

RECIPES

Buñuelos

Buñuelos are a cross between a fritter and Indian fry bread, and are popular throughout Mexico. They are especially esteemed in south Texas, and San Antonio has several factories that turn out countless numbers of the crispy fried morsels for various celebrations. They are made with a dough similar to the one for flour tortillas, and shaped the same way, except thinner. But instead of being cooked on an ungreased griddle, they are fried in about ½ inch of hot oil.

Dough ingredients

1 ½ cups all-purpose flour
½ teaspoon baking powder
1/4 teaspoon salt
2 tablespoons melted butter
1 egg, beaten
2 tablespoons to 1/4 cup water

Dough instructions

1. Make the dough. Whisk together the dry ingredients in a mixing bowl. Add and stir in the melted butter, then add and stir in the beaten egg. Using your fingers, mix the dough into a crumbly consistency like pie dough, then add the water, 1 tablespoon at a time, until it comes together. Work the dough for about 1 minute or until it is smooth and elastic. Cover the dough and allow it to rest for ½ hour.

Syrup ingredients

1 cup turbinado, or light brown sugar
1 cup water
½ teaspoon aniseed
Heaping 1/4 teaspoon cinnamon
Grated peel from ½ orange (outside, orange part only)

Syrup directions

1. Make the syrup. Stir all the ingredients together in a saucepan, bring to a boil, simmer for 2 minutes then remove from the heat and reserve.

Sugar topping ingredients

3 Tablespoons sugar
1 ½ teaspoons cinnamon

Sugar topping directions

1. Mix the sugar and cinnamon together and reserve.

Buñuelo ingredients

The reserved dough
Vegetable oil
The reserved syrup
The reserved topping

Buñuelo directions

1a. Make traditionally sized buñuelos. To make traditionally sized buñuelos, divide the dough into 3 balls of equal size, then divide each of them into three more balls, for a total of 9.

1b. Make buñuelitos (little buñuelos). To make buñuelitos, divide the dough into 6 balls of equal size, then divide each of them into 3 more balls, for a total of 18.

2. Form the buñuelos or buñuelitos. Lightly flour a work surface and roll each ball into a circle of either 7 or 5 inches, depending on which option you chose.

3. Fry and finish the buñuelos or buñuelitos. Pour oil into a small skillet to a depth of about ½ inch. Heat the oil over medium heat to 350 degrees, or just until a drop of water instantly vaporizes. Be careful not to test the oil with more than 1 tiny drop of water at a time, as more can cause the oil to splatter and cause burns. (If the oil even begins to smoke it is way too hot). Being careful not to burn yourself, place a circle of flattened dough in the oil, and cook until it is a light golden brown on the bottom, about 15 to 30 seconds. Turn and fry until the other side is a light golden brown. Remove the buñuelo to drain on absorbent towels, then fry the remaining dough in the same manner. To serve, drizzle some of the reserved syrup onto each buñuelo, then dust with the flavored sugar.

Makes 9 buñuelos or 18 buñuelitos.