

## Cassatedde

### For the Pastry

3½ cups flour  
¾ cup sugar  
½ teaspoon salt  
2½ teaspoons baking powder  
7 tablespoons unsalted butter  
¼ cup lard or Crisco  
2 large eggs  
1 teaspoon vanilla  
½ cup or more milk

### For the Filling

1¼ pounds whole-milk ricotta  
⅓ cup sugar  
1¼ teaspoons cinnamon  
1½ teaspoons vanilla  
3.5 ounces semisweet chocolate

### For the Pastry

In a large bowl, whisk together the flour, sugar, salt, and baking powder. With a pastry blender, cut in cold butter and lard or Crisco until coarse crumbs are formed.

In another bowl, beat together the eggs, vanilla, and milk. Beat the liquid ingredients into the flour mixture with a large wooden spoon. If the mixture seems too dry, add a bit more milk. When the mixture forms into a ball, knead it slightly until well combined and smooth. Wrap in plastic, and refrigerate for several hours or overnight.

### For the Filling

Chop the chocolate bar into fairly small bits. You should use a high-quality chocolate for this. In a bowl, lightly combine the ricotta, sugar, cinnamon, and vanilla, then stir in the chopped chocolate. Taste to see that you have a sweetness you're happy with. It should not be overly sweet.

### To Assemble

Remove the pastry from the refrigerator, and roll it out on a floured surface until it is the thickness of pie crust. Cut out circles about 5-inch in diameter. I use the lid of a canister for this.

Spread the ricotta filling on one half of the pastry circles. Do not spread the filling to the edge, but rather leave about a ½-inch bare strip to allow you to enclose the pastry. Moisten the edge of the pastry with a little warm water. Fold the bare half of the pastry over the filling. Crimp the edges of the half-moon shape with a fork in order to seal the filling.

It should make about 12 Cassatedde. Chill the filled pastry half-moons for a couple hours in the refrigerator.

**To Fry and Serve**

Heat vegetable oil, about an inch deep, in a frying pan or deep fryer to 350°. I find an electric frying pan perfect for this. When the oil reaches the desired temperature, gently place a few of the Cassatedde in the hot oil. Do not crowd the pan with too many pastries. Fry for just a few minutes until nicely browned on the bottom, then gently turn them over with a spatula to cook the other side. Again, this should take just a few minutes until they are golden brown. Remove the fried pastries to a tray lined with paper towels. Blot the tops of the pastries with another paper towel to remove any excess oil.

When the pastries reach room temperature, sprinkle with powdered sugar in a sieve. The Cassatedde may be served at room temperature or cold. Store any leftover pastries covered in the refrigerator.