



Leche Frita

Leche Frita is many Spaniards favourite dessert and popular throughout the country. In the Basque region it's called tostadas de crema and, as both names suggest, it is fried milk. The milk is formed into a thick custard that is set in the fridge until it can be cut into squares that are coated in flour and egg and deep-fried so it's crisp on the outside and warm and almost molten on the inside. It can be tricky turning the custard out of the tin without breaking it; I place a large chopping board on top of the tin and invert it, a good tap on the bench then usually shakes it loose.

Makes 16-20 pieces

INGREDIENTS

- Extra virgin olive oil, for brushing and shallow frying
- 3 cups full-cream milk
- 25g butter
- 1 stick cinnamon, broken
- 1 lemon, zest peeled into strips
- $\frac{2}{3}$ cup castor sugar
- 4 eggs, separated
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup cornflour
- Plain flour, for dusting
- $1\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoons ground cinnamon

METHOD

1. Grease a 20cm x 20cm cake tin or baking dish with olive oil.
2. Place milk, butter, cinnamon, lemon peel and $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of the sugar in a saucepan and bring to a simmer.
3. Remove from heat and set aside for about 10 minutes.
4. Beat egg yolks and cornflour in a large bowl until well combined; setting egg whites aside.
5. Strain half a cup or so of the milk mixture into the egg yolk mixture and whisk until completely smooth.
6. Strain in the rest of the milk and whisk well. Wash the saucepan.
7. Transfer the milk mixture to the clean saucepan, place a whisk and wooden spoon beside the stove top and set a timer for 15 minutes.
8. Return the pan to the stove top and whisk over medium heat until it starts to thicken then reduce heat to low.
9. Continue whisking until it becomes too thick for the whisk to move through it easily, then change to the wooden spoon.
10. Continue stirring vigorously for the remainder of the 15 minutes.
11. Remove from the stove and stir for a further minute or so to let some of the heat escape and ensure it's completely smooth.
12. Pour into the cake tin or baking dish and tap firmly on the bench to smooth the top.
13. Set aside until cool, then cover and refrigerate overnight.
14. Turn out onto a clean, dry work surface and cut into 3-4cm squares.
15. Place flour for dusting in a shallow bowl and lightly beat egg whites in another shallow bowl.
16. Heat oil in a small frying pan over medium heat until very hot.
17. Working in batches, dust the squares in flour, dip in egg white and add to the oil. Cook for 4-5 minutes, turning occasionally, until well coloured.
18. Drain on a rack over a plate.
19. Combine cinnamon and remaining sugar.
20. Serve leche frita warm or at room temperature, dusted liberally with the sugar and cinnamon.