



Koesisters

A koesister or koe'sister is a traditional Cape Malay pastry. Balls of spicy dough are deep-fried in oil and once cooled, boiled in a spicy syrup and rolled in coconut.

The frying of dough strips in this manner is of Malay/Indonesian origin, possibly with Indian influence. It was originally enjoyed as an unsweetened breakfast savoury brought to South Africa with Malay slaves, among whom they were known as koe'sisters, apparently suggesting polite gossiping among spinsters.

Centuries later, sweet and spicy koesisters and coffee is still a Sunday breakfast favourite in many houses in Cape Town.



Photo by Dawie van Niekerk ©

Ingredients

- 6 potatoes, peeled and halved
- 1 cup milk
- ¼ cup oil
- 60g melted butter
- 1 large egg, lightly beaten
- 1 sachet (10g) instant yeast
- ¼ cup sugar
- 5 cups flour

1 tsp salt
1½ tsp cinnamon
1 tsp ground ginger
2 tsp aniseed
½ tsp mix spice
1 tsp ground dry tangerine peel
½ tsp ground cardamom
Oil for deep frying

Syrup

1 cup water
1 cup sugar
2 cardamom pods
1 cinnamon quill
2cm fresh ginger, sliced

Topping

Desiccated coconut

Method

1. Boil potatoes in water until soft. Discard water and mash potatoes until very smooth. Add milk, oil, butter and the egg and mix well until completely smooth. Press through a sieve if necessary.
2. Add the yeast, sugar, flour, salt and spices in a large mixing bowl. Add the potato mix and mix to form a very smooth dough. The secret to the perfect koesister is ensuring that the potato-flour mixture is super smooth.
3. Cover with clingfilm and put in a warm area to allow the dough to rise and double in size (approximately 1 hour).
4. Once risen, break off golf ball sized pieces of dough and roll between hands to make small balls. Place the balls on an oiled surface to prevent the dough from sticking. Allow to rise for another 15 minutes.
5. Lightly stretch the balls to form oval shapes (approximately 2,5 x 6 cm). Deep fry in batches in medium hot oil until golden brown. Make sure not to overcrowd the pan. Remove with a slotted spoon and drain on paper towels. Allow to cool.

Syrup

1. Place all the ingredients in a large saucepan and bring to a slow boil, stirring to ensure that the sugar doesn't burn. Stir until the syrup becomes slightly sticky.
2. Boil the koesisters in the syrup for 1-2 minutes, and removed with a slotted spoon.
3. Roll in the desiccated coconut, until well covered.
4. Best served warm.