Buñuelos (Colombian cheese fritters)

A sunny, festive fried treat with a crisp exterior and a tender, cheesy interior—perfect with coffee or hot chocolate.

Country, Columbia

Makes about 12-16 Bunuelos (about 4-6 snack servings)
Prep Time: 10 min / Inactive Time: 10 min / Cook Time: 20 min

Ingredients

1 C cassava (yuca) starch
½ C cornstarch
1 C finely grated salty white cheese (queso costeño, queso fresco, or feta + mozzarella)
2 T granulated sugar
1 t baking powder
Pinch fine salt
1 large egg
2–3 T whole milk (adjust for dough texture)
Avocado oil for frying (enough for 2–3 in depth in a pot)

Method

Combine cassava starch, cornstarch, sugar, baking powder, and a pinch of salt in a bowl and stir in the grated cheese until evenly distributed.

Add the egg and mix, then add just enough milk to form a soft, slightly tacky dough; cover and let rest 8–10 minutes so the starches hydrate.

Heat avocado oil in a deep pot to about 300–350°F (150–175°C) and keep the temperature steady so the buñuelos puff and cook through without overbrowning.

Shape the dough into balls about 1–1½ in (25–35 g) by pinching and rolling between your palms; wet your hands lightly if the dough sticks.

Fry a few buñuelos at a time until golden and puffed, about 3–6 minutes depending on size and oil temperature, turning as needed for even color.

Drain on a cooling rack and serve warm.

Notes and substitutions

Use queso costeño or queso fresco for authentic flavor; if unavailable, blend salty feta with a bit of mozzarella. Avocado oil's high smoke point makes it an excellent frying choice—keep the oil in the recommended temperature range to avoid undercooked centers or greasy results.
Add milk 1 tsp at a time to the batter if the dough feels dry.
Buñuelos are best the day they're fried for the ideal crisp-outside and tender-inside
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