

Delectable Donuts

A donut (sometimes known as a doughnut) is a sweet bread that's been baked or fried. Some donuts are formed into ring shapes, while others look like buns and are filled with cream or jelly. Donuts range from basic and rustic to beautifully decorated with icing, sprinkles, and other designs. A fresh, hot donut is genuinely an amazing treat!

The pastries we know as donuts today are a combination of the culinary traditions and techniques of a variety of countries. Here are a few of the main types of donuts:

Yeast/raised donuts: This donut variety is made with yeast as the leavening agent. They are light and fluffy and can be baked or fried. They're also the perfect blank canvas for toppings and fillings.

Cake donuts: Rather than yeast, cake donuts get their rise from baking powder. They are denser than their yeast counterparts and—as you might expect—have a cakelike texture. Like yeast donuts, they can be decorated, flavored, and filled in any way you like.

Glazed donuts: Donuts that are finished with a dip in a sweet glaze.

Filled donuts: Baked or fried donuts can be filled with custard, cream, jelly, or jam. After that, they might be rolled in sugar, glazed, or otherwise decorated.

Have you considered making donuts at home? DIY donuts also make for a fun home-baking project. Now for the details of filled donuts:

Most yeast donuts are made up of a few base ingredients such as flour, liquid (water, milk, buttermilk, or a combo), yeast, salt, and flavorings. Some recipes will also include enrichments like eggs, a small amount of sugar, butter, or oil.

Follow the recipe's guidelines for mixing. Generally, yeast donut dough should be mixed on low speed until the dough comes together, then mixed on medium speed to strengthen gluten strands.

Yeast donut doughs need time to rise. Plan on 1 to 2 1/2 hours after mixing and another 30 minutes to 1 hour after shaping.

Fry the donuts at 350°F - 375°F. If the oil is too cold, the donuts will absorb the oil and taste greasy. If it's too hot, they'll brown too quickly. Note that when you first drop the donuts in, the temperature of the oil will also drop, so keep checking to try to maintain a steady temperature. Fry the donuts in batches, about 3-5 at a time.

After frying, drain the donuts on several layers of absorbent paper towels on a baking sheet. Once they get too saturated, toss the top layers and reveal the fresh ones underneath. Some folks opt for a cooling rack set on top of paper towels.

Filled donuts can be done in several ways. The main thing to consider is when the donuts will be filled. Some donuts have a filling added before they are fried, such as fritters, twists, and bear claws. Other donuts get their fillings after frying. Fill them with whipped cream, pudding, jam/jelly/preserves, cooked fruit, ganache, or chocolate—the list goes on!

The sky is the limit with fillings, glazes, and toppings. If a donut has a smooth and creamy filling, garnish it with cinnamon sugar or chopped nuts for contrast. Opt for a smooth, all-over glaze if a donut has a chunkier filling.

Donuts are best eaten fresh the day they are made. However, you can keep them for a day or two. It is best to store filled donuts in the fridge.

Filled donuts are a fantastic way to add variety to your baking repertoire. What's a better surprise than biting into your donut and discovering a filling inside?

(Sources: foodimentary.com; www.realsimple.com; www.smithsonianmag.com; www.webstaurantstore.com)