

Step 1: Get your ingredients and prepare stations

Most grocery stores carry apple cider in the produce department during the fall months and all other ingredients should be easy to find at the store or in your own pantry. If you don't have a donut cutter, try a kitchen or home supply store. Bring along this [shopping list](#) so you don't miss any items.

Before baking starts, set up donut making stations to streamline the process and keep everyone from stepping on each other's toes.

Step 2: Mixing Station

At the first station, put a few of your Home Maven friends in charge of heating the cider and mixing the ingredients together in bowls to create the dough. If you'd like, you can reduce several cups of cider (one for each batch you plan to make) beforehand to speed up the process.

Friends stationed here will follow these instructions:

- Boil 1 cup of apple cider in a small saucepan for 8 to 10 minutes or until cider is reduced to 1/4 cup; let cool.
- In a large bowl, beat sugar with solid shortening until smooth. Add eggs and mix well, then add buttermilk and cooled cider.
- In a medium-sized bowl, stir together flour, baking powder, baking soda, cinnamon, salt and nutmeg. Add to liquid ingredients; mix ingredients just enough to combine.

Step 3: Donut-Cutting Station

At the second station, set up an area on a flat surface with a lightly floured board for cutting and shaping dough. Place baking pans covered in wax paper or parchment nearby for finished donut shapes.

Friends stationed here will follow these instructions:

- Transfer dough to the lightly floured board and pat to 1/2-inch thickness. Cut with a 3-inch donut cutter; re-roll the excess donut holes and cut scraps back into the dough.
- Refrigerate formed donuts on baking sheets for about 20 minutes to help firm the dough prior to frying.



Step 4: Frying Station

If you want to work at a faster pace, you can provide two frying pans at this station so more donuts can be fried at once. Also provide plates with several layers of paper towels for draining the donuts after frying.

Friends stationed here will follow these instructions:

- Add enough oil or shortening to fill a deep (3-inch) pan; heat to approximately 375°F or until the oil is bubbling.
- Fry several donuts at a time, turning once or twice until browned and cooked through, about 4 minutes.
- Remove and place on paper towels for draining and cooling.

Step 5: Cinnamon and Sugar Station

Have one or two helpers put the finishing touch on the donuts by supplying large plastic zip-top bags containing a cinnamon and sugar mixture. Once the donuts have drained and cooled a bit, they will shake up the donuts in the bag. Finished donuts can be placed on a wire rack to continue cooling.

For an added touch, have friends at this station pour the excess apple cider into a large saucepan and heat with cinnamon sticks, nutmeg, cloves and orange peel. Since they won't have much to do right away they can keep an eye on the hot apple cider and stir occasionally. Not only will it add warm festive fragrances throughout your home, it makes a tasty complement to the donuts.

Step 6: Goodie Bags

When the baking is finished take a moment to sit back and enjoy your warm donuts and hot apple cider together. You can catch up with each other and talk about your plans for the season. Before it's time to go, make several goodie bags with your friends so they can take home some leftover treats to share.