



Air fryer apple cider donuts are a modern twist on a classic treat. Traditionally, apple cider donuts are either deep-fried or baked, but air frying offers a brilliant alternative that achieves the same fluffy, golden-brown texture without a deep fryer.

They're made with apple cider—real apple cider, not juice—which gives them an undeniable depth of flavor. Warm spices like cinnamon and nutmeg, combined with the caramelized edges achievable in an air fryer, make these donuts an irresistible fall treat. The best part? They're healthier, faster, and easier than their [deep-fried](#) counterparts—making them an ideal baking project for any home cook.

The Secret Behind No-Yeast Air Fryer Apple Cider Donuts

Traditional donuts often rely on yeast for their light and fluffy texture. However, air fryer apple cider donuts typically use a no-yeast batter or dough recipe. By skipping the yeast, you eliminate the time-consuming proofing process (waiting for your dough to rise), which means you can whip up a batch in less time.

Instead of yeast, these donuts usually include baking powder or baking soda as a leavening agent. This allows them to puff up beautifully while cooking in the air fryer. The result? A soft, cake-like donut with just the right hint of chewiness.

Why Air Fryer Apple Cider Donuts Are a Healthier Option

Switching from deep frying to air frying makes a world of difference in terms of calorie count and fat content. Here's why air fryer apple cider donuts are considered a healthier option:

- **Reduced Oil Usage:** Traditional fried donuts are submerged in oil, adding unnecessary fat and calories. Air fryers use a fraction of the oil—or none at all—while still delivering that signature crispy outer layer.
- **Lower Calorie Count:** Because air fryer donuts avoid deep frying, they're significantly lighter, while delivering the same indulgent flavor.
- **Less Mess:** Unlike deep frying, which leaves you with greasy splatters and a pot full of used oil, air frying is quick and tidy.



For those who want to treat themselves without overindulging, air fryer apple cider donuts are the perfect solution.

Step-by-Step Ninja Air Fryer Apple Cider Donut Recipe

Before we get into the step-by-step method, here's what you'll need to make approximately a dozen donuts:

Ingredients:

- 1 cup apple cider (reduced)
- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 tsp baking powder
- 1/2 tsp baking soda
- 1 tsp ground cinnamon
- 1/4 tsp ground nutmeg
- 1/2 cup granulated sugar
- 1/2 cup brown sugar (packed)
- 1/3 cup unsalted butter (melted)
- 1 large egg
- 1/2 cup buttermilk
- 1 tsp vanilla extract

Instructions:

1. Reduce the Apple Cider

To concentrate the apple flavor, simmer 1 cup of apple cider in a saucepan over medium heat until it reduces to 1/4 cup. This intensifies the flavor in your donuts.

2. Mix the Dry Ingredients

In a large bowl, whisk together the flour, baking powder, baking soda, cinnamon, nutmeg, and a pinch of salt.

3. Combine the Wet Ingredients

In a separate bowl, whisk together the reduced apple cider, sugars, melted butter, egg, buttermilk, and vanilla extract.



4. Create the Dough

Gradually mix the wet ingredients into the flour mixture until a soft, sticky dough forms. Avoid overmixing to keep the donuts fluffy.

5. Shape the Donuts

Roll out the dough on a floured surface to about 1/2-inch thickness. Use a donut cutter to cut out the donut shapes.

6. Air Fry the Donuts

Preheat your Ninja Foodi or other air fryer to 400°F. Place the cut donuts (and holes!) into the air fryer basket in a single layer. Spray them lightly with cooking oil. Air fry for 6-8 minutes or until golden brown.

7. Add the Cinnamon Sugar Coating

While the donuts are still warm, brush them lightly with melted butter and toss in a cinnamon-sugar mixture.

Air Fryer Donuts vs. Traditional Fried Apple Cider Donuts

What makes air fryer donuts so special? Here's a quick comparison of air fryer vs. traditional fried donuts:

Feature	Air Fryer Donuts	Fried Donuts
Oil Usage	Minimal or none	Submerged in oil
Calorie Count	Lower	Higher
Cook Time	Shorter	Longer
Health Factor	Healthier (less fat)	Less healthy
Texture	Light and cake-like	Crispy with a chewy center

While traditional fried donuts will always hold a nostalgic place in our hearts, air fryer apple cider donuts are the guilt-free solution we didn't know we needed.



Are Apple Cider Donuts Fried or Baked? Understanding The Process

When it comes to preparing apple cider donuts, the method of cooking can vary depending on preference and available appliances. Here's an overview of the common processes:

Fried Apple Cider Donuts

- **Traditional Method:** These donuts are deep-fried in oil, giving them a rich, golden-brown crust.
- **Texture:** Typically crispy on the outside with a tender, chewy center.
- **Flavor:** The frying process enhances indulgent flavors and creates a nostalgic appeal.
- **Considerations:** While delicious, frying adds extra fat and calories, which might not be ideal for everyone.

Baked Apple Cider Donuts

- **Alternative Approach:** Baked donuts are prepared using a donut pan in the oven, eliminating the use of oil.
- **Texture:** Often lighter and more cake-like in consistency.
- **Health Factor:** Baking results in fewer calories, making it a healthier option for those monitoring fat intake.
- **Convenience:** Easier cleanup and reduced cooking time compared to frying.

Air-Fried Apple Cider Donuts

- **Modern Twist:** Air fryers replicate the crispy texture of frying with minimal oil.
- **Health Benefits:** A balance between taste and health, with lower fat content than traditional frying.
- **Efficiency:** Faster cooking times and reduced mess make air frying an appealing method.

Each method has its own unique advantages, allowing home bakers to choose based on their preferences, dietary needs, and equipment!

Tips for Perfectly Fluffy Air Fryer Apple Cider Donuts

1. **Use Fresh Ingredients:** Ensure your apple cider and baking powder are fresh for the



best flavor and rise.

2. **Don't Overmix:** Combine the ingredients gently to avoid overworking the dough, which can lead to dense donuts.
3. **Preheat the Air Fryer:** Preheating ensures an even cooking temperature for consistent results.
4. **Shape Dough Evenly:** Uniform shapes allow for even cooking and a professional appearance.
5. **Avoid Overcrowding:** Place donuts in a single layer with space between them to allow proper air circulation.
6. **Brush with Oil Lightly:** Use a light coating of oil to enhance the crisp exterior without adding excess fat.
7. **Monitor Cooking Time:** Check a couple of minutes before the cooking time ends to prevent overcooking.
8. **Cool Before Glazing:** Let the donuts cool to room temperature so the glaze sets perfectly without running off.
9. **Experiment with Glazes:** Try classic cinnamon-sugar or a rich apple cider glaze for a delightful finish.

Creative Variations for Air Fryer Apple Cider Donuts

1. **Maple Bacon Topping:** Add a savory twist by sprinkling crumbled cooked bacon on top of a maple glaze for a sweet and salty combination.
2. **Pumpkin Spice Infusion:** Mix a teaspoon of pumpkin spice into the dough for a warm, autumn-inspired flavor. Dust with powdered sugar for a final touch.
3. **Chocolate Drizzle:** Melt some dark or white chocolate and drizzle it over the donuts for a decadent treat. Add sprinkles for extra fun.
4. **Stuffed Donuts:** Use an apple cutter to hollow out the center before cooking and fill with apple pie filling or caramel sauce after.
5. **Coconut Crunch:** Top the donuts with shredded coconut before air frying for added texture and tropical flavor.
6. **Cinnamon Roll Style:** Mix cinnamon and brown sugar into the dough and roll it up before forming into donut shapes for a cinnamon roll-inspired variation.
7. **Nutty Delight:** Add crushed almonds, pecans, or walnuts to the glaze for a crunchy and nutty finish.
8. **Zesty Citrus Kick:** Incorporate orange or lemon zest into the dough for a refreshing citrus flavor, and glaze with a tangy lemon icing.

Experiment with these creative variations to make your apple cider donuts a unique and



flavorful experience!

Healthy Alternatives for Guilt-Free Donuts

1. **Baked Instead of Fried:** Opt for baking your donuts in the oven rather than deep-frying them. This method significantly reduces the amount of oil and calories in the final product.
2. **Swap Refined Sugar:** Replace refined sugar with natural sweeteners like honey, maple syrup, or coconut sugar to add a wholesome sweetness.
3. **Use Whole Wheat Flour:** Substitute all-purpose flour with whole wheat or almond flour for added fiber and nutrients.
4. **Add Fruits for Natural Sweetness:** Incorporate mashed bananas, applesauce, or shredded carrots into the batter for a naturally sweet and moist texture.
5. **Reduce the Oil:** Cut down on the oil content by using Greek yogurt or unsweetened applesauce as a healthier alternative in your batter.
6. **Lighten the Glaze:** Use a powdered sugar alternative like monk fruit powder for the glaze, or opt for a light drizzle of dark chocolate instead.

By following these steps, you can create delicious donuts that are lighter, healthier, and just as satisfying!

How to Store and Reheat Air Fryer Apple Cider Donuts

Proper storage and reheating ensure your air fryer apple cider donuts stay fresh and delicious for longer. Follow these simple steps:

1. **Allow Donuts to Cool Completely:** Before storing, make sure the donuts have cooled to room temperature to prevent moisture buildup.
2. **Store in an Airtight Container:** Place the donuts in a single layer in an airtight container. You can use parchment paper between layers if stacking is necessary.
3. **Refrigerate or Keep at Room Temperature:** If you plan to eat the donuts within two days, they can be kept at room temperature. For longer storage, place the airtight container in the refrigerator for up to a week.
4. **Freeze for Extended Storage:** To store for up to three months, wrap each donut individually in plastic wrap, then place them in a freezer-safe bag or container.
5. **Reheat with an Air Fryer:** To reheat, preheat your air fryer to 350°F (175°C). Place the donuts in the basket and heat for 3-4 minutes, or until warm and crispy.
6. **Microwave Reheating Option:** If you don't have access to an air fryer, microwave



the donuts on low power for 10-15 seconds each to gently warm them without drying them out.

By following these tips, you can enjoy your apple cider donuts just as fresh as the day you made them!

Why Apple Cider Donuts Are a Fall Favorite

Apple cider donuts have become an iconic treat during the fall season, and for good reason. These donuts perfectly capture the essence of autumn with their warm spices like cinnamon and nutmeg, combined with the rich flavor of apple cider.

The crispness in the air and the seasonal abundance of apples make them a natural indulgence at festivals, pumpkin patches, and cider mills. Beyond their delicious taste, they evoke feelings of nostalgia and comfort, reminding many of cherished traditions and cozy fall gatherings. Their unique blend of flavors and seasonal associations make apple cider donuts a quintessential fall favorite.

Conclusion

Apple cider donuts are more than just a seasonal treat—they are a celebration of fall's most cherished flavors and traditions. Whether enjoyed fresh from a local cider mill, paired with a warm cup of coffee, or reheated to perfection at home, these donuts bring a sense of comfort and joy to all who savor them. Their timeless appeal and connection to autumn festivities ensure they will remain a beloved favorite for generations to come.

FAQs

What are apple cider donuts made of?

Apple cider donuts are traditionally made with ingredients like flour, sugar, cinnamon, nutmeg, and, of course, apple cider. The use of apple cider gives these donuts their distinct flavor, often enhanced with additional spices for a warm and comforting taste.

Can I make apple cider donuts at home?

Yes, apple cider donuts can easily be made at home with simple ingredients and tools. Many recipes are available for both baked and fried versions, allowing you to replicate their



classic flavor right in your kitchen.

How should apple cider donuts be stored?

Apple cider donuts are best enjoyed fresh, but they can be stored in an airtight container at room temperature for up to two days. For longer storage, you can freeze them and reheat them in the oven when ready to enjoy.

Are apple cider donuts only available in the fall?

While apple cider donuts are often associated with fall due to their seasonal ingredients and popularity at autumn festivities, some bakeries and cider mills offer them year-round. However, they are most commonly enjoyed during apple harvest season.