

Krapfen - A history of 15th Century German Doughnuts from Küchenmeisterei

Research and class by Amos Ironbeard aka Jarnskeggi the Mad

Translations by Safiyya Fiore da Rabatta

Küchenmeisterei (Mastery of the Kitchen) was the first printed German Cookbook, using the Gutenberg printing press and was one of the first cookbooks to be so printed. After its first printing in 1485 it became a bestseller, transcribed in a number of languages and had far reaching influence across Europe. To this date there is no complete English translation of this work, although German and High German versions exist.

To describe Krapfen in modern terms, we would think of them as filled fried doughnuts. Their appearance resembles a Berliner, and the recipe and class I will be teaching will focus on sweet fillings although there are many variations of Krapfen, including savory versions.

Küchenmeisterei 102 A Doughnut/Krapfen Dough

Bring honey in wine to the boil, as much as you need. Take a large bowl and stir the wine with white flour until it resembles a puree. Beat an egg yolk, which ought to be red in colour, in another bowl with a little saffron. Blend this very thoroughly with the pre-prepared honey-wine-mush and bring together. Mix it very thoroughly and incorporate additional flour - little by little - until you have a smooth dough. Then spread out a clean cloth, and roll the dough out with a rolling pin until it is suitably thin. Then cut it into large or small pieces, depending how you want your krapfen, then fill with their respective stuffings.

Or, all doughs that are made with yeast or beer or hop water must be allowed to rise, then allowed to rise again after being kneaded once more with either lukewarm water or boiled honey-wine.

Redaction

1.5 cups of wine (mead or white wine)
1 tablespoon honey
1 tablespoon yeast
1 tsp ground saffron
1 egg yolk
500g plain flour
1 tsp salt

Heat wine and honey over a stove until honey has dissolved, set aside to cool until warm but not hot/boiling
Meanwhile add yeast to 1 cup of warm water and leave until frothy (approx 5 mins)

Sift flour and salt, create well and pour liquids together, along with egg yolk and saffron, gently mixing and kneading until smooth and elastic.

Transfer to oiled bowl and allow to rise. After 30-60 minutes of rising, gently knead and press air out and allow to rise another 30-60 minutes minimum.

Küchenmeisterei 100 To make doughnuts with apples or pears

Bake apples or pears in advance, then put in a mortar and pestle. Beat through one or two eggs and a little salt, pound well and spice it well, then use the mixture to fill the doughnuts.

If you want to make another type of doughnuts with eggs, you can chop parsley and marjoram or other good herbs, knead these with a raw egg, then spice and salt the mix, then fill the doughnuts.

Redaction

2 apples (granny smith recommended)

1 tb butter

1 tsp cinnamon

1 tsp ginger

1 tsp nutmeg

1 tsp salt

1 egg yolk beaten

Peel, core and dice apples into small pieces, in a large frying pan with butter fry them until well cooked and most of the moisture has been cooked out. In a bowl add fried apples, spices and egg yolk and mash together with a fork (or food processor) until a fine paste.

To Combine

Oil for frying (Suggest Canola oil, can use lard if desired)

Sugar

Take risen dough, roll thin on a board and using a medium size cookie cutter, cut two circles for each Krapfen. Using a teaspoon, place a small amount of filling in the center of one dough circle. Dip finger in water and run along outside of both circles of dough to ensure they're sticky, then press together, over the paste filling. Meanwhile in a fryer or other deep pan, heat oil to frying temperature (Check by placing small ball of dough in oil, if it begins to bubble and cook straight away, it is hot enough).

Gently lower Krapfen into oil and cook, turning once. Each side should be a golden/deep brown, I recommend cooking one and testing consistency.

Finally, in another section of *Küchenmeisterei*, there is reference to strewing sugar over baked items of a courtly nature. In my redaction, I sprinkle sugar over the top of the cooked Krapfen as they cool. Serve hot to a hungry crowd.

References

Hunwick, Heather Delancey. *Doughnut: A Global History*. N.p.: n.p., n.d. Print.

Trude Ehlert. *Küchenmeisterei: Edition, Übersetzung Und Kommentar Zweier Kochbuch-Handschriften Des 15. Jahrhunderts, Solothurn S 490 Und Köln, Historisches Archiv GB 4° 27 ; Mit Einem Reprographischen Nachdruck*. N.p.: Peter Lang Group, 2010. Print.