

GLAZED BUTTERMILK CAKE DOUGHNUTS

These are my simplest doughnuts. Nothing fancy, but so good.

MAKES A BAKER'S DOZEN

¾ cup buttermilk

1 large egg

3 large egg yolks

⅓ cup grapeseed oil

¾ cups cake flour, plus extra for dusting

1 cup granulated sugar

2 teaspoons baking powder

½ teaspoon baking soda

1½ teaspoons ground cinnamon

¼ teaspoon freshly grated nutmeg

1 teaspoon kosher salt

Finely grated zest of 1 lemon

Nonstick cooking spray

2 cups confectioners' sugar

Peanut oil, for frying

In a medium bowl, whisk together the buttermilk, egg, egg yolks, and grapeseed oil. Sift 2 cups of the flour into another bowl and set it aside.

In the bowl of an electric mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, combine the remaining 1¾ cups flour, the granulated sugar, baking powder, baking soda, cinnamon, nutmeg, salt, and lemon zest. Mix on low speed just to combine. Add the buttermilk mixture and continue mixing just until the dough comes together. Remove the bowl from the mixer, and using a spatula, gently fold in the reserved flour. The dough will be very sticky.

Transfer the dough to a 12 x 14-inch sheet of waxed paper. Place a second sheet of waxed paper on top, and roll out the dough between the paper to an 8 x 10-inch oval, about ¾ inch thick. Set the dough, still between the sheets of waxed paper, on a baking sheet and freeze until it is firm enough to cut, about 30 minutes.

Remove the dough from the freezer and remove the top sheet of waxed paper. Dust the dough with flour and replace the waxed paper. Flip the dough over; remove and discard the bottom sheet of waxed paper. Now the dough is loosened from the waxed paper and is easy to cut.

Lightly coat a baking sheet with nonstick cooking spray.

Using a floured 3-inch round cutter or inverted drinking glass, cut out doughnuts. Cut out the centers with a floured 1-inch cutter. Transfer the doughnuts to the prepared baking sheet. Re-roll the scraps and repeat to make a total of 13 doughnuts and 13 holes. Cover with plastic wrap and chill in the refrigerator for at least 30 minutes or up to 1 day (if making the dough ahead, bring it to room temperature before frying).

Just before frying the doughnuts and holes, prepare the glaze: In a wide, shallow bowl, whisk together the confectioners' sugar and ¼ cup hot water.

In a large high-sided skillet or a wide pot, heat 2 inches of oil to 350°F. Working in batches of 3, fry the doughnuts, carefully turning them with a wire skimmer or slotted spoon halfway through, until golden brown, about 1½ minutes per side. Transfer the doughnuts to paper towels to drain, and then immediately dip one side of each doughnut into the glaze. Transfer them, glaze side up, to a rack set over a baking sheet, and let sit until the glaze sets, about 3 minutes.

Fry the doughnut holes for 1 minute per batch. Drain, dip in the glaze, and transfer to the wire rack.

Serve the doughnuts warm or at room temperature on the day they are fried.

BUILDING YOUR CRAFT DOUGHNUTS

Making doughnuts at home might seem daunting, but it's actually quite easy, and of course, there are few things better than a fresh-from-the-fryer doughnut.

Doughnuts fall into two basic categories: cake and yeast. Cake doughnuts are leavened with baking powder and baking soda. They have a tender crumb, like a cake. The yeast sort get their loft from yeast, and like bread, they require a rise. They are lighter and have little air pockets and a touch of yeasty flavor. If you're a first-time doughnut maker or are short on time, start with the cake doughnuts (page 50 and 53).

Except for an inexpensive candy (or deep-frying) thermometer, you don't need any fancy

equipment. The key to making a great doughnut at home is to set up your tools before you begin. Once you begin to fry the doughnuts, you'll be working quickly, so it's best to have everything within arm's reach. While your dough is chilling or rising, clean your tools and clear your work surface. Set up a mini assembly line: on a work surface near the stove, position a slotted spoon or skimmer for turning and transferring doughnuts, a timer, a paper towel-lined plate for draining, your bowl of glaze or sugar topping so the warm doughnuts can be dunked right in, and a baking sheet with a rack fitted over it, for cooling and to let a glaze topping drip off. Fry and sugar or glaze doughnuts in batches of three.



CHOCOLATE CAKE DOUGHNUTS WITH CHOCOLATE CRACKLE GLAZE

The glaze for these doughnuts is very thick when first mixed together, and then it melts onto the doughnuts as they're dipped. When it cools off, it crackles.

Bring 1 inch of water to a simmer in a medium saucepan. Put the chocolate and the butter in a heatproof bowl and set it over (but not touching) the simmering water. Turn off the heat; stir occasionally until they have melted completely.

In a large bowl, whisk together 1 cup of the flour, the granulated sugar, cocoa powder, baking powder, baking soda, and salt. In a second bowl, whisk together the buttermilk, egg, and egg yolk.

Make a well in the center of the dry ingredients, pour in the buttermilk mixture, and using a spatula, fold two or three times. Add the chocolate mixture and fold together until the dough is smooth and shiny. Sift the remaining $\frac{3}{4}$ cup flour over the mixture, and fold to combine well.

Transfer the dough to a 12 x 14-inch sheet of waxed paper. Place a second sheet of waxed paper on top, and roll out the dough between the paper into a 10 x 12-inch oval that is about $\frac{3}{4}$ inch thick. Set the dough, still between the sheets of waxed paper, on a baking sheet and freeze until it is firm enough to cut, about 30 minutes.

Remove the dough from the freezer and remove the top sheet of waxed paper. Dust the dough with flour and replace the waxed paper. Flip the dough over; remove and discard the bottom sheet of waxed paper. Now the dough is loosened from the waxed paper and is easy to cut.

Lightly coat a baking sheet with nonstick cooking spray.

MAKES 10

DOUGHNUTS

3 ounces best-quality bittersweet chocolate (70%), finely chopped

3 tablespoons unsalted butter

$1\frac{3}{4}$ cups cake flour, plus more for dusting

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup granulated sugar

1 tablespoon unsweetened cocoa powder

2 teaspoons baking powder

$\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon baking soda

$\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon kosher salt

$\frac{1}{3}$ cup plus 1 tablespoon buttermilk

1 large egg

1 large egg yolk

Nonstick cooking spray

GLAZE

1 cup confectioners' sugar

2 tablespoons unsweetened cocoa powder

$\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon pure vanilla extract

$\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon kosher salt

Peanut oil, for frying

RECIPE CONTINUES

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Using a floured 3-inch round cutter or inverted drinking glass, cut out doughnuts. Cut out the centers with a floured 1-inch cutter. Transfer the doughnuts to the prepared baking sheet. Re-roll the scraps and repeat to make a total of 10 doughnuts and 10 holes.

Cover with plastic wrap and chill in the refrigerator for at least 30 minutes or up to 1 day (if preparing the dough ahead, bring it to room temperature before frying).

Just before frying the doughnuts and holes, prepare the glaze: Whisk together the confectioners' sugar, cocoa powder, vanilla, and salt in a wide, shallow bowl. Add 2 tablespoons hot water and whisk until the glaze is smooth. (The glaze will be very thick. The warm doughnuts will melt the glaze as you dip them. Still, if the glaze begins to thicken too much as you are using it, adjust the consistency by adding a few more drops of hot water.)

In a large high-sided skillet or a wide pot, heat 2 inches of oil to 350°F. Working in batches of 3, fry the doughnuts, carefully turning them with a wire skimmer or slotted spoon halfway through, until cooked through, about 45 seconds per side. Test the first doughnut by breaking it open about 30 seconds after removing it from the oil, and if it is over- or underdone, adjust the time accordingly. Transfer the doughnuts to paper towels to drain, and then immediately dip one side of each doughnut into the glaze. Transfer them to a rack, glaze side up, and let sit until the glaze sets, about 3 minutes.

Fry the doughnut holes for 35 seconds per batch. Drain and dip in the glaze in the same way.

Serve the doughnuts warm or at room temperature on the day they are fried.

RAISED CINNAMON-SUGAR DOUGHNUTS

Made with brioche dough, these doughnuts are less sweet and more yeasty than a traditional doughnut. I like to serve them with a seasonal fruit compote.

Prepare the dough through the second rise.

Lightly grease a baking sheet with nonstick cooking spray.

Turn out the brioche dough onto a clean lightly floured work surface and roll it out with a lightly floured rolling pin to a ¾-inch-thick round. Cut out 13 rounds with a floured 3-inch cutter or inverted drinking glass, and then cut a hole in the center of each round with a floured 1-inch cutter. Transfer the doughnuts and holes to the prepared baking sheet. Cover with plastic wrap or a clean kitchen towel and let rise in a warm place until slightly puffed, about 20 minutes. Do not re-roll the scraps.

Just before frying the doughnuts and holes, stir together the sugar, cinnamon, and salt in a wide, shallow bowl.

Heat 2 inches of oil in a deep heavy 4-quart pot until it registers 350°F on a deep-frying thermometer. Fry the doughnuts, 3 at a time, turning them occasionally with a wire mesh skimmer or a slotted spoon, until they are puffed and dark golden brown, about 1 minute per side. Transfer them to paper towels to drain. Fry the holes until they are puffed and dark golden brown, 30 to 45 seconds per side, and transfer them to paper towels. Toss the doughnuts and holes in the sugar mixture to coat.

Serve warm or at room temperature. The doughnuts are best on the day they are fried.

MAKES A BAKER'S DOZEN

Dough for Brioche Baked in a Can (page 39)

Nonstick cooking spray

Unbleached all-purpose flour, for rolling

¾ cup sugar

1 teaspoon ground cinnamon

⅛ teaspoon kosher salt

Peanut or soy oil, for frying