Prep time: 8 minutes
Cook time: 8–10 minutes (in batches)
Total time: 20 minutes
Intensity: Easy (no deep frying; minimal cleanup)

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Ingredients

For the donuts:

- 1 can (16 oz / 450 g) refrigerated flaky biscuit dough (8 biscuits) — Pillsbury Grands or similar

- 2 tbsp melted butter, for brushing
- Nonstick cooking spray (avocado or coconut oil recommended)

For the cinnamon sugar coating:

- ½ cup granulated sugar
- 1½ tsp ground cinnamon
- 3 tbsp melted butter (for dipping after cooking)

For the vanilla glaze (alternative to cinnamon sugar):

- 1 cup powdered sugar
- 2–3 tbsp whole milk
- ½ tsp vanilla extract
- Pinch of salt

Optional toppings:

- Chocolate drizzle, sprinkles, crushed nuts, or a dusting of powdered sugar

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Equipment

- Air fryer (3.5 qt / 3.3 L or larger)
- 1-inch round biscuit cutter or a small drinking glass
- Small bowl for coating
- Pastry brush
- Tongs
- Wire cooling rack

Instructions

Step 1 — Prep the air fryer and dough (5 minutes | Intensity:

Low)

Preheat the air fryer to 350°F (175°C) for 3 minutes. Meanwhile, open the biscuit can and separate the 8 biscuits onto a lightly floured surface. Using the biscuit cutter or glass, press straight down through the center of each biscuit to cut out a hole — do not twist the cutter, or the layers will seal and the donuts won't puff properly. Reserve the holes; they cook into perfect donut bites.

Step 2 — Spray and arrange (2 minutes | Intensity: Low)

Lightly spray the air fryer basket with nonstick spray — do not use aerosol propellants on nonstick baskets if the manufacturer advises against it; an oil mister is ideal. Arrange 3–4 donuts in a single layer with at least ½ inch of space between them. Do not overcrowd — air circulation is what creates the golden crust. Work in 2–3 batches.

Step 3 — Air fry the donuts (4–5 minutes per batch | Intensity: Medium — watch closely)

Air fry at 350°F (175°C) for 4–5 minutes, flipping halfway through with tongs at the 2½-minute mark. Donuts are done when puffed and deep golden brown. Watch the first batch closely — every air fryer runs differently, and these can go from golden to dark in 60 seconds. Internal temperature should read 190–200°F (88–93°C).

Step 4 — Air fry the donut holes (2–3 minutes | Intensity: Low)

Add the donut holes to the basket in a single layer and air fry at 350°F (175°C) for 2–3 minutes, shaking the basket once at the halfway point. They cook fast — pull them as soon as they're golden.

Step 5 — Brush with butter (1 minute | Intensity: Low)

As each batch comes out, brush the warm donuts lightly with melted butter on both sides. This helps the coating adhere and keeps the exterior tender rather than dry. Transfer to a

wire rack while you finish the remaining batches.

Step 6 — Coat or glaze (3 minutes | Intensity: Low)

For cinnamon sugar: Stir the sugar and cinnamon together in a shallow bowl. While the donuts are still warm, press each one into the mixture, turning to coat both sides evenly.
For vanilla glaze: Whisk the powdered sugar, milk, vanilla, and salt in a bowl until smooth and pourable. Dip the top of each donut into the glaze and let the excess drip off; set on the rack to set, about 5 minutes.

Step 7 — Serve (Immediately | Intensity: None)

These are best eaten within 30 minutes of cooking, while the exterior is still crisp. Pile onto a plate and serve warm.

Chef’s Notes & Troubleshooting

- Donuts not rising? Twisting the cutter seals the biscuit layers. Press straight down and lift straight up. Also ensure your biscuit dough is fresh and not past its date.
- Uneven browning? Every air fryer has hot spots — shake the basket or flip at the halfway point and don’t overcrowd.
- Raw center? Lower the temperature to 340°F (170°C) and add 1–2 minutes. Higher heat browns the outside before the inside sets.
- Donuts dry? Don’t overcook, and don’t skip the butter brush — it’s what keeps the crumb soft.

- Sticky basket? Always use a light coating of oil spray, and never put wet batter in the air fryer.

- Make-ahead: These don’t store well — they lose their crispness. Best made fresh; leftovers can be revived in the air fryer at 300°F for 1–2 minutes.

- Flavor variations: Add ½ tsp nutmeg to the dough coating, brush with melted butter and garlic salt for a savory version, or fill cooled donuts with jam using a piping bag and star tip.

Nutrition (per donut — 1 of 8, cinnamon sugar coating, without optional toppings)

Nutrient	Amount
Calories	~210 kcal
Protein	3 g
Total Fat	8 g
— Saturated Fat	4 g
Carbohydrates	31 g
— Fiber	0.5 g
— Sugars	15 g
Cholesterol	10 mg
Sodium	~380 mg