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# Fastnachts Donut Recipe Pennsylvania Dutch

FEBRUARY 20, 2020 BY JOANNE SCHWEITZER

<https://noplatelyhome.com/fastnachts-donut-recipe-pennsylvania-dutch/>



*Hi, I'm Joanne!*

Here you'll find my Italian family heritage  
recipes from my Italian immigrant parents

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*This fastnachts donut recipe Pennsylvania Dutch is an old family recipe. They're German doughnuts fasnacht (although spelled different ways) are dense, fried doughnuts that are made with yeast and potatoes. **This is the fastnacht recipe you've been searching for!***

This recipe has been featured in MSN and Yahoo!life. The links are below the recipe card.

and extended family! Reconnect with your past and get the delicious recipes you've been searching. Follow me and have fun cooking!

*About Joanne*

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# AUTHENTIC PA DUTCH **Fastnachts Recipe**



## Pennsylvania Dutch Cooking

I'm familiar with Pennsylvania Dutch cooking for two reasons: First, I grew up living one hour from Amish country a.k.a. Lancaster County, PA and second, I married a German with PA Dutch roots. Whatever I didn't know before we got married, I learned quickly from his mother.

"There are angels in my mouth!" said my son's teacher after she bit into her first bite of one of these freshly fried fastnachts.

They're traditionally made for Mardi Gras or Fat Tuesday, which is the day before Lent starts. By the way, see my Lenten recipes: [fish and seafood recipes](#) and [vegetarian recipes](#) too.

Before you run out and buy yeast, you need to know that this recipe needs to be started the night before so it can rise for 8 hours. So, **read the instructions and tips carefully BEFORE you start!** There are three rises in this recipe but, don't fear, it's still an easy recipe with step-by-step instructions and photos for beginners!

I'm excited to share this authentic Pennsylvania Dutch recipe with you and share tips to make them come out perfect the first time like mine did!

This fastnacht recipe is my mother-in-law's recipe. She is no stranger to Pennsylvania Dutch cooking as she's from German decent and has been







making these from-scratch fastnachts for many years.

Her children wait anxiously for these donuts. She's even harassed by her sons, but one in particular, not mentioning any names here.. Stephen!

I sent these donuts in with my kids to give to their teachers and both teachers wrote me telling me they loved them! I'm sure you're going to love them too.



*Disclosure: This post contains Amazon affiliate links. If you make a purchase, I'll receive a very small commission but, the price you pay is the same. Clicking on the link takes you straight to YOUR Amazon account.*

## **WARNING: DON'T EAT TOO MANY FASTNACHTS!**

They lie a bit heavy in your stomach so, cut yourself off after 4 and please eat a low-carb dinner that night. Here are some [low-carb recipes](#) dinner ideas.

This recipe isn't hard but, you need to be aware of some things that can botch the recipe. I have photos to reference so that won't happen to your recipe!

Mine turned out great the first time. If you've ever made bread, you'll find this recipe easy.

## **Tips for making perfect Fastnachts:**

- **Use fresh yeast**, not expired or opened jar and older than 3 months. If you're aren't sure, [proof the yeast](#) first. If your yeast doesn't foam (as shown below) after 5 minutes of sitting in with water that's 110F-120F and some sugar, it's not going to rise and it'll botch your recipe. You don't want to find out later after you've wasted all of the ingredients.





- Use a [thermometer](#) to get an accurate temperature of the water that'll be used with yeast. If the water isn't hot enough the yeast won't activate. If the water is too hot, it'll kill the yeast. Therefore, you need the right temperature. Don't botch your recipe by using the wrong temperature water.











- Make sure your oil is 400F-425F. If it's under, the donuts won't cook properly. If it's over 425F, they'll burn on the outside and not cook on the inside. When you drop the donut into the hot oil, the donut should immediately start to fry and sizzle in the oil like bacon.
- Change oil midway through frying. It will turn brown and that indicates it needs to be discarded and new oil added.

NOTE: The full, printable recipe is in the recipe card at the bottom of this post.

## Ingredients

- one medium potato
- 4 lbs all-purpose flour (may up to 5 lbs)
- 8 oz butter (two sticks)
- 4 cups starchy water (see recipe card)





- 3 eggs

- 1/2 tsp salt
- 2 1/4 cups sugar, divided
- 2 1/4 tsp fast acting yeast or one packet (not expired)
- 30 oz cooking oil or vegetable shortening

## Instructions

1. First, peel potato and cut it into cubes. Boil it until soft. Save the starchy water. Mash potato cubes and measure out one cup.
2. Next, measure the starchy water and add more water until you have 4 cups.
3. Then, proof yeast if you think it is old or wasn't stored properly. See [this video on how to proof yeast](#).
4. Then, in a very large bowl (3 gallons or so because it'll rise in this bowl overnight) add two cups of sugar, mashed potatoes, very warm starchy water (temperature should be 110-120F for yeast to rise) and yeast. This



is very warm/hot water. It's best to use a thermometer. Stir.







5. Check back in a few minutes. You should start to see some foam, which means the yeast is working. If there is no foam at all, the yeast could be dead and you should get a new packet. Let it sit for 1 hour. It's o.k. if it sits longer (up to three hours.)







**Fastnacht recipe first rise**

6. Next, add in the butter, eggs, salt, and two cups of flour at a time. Use a mixer or stand mixer with a dough hook. Add enough flour until it's only slightly sticky when you touch the dough. It should spring back a little when you touch it.





Then, place the dough in a 3 gallon or so bowl covered with a clean dish towel to rise overnight.

7. Your dough will look like this after it sits overnight. It doubles in size and will fill the container.

8. Then, line five sheet pans with wax paper.

9. Next, add flour to counter and pull out a handful at a time to roll onto floured surface. Roll out long pieces as shown. Then, pull apart the size donut you want to make. Knead it in your hands and push a hole





through the middle. Next, add it to the sheet pan lined with wax paper.

10. Then, after you've rolled out all of the donuts, let them sit for one hour for the third rise.



11. Then, add oil to a frying pan and turn the fan on high. The oil temperature should reach 400-425F. Line a platter with paper towels to place cooked donuts upon.
12. Next, carefully place the donuts in the hot oil and cook on each side for 2-4 minutes. When you see the bottom edge of donut is brown, it's time to flip it. ***As soon as you remove each donut, sprinkle sugar on top while the donut oil is still wet so the sugar adheres to it a little better or you can just remove all of the donuts and sprinkle with sugar all at once.***



13. Change oil midway through frying the donuts. The oil will get brown. Pour it into a glass or plastic container to discard. NOTE: If using a plastic container, add cold water first so the hot oil doesn't melt the container.) Put new oil in the frying pan or fryer, let it reach 425F and continue with previous step until all doughnuts are fried.

## What is the donut for Fat Tuesday?

**Fastnachts** are the traditional donuts used to celebrate Fat Tuesday.

However, Dunkin Donuts and many family-owned doughnut shops don't make fastnachts but, like to promote any donuts for Doughnut Day or Fat Tuesday.

They'll market it as "doughnut day" but, fastnachts are the authentic donuts made for Fat Tuesday. Now, I'm not telling you to forgo a delicious Boston Cream doughnut (my favorite) on Fat Tuesday. You do what you gotta do.

## What is a faschnaut?

Faschnauts are spelled a few different ways. I've covered some of them in this post so Google knows exactly the topic of this post. LOL That's blogging talk.

Faschnauts are a yeast raised doughnut containing potatoes that are cooked, mashed and mixed with other ingredients: flour, butter, sugar, eggs, yeast,



starchy water, and salt and then fried and topped with sugar.

## **What is the difference between a donut and a fastnacht?**

Doughnuts are not typically made with potatoes. Therefore, traditional doughnuts are more light and airy. Because they are made with potatoes, they're more dense.



Fastnacht means “fast night” and back in the day, were a fast way for people to use up some ingredients that were forbidden to use during Lent.

Consequently, fastnachts are not only popular in the German heritage, they’re also popular in Poland. My Polish friends also indulge in similar fastnacht donuts the days leading up to Mardi Gras or Fat Tuesday (Shrove Tuesday.)

Additionally, my friend Maggie loved them and said they remind her of her grandmother’s donuts (in Poland) without the plum preserves. Keeping old traditions are a great way to celebrate your cultural heritage or just eat delicious donuts one day a year!

**You may also like:**

[\*\*PA Dutch Chicken and Waffles\*\*](#)

[\*\*Creamy Chicken Pot Pie\*\*](#)

I took this recipe to [\*\*Weekend Potluck.\*\*](#)

This recipe was updated on Fat Tuesday, February 21, 2023.



# Pennsylvania Dutch Fastnachts Donut Recipe

This fried donut is made with potatoes and other simple ingredients. They're crispy on the outside with a dense moist middle. They're a simple delicious donut adorned with granulated sugar or powdered sugar.



4.35 from 20 votes

<b>Course</b>	Breakfast
<b>Cuisine</b>	American, German
<b>Keyword</b>	German doughnuts fastnachts recipe
<b>Prep Time</b>	45 minutes
<b>Cook Time</b>	15 minutes
<b>rising time</b>	10 hours
<b>Total Time</b>	11 hours
<b>Servings</b>	<a href="#">85</a>
<b>Calories</b>	211cal

## Ingredients

- 1 potato medium sized
- 4 lbs all-purpose flour (14.5 cups) may need up to 5 lbs
- 8 oz butter or two sticks softened
- 4 cups starchy water use water from boiling potato
- 3 eggs
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 2 1/4 cups sugar, divided





- 2 1/4 tsp fast rising yeast (one packet) ensure it's not expired
- 30 oz cooking oil or vegetable shortening

Get ingredients with

## Instructions

1. First, peel potato and cut it into cubes. Boil it until soft. Save the starchy water. Mash potato cubes and measure out one cup.
2. Measure the starchy water and add more water until you have 4 cups.
3. Proof yeast if you think it is old or wasn't stored properly.
4. Then, in a very large bowl (3 gallons or so because it'll rise in this bowl overnight) add two cups of sugar, mashed potatoes, very warm starchy water (temperature should be 110-120F for yeast to rise) and yeast. This is very warm/hot water. It's best to use a thermometer. Stir.



6. Add in the butter, eggs, salt, and two cups of flour at a time. Use a mixer or stand mixer with a dough hook. Add enough flour until it's only slightly sticky when you touch the dough. It should spring back a little when you touch it. Place the dough in a 3 gallon or so bowl covered with a clean dish towel to rise overnight.



7. This is what the dough looks like after it sits overnight. It will have doubled in size and fill the container.

8. Line 5 sheet pans with wax paper.

9. Add flour to counter and pull out a handful at a time to roll onto floured surface. Roll out long pieces as shown. Then, pull apart the size donut



you want to make. Knead it in your hands and push a hole through the middle. Add it to the sheet pan lined with wax paper.

10. After you've rolled out all of the donuts. Let them sit for one hour for the third rise.

11. Add oil to a frying pan and turn the fan on high. The oil temperature should reach 400-425F. Line a platter with paper towels to place cooked donuts upon.

12. Carefully place the donuts in the hot oil and cook on each side for 2-4 minutes. When you see the bottom edge of donut is brown, it's time to



flip it. As soon as you remove each donut, sprinkle sugar on top while the donut oil is still wet so the sugar adheres to it a little better or you can just remove all of the donuts and sprinkle with sugar all at once.

13. Change oil midway through frying the donuts. The oil will get brown. Pour it into a glass container (plastic will melt with hot oil) that you can discard. Put new oil in the frying pan or fryer and continue with previous step.

## Notes

### Storage:

Store leftovers in a plastic zipper bag or air tight container for up to three days. Donuts are freshest the day they're made. These donuts will get more dense after the first day.

Sprinkle with granulated sugar or powdered sugar. Spread with your favorite preserves, if you wish.



NOTE: I discarded 8 oz of oil after making these donuts. Therefore, the nutritional information doesn't take this into account. So, I'm happy to say the calorie and fat counts in this nutritional label are lower than reported but, it's too hard to get an accurate count.

## Nutrition

Serving: 1g | Calories: 211cal | Carbohydrates: 22g | Protein: 3g | Fat: 13g | Saturated Fat: 2g | Polyunsaturated Fat: 3g | Monounsaturated Fat: 7g | Trans Fat: 0.1g | Cholesterol: 12mg | Sodium: 34mg | Potassium: 39mg | Fiber: 1g | Sugar: 5g | Vitamin A: 75IU | Vitamin C: 0.5mg | Calcium: 6mg | Iron: 1mg

*They're down right delicious!* This recipe has been featured in [MSN The German Pastries That Hold a Sacred Place in Pennsylvania Cuisine](#) and [Yahoo!life 9 Traditional Treats for Fat Tuesday](#).

## Trackbacks

**Fastnachts Donut Recipe Pennsylvania Dutch — No Plate Like**

**Home | My Meals are on Wheels** says:

February 23, 2020 at 3:33 AM





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