Move over cupcakes. It’s time for doughnuts to take their star
turn. So, bring on the sprinkles, the chocolate, the bacon. Yes,
even the bacon.

“People were doing interesting flavors with cupcakes. It was a
matter of time before the same thing happened to doughnuts,”
says Lara Ferroni, cookbook author and food photographer,
Portland, Ore.

However, if you still envision racks of plain, glazed doughnuts in
your favorite coffee shop, stretch your imagination. You can make
luscious, indulgent and extravagant doughnuts for holiday parties in
no more time than it takes to bake a batch of cookies.

Once you’ve mastered the basic technique, “you can put your
own spin on the doughnut; make it your own,” says Mark Kle
beck, a co-founder of Top Pot Doughnuts in Seattle.

Create your own designer doughnuts using your favorite sea-
sonal flavors, such as nutmeg, peppermint, cranberry or pump-
kin. Coat finished doughnuts with orange, coconut or chocolate
 glaze.

Then, since there’s no such thing as too much, finish off your
masterpiece with chopped nuts, chocolate shavings or savory
bacon.

Doughnuts topped with chopped walnuts and crumbled
bacon is one of the tantalizing recipes in the new cookbook by
Mark and Michael Klebeck, “Top Pot Hand-Forged Dough-
nuts” (Chronicle Books, 2011).

The choices are yours. Here are some “do and dough-not” sug-
gestions to get started.

Don’t make doughnuts a day in advance. For best quality,
milk doughnuts on party day. Cake doughnuts only take about
30 minutes to prepare and you can make them a few hours ahead
of time to avoid last-minute preparation, according to Ferroni,
author of “Doughnuts: Simple and Delicious Recipes to Make at
Home” (Sasquatch Books, 2010).

Resist super-sizing so your guests can sample more. “You can
grab one or two and don’t feel like you have to cut up a doughnut
and share it,” Klebeck says.

Do take steps to make cleanup easier. Unfortunately, frying
doughnuts can be messy. Cover your stovetop with aluminum
foil. Toss the spattered foil when you’re done, Klebeck says.

Don’t stack glazed doughnuts. Although a doughnut tower
would be an eye-catching display on the dessert table, glazed
doughnuts are best arranged in a single layer so they don’t stick
together. A large platter or party tray will hold a dozen dough-
nuts.

Invite your guests to share in the fun of doughnut prepara-
tion with a DIY decorating station, Ferroni says. Set out a platter
of plain doughnuts. Make a glaze and bring it warm to the table.
Add a few bowls of toppings. Let guests create their own design-
er doughnuts.

Don’t discard your leftovers. Turn the stale crumbs into
truffles as Ferroni does.

If you’re ready to make doughnuts from scratch, try the Kle
beck sensation: a chocolate cake doughnut with peppermint
icing and candy cane bits.

“Mint and chocolate is an incredible combination,” he says.

Gourmet doughnuts are the next big thing. Try these 2 easy-to-execute, holiday-themed recipes

See page 2 for doughnut recipes
Peppermint Snowdrift Cake Doughnuts

Adapted from the cookbook “Hand-Forged Doughnuts"

Chocolate peppermint doughnuts:
1. First make the doughnut dough. Sift the flour, cocoa powder, baking powder, salt and nutmeg together into a mixing bowl and set aside.

2. In a stand mixer, fitted with the paddle attachment, mix the sugar and shortening for 1 minute on low speed, until sandy. Add the egg yolks, one at a time. Then mix for 1 more minute on medium speed, scraping the sides of the bowl with a rubber spatula if necessary, until the mixture is light colored and thick. Mix in the vanilla and peppermint extracts.

3. Add the flour mixture to the mixing bowl in three additions, alternating with the milk, mixing until just combined, on low speed each time. The dough will be sticky.

4. Transfer the dough to a clean bowl, cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate for 45 minutes or up to 24 hours.

5. Using a candy thermometer to measure the temperature, heat at least 2 inches of oil in a deep fryer or large pot to 370 degrees F.

6. Roll out chilled dough to 1/2-inch thickness on a lightly floured surface; lightly flour top of dough and rolling pin to prevent sticking. Cut into as many doughnuts and doughnut holes as possible, dipping cutter into flour before each cut. Fold and gently rework dough; cut more holes.

7. Shake any excess flour off doughnuts. Carefully lower doughnuts into hot oil, a few at a time. Don’t crowd. When doughnuts float to the oil’s surface, fry about 1 minute per side. The texture will change as the doughnuts are done.

8. Remove doughnuts with slotted spoon; drain on paper towels and cool completely.

9. While doughnuts are cooling make the icing. Place the confectioners sugar, corn syrup, salt, vanilla and peppermint extracts in the work bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment. With the machine on medium speed, add the hot water in a slow, steady stream and blend until all the sugar has been incorporated, scraping the bowl a few times if necessary. Set aside.

10. Dip one side of each doughnut into warm icing. Sprinkle on crushed peppermint candies. Place doughnuts, icing side up, on wire rack to cool completely.

Makes 1 dozen doughnuts and holes.