

— AMERICA'S —
TEST KITCHEN

Beer-Battered Onion Rings with Jalapeño Dipping Sauce

YIELD Serves 6**TIME** 1¼ hours

Why This Recipe Works

For crisp, flavorful onion rings we started by adding a bit of flavor to the onions themselves by coating them lightly with a mixture of confectioners' sugar, salt, and onion powder. A bit of cornstarch helped absorb any moisture the salt drew out of the onions as they awaited coating and frying. For the batter, we used a combination of all-purpose flour, which clings and browns nicely, and cornstarch, which doesn't brown or cling as well as the flour but crisps beautifully. Cold beer provided plenty of bubbles to lighten the batter, and a hefty dose of baking powder boosted those bubbles even more. Cutting the onions to a ½-inch thickness and cooking them briefly in 375-degree oil ensured that the inner onion softened perfectly as the batter crisped, producing onion rings that were easy to bite through without experiencing the dreaded “onion escape.” These rings were great on their own, but a cool, creamy, jalapeño-spiked sauce made a complementary accompaniment.

Gather Your Ingredients

Sauce

- ☐ ½ cup mayonnaise
- ☐ 3 tablespoons ketchup
- ☐ 2 tablespoons minced jarred jalapeño chiles plus 1 tablespoon brine
- ☐ ½ teaspoon granulated sugar
- ☐ ¼ teaspoon cayenne

Onion Rings

- ☐ 2 quarts vegetable oil for frying
- ☐ 1 tablespoon confectioners' sugar
- ☐ 2 teaspoons plus 3 tablespoons cornstarch, divided
- ☐ 1½ teaspoons table salt
- ☐ 1 teaspoon onion powder
- ☐ 2 large yellow onions, peeled
- ☐ 2 cups (10 ounces/283 grams) all-purpose flour
- ☐ 2 teaspoons baking powder
- ☐ 2 cups cold beer

Before You Begin

- * Use a Dutch oven that holds 6 quarts or more. We like large yellow onions here, about 1 pound each, but sweet onions such as Vidalia or Walla Walla can be used. If using sweet onions, which are smaller and flatter, do not trim the ends (trimming will reduce the yield too much), and increase the salt to 2 teaspoons. We like an inexpensive lager for this recipe, but nonalcoholic beer works well too.

Instructions

1. **FOR THE SAUCE:** Whisk all ingredients in bowl until combined. Refrigerate until needed.
2. **FOR THE ONION RINGS:** Heat oil in large Dutch oven over medium-high heat to 380 degrees. While oil heats, combine sugar, 2 teaspoons cornstarch, salt, and onion powder in small bowl.
3. Adjust oven rack to middle position and heat oven to 200 degrees. Set wire rack in rimmed baking sheet and line with triple layer of paper towels. With sharp knife, remove ½-inch slice from each end of 1 onion and save for other use. Cut onion crosswise into ½-inch-thick rounds. Repeat with remaining onion. Separate onion rounds into rings, saving 3 innermost layers of each round for other use. Transfer rings to bowl. Sprinkle with 1 tablespoon confectioners' sugar mixture and toss to coat.

4. Whisk flour, baking powder, remaining 3 tablespoons cornstarch, and remaining 1½ tablespoons confectioners' sugar mixture in medium bowl to combine. Whisk in beer until almost smooth (small lumps are OK). Add one-quarter of rings to batter and stir to coat. Using your fingers or tongs, transfer rings to oil one at a time until surface of oil is covered. Fry rings, turning occasionally and adjusting heat to keep oil temperature between 360 and 375, until deep golden brown and crisp, about 4 minutes. Transfer rings to prepared rack and place in oven. Return oil to 380 degrees and repeat with remaining onion rings and batter. Serve with sauce.