

Picnics & Doughnuts

By: Sue Damiao

Here's a recipe I'd like to share with you. It is a dessert that I so fondly remember when I was young. It's a family variant of the Portuguese doughnut.

Being half-Portuguese, I grew up experiencing the joys of traditional Portuguese food and the kind hospitality that accompanied it.

My parents, along with several family friends, would make plans for a picnic. So we all drove out to our favourite park and searched for that perfect spot that would provide ample room for four to five families. As soon as the spot was found, we'd all pitch in, set up chairs, and unload all our packages. Once that was done, the younger children were free to go and play while the adults enjoyed each other's company while preparing an all day meal. What a production that was – a labour of love! Good food, good company.

Each family brought enough food to feed... well, you know. The table overflowed with a variety of fruits, vegetables and meat dishes such as spicy barbeque chicken and barbecued fish of all sorts. But what always grabbed my attention was the huge platter of Portuguese doughnuts.

Even cold that dessert was addictive. It might be described as like a doughnut, but there was something unique about its taste and texture that made it such a favourite. Needless to say, that dessert was always the first to go. I don't ever remember leftovers!

Reminiscing, I recall that most of the conversation was in Portuguese of which, to this day, I understand little. But it didn't matter, because we used the universal languages of fun and food to communicate. What fabulous times we had, swimming in the nearby lake, the laughter, the games from early morning until closing time. Those were special times that fashioned wonderful memories. Getting together with families and friends was a very common thing growing up. Now times seem so much more busier, and it can be difficult to find time to connect with family and friends once a year, let alone every other week.

So, in memory of those family picnics, here is the recipe for those incredible doughnuts!

Portuguese Donuts Recipe

- 3 cups of flour
- 1 yeast cake
- 3 tbsp. of sugar
- 1 stick of butter
- 1/2 tsp. of salt
- 9 eggs

Dissolve yeast in 1/4 cup of lukewarm water. Beat the eggs well, add the sugar, beat well, add the dissolved yeast. Mix in the 3 cups of flour, mix until you get a soft dough. Melt the butter let it cool until lukewarm, pour this into the dough, blend together well and set in a warm place to rise until double in size.

Heat one cup of oil over low heat. Use a saucer of milk to dip your hands. Take dough (1 tbsp.) in your hand; stretch it until it is round and thin. Drop it in the oil, turn to brown on both sides. Coat each one with sugar while they are still warm.

