

Fusion Treats You Can Make With Grocery Store Staples

You don't expect pineapple upside-down cake to start with frozen bao. Or churros to come out of a waffle iron. But pair everyday grocery items with global flavors, and your pantry becomes a gateway to something unexpected.

Fusion desserts work best when they don't overcomplicate things. With staples like [boxed pancake mix](#), canned milk, instant coffee, or refrigerated dough, you can build sweets that blend tradition and creativity in a way that feels playful but grounded. These seven ideas pull from what's already in your pantry and turn it into something unexpected and deeply satisfying.

Pound cake tiramisu with instant espresso

Traditional tiramisu uses ladyfingers and mascarpone, but this version swaps in pound cake and a whipped cream cheese filling. Use a store-bought loaf or even graham crackers. For the coffee, [instant espresso](#) like Nescafé or Café Bustelo gives you that concentrated bitterness without needing a stovetop brew.

Layer the cake and cream in a loaf pan, alternating soaked slices with the filling made from cream cheese, sweetened condensed milk, and whipped topping (such as Cool Whip, fully thawed, or stabilized whipped cream). Let it chill overnight. Dust with cocoa powder or grated chocolate. It cuts clean, travels well, and keeps for up to three days in the fridge. For a dairy-free option, use plant-based cream cheese and whipped coconut cream.

Mochi pancake bites from a muffin tin

Start with a pancake mix—Krusteaz, Bisquick, or any generic brand—and combine it with [mochiko](#) (sweet rice flour), which you can find in the Asian or gluten-free baking section. Mix equal parts, then add milk, sugar, and an egg. Bake in a mini muffin tin at 350°F until puffed and lightly golden, about 15 minutes.

The result is soft and chewy inside, crisp around the edges, and bouncy when pressed. Eat them plain or dip in syrup, drizzle with melted chocolate, or roll in cinnamon sugar. For a dairy-free version, substitute oat or almond milk. These store well in an airtight container and reheat nicely in a toaster oven.

Tres leches banana pudding with a soaked twist

Combine boxed vanilla pudding with evaporated milk, sweetened condensed milk, and whole milk to create a base that mimics the richness of tres leches. Layer with banana slices and vanilla wafers, Nilla or store-brand, and let the mixture soak overnight.

This dessert brings together two Southern hemisphere staples: tres leches, popular across Latin America, and banana pudding, rooted in Southern Black culinary tradition. Add whipped cream on top and dust with cinnamon or [crushed cookies](#). It keeps for two to three days and is even better the second day, after everything softens and melds.

No-bake matcha cheesecake with graham cracker crust

Crush graham crackers with melted butter to make the crust. For the filling, beat softened cream cheese with powdered sugar and fold in whipped topping (like Cool Whip, fully thawed, or a homemade stabilized whipped cream). Stir in one to two teaspoons of [matcha powder](#). Look for culinary-grade options in the tea or natural foods aisle. Matcha, used in Japanese tea ceremonies, adds earthy bitterness and color. If you prefer something milder, hojicha works well too.

Pour the filling over the crust and refrigerate for at least four hours. Slice and serve with sesame seeds or crushed shortbread for texture. These bars hold well in the fridge for up to five days. The texture sets up beautifully by day two, making them even easier to slice and serve cleanly.

Churro waffles made with biscuit dough

Grab a can of refrigerated biscuit dough, like Pillsbury Grands. Separate the pieces, roll them in cinnamon sugar, and press into a preheated waffle iron. Cook until golden and crisp, about four to five minutes. The sugar melts into the ridges while the dough puffs and crisps, giving you churro flavor without deep frying.

Top with melted chocolate, dulce de leche, or whipped cream. Add a pinch of chili powder to the cinnamon for a little kick. Store extras in the fridge and reheat in a toaster oven at 350°F for five minutes to bring the crunch back. It's quick, satisfying, and crowd-friendly.

Pineapple upside-down skillet bao

Use plain frozen bao, found in the freezer aisle or at Asian grocery stores, and canned pineapple slices. In a skillet, melt butter and brown sugar, sear the pineapple, then add the thawed bao. Cover and cook over medium heat for six to eight minutes, until the bao are soft and glazed and the syrup reduces to a sticky glaze.

The tops remain soft and pillowy while the bottoms develop a golden, sticky crust from the caramel. This dessert flips the idea of classic pineapple cake with a chewy, steamed base instead of sponge. Serve with coconut whipped cream or vanilla ice cream. Store leftovers in the fridge and reheat in a nonstick pan with a splash of water to refresh the glaze.

Sweet-salty peanut butter miso cookies

Peanut butter cookies get a savory upgrade with a spoonful of white [miso paste](#). Mix it into store-bought dough or homemade batter, and reduce any extra salt. Brands like Hikari or Miso Master work well and are usually sold in plastic tubs near the tofu section.

Scoop, flatten, and top with chopped peanuts or flaky salt. Bake at 350°F until golden and slightly cracked, about 10 to 12 minutes. The miso rounds out the sweetness with a slow-building savory finish. Serve slightly warm for the best contrast between the crisp exterior and chewy center. For a nut-free version, use sunflower seed butter. These cookies store for four days in an airtight container and pair well with tea or coffee.