

Homemade Donuts with Chocolate Hazelnut Sauce

Homemade Donuts

Yield: 2 dozen

½ cup	warm water
2 pkgs	active dry yeast (not fast-rising)
1 ¼ cups plus ½ tsp	granulated sugar
¾ cup	whole milk
4 ½ cups	all-purpose flour, plus more for baking sheet
1 ½ cups	cake flour
1 Tbsp	kosher salt
1 tsp	ground cinnamon
½ tsp	ground nutmeg
4	large eggs
8 Tbsp (1 stick)	unsalted butter, well softened
4-6 cups	Canola oil, for frying

Spiced Sugar Blend

6 Tbsp	granulated sugar
1 Tbsp	ground cinnamon
¼ tsp	allspice
¼ tsp	nutmeg
¼ tsp	cardamom

Place the warm water in a small bowl and sprinkle the yeast over it. Make sure not to get the water too hot or the yeast won't activate. Add ½ tsp granulated sugar and stir to dissolve the yeast. Set the bowl aside and allow the yeast to proof until foamy, about 4 minutes. Place the milk in a small saucepan or a microwaveable container and heat until warm to the touch (about 20-30 seconds).

Place the all-purpose flour, cake flour, remaining 1 ¼ cups granulated sugar, salt, cinnamon and nutmeg in the bowl of an electric mixer and use the paddle attachment to combine them thoroughly. Make a well in the center of the bowl and add the yeast mixture, warm milk and eggs. Beat on medium until a smooth dough forms. Beat in the butter, then add enough additional flour on low speed to make a smooth, soft and elastic dough. Switch to medium speed and mix for 2 to 3 minutes. Turn the dough into a bowl sprayed with cooking spray and cover with plastic wrap. Place the bowl in a warm, draft-free spot (I used my oven with no heat). Allow the dough to rise until doubled in size, about 2 hours.

Gently deflate the dough by pulling it from the sides of the bowl and turn it onto a floured surface. Pat the dough into about a ½ thickness and cut circles with a plain-edged round cutter. Place them on a baking sheet dusted with flour and cover them with plastic wrap. Allow them to proof while you heat the oil.

Heat about 4 to 6 cups of canola oil in a heavy-bottomed pot until it reaches about 350 degrees F. Fry the donuts in batches in the hot oil keeping note of the oil's temperature. If you let the oil get too hot, the donuts will brown quickly on the outside, but not cook all the way on the inside. Gently turn them until they are golden brown on both sides, about 2-3 minutes per side (depending on the size).

Drain the donuts on a plate covered in paper towel and let cool slightly before rolling them in the Spiced Sugar mixture. These donuts are ABSOLUTELY best when served warm, but they can be stored in an airtight container and reheated in the oven right before serving.

Florentine Doughnuts Recipe from Dolce Italiano, Desserts from the Babbo Kitchen, by Gina DePalma

Chocolate Hazelnut Sauce

Yield: 1 cup

6 Tbsp	heavy whipping cream
1 cup	semi-sweet chocolate chips
2 Tbsp	Nutella

Heat the heavy whipping cream in a small saucepan until just simmering. Add the chocolate chips and the Nutella and stir until the chocolate is melted and the mixture is well incorporated. Begin dunking!