

ITALIAN CANNOLI

One of my favorite treats, apart from gelato, is crispy cannoli. So when planning a trip to Italy, I was excited to book a private lesson for my son and I to learn how to make these sweet treats the traditional way. Our charming Sicilian chef was happy for us to film and share the recipe with you.

Makes 25 cannoli tubes.

CANNOLI TUBES

1 ¾ cups (250 g / 8.8 oz) plain or all-purpose flour
 1 egg (45 g / 1.6 oz)
 1 teaspoon cinnamon
 ¼ cup sugar (50 g / 1.8 oz)
 ¼ cup (50 g / 1.8 oz) butter, slightly melted
 2–4 tablespoons (30–60 mL / 1–2 fl oz) Marsala or red wine
 ½ cup (50 g / 1.8 oz) semolina flour for rolling
 3 inch (8 cm) round cookie cutter
 Metal cannoli tubes
 Metal skimmer spoon (or other all-metal sieve)
 ½ gallon (2 litres) oil for deep-frying

RICOTTA FILLING

(Enough to fill 25 cannoli)

1 ¾ cups (500 g / 17.6 oz) ricotta
 1 cup (200 g / 7 oz) sugar
 ½ cup (45 g / 1.6 oz) candied dried fruits

CREMA BIANCA FILLING

(Enough to fill 25 cannoli)

5 egg yolks (75 g / 2.6 oz)
 ½ cup milk (125 mL / 4 fl oz)
 ⅔ cup (140 g / 4.9 oz) sugar
 Zest of ½ a lime
 Zest of 1 orange
 2 tablespoons (30 mL / 1 fl oz) orange juice
 ½ cup (50 g / 1.8 oz) semolina flour
 2 cups (500 mL / 16 fl oz) milk

ASSEMBLY

½ cup (50 g / 1.8 oz) chopped almonds
 ½ cup (50 g / 1.8 oz) chopped pistachios
 1.8 oz (50 g) small chocolate chips or chopped chocolate

CANNOLI TUBES

Tip the flour onto the counter in a small pile and make a hole in the center. Add the egg into the hole and use your hands to combine. Once it is mixed in, it will still be dry and crumbly. Tip the cinnamon and sugar on top and mix through. Pour on the slightly melted butter and mix it in, still using your hands. Add the Marsala a little at a time until you get a firm dough. Knead for a few minutes until it is smooth. Wrap it in plastic wrap and rest in the fridge overnight.

Dust the surface with semolina flour. Roll out the dough to about ⅛ inch (2 mm) thick. Cut circles using the cookie cutter. Now roll each circle out so that it is larger and thinner. Each one should be thin enough that you can see the silhouette of your fingers through the dough when you hold it toward the light.

Wrap the circle of dough around the cannoli tube. They should be big enough to wrap all the way around the tube and overlap by about 1.5 cm (½ inch). Use your finger to put a little egg on the dough where it overlaps to ensure it sticks together.

Heat your oil to 188°C (370°F).

If you are using metal cannoli tubes, they will sink to the bottom of your oil. To prevent this from happening, place three at a time onto a skimmer (or all-metal sieve) and lower into the hot oil. The cannoli shells should puff up with bubbles all over them, this is a sign of a good cannoli. Once they are golden, lift them out, but be careful to tilt them over the pan to allow the oil to drain out of the tubes. Place your tubes onto a paper towel and let them cool.

Squeeze the metal tube to make it smaller and slide it out of the cannoli shell. Look at the inside to check that it is cooked all the way through. If not, you can always return your shells to the pan and fry them for a little longer.

Do not reroll the spare dough that was between the circles because the semolina flour is only supposed to be on the outside. You can, however, fry up the scraps and drizzle with warm Nutella as a bonus treat.

RICOTTA FILLING

Whisk together the ricotta and sugar. Add in the candied fruits and mix through. Store covered in the fridge until you are ready to use it. You can use chopped chocolate in your filling instead of candied fruit if you prefer.

CREMA BIANCA FILLING

Whisk together the egg yolks, ½ cup milk, sugar, lime zest, orange zest, orange juice, and semolina flour in a bowl until there are no lumps. Heat 2 cups of milk in a saucepan until it just starts to boil.

Pour in the egg yolk mixture, whisking as you do. Stir continuously over the heat until it starts to bubble and thicken. Keep stirring over the heat for another 60 seconds. Tip into a bowl, cover in plastic wrap, and allow it to cool in the fridge for at least two hours.

ASSEMBLY

Place the filling into a piping bag or a Ziploc bag with the corner cut off. Pipe your filling into each tube. Dip each end into chopped pistachios, almonds, or chocolate. Eat within 3 hours of filling or the shells will go soggy. Unfilled shells can be stored in an airtight container for a few days.



WHAT IS SEMOLINA FLOUR?

Semolina is made from durum wheat, a high protein, hard type of wheat grain. During milling, it is coarsely ground and then sifted to separate the outer bran and germ from the starch (the endosperm). The cracked and slightly coarse yellowy pieces of starch are semolina.

Video tutorial for this recipe can be found at howtocookthat.net/cookbook



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