

FRIED FRITTERS

December 2 is National Fritters Day! Fritters are made all over the world, with countless variations across many countries. They are made with almost any filling, shape, and size, but the one thing they all have in common is that they are all battered and fried. The fillings of fruit, vegetables, or meats can be bigger, solid pieces, diced into small pieces, or mashed. The batter usually surrounds the fillings, but sometimes the ingredients that could be fillings are mixed into the batter and then fried.

If you want to make fritters, the possibilities are endless. You can experiment with different fillings, using spices of your choice, either inside with the fillings or dust the outside of the fritters with sugar, salt, or anything you would like. Fritters are also delicious when served with dips.

The history of the fritter is believed to begin in Ancient Rome. The word “fritter” comes from the Latin root word “frigere,” which means to fry. Words such as frittata and fricassee also come from the same Latin root word.

The Romans made their fried fritters with mostly fruit and cheese fillings. Fritters then were shared with Europe and the rest of the world, with each region adapting them to their tastes and native foods.

In France, Italy, and Greece, the fritters are generally sweet and sometimes sugar-coated. The French version of fritters is called Beignets (BEN-yay), Italian are called Loukoumades (loo-koo-MAH-thez), and Greek are Bignes (BEE/nyeh).

The batter-frying technique was introduced into Japan by the Portuguese and Spanish in the late 16th century. The tempura that developed, a mixed fry of shrimp, herbs, and vegetables, has been incorporated into the cuisine.

In the United States, fritters are popular and have regional favorites. For example, hushpuppies and corn fritters are specialties of the southern United States, and apple fritters have gained popularity in all regions.

Did you know that fritters have even been served in the White House? President Cleveland served parsnip fritters at the White House for Thanksgiving in 1887. To make the parsnip fritters, the chef used boiled parsnips, flour, egg, and salt and then fried spoonfuls of the mixture until lightly browned.

In the United States, batter for fritters is typically made from milk, eggs, and flour or cornmeal. The most important thing is knowing how to properly deep fry food. Always fry using a neutral oil with a high smoke point such as vegetable oil or peanut oil. When it comes to deep frying, heating the oil to the right temperature is crucial. If the oil is too cold when food is added it will absorb excess oil and taste greasy. On the other hand, too hot oil can produce a dark surface with a raw center or burned fritters. The best way to determine if the oil is at the right temperature (usually between 350°F to 375°F) is by using a deep-fry thermometer. Work in batches of four or five at a time.

If you would like to stick to traditional American fritters, I recommend apple fritters, banana fritters, corn fritters, or zucchini fritters. Crab, sausage, chicken, and other meat-filled fritters are also delicious.

Make your own fritters at home. Experiment with the flavors - raid your fridge and fry whatever you can think can be fried with batter. They say everything tastes better fried, and fritters are the perfect example.

Apple Fritters (recipe from <https://kitchenfunwithmy3sons.com/apple-fritters-recipe/>)

Ingredients:

Fritter

- 1 ½ cups all purpose flour
- ¼ cup granulated sugar
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
- ½ cup unsweetened applesauce
- ½ cup milk
- 2 large apples diced
- vegetable oil

Glaze

- 3 cup powdered sugar
- ½ cup milk
- ½ tsp vanilla extract

Instructions:

- In a large bowl, stir the flour, sugar, baking powder, salt and cinnamon to combine.
- Add applesauce and milk to the dry ingredients and mix until just combined.
- Fold in the diced apples.
- Heat 2 inches of oil in a large skillet to about 375°F.
- Scoop 1/3 cup of the apple fritter batter and place in the hot oil, spreading it down to flatten.
- Cook on one side for about 2-3 minutes until golden brown, then flip with tongs and cook another 1-2 minutes.
- Place the cooked fritters on a cooling rack with a pan or parchment paper underneath to catch oil drippings.
- Continue with the remaining batter.

Glaze

- Whisk the glaze ingredients together in a medium-sized bowl until smooth.

- Dip each fritter into it.
- Place back on the rack to harden and drip.

Sources:

<https://www.britannica.com/topic/fritter> <https://culinarylore.com/food-history:how-did-fritters-get-their-name/> <https://www.nationaldaystoday.com/national-fritters-day/>