebranding capitalized on the beaver's symbolic significance in Canadian culture, leading to the pastry's widespread popularity.

The first BeaverTails shop opened in Ottawa's historic ByWard Market, quickly becoming a favorite among skaters at the nearby Rideau Canal. The unique texture and flavor of BeaverTails captured the hearts of both

visitors and locals. Over the years, BeaverTails have expanded beyond Canada, with franchises now found in countries like Mexico, France, the United Arab Emirates, and Japan. The pastries even entered the U.S. market around 2018, gaining popularity across various states.

BeaverTails are traditionally sprinkled with a mix of sugar and cinnamon. However, the versatility of this treat is evident in the myriad of toppings that can be added, ranging from chocolate hazelnut spread and maple cream to crushed chocolate bars, cookies, fruit, and even poutine. Regional variations of BeaverTails also reflect Canada's diverse culinary landscape, with toppings like fresh salmon, cream cheese, capers, steak, and even lobster in different parts of the country.

The iconic status of BeaverTails in Canadian culture is such that they have been featured in television shows, board games, and have even inspired an "ObamaTail," crafted especially for President Barack Obama during his visit to Ottawa in 2009. The popularity of BeaverTails is a testament to their unique appeal and the ingenuity of their creators, embodying the spirit of Canadian culinary innovation.

How to make BeaverTails:

Prep Time: 2 hours

Cook Time: 30 mins

Total Time: 2 hrs 30 mins

Yield: 25

INGREDIENTS:

- Warm water: ½ cup (120 ml)
- Active dry yeast: 5 tsp
- White sugar: ¼ tsp, plus ⅓ cup (70 g)
- Warm milk: 1 cup (240 ml)
- Salt: 1½ tsp
- Vanilla extract: 1 tsp
- Eggs: 2
- Canola oil: ⅓ cup (80 ml), plus more for frying
- All-purpose flour: 5 cups (625 g)
- Corn oil: For frying
- Ground cinnamon: For coating

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. In a large bowl, mix yeast, warm water, and ¼ tsp sugar. Let it stand for a few minutes to allow the yeast to activate.
2. Add ⅓ cup sugar, milk, vanilla, eggs, oil, salt, and most of the flour to the yeast mixture. Knead for 5-8 minutes, adding flour as needed, to form a smooth, elastic dough.
3. Place the dough in a lightly greased bowl, cover with a warm towel, and let rise for 30-40 minutes.
4. Gently deflate the dough. If refrigerated, let it warm up for 40 minutes before proceeding.
5. Pinch off golf ball-sized pieces of dough, roll into ovals on a floured surface, and cover with a tea towel.
6. Heat 4 inches of corn oil in a fryer to about 385°F (196°C).
7. Stretch the ovals into beaver tail shapes and fry one at a time until deep brown on both sides.
8. Drain on paper towels.
9. In a bowl, mix white sugar and cinnamon. Toss the beaver tails in this mixture, coating both sides. Shake off the excess.

Picarones (Perù)



Picarones, a beloved Peruvian delicacy, are more than just a dessert; they are a rich tapestry of history and culture woven into a delightful pastry. With a history dating back to the Viceroyalty era, picarones have evolved from pre-Hispanic roots to become a symbol of Peruvian culinary heritage.

Originally, the indigenous people of the region prepared a simple mixture of sweet potato and pumpkin. With the arrival of the Spaniards, the recipe was enriched with wheat flour and sugar, transforming it into a dish that closely resembles Iberian fritters. This blend of native and European ingredients gave birth to what we now know as picarones.

The addition of wheat flour and sugar by the conquistadors led to a more compact dough, giving picarones their distinctive bread-like form. Traditionally garnished with chancaca, a sweet syrup, these treats embody a fusion of diverse culinary influences.

Over the centuries, picarones have been popularized by Afro-descendant cooks, who played a crucial role in integrating this sweet into Peruvian culture. These women, often seen hawking their wares in the streets during religious processions like the feast of the Señor de Los Milagros, became synonymous with this iconic dessert.

Picarones are characterized by their globular shape, reminiscent of doughnuts, and a texture similar to fritters. The classic hole in the center, a feature developed post-conquest, adds to their visual appeal. The story of the Picarón, deeply rooted in both pre-Hispanic and colonial history, reflects the blending of native and Spanish culinary traditions.

The popularity of picarones in Lima led to their recipe being passed down through generations, particularly among Afro-descendant families. The tradition of serving these hot, sweet treats during religious events has been immortalized in Peruvian culture, with vendors often advertising their products with verses or melodic songs.

One such cultural expression is captured in “La picaronera,” a composition by Peruvian artist Rosa Mercedes Ayarza. The song vividly portrays the allure of picarones, enticing everyone from young to old with their round, toasted form and sumptuous honey-soaked taste.

Today, picarones are a staple in Peruvian cuisine, loved by both locals and foreigners. Their widespread appeal has ensured that one can easily find a cart serving these delicious pastries on almost any corner of the capital.

As you savor a picarón, you are not just enjoying a dessert; you are partaking in a story that spans centuries, a story of convergence, tradition, and the enduring spirit of Peruvian cuisine.

How to make Picarones:

Prep Time: 40 mins

Cook Time: 40 mins

Total Time: 5 hrs 20 mins

Yield: 20

INGREDIENTS:

For Chancaca Honey:

- Chancaca: 250g (8.8 oz)
- Water: 240 ml (1 cup)
- Sugar: 250g (8.8 oz)
- Orange juice: 240 ml (1 cup)
- Fig leaves: 2
- Cinnamon sticks: 2
- Cloves: 5

For Picarones:

- Sweet potato, diced: 750g (1 2/3 lbs)
- Pumpkin, diced: 1 kg (2.2 lbs)
- Anise: 2 tbsp
- Brown sugar: 60g (2 oz)
- Dry yeast: 10g (2 tsp)
- All-purpose flour: 650g (23 oz)

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Finely chop chancaca and melt in a saucepan with water.
2. Strain and discard debris, then add sugar, orange juice, fig leaves, cinnamon, and cloves.
3. Simmer until syrupy.

4. Cook, covered and over medium-heat, diced sweet potato in water until tender (about 10 minutes). Drain, reserving the water, and mash.
5. Repeat with pumpkin.
6. Mix 200 ml pumpkin water, 100 ml sweet potato water, anise, brown sugar, and yeast.
7. Add 500g pumpkin purée, 300g sweet potato purée, and flour. Combine and let rest, covered in a warm spot, for 4 hours.
8. Shape dough into rings using fingers dipped in salted water.
9. Fry until puffed and golden.
10. Drizzle with prepared honey and serve.

ASIA

AnPan (Japan)



Anpan, a Japanese sweet bread filled with red bean paste, is a culinary delight that harmoniously blends Eastern and Western baking traditions. Unlike a typical doughnut, anpan is not fried but baked, offering a softer, slightly chewy texture that is both comforting and satisfying.

The genesis of anpan can be traced back to the late 19th century, born out of a fusion of Japanese and Western culinary practices. Yasubei Kimura, a former samurai, ventured into the world of baking and created this unique treat to make Western bread more appealing to Japanese tastes. By filling the Western-style bread with traditional Japanese Anko (red bean paste), Kimura not only reinvented the bread but also established a new pastry tradition in Japan.

Anpan's creation also influenced the development of "an-doughnuts," Japanese doughnuts stuffed with red bean paste. While anpan and an-doughnuts share the Anko filling, they differ in their preparation; anpan is baked, whereas an-doughnuts are fried. This distinction in cooking methods contributes to their unique textures and flavors.

Historically, anpan is linked to "manj," a traditional Japanese pastry that originated in China as "mantou." The similarities between anpan and manj lie in their use of soft wheat dough and red bean filling. However, manj,

known for its longer history and Chinese origins, is considered a pastry, while anpan is classified as a dessert or a snack.

Anpan's dough, made from flour, sugar, yeast, and milk, is expertly kneaded and shaped into rounds or ovals before being filled with the sweet, slightly nutty Anko. The bread's delicate texture perfectly complements the rich, smooth red bean paste, making anpan a beloved treat in Japan. Often found in bakeries, convenience stores, and festival stalls, anpan is more than just a snack; it's a symbol of culinary innovation and cultural fusion.

In essence, anpan represents the beautiful amalgamation of Eastern flavors with Western baking techniques, creating a unique and beloved treat that holds a special place in the hearts of those who savor it. Whether enjoyed as a quick snack or a sweet indulgence, anpan is a testament to the timeless appeal of simple, well-crafted flavors.

How to make Anpan:

Prep Time: 1 hour 15 mins (including rising time)

Cook Time: 15-20 mins

Total Time: 1 hour 30-35 mins

Yield: 10-12 Anpan

INGREDIENTS:

- Milk: 1 cup (240 ml)
- Unsalted butter: 2 tablespoons (30 g)
- Sugar: 1/4 cup (50 g)
- Egg: 1
- Active dry yeast: 2 1/4 teaspoons (7 g)
- All-purpose flour: 3 cups (360 g)
- Salt: 1/2 teaspoon (2.5 g)
- Red bean paste (Anko): 1 cup (240 ml)

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Mix milk, egg, and butter in a saucepan over medium heat. Heat until butter melts, then let cool until lukewarm.
2. In a large bowl, combine flour, salt, sugar, and yeast.
3. Gradually pour the milk mixture into the dry ingredients, kneading continuously until smooth and elastic.
4. Knead in the butter until dough becomes smooth.
5. Place dough in a greased bowl, cover with a damp cloth, and let it rise in a warm place for about an hour or until doubled in size.
6. Preheat oven to 350°F (180°C).
7. Punch down the dough and roll it into a long cylinder on a floured surface. Cut into slices.
8. Roll each slice flat, add a spoonful of red bean paste to the center, and pinch edges to seal. Shape into round balls.
9. Place the Anpan on a baking sheet, cut-side up, and let them rise again.
10. Bake for 15-20 minutes, or until golden brown and the filling is warm.

NOTE:

- Prepare your Anko (red bean paste) a day in advance, or use pre-made Anko for convenience. Boil red beans and mash with sugar to make the paste.

Sel Roti (Nepal)



Sel Roti, a traditional Nepalese delicacy, is a unique culinary creation that embodies the rich cultural tapestry of Nepal. Resembling a doughnut in appearance, Sel Roti is a sweet, ring-shaped bread, but its composition and cultural significance set it apart from ordinary fried pastries.

Crafted from rice flour, Sel Roti's origins can be traced back over 800 years, reflecting Nepal's diverse ethnic melting pot. The evolution of this dish is deeply intertwined with Nepal's history, with influences from various communities contributing to its current form. The possibility of Sel Roti originating from Babari, a Nepalese rice pancake, highlights its evolution from a pancake-like dish to the distinctive ring-shaped, deep-fried treat known today.

The name "Sel Roti" is thought to be derived either from 'Sel,' a type of rice grown in Nepal's foothills, or from 'Saal,' the Nepali word for year, emphasizing its role in New Year celebrations. Over time, it has become an indispensable part of major Hindu festivals like Dashain and Tihar in Nepal, as well as in regions with Nepali-speaking communities in India and Bhutan.

During these festive occasions, the preparation of Sel Roti becomes a communal activity, with its sweet aroma signifying celebration and joy. Its cultural significance extends beyond festivals, being a staple at weddings, parties, and other ceremonies. The dish's popularity in Nepalese culture is such that it has even evolved into double-ring shapes in certain regions, showcasing its adaptability and continued relevance in traditional cuisine.

Interestingly, Sel Roti shares similarities with Singhal, a traditional dish from India's Kumaon region. While Singhal is made from semolina flour, it mirrors Sel Roti in cultural significance, being a common feature in festivals and special occasions. The use of semolina in Singhal imparts a distinct texture and nutty flavor, differentiating it from the softer, sweeter Sel Roti.

Sel Roti, with its crispy exterior and soft, fluffy interior, represents a fusion of traditional Nepalese ingredients and cooking techniques. It's not just a food item but a symbol of Nepalese heritage, a testament to the nation's rich culinary history, and a beloved treat among the Nepalese diaspora worldwide. Each bite of Sel Roti is not only a taste of sweet, delicate flavors but also a journey into the heart of Nepal's cultural identity.

How to make Sel Roti:

Prep Time: 2 hours

Cook Time: 20 mins

Total Time: 2 hrs 20 mins

Yield: 3

INGREDIENTS:

- Rice flour: 2 cups (240 g)
- Water: 1 cup (240 ml)
- Sugar: 1 cup (200 g)
- Ghee (clarified butter): ½ cup (120 ml)
- Ground cardamom: ½ tsp (1.5 g)
- Cooking oil: For deep frying

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Combine rice flour, sugar, ground cardamom, and ghee in a large bowl. Mix until crumbly.
2. Gradually add water, kneading into a smooth, slightly thick, pourable batter.
3. Cover the bowl with a cloth and let the batter rest for 2-3 hours for fermentation.
4. Heat oil in a deep pan or kadhai over medium heat for deep frying.
5. Pour batter into hot oil in a ring shape using a mould or spoon. Fry until golden brown and crispy, about 3-4 minutes per side.
6. Drain Sel Roti on paper towels.
7. Serve hot or at room temperature, perfect with tea or coffee.

Balushahi (India)



Balushahi, often hailed as the Indian version of a doughnut, is a classic sweet treat that has captured the hearts of many across South Asia. This delicacy, characterized by its crunchy exterior and soft, flaky interior, offers a unique sensory experience.

The key ingredient of balushahi is maida (all-purpose flour), a finely milled wheat flour, which forms the foundation of its dough. This ingredient is crucial in achieving the pastry's distinctive texture. Balushahi is immensely popular in North India and equally cherished in the South, where it is known as "badusha."

A hallmark of traditional Indian cuisine, the origins of balushahi can be traced back thousands of years. Its iconic shape, featuring a signature dent in the center, is one of the many aspects that make balushahi stand out. The sweet syrup used to coat the freshly fried dough imparts a delightful sweetness, balancing the crunchy texture with a syrupy bliss.

Though often referred to as "Indian donuts," balushahi and donuts are distinct in texture and taste. Unlike the uniformly fluffy donuts, balushahi boasts a contrasting combination of a crispy shell and a soft, flaky core. This contrast is what sets balushahi apart, making it a sought-after delicacy in Nepal, Bangladesh, Pakistan, and other South Asian regions.

Balushahi is not just a dessert but a cultural symbol, enjoyed across generations and on various occasions, from Diwali celebrations to casual gatherings. The joy of biting into a balushahi, with its crunch giving way to a sweet, syrup-soaked interior, is an experience cherished by both adults and children alike. It's a testament to the rich culinary heritage of the Indian subcontinent and a beloved treat that continues to delight taste buds worldwide.

How to make Balushahi:

Prep Time: 20 mins

Cook Time: 30 mins

Total Time: 50 mins

Yield: 18

INGREDIENTS:

For Balushahi Dough:

- All-purpose flour: 2 cups (250 g)
- Ghee: ¼ cup (60 g), semi-solid
- Curd: ¼ cup (60 g)
- Cold water: ½ cup (120 ml), or as needed
- Salt: 1 pinch
- Baking soda: 1 pinch
- Baking powder: ½ tsp

For Sugar Syrup:

- Sugar: 1 heaped cup (200 g)
- Water: ½ cup (120 g)
- Cardamom powder: ½ to 1 tsp, to taste
- Saffron strands: 10 to 12
- Lemon juice: 2 to 3 drops (optional)

Other Ingredients:

- Oil or ghee for deep frying

For Garnish:

- Chopped pistachios, almonds, or preferred nuts: 1 to 2 tbsp

INSTRUCTIONS:

Creaming Ghee:

1. Beat ghee until smooth, light, and fluffy.
2. Add chilled curd and whip until light and smooth.

Making Dough

1. Sift flour with salt, baking soda, and baking powder into the creamed ghee-curd mixture.
2. Mix lightly using a spoon or spatula.
3. Gradually sprinkle cold water, mixing to form a soft dough. Do not knead heavily (Just mix and bring everything together to a dough.)
4. If sticky, add 1-2 tbsp flour and lightly form a dough.
5. Cover the dough and let it rest for 15 minutes.

Making Sugar Syrup:

1. Take sugar and water in a pan with a large surface area for soaking balushahi.
2. Heat on low, stirring until the sugar dissolves.
3. If impurities arise, add milk and skim off the scum.
4. Add cardamom powder and saffron strands, stirring well.
5. Simmer on low to medium-low heat, stirring occasionally. Add lemon juice to prevent crystallization.

6. Cook until the syrup is sticky, testing by cooling a spoonful and feeling for stickiness.
7. Once sticky, turn off the heat.

Frying Balushahi:

1. Heat oil or ghee in a kadai on medium heat.
2. Form small to medium-sized balls from the dough, make an indent in each.
3. Test oil temperature with a tiny piece of dough; it should rise steadily.
4. Gently place 5-7 balushahi in the hot oil without overcrowding.
5. Fry on low heat, turning occasionally until golden and crisp (about 12-15 minutes per batch).
6. Remove and drain on paper towels. Prepare the next batch.

Making Balushahi:

1. While still hot, soak the fried balushahi in warm sugar syrup for 14-15 minutes.
2. Turn each piece to coat evenly.
3. Remove and place on a serving tray.
4. Sprinkle with pistachios, and optionally saffron, rose petals, or cardamom.
5. Repeat soaking for remaining balushahi.
7. If sugar syrup crystallizes, add water and warm it up.
8. Serve the balushahi, storing any leftovers in an airtight container for 5-6 days.

Youtiao (China)



Youtiao, colloquially known as Chinese cruller or fried breadstick, is an integral part of Chinese cuisine with a dramatic origin steeped in history and folklore. The dish, which literally translates to "oil-fried devil" from Cantonese, traces its roots back to the Southern Song dynasty, associated with the story of general Yue Fei, a revered figure in Chinese culture.

Youtiao is believed to have originated from a public act of culinary defiance against corrupt officials Qin Kuai and his wife, who were responsible for Yue Fei's betrayal and execution. In an act of protest, a food vendor named Wang Xiao-er created a representation of the Qin couple holding hands, frying it in boiling oil, an expression of the public's wish for justice. This act not only vented the public's frustrations but also gave birth to youtiao.

Originally known as "yao zha kuai," the snack's name evolved over time, eventually becoming "youtiao" in Mandarin and "yao zha gwai" in Cantonese. The dish's transformation from a symbol of political defiance to a popular culinary delight is a testament to its enduring appeal.

Youtiao is typically made from two long strips of wheat flour dough, joined together and deep-fried until golden brown. It's enjoyed in various forms across Asia, reflecting the region's diverse culinary traditions. For instance, in Hangzhou, it is combined with spring onions to create "蔥包檣." In Guangdong and Hong Kong, youtiao accompanies traditional breakfasts like congee or is wrapped in rice noodle rolls to make zhaliang. Yunnan's variant, erkuai, is a rice cake often paired with stir-fried vegetables, while Shanghainese cifantuan wraps youtiao with glutinous rice, pickled vegetables, and pork floss.

Each regional variant of youtiao offers a unique taste and texture, showcasing the versatility of this simple yet beloved snack. From its historical origins as a symbol of protest to its modern-day status as a staple in Chinese and Asian cuisine, youtiao remains a culinary icon, revered for both its taste and its rich cultural heritage.

How to make Youtiao:

Prep Time: 30 mins

Cook Time: 20 mins

Total Time: 12 hours (including resting time)

Yield: 10

INGREDIENTS:

- All-purpose flour: 2 cups (280 g)
- Egg: 1
- Salt: ½ tsp
- Baking powder: 1½ tsp
- Milk: 1 tbsp (15 g)
- Unsalted butter (softened, NOT melted): 2 tbsp (30 g)
- Water: about 1/3 cup (80 to 120 ml)
- Oil for frying

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Mix flour, egg, salt, baking powder, milk, and softened butter with an electric mixer using a dough hook on the lowest setting.
2. Gradually add water in batches, adjusting the amount as necessary.
3. Knead the dough for 15 minutes until sticky but not sticking to the bowl sides. Cover and let it rest for 30 minutes.
4. Form dough into a long, flat loaf (1/4-inch thick, 4 inches wide) on a floured surface. Wrap in plastic and refrigerate overnight.
5. The next morning, let the dough come to room temperature (1-3 hours) until very soft to the touch.
6. Heat oil in a wok or deep pan to 400-425°F (205-220°C).
7. Unwrap the dough, place it on a floured surface, and lightly flour the top.
8. Cut into 1-inch wide strips and stack two strips together. Press down the center lengthwise with a chopstick.
9. Gently stretch each piece into a 9-inch long rope.
10. Carefully lower the stretched dough into the hot oil. The dough should surface immediately.
11. Continuously roll the dough in the oil for about a minute using chopsticks or tongs.
12. Fry one or two youtiao at a time until light golden brown.
13. Repeat with remaining dough, potentially working in pairs for efficiency.

OCEANIA & AFRICA

Koeksisters (South Africa)



In the vibrant and diverse culinary landscape of South Africa, the koeksister stands out as a beloved and culturally significant treat. This pastry, deeply ingrained in the nation's culture, is a testament to South Africa's rich history of culinary fusion, where indigenous, European, and Cape Malay influences meld to create unique and delightful flavors.

South African cuisine, often referred to as "rainbow cuisine," reflects the country's complex history of colonization and immigration. The Dutch, Portuguese, Italians, French, and indigenous populations, along with slaves from Indonesia, India, and Malaysia, have all contributed to this culinary melting pot. The result is a gastronomic tapestry that's as varied as it is flavorful.

The koeksister, a quintessential South African pastry, epitomizes this blend of cultures. It is a donut-like treat, braided and generously soaked in syrup, known for its firm and crispy texture. There are two main types of koeksisters: the Afrikaner version and the Cape Malay version. The Afrikaner koeksister, from the white South African community of predominantly Dutch descent, is intensely sweet and crunchy, while the Cape Malay version, attributed to the descendants of Indonesian and Malaysian slaves, is softer, spicier, and often coated in coconut.

The term "koeksister" derives from the Dutch word "koek" (cake) and the Belgian "couque" (a type of cookie or pastry). The latter part of the word, "sister" or "suster," is believed by some etymologists to mean "sizzles" in reference to frying. However, another interpretation links it to the word "suster" (sister) in Afrikaans, reflecting the pastry's braided appearance, reminiscent of a doll's hair.

Celebrated in Orania, Northern Cape, with an annual festival and a dedicated statue, the koeksister is more than just a sweet treat; it's a cultural icon. South African homes often enjoy koeksisters on Sundays, accompanied by coffee, highlighting the pastry's role in family and social gatherings.

When preparing koeksisters, a crucial step is to immerse the freshly fried pastry into cold, sometimes iced, syrup. This process contrasts with other global doughnut varieties like Spanish churros or Moroccan sfenjs, which are typically enjoyed warm. The koeksister is a delight meant to be savored cold and crisp.

This pastry, enjoyed after a meal with friends or as a weekend treat, is a celebration of South Africa's culinary diversity. Despite being rich in sugar and calories, the indulgence is well worth it, embodying a blend of flavors and traditions that are uniquely South African.

As you bite into this syrupy, crisp delicacy, you're not just enjoying a dessert; you're experiencing a piece of South Africa's rich, multicultural heritage.

How to make Koeksisters

Prep Time: 20 mins

Cook Time: 50 mins

Total Time: 1 hr 10 mins

Yield: 8

INGREDIENTS:

For the syrup:

- Water: 3 cups (700 ml)
- Sugar: 2 lb (1 kg)
- Lime juice: ¼ cup (50 ml)
- Fresh ginger: 1 (1inch piece)
- Cinnamon stick: 1
- Sunflower oil for frying

For the dough:

- Flour: 4 cups (500 g)
- Salt: 1 tsp
- Baking powder: 4 tbsp
- Soft butter: 4 tbsp (50 g)
- Egg, beaten: 1
- Water: 1 cup (250 ml) (adjust as needed)

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. In a nonstick saucepan, boil water and sugar. Add lime juice, ginger, and cinnamon stick. Simmer on low-medium heat for 15 minutes.
2. Divide the syrup into two large bowls and cool at room temperature. Refrigerate for at least 6 hours or overnight.
3. Sift flour and baking powder into a large bowl. Mix in butter with fingertips.
4. In a separate bowl, whisk egg and water.
5. Create a well in the flour mixture, pour in the egg-water mix, and blend to a smooth dough. Knead for 5 minutes, cover, and refrigerate for 2 hours.
6. Roll dough on an oiled surface to ¼ inch thickness. Cut into 2x6 inch rectangles, then braid.
7. Heat oil to 320°F (160°C). Fry braids for 23 minutes on each side until golden.
8. Briefly drain and immediately soak in cold syrup.
9. Use the second bowl of syrup for the remaining koeksisters.
10. Store in the refrigerator and serve chilled.

Sfenj (North Africa)



Sfenj, the beloved Moroccan doughnut, is a culinary treasure that is as much a part of Morocco's rich cultural tapestry as it is a beloved snack. Known for its crispy exterior and soft, airy interior, sfenj aptly means "sponge" in Arabic, a nod to its delightful texture. This slightly savory doughnut, with just a hint of sugar to activate the yeast, can be enjoyed plain or enhanced with a sprinkle of sugar or a coating of hot honey.

The art of making the perfect sfenj lies in the kneading. It requires a long and energetic process, best achieved with a stand mixer, to develop the ideal crumb texture. Equally crucial is the dough's rising time, which ensures its airiness. If the dough doesn't rise adequately, it indicates insufficient kneading or rising time.

Sfenj's origins trace back to Al-Andalus (Islamic Spain), encompassing parts of the Iberian Peninsula and southern France under Muslim rule from 711 to 1492. According to legend, sfenj was accidentally created by a baker who dropped a ball of bread dough into boiling oil, originally called isfandj. Over time, sfenj became an integral part of Andalusian culture, with bakers being esteemed as highly as kings in the 12th century.

The sfenj's journey to the Maghreb is not precisely documented, but it was well-known during the Marinid dynasty in Morocco between the 13th and 15th centuries. The Zenata Berber tribes, spread from Egypt to Morocco, are believed to have helped spread sfenj across the Maghreb.

In Morocco, sfenj bakers, known as *sufnāj*, are iconic figures in community life, interacting daily with families in their neighborhoods. Traditionally, sfenj is prepared early in the morning and sold for breakfast or in the late afternoon, often accompanied by mint tea.

Sfenj has also found its way to Israel, particularly popular among Moroccan Jews and other Sephardic communities, especially during Hanukkah and Mimouna, a holiday marking the end of Passover. Despite the introduction of soufganiyoth, a similar doughnut promoted by the Histadrut union to create jobs for Jewish bakers, sfenj remains a staple in many Israeli markets, reflecting the diverse cultural influences within Israeli cuisine.

How to make Sfenj

Prep Time: 20 mins

Cook Time: 30 mins

Total Time: 50 mins

Yield: 15

INGREDIENTS:

- Flour: 4 cups (500 g)
- Salt: 1½ tsp
- Sugar: 1 tbsp
- Instant yeast: 3 tsp
- Warm water: 1¼ cup (330 ml)
- Water (for yeast): ½ cup (100 ml)
- Vegetable oil: For frying

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Dissolve yeast and sugar in ½ cup (100 ml) of water.
2. In a stand mixer bowl, combine flour, yeast mixture, and most of the warm water. Gradually add remaining water to form a sticky dough.
3. Add salt and knead at a higher speed for about 10 minutes. The dough should be very sticky.
4. Let the dough rest at room temperature, covered, for at least 3 hours.
5. Keep a bowl of cold water nearby for shaping the donuts.
6. Wet hands, take egg-sized dough balls, make a hole in the center, and deep-fry in hot oil.
7. Fry each side for 2-3 minutes until golden.
8. Serve with sugar or hot honey.

Firi firi (Polynesia)



Firi firi, a delightful coconut donut from Tahiti, embodies the essence of Polynesian cuisine with its exotic flavors and simple yet enticing preparation. This specialty, traditionally savored at breakfast, especially on weekends, is a staple in many Polynesian households, enjoyed with a cup of coffee as the morning sun rises over the islands.

The secret to firi firi's irresistible taste lies in its two key ingredients: coconut milk and coconut water. These ingredients infuse the dough with a profound coconut aroma and flavor, which is the heart and soul of this Polynesian treat. Coconut milk contributes to the soft, tender texture, while the coconut water adds a delicate sweetness and distinct tropical flavor, making it hard to substitute in this traditional recipe.

What sets firi firi apart, besides its flavor, is its unique shape. The dough, though sticky, is skillfully shaped into a figure-eight, symbolizing infinity and reflecting the endless enjoyment these donuts bring. Dusting the work surface with enough flour is crucial to achieve the perfect shape without the dough sticking. Once shaped, the doughnuts are left to rise briefly before being fried to golden perfection.

In Polynesia, the preparation of firi firi is not just about creating a delicious breakfast item; it's a cherished ritual that brings families and communities together. The simplicity of the recipe and the minimal time required for preparation make firi firi an accessible delight for everyone, whether you're an experienced baker or a novice in the kitchen.

The final touch to these exquisite donuts is a sprinkle of sugar, adding a sweet contrast to the rich coconut flavor. Some prefer to enjoy them plain, appreciating the natural sweetness and warmth of the freshly fried dough.

In making firi firi, the culinary traditions of Tahiti are celebrated and preserved. Each bite of these coconut donuts is a journey to the heart of Polynesia, a land where flavors are as vibrant as its culture and where each dish tells a story of the islands' rich heritage.

So, whether you're basking in the morning sun of Tahiti or savoring a taste of the islands from afar, firi firi offers a delicious escape, a moment of tropical bliss that brings the spirit of Polynesia to your breakfast table.

How to make Firi firi

Prep Time: 45 mins

Cook Time: 20 mins

Total Time: 3 hrs 30 mins

Yield: 10

INGREDIENTS:

- Flour: 2½ cups (300 g)
- Caster sugar: ¼ cup (40 g)
- Active dry yeast: 1 tbsp
- Coconut milk: ½ cup (100 ml)
- Coconut water (at 85°F): ½ cup (100 ml)
- Vanilla pod (split and scraped): ½
- Vegetable oil: For frying
- Icing sugar: To sprinkle
- Additional flour: 2 tbsp (for work surface)

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Dissolve yeast in coconut water.
2. In a stand mixer bowl, combine flour, sugar, coconut milk, yeast-coconut water mixture, and vanilla seeds. Knead to a smooth dough.
3. Cover and let the dough rise at room temperature for 2 hours.
4. Sprinkle some flour over the dough to prevent sticking.
5. Divide the dough into 10 pieces, forming balls. Dust with flour to prevent sticking.
6. Roll each ball into a sausage shape and form an 8-shape, characteristic of firi firi.
7. Allow the donuts to rise on a floured surface at room temperature for 30 minutes.
8. Heat a large amount of vegetable oil to 350°F (170°C) and fry the firi firi until golden brown on each side.
9. Remove and drain on paper towels.
10. Sprinkle with icing sugar and enjoy hot.

CONCLUSION

Dear friends, as we close the pages of our global doughnut adventure, let's take a moment to reflect on the incredible journey we've embarked upon. From the winding streets of Nepal with the sweet ring of Sel Roti to the vibrant festivals of India where the crunch of Balushahi reigns supreme, each recipe has not only added a dish to our table but has also enriched our understanding of the world's diverse culinary landscape.

Imagine the joy of bringing a piece of Nepal to your kitchen with the subtle sweetness of Sel Roti, or the excitement of recreating the royal heritage of the Indian Balushahi, with its inviting crunch and syrupy goodness. As you knead the dough for Youtiao, feel the pulse of Chinese history, a testament to the resilience of a culture and its people.

But remember, dear friends, the world of doughnuts is as vast as it is delicious. Each recipe is a new adventure, a new story to be told. So, don't be afraid to explore, to experiment, and most importantly, to enjoy every moment of it. Making doughnuts at home might seem daunting at first, but as we've seen, it's a journey filled with delightful surprises and rewards.

As you delve into these recipes, you're not just baking; you're bringing history to life in your own kitchen. Each bite is a celebration of traditions that have traversed oceans and stood the test of time. So go ahead, invite your loved ones over, and let them taste the wonders of the world one doughnut at a time.

And if you find yourself struggling, remember, every great baker started as a beginner. The key is to keep trying, keep learning, and keep sharing. Your kitchen is not just a place for cooking; it's a space for creating memories, for laughter, and for love.

We've journeyed through different countries and cultures, but our exploration doesn't have to end here. Let these recipes be a starting point for your culinary adventures. Who knows what delicious discoveries lie ahead?

So, dear friends, as we part ways in this culinary journey, remember that the world is full of flavors waiting to be explored. Keep your spirit of adventure alive, your heart open to new experiences, and your kitchen ready for the next delicious discovery. Happy baking, and may your days be as sweet and fulfilling as a freshly made doughnut!