

Papanasi Dessert

Traditional Romanian papanași - golden cheese donuts topped with sour cream and jam. Learn to make these authentic sweet treats at home.

30	30	60	6	Medium
PREP MIN	COOK MIN	TOTAL MIN	SERVINGS	DIFFICULTY

Papanasi Dessert

Ingredients

- 2 egg
- 0.5 tsp vanilla extract
- 2 cup flour
- 1 lb cottage cheese
- 0.5 cup powdered sugar
- 0.5 tbsp baking soda
- 2 cup olive oil
- 1 tbsp lemon
- 12 tbsp sour cream

Instructions

- 1 Prepare the dough**

Place 1 pound cottage cheese in a fine-mesh strainer and let drain for 30 minutes to remove excess liquid.
- 2** Transfer drained cottage cheese to a large bowl and mash with a fork until completely smooth with no lumps.
- 3** Beat 2 eggs with 0.5 cup sugar using a hand mixer for 2-3 minutes until mixture is pale yellow and fluffy.
- 4** Add 0.5 teaspoon vanilla extract to the egg mixture and beat until combined.
- 5** Fold the egg mixture into the mashed cottage cheese until evenly combined.
- 6** Add 2 cups all-purpose flour gradually to the cheese mixture, stirring gently until a soft dough forms that holds together but isn't sticky.
- 7** Cover dough with plastic wrap and rest at room temperature for 20 minutes to allow flour to hydrate.
- 8 Shape the papanași**

Divide dough into 8 equal portions using a kitchen scale or by eye.
- 9** Roll 6 portions into smooth balls, then press your thumb through the center and gently stretch to create rings 3 inches wide with 1-inch holes.
- 10** Shape remaining 2 portions into 6 small balls, each about 1 inch in diameter.

11 **Fry the papana?i**

Heat oil to 350°F (175°C) in a heavy-bottomed pot using a thermometer to monitor temperature.

12 Fry small balls first for 2-3 minutes, turning once, until golden brown all over.

13 Fry donut rings for 3-4 minutes per side until deep golden brown and cooked through.

14 **Assemble and serve**

Place each warm donut ring on a serving plate and fill the center hole with 0.5 tablespoon sour cream.

15 Top each portion with 1 tablespoon jam and crown with a fried ball, then serve immediately while warm.

Tips

Drain cottage cheese thoroughly by placing it in a fine-mesh strainer for 30 minutes before use to prevent soggy dough.

Room temperature eggs incorporate more easily and create a smoother batter texture.

Test oil temperature with a small piece of dough - it should sizzle gently and rise to the surface within 10 seconds.

Fry the small balls first as they cook faster, then use them to gauge perfect oil temperature for the larger rings.

Place finished papana?i on paper towels briefly to absorb excess oil, but serve immediately while still warm.

Create the center hole by pressing your thumb through the dough and gently stretching - don't use a knife as clean cuts can close during frying.

Keep fried papana?i warm in a 200°F (95°C) oven while finishing the batch, but don't hold longer than 15 minutes.

Use tart jam varieties like sour cherry or raspberry - the acidity balances the rich cheese beautifully.