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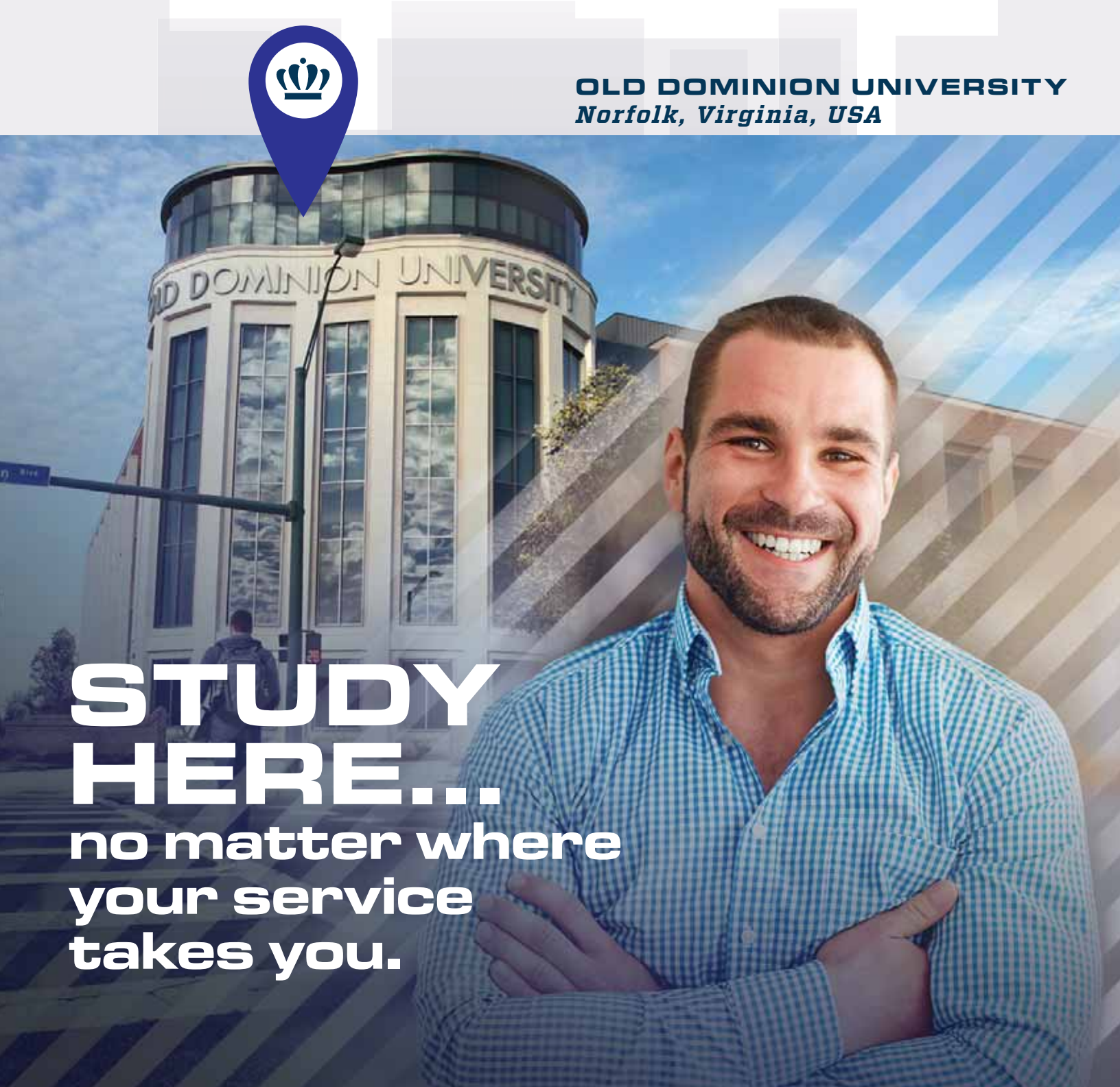
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Important German Table Manners

By Emma Bareihs

Experiencing Germany wouldn't be complete without trying the local foods. One thing to note about eating in Europe is the differences in table manners from what most Americans know. Although you don't have to fully adapt to the traditional customs, it doesn't hurt to try eating like a European. These top five tips can get you started in Germany.

1. When you "cheers" around the table, look each person in the eye as you clink glasses.
2. In Germany, it is a rule of thumb to hold the fork in the left hand and knife in the right-hand throughout the entire meal. As opposed to cutting everything into bite-sized pieces at once, you should cut one piece at a time.
3. Like most countries in Europe, water does not come automatically before the meal. Instead, you should ask for the water you would like when ordering your drinks (still or sparkling).
4. When you are finished with your meal, lay the utensils at an angle on the plate. The tips of the fork and knife should be in the center of the plate and the handles should lay on the bottom right of the plate.
5. Unless you are in a larger city, many German restaurants are cash only. Bring cash with you, unless you call ahead to check their payment services. At the end of the meal, an average tip in Germany is about 10 percent.

"Adjusting to new table manners might be difficult at first, but with practice, it can become second nature."

Adjusting to new table manners might be difficult at first, but with practice, it can become second nature. Try applying these table manners into your routine to impress the Germans with the opposite impression of the "lazy American." ■

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PHOTO of the month

Lago di Braies is the Dolomites' showstopper. Known as the "Pearl among Dolomite lakes," Lago di Braies provides the perfect photo opportunity. To avoid the crowds, it's best to go in the early morning.

Photo by Elizabeth Jones.

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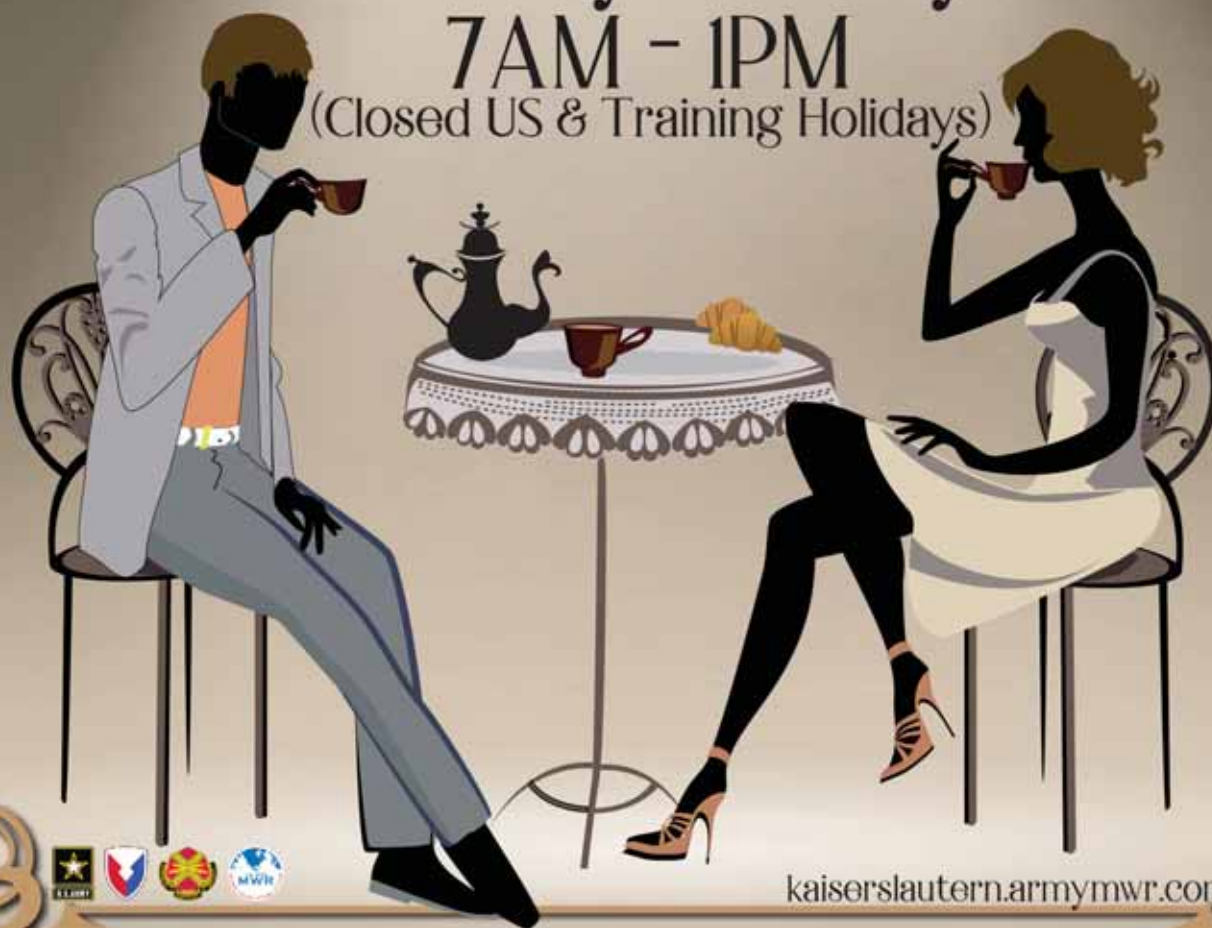
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WEINSTUBE KESSELSTATT

By Anna Leigh Bagiackas

Every time I visit the city of Trier, I inevitably find myself making a stop at Weinstube Kesselstatt. Whether it's a day trip hosting visiting family members to this beautiful, old city or a simple getaway during the German lockdown, Weinstube Kesselstatt has always been there to welcome me with open arms, delicious wine and scrumptious food.



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“With Trier’s location along the Mosel River, one of the world’s most renowned wine regions, Weinstube Kesselstatt offers a lengthy wine list for all wine palates.”



With Trier’s location along the Mosel River, one of the world’s most renowned wine regions, this wine tavern offers a lengthy wine list for all wine palates. They have been in the winemaking business for over 650 years, and as the Mosel wine region is known for the steep and slate covered vineyard slopes that produce their Riesling white wines, Weinstube Kesselstatt focuses on Rieslings too. You can either sip wines at the winery or buy wine to take home—perfect for gifts or if you are just discovering what types of German wines you like.

This winemaker and winery will always hold a nostalgic place in my heart, as Trier was our very first adventure after landing in Germany and we popped open a bottle of Kesselstatt sekt (sparkling wine) when we moved into our new home.

Their meals also continue to impress me, particularly their seasonal dishes. From white asparagus soup and strawberry and asparagus salads in the spring to elaborate boards of local cheeses and meats and perfectly crisped pan-fried potatoes with warm schnitzel in the fall and winter, their menu is constantly changing to showcase the best of the season’s produce.

If you’re visiting, you can choose to sit inside the winery, which is full of dark wooden furniture and tables surrounded by wine bottles to look at. Weather permitting, you can also choose outdoors, standing at a makeshift table built on wine barrels or sitting on their terrace, surrounded by grapevines and with close-up views of the Trier Cathedral. You may almost feel like you’re steps away from the historical vineyards along the river, as you sit in this quiet sanctuary, sipping your Riesling.

The Wine Cellar

Not only is the winery and restaurant worth a visit, but the historic cellar is also part of Weinstube Kesselstatt’s charm. The 17th-century cellars were built on parts of a Roman glassworks factory and stretched approximately 4,000 square meters, storing 400 oak barrels. Wine was made in these cellars until around 1980 when the process was relocated, but the cellars remain a spot for wine tastings, wine storage and other events.

The winery hosts various opportunities for wine tasting, from private tastings for a group to a wine walk around the Kesselstatt Palace and Trier Cathedral as well as tastings in the cellar. Reservations and English-tasting requests should be made ahead of time.

Located an hour-and-a-half drive or two-hour train ride from Kaiserslautern, the winery is next to the Trier Cathedral, off the main thoroughfare that runs through the city. Wander through Germany’s oldest city, stopping at the Porta Nigra Roman city gate and peeking in shops along the way, all in anticipation of a refreshing glass of wine and tasty German meal to come.

Make your reservation and learn more at www.weinstube-kesselstatt.de



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Romania provides the perfect getaway experience with its beautiful landscape and foggy sunrises over the fields of the Carpathian Mountain range.

Romania

DISCOVER THE WONDERS

BY STACY ROMAN

Romania has long been a hidden treasure in Eastern Europe. With majestic mountain ranges, glass-like lakes and villages that appear to be straight out of a fairy tale, it's no wonder this spectacular country is emerging as a must-visit destination. Hulking castles and fortresses lend themselves to mythical legends and creatures, such as Count Dracula. However, there is so much more to Romania than vampiric folklore and shadowy tales. Come and discover the wonder and beauty of this amazing country.

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RIGHT:
Basarab bridge and
railroad station in
Bucharest.
BOTTOM:
Concert hall in the
Romanian Athenaeum.



BUCHAREST

Located near the southeastern border near Bulgaria is the capital city of Bucharest. Since the fall of communism, the city has been slowly emerging as a vibrant and powerful metropolitan hub. One thing consistent throughout the capital is the sheer grandiosity on display. The Palace of Parliament was commissioned by former dictator Nicolae Ceaușescu and is jaw-droppingly huge. With more than 1,100 rooms, the Romanian government only occupies roughly 30% of the building. Other highlights include the impressive Romanian Athenaeum—home to the philharmonic orchestra and the Arch of Triumph, which boasts stunning vistas of the city from the top.



TIMIȘOARA

Ruled by Turks, Austrians and Hungarians, Timișoara is a veritable melting pot of culture and history. The city was also the spark that lit the flame of the Romanian Revolution in 1989, leading to the government's downfall less than a week after the protests began. Today, Timișoara is filled with college students, well-preserved architecture and stately squares. Art galleries and museums are housed in former Baroque-style mansions, while bustling cafes awaken the old town streets. Stroll through the meticulous riverfront gardens lining the Bega River as it winds its way through the city.

TRANSYLVANIA AND BRAȘOV

In the beating heart of this beautiful country is Transylvania. Known for its picturesque scenery filled with jagged peaks and castles, it feels as though you've stepped into a Brothers Grimm or Bram Stoker story. The most famous of these castles—Bran Castle—is the legendary home of Count Dracula. Further away toward the western edges of Transylvania is

Corvin Castle. This medieval fortress is actually the largest castle in Romania and is a testimony to Gothic and Renaissance architecture.

Centered in the Transylvania region is Brașov, a busy city filled with old-world charm and plenty of history. While many use it as a starting point for touring around the area, it's definitely worth exploring. Brightly colored Baroque buildings line the streets leading to the town square. The Black Church is an impressive Gothic-style church built by the local German community. After suffering a devastating fire in the late 1600s, the church derived its name from the remaining soot and smoke on the walls.

THE TRANSĂGĂRĂȘAN

Made famous by the adrenaline junkies of the TV show "Top Gear," the Transăgărășan is a road stretching more than 150 kilometers north and south through the southern Carpathian Mountains. Initially built as a quick escape in the event of a Soviet invasion, the Transăgărășan has been deemed one of the most exhilarating roads in the world. The route is filled with hills, valleys, alpine glaciers, twisting hairpin turns and breathtaking views of Romania's beauty.



LEFT:
Aerial view of the
Danube River Delta.
BOTTOM LEFT:
The famous
Transfăgărășan road.



AMAZING ECOSYSTEMS

Romania is home to a variety of different ecosystems. From the steep mountain ranges to more than 12,000 caves found underground to the serene wetlands and shoreline of the Black Sea, it's easy to find the natural wonders. Approximately two hours northeast of Bucharest is Vulcanii Norioși Pâclele Mari, also known as Berca Mud Volcanoes. This geological phenomenon is a mix of natural gases, clay and salty mash water. As the gases release toward the surface, it causes the mud and water to erupt, creating small mud "volcanoes."

At the opposite end of the country toward the northwest is Salina Turda—the Turda Salt Mine. At 120 meters deep, this salt mine dates back to the 11th century and was operated until the early 1900s. After it shuttered, the mine was refurbished and is now considered one of the largest salt mine museums in Europe. It has an incredibly epic amusement park underground, including mini-golf, a Ferris wheel and a bowling alley.

For nature lovers and bird-watchers, the Danube Delta is the second-largest yet best-preserved in Europe. The delta spans a massive 580,000 hectares and is home to more than 300 species of birds and wildlife, many of which have been on the endangered species list. While parts of the reserve are in neighboring Ukraine, much of the wetlands are found in Romania and are part of the UNESCO World Heritage Site. ■

Fun Facts about Romania

- It's been part of the EU since 2007, and its currency is the euro.
- Romania has won international acclaim for its wine production.
- Vlad III (also known as Vlad the Impaler) and Bran Castle are said to have inspired "Dracula;" however, the tyrannical ruler never stayed at Bran Castle.
- The Palace of Parliament is the world's heaviest building, consisting of more than 700,000 tons of bronze and steel and 4,500 tons of crystal.

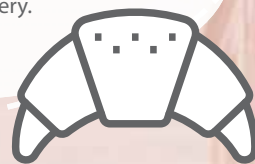
10 Things to know about Paris

By Mary Del Rosario



1

A croissant, or Pain au Chocolat, is the breakfast of choice for many Parisians, which can be found at any "boulangerie," bakery.



For a more relaxed travel experience, it's best to take the train. Gare du Nord and Gare de l'Est are the popular train stations in Paris.



2

"Bonjour!"

4

The French are very proud of their language, so learning basic pleasantries and exchanges will go a long way when navigating the city.

3

Be wary of games such as the cup game near touristy places. Oftentimes, they are a scam and provide an easy distraction for pickpockets.



5

Don't be upset if a restaurant is closed for lunch as many partake in "sieste"—resting hours during midday. Some businesses may close for two to four hours every afternoon.



7

The origin of Paris' nickname, The City of Light, is believed to come from the Age of Enlightenment, when many intellectuals lived here.



Be aware when taking the metro as stops are not announced—it's best to count them.

8

6

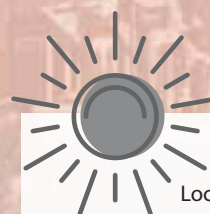


There are 20 Arrondissement (neighborhoods) in Paris. The First Arrondissement is the most admired one, housing popular attractions such as the Louvre and the Royal Palace.

9



The Paris Pass will be a money and time saver, as it gives you free entry to over 60 attractions and tours.



10

Locals recommend you do not visit in August since many businesses are closed for their holiday. August is also one of the hottest months. ■

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PAPANAȘI:

— *Your New Favorite Romanian Dessert* —



By Anna Leigh Bagiackas

If there's one kind of food that will get me buying a plane ticket to a new place, it's dessert. And with these fried cheese-filled, donut-like beauties, you can bet I'm pulling out my passport and credit card for a trip to Romania—right after I make these, of course.

Papanashi, pronounced papanash, are a traditional Romanian dessert that are found on most local restaurant menus. Topped with blueberry jam and a cream similar to sour cream or crème fraîche, the donut-like treats are made with a Romanian cow's milk soft cheese and fried to golden perfection. Adapted versions use ricotta or cottage cheese, as these cheeses are more widely available for the home cook. These are best served warm.

PAPANAȘI

Start to finish: 45 minutes

Serves: 8

1 pound ricotta cheese

1/2 cup sugar

2 eggs

1 1/2 cups all-purpose flour

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

1/4 teaspoon baking soda

1/4 teaspoon salt

1 cup sour cream or crème fraîche

1 cup blueberry jam, or whichever flavor you prefer

Oil for frying

In the bowl of a mixer, combine the cheese, sugar, eggs, vanilla, baking soda and salt. Mix until it is well incorporated and then gradually add the flour. Continue mixing; the batter will be sticky but do not add additional flour.

Flour your work surface well and dump the mixture onto the surface. With lots of flour on your hands, shape the dough into a ball. Then cut it into 8 equal pieces. Take each piece and cut a small portion from it, this will make the donut hole. You should have 16 pieces of dough.

Take the small pieces and roll them into small balls, flouring your hands as necessary. Do the same thing with the larger pieces, and then press them down flat and use your finger to press through the middle to make a hole.

Heat up the oil in a Dutch oven or large pot. When it's hot, fry the donuts, 4 at a time and flipping halfway through. When they are golden brown, remove and place on a paper towel-lined rack. Make sure the oil is back up to temperature before putting in a new batch. Fry all of the donuts and donut holes.

To serve, place warm donuts on a plate, dollop a couple spoonfuls of sour cream in the middle and then a heaping spoonful of jam. Place the donut holes on top and serve. ■

(This recipe was adapted from Jo Cooks.)



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