

BEAVER TAILS

MAKES 12 PASTRIES

When I was pregnant with my son, my husband and I took a trip to Montreal, Canada, for a small getaway before the baby came. Being a chef and pregnant, for me this trip was mostly about food—and spending time with my husband, of course. I was hungry so constantly that I could swear I was going to give birth to a 20-pound baby. So it was important that I plot out the food scene on this trip. In my research for restaurants, I came across a lot of people mentioning beaver tails, a fried yeast dough with various toppings, served hot. I just had to get my hands on one. Sure, the fact that the dough is stretched and flattened out to be the shape of a beaver tail is cute, but it's the actual dough here that is so special and tasty. I tracked down a beaver tail in a mall, of all places, and was hooked immediately. It might even have been a lunch substitute for me one day, but that was the baby's fault, not mine. **SPECIAL EQUIPMENT:** deep-frying thermometer or a deep fryer; spider

1/2 cup warm (108° to 110°F) water

5 teaspoons active dry yeast

1 1/3 cups + 1 teaspoon sugar

1 cup whole milk

2 teaspoons kosher salt

1 tablespoon vanilla extract

2 large eggs, at room temperature

3 cups all-purpose flour, plus more for rolling

1 1/2 cups whole wheat flour

1/3 cup grapeseed or vegetable oil

Cooking spray

1 tablespoon ground cinnamon

Vegetable oil, for deep-frying

In the bowl of a stand mixer, whisk together the warm water, yeast, and 1 teaspoon of the sugar by hand. Let stand for 3 to 5 minutes for the yeast to start to activate.

While the yeast is activating, in a small saucepan or in the microwave, warm the milk.

Place the bowl with the yeast in it on the mixer fitted with the dough hook and mix in the warm milk, $\frac{1}{3}$ cup of the sugar, the salt, vanilla, and eggs on low speed. Add the flours and grapeseed oil and continue to mix on low speed until the dough comes together and pulls away from the sides of the bowl.

Coat a large bowl with cooking spray and transfer the dough to it. Cover with plastic or a kitchen towel and let rise in a warm place until doubled in bulk, about 2 hours.

Punch down the dough. Divide the dough in half, then divide each half into 6 portions. Roll each portion into an oval ball about the size and shape of an egg. On a lightly floured surface, flatten each ball of dough and pull it slightly to elongate, like a beaver tail, about 5 inches long and $\frac{1}{4}$ inch thick.

In a large bowl, whisk together the remaining 1 cup sugar and the cinnamon; keep at hand.

In a heavy-bottomed, deep saucepan, pour in enough vegetable oil to come up 3 inches (or use a deep fryer, if you have one). Heat the oil to 350°F. Line one or two baking sheets with paper towels.

Working in batches, gently drop 2 beaver tails at a time into the oil. Fry until golden brown, about 4 minutes. Remove with a spider and drain the tails on paper towels. Toss in the cinnamon sugar. Serve warm.

