

Buttermilk Beignets

adapted from epicurious

3/4 cup whole milk
1 1/2 cups buttermilk
4 teaspoons active dry yeast
2 1/2 tablespoons sugar
3 1/2 cups bread flour (plus quite a bit extra for flouring your work surface)
1/2 teaspoon baking soda
1/4 teaspoon salt
Vegetable oil for frying
Lots and lots and lots and lots of confectioners' sugar to serve

1. Heat milk in a saucepan over medium-high heat until it just begins to boil (stir to avoid creating a skin). Remove from heat.
2. Add buttermilk and pour into the bowl of a stand mixer.
3. Whisk in yeast and sugar by hand (don't use whisk attachment, it'll just make a mess). Let rest for 5 minutes.
4. Sift flour, baking soda and salt together and add to milk mixture.
5. Using dough hook, mix on low speed (Setting #2 on a Kitchenaid) until ingredients are moistened, about 2-4 minutes.
6. Increase mixer speed to medium-high (Setting #6 or #8 on a Kitchenaid) until the dough forms a loose ball. The length of time this takes will vary from 5 to 15 minutes. The moral of the story is keep an eye on it. It will still be very sticky. Put it aside in a draft free spot to rise for 1 hour.
7. Pour 3 inches worth of vegetable oil into a pot, and heat over medium heat to 375° F. I highly recommend buying a digital thermometer for this. They're not very expensive at all, and they give you a very quick and accurate reading. You don't need to invest in the laser kind, any simple one will do.
8. Flour your countertop and your hands and turn out the dough. Sprinkle the top of the dough with flour and fold it in half. Sprinkle with flour again. Fold the sides under, sprinkling underneath with more flour as you do it, and use your hands to round the dough. Then, flour your rolling pin as you prepare to roll it out, and keep some more flour on the side for good measure. There's a pattern here, in case you can't tell. It's a very sticky dough. Also, at this point you can refrigerate it for up to 8 hours, if you don't want your beignets just yet.
9. Dust the top of the dough with flour. Roll the dough so that it's 1/3-1/2 in thick.
10. Use a pizza wheel or very sharp knife to cut the dough into 1.5 inch squares. Then gently stretch beignets lengthwise as you toss them into the oil. Fry for 2-3 minutes, a few at a time (don't crowd them) until golden brown and puffy. Then transfer to a plate with 2-3 paper towels on it and top with a few more. Let paper towels absorb grease as you fry the rest.
11. Serve as soon as possible, topped with more powdered sugar than you ever thought you'd need.