

MILK TART DOUGHNUTS

FEEDS: 6–8 PREP: 3½ hours COOK: 20 minutes

There are a lot of bad doughnuts in South Africa. This is not one of them. Sure, they take some time and finesse, but you'll never regret the effort. You will need a digital thermometer and piping bag and a large round nozzle.



THE DOUGHNUTS

500 g bread wheat flour
50 g castor sugar
12 g salt
10 g instant yeast
3 large eggs
175 g lukewarm water
Zest of 1 lemon
150 g butter, cubed
2 L canola oil for frying
250 g castor sugar mixed with
2 Tbsp ground cinnamon
for dusting

THE MILK TART PART 1

1 C full-cream milk
2 large eggs
50 g cornflour
1 tsp vanilla extract

THE MILK TART PART 2

2 C full-cream milk
1 × 385 g can condensed milk

For the doughnuts, add the flour, castor sugar, salt and yeast to the mixing bowl of a stand mixer, then mix to combine. Add the eggs, water and lemon zest, and set on medium with the dough hook attachment. Mix for 5 minutes to combine, scraping down the sides if needed. Add the butter while mixing, 2 cubes at a time, for it to incorporate in the dough. Mix for another 6–8 minutes until the dough has come together and is glossy and elastic. Scoop the dough out into a large bowl and cover. Allow to proof in a warm area for 1½–2 hours, until it has doubled in size.

While the dough is proofing, add the ingredients for milk tart part 1 to a bowl. Use an electric whisk to combine until smooth, then set aside. Pour the ingredients for milk tart part 2 into a medium-sized pot. Set it over medium heat and warm until it just begins to simmer, then remove it from the heat. Slowly whisk in the egg mixture, and keep whisking. Return the pot to medium heat and bring to a simmer while whisking. Once the mixture thickens, remove the pot from the heat and pour the mixture into a bowl. Let the mixture cool, then scoop it into a piping bag and set aside.

Turn the dough out onto a lightly floured surface and gently knock it back with your fingers to remove some of the gas. Using a kitchen scale, portion the dough into 60-g pieces. To roll the dough into balls, cup your hand over a piece of dough, palm and fingers touching the work surface, then rotate your hand in a clockwise motion. Place the balls on a floured tray and lightly dust the tops, then cover with a kitchen towel. Ensure you give them space on the tray because they will double in size again during the second proof. Cover and proof for another hour, or until doubled in size.

Half-fill a large Dutch oven (pot) or a deep fryer with canola oil and set it to high heat. While the oil is heating, add the castor sugar and cinnamon mixture to a large bowl and place a few sheets of kitchen towel onto a baking tray to drain the doughnuts before dusting. Also, have a large container (a loaf tin works well) to stack the sugared doughnuts in, while you continue frying. When the oil hits 190 °C, it's time to fry.

Using a dough scraper or spatula, gently pick up the balls one at a time and carefully drop them into the oil. Fry 4 at a time for 2 minutes per side. Remove the fried doughnuts from the oil and place them on the kitchen towel to remove excess oil before rolling them gently in castor sugar-cinnamon. Stack the sugared doughnuts seam-side up in the container. Repeat, maintaining a 185–190 °C frying temperature, until all are done.

Use a sharp knife to slit a hole in the centre of each doughnut and then gently work it open with your finger. Fit the piping bag with a large round nozzle and pipe the milk tart filling into the doughnuts until they are all filled. Serve, and consider opening your own doughnut shop.