

Crispelle: Calabrian Fried Dough Balls Stuffed with Anchovies

Cooking Times & Servings

Prep Time: 20 minutes

Rising Time: 2-3 hours

Cook Time: 20 minutes

Yield: About 20 crispelle

Ingredients

For the Dough

- 500 g all-purpose flour (about 4 cups)
- 10 g salt (about 2 teaspoons)
- 10 g sugar (about 2 teaspoons)
- 15 g fresh yeast (about 1/2 oz), or 5 g dry yeast (about 1 1/2 teaspoons)
- 400 ml lukewarm water (about 1 2/3 cups)
- 2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil

For the Filling

- 10-12 anchovy fillets, packed in oil or salted
- If using salted anchovies, rinse and pat dry before using

For Frying

- Sunflower oil or light olive oil, as needed

Instructions

1. Prepare the Dough

In a large bowl, dissolve the yeast in the lukewarm water together with the sugar.

Add the flour, salt, and extra virgin olive oil. Mix until a soft, sticky dough forms.

Knead lightly for 5-7 minutes. You can also use a stand mixer fitted with a dough hook.

2. Let the Dough Rise

Cover the bowl with a clean kitchen towel. Let the dough rise in a warm place for 2-3 hours, or until doubled in volume.

3. Prepare the Anchovy Filling

Cut the anchovy fillets in half if they are large. Each crispella only needs a small piece of anchovy inside, just enough to give a savory bite.

4. Shape the Crispelle

Heat the frying oil in a deep pan to about 170-175°C / 340°F.

Wet your hands slightly to prevent the dough from sticking. Pinch off a small piece of dough, about the size of a walnut.

Flatten it gently, place a piece of anchovy in the center, then seal the dough well around the filling.

5. Fry Until Golden

Carefully drop the stuffed dough balls into the hot oil, a few at a time.

Fry for about 3-4 minutes, turning them until they are golden brown on all sides.

Drain on paper towels.

6. Serve

Serve the crispelle hot, while they are still crispy outside and soft inside. Traditionally, they are enjoyed as part of a Calabrian Christmas spread.

Tips & Tricks

- Anchovies: Use only a small piece in each crispella so the flavor is savory but not overpowering.
- Milder version: Replace the anchovy with a small piece of cheese if preferred.
- Extra flavor: Add a pinch of black pepper or fennel seeds to the dough for more aroma.
- Serving idea: Serve hot with a glass of red wine for a true Southern Italian experience.