

PASTRY deep-fried perfection

mini-me

While high-volume stores tend to make large, round doughnuts, Michael Gilligan, executive chef at The Rusty Pelican in Key Biscayne, Fla., makes mini stuffed dough balls so guests can enjoy several different flavors.

He experimented with traditional kinds of dough, but was not happy with how they cooked and tasted. So he decided to use a dough recipe from a fried chocolate-ravioli dessert. Instead of rolling out the dough to make ravioli, he rolls the dough into small balls for the mini doughnuts.

The dough is made ahead of time and comes to room temperature before the doughnuts are cooked. “If they were left in the cooler and then tossed in the fryer, it’d create a mess, and they wouldn’t puff up,” Gilligan says.

When cooked, the balls puff up perfectly, and a filling of chocolate ganache, raspberry purée or anise cream is injected immediately after they come out of the fryer. Then, they’re tossed in cinnamon sugar.

A key to Gilligan’s recipe is adding a bit of sea salt to the dough. “Instead of the doughnut and its filling being thickly sweet, the sea salt levels out the flavor profile by bringing out the butter, milk and eggs,” he says.

Each order is six mini doughnuts, with two each chocolate ganache, raspberry purée and anise cream.

the naked truth

“A doughnut unto itself is great,” says Tony Maws, executive chef at Craigie on Main in Cambridge, Mass. “You don’t need to overly dress up a doughnut unless you’re trying to cover up an inferior product.”

In June 2010, *Food Network Magazine* listed its best breakfast dishes in every state. It named Maws’ housemade doughnut with confiture du lait, rolled in a mixture of cinnamon, nutmeg, cardamom, vanilla and sugar, the best in the country.

He follows a standard doughnut recipe, but uses buttermilk and fries the dough in peanut oil. “The doughnut tastes like a buttermilk doughnut—slightly tangy,” Maws says. “And the difference in using peanut oil, which is a richer oil, is that it makes the doughnut crispier and darker in color.”



ZEPPOLE
stuffed with Nutella,
Lemon Pastry Cream
and Strawberry
Marmalade

Maws uses goat’s milk in the confiture du lait, giving the sauce a more tangy, complex taste compared with a sauce made with cow’s milk, which could be bland and one-dimensional.

doughnut garnish

Doughnuts are generally considered a breakfast item first and foremost, and secondly, a dessert item. But Ryan Bleibtrey, executive chef at The Original, a Dinerant, Portland, Ore., likes to include them as part of the center of the plate.

He tops his Niman Ranch pork shank with brown butter and sherry jus with an apple fritter. “The 1-ounce fritter complements the dish and gives some crispy textural diversity and sweetness,” he says. “It’s my play on the sweet-and-savory aspect combination.”

It makes perfect sense to use the fritter as a garnish, because bacon and doughnuts is currently the rage and apple works with pork. Bleibtrey uses a standard fritter recipe, except he adds sage and a touch of bourbon, which gives the fritter more structure and complements the ingredients used in the pork shank recipe.

The fritter is topped with a bacon icing. “It’s really no different than a beignet or a pâte à choux garnish,” Bleibtrey says. “It’s just a bit more of an Americanized version.” ●

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