

Italian Zeppole Dessert



Easter will be here in early April this year and I can remember the excitement and anticipation of this holy celebration among Catholics starting with Ash Wednesday. My Mother and my Aunts, the blue ribbon cooks in our family, would plan and prepare some delicious meals, including desserts. There were many meatless dishes that were prepared during the forty days of lent.

As children, most of us would give up eating sweets during those forty fast days. Come Easter Sunday, a full course meal of meat, pasta, and salads and pastries, pies, and cakes were a child's dream after the 40 days of giving up sweets. I can still smell the aromas coming from the family cooks on the days prior to Easter. They would be preparing for days the scrumptious feast for this special holiday.

One of the pastries I loved, Zeppole, sorry to say is deep fried, but it is a once or twice a year treat and so delicious. It is a Neapolitan Italian treat and is sold at many Italian fairs and feast celebrations throughout America and Europe. This is my Mother's simple recipe for this Italian delicacy which is always served warm. Enjoy them plain, dusted with confectioners' sugar, or a drizzle of honey.

Ingredients:

Serves: 6 (Double or triple the ingredients to make more Zeppole)

- 1 pkg Rapid Rise yeast
- 1 1/4 cup All Purpose unbleached flour
- 1 cup water (warm not hot)

- 1/2 tsp salt
- Vegetable oil or canola oil

Directions:

1. Pour vegetable or canola oil in a heavy duty saucepan to a depth of 3 inches.
2. In a large bowl empty the package of yeast and slowly add the warm water not hot (110°-115°). Gently stir to dissolve the yeast. Let sit till yeast mixture starts to foam.
3. Add the flour and salt and blend well. The mixture will be stringy and runny.



4. Cover and let rise in warm area 1 to 1 ½ hours until bubbly and double in size.



5. Heat oil (3 inch deep) in a heavy saucepan. When oil is hot 375° (test by dropping in a little dough. If it sizzles and rises to the top the oil is hot) drop by tablespoon. Fry three or four at a time.



6. Fry each side until golden brown. Continually turn Zeppole while frying to evenly brown all over.



7. Drain well on paper towels. Serve warm, sprinkle with

confectioners' sugar, or a drizzle of honey or plain.

