Desserts / Greece

Loukoumades

Greece's ancient honey-dipped fritters — yeasted dough dropped by the spoonful into hot oil where they puff into irregular golden spheres, pulled and immediately drenched in warm honey and dusted with cinnamon and crushed walnut.

Time 80 min **Servings** 4

What you'll need.

- ☐ 100 % All-purpose flour
- ☐ 90 % Warm water (38–40C / 100–104F)
- ☐ 3 % Sugar (for the dough)
- ☐ 40 % Thyme or wildflower honey, warmed
- ☐ 15 % Walnuts, lightly toasted and roughly crushed
- ☐ 1.5 % Instant dry yeast
- ☐ 1 % Fine sea salt
- ☐ 200 % Neutral oil for frying (sunflower or rice bran)
- ☐ 1 % Ground cinnamon

Let's make it.

01 Combine the flour, instant yeast, salt, and sugar in a large bowl. Make a well in the center and pour in all of the warm water at once. Mix vigorously with a wooden spoon or your hand for 2–3 minutes until a completely smooth, thick, pourable batter forms — it should look like a very thick pancake batter or a soft porridge, not a kneadable dough. There should be no lumps. Cover the bowl tightly with clingfilm and leave in a warm place (28–30C) to ferment for 1 hour. The batter is ready when it has doubled in volume, is visibly bubbly throughout, and smells yeasty-sweet. Do not stir the proofed batter — you want to preserve the air bubbles that the yeast has worked to produce, as they are what make the loukoumades puff and become light inside.

02 Gently warm the honey in a small saucepan over very low heat, or in a heatproof bowl set over hot water, until it is pourable and fluid — around 40–50C. Do not boil it. Warm honey soaks into freshly fried loukoumades almost instantly, whereas cold honey sits on the surface and creates a thick, sticky coating that feels cloying. Set the warm honey, ground cinnamon, and roughly crushed toasted walnuts in small separate bowls next to the frying setup. The loukoumades must be dressed the instant they leave the oil, so everything needs to be in place before the first fritter hits the fat. Speed is the whole game at this stage.

03 Heat the frying oil in a wide, deep pot to 175–180C / 350–360F. Using two wet spoons or a small ice cream scoop dipped in water between batches, drop heaped tablespoon-sized portions of batter into the oil without crowding — 6–8 at a time is typical. The batter will immediately puff and begin rolling in the oil. Do not move them for the first 30 seconds. After they have set on the bottom, they will begin to rotate on their own as the steam inside expands and shifts their center of gravity — this self-rolling is the sign of properly fermented batter and correctly heated oil. Fry for 3–4 minutes total, turning once or twice with a slotted spoon to encourage even color, until they are a deep, uniform golden-amber. Remove with a slotted spoon, shaking off excess oil.

04 Transfer the hot loukoumades to a shallow bowl or plate. Immediately drizzle the warm honey generously over them — use more than you think you need, because the honey is partly absorbed by the hot dough. Dust liberally with ground cinnamon, then scatter the roughly crushed toasted walnuts over the top. The whole dressing process should take no more than 30 seconds per batch. Loukoumades must be eaten hot: the contrast between the crispy exterior and the steaming hollow interior is the defining characteristic of a great loukoumade, and within 5 minutes the exterior softens from the honey's moisture and the steam inside. At Greek festivals and street stalls, loukoumades are served in paper cones and eaten standing, immediately, without ceremony.

Recipe & provenance ForkRecipe Kitchen / ForkRecipe / FoodML and contributors / CC BY-SA 4.0.
Original recipe and attribution CC BY-SA 4.0
Servings are an estimate; check quantities in the source recipe.
recipes.dvs-services.be / loukoumades