



Brazilian Cheese Bread (Pão de Queijo)

WHY THIS RECIPE WORKS

by Sasha Marx

We have to admit that gluten-free baked goods rarely blow our hair back. It’s just difficult to achieve the satisfying chew of wheat-based baked goods without the help of gluten. But tapioca starch’s unique qualities make it one of the best substitutes out there. Tapioca starch is low in amylose—one of the types of polysaccharides that makes up starch—and therefore forms a high viscosity paste that can trap air. *Pão de queijo* are traditional Brazilian rolls made using a classic French *pâte à choux* dough. *Pâte à choux* is a dough base used for both sweet (éclairs, profiteroles) and savory (Parisian gnocchi, *gougères*) items. Comprised of butter, water, flour, and eggs, choux pastry relies on steam rather than chemical leavening agents to create rise.

Many of the recipes we tried baked up with a too-goopy interior. So we played with the hydration level until we nailed our favorite version. At 91 percent hydration (most recipes have hydration levels well over 100 percent, which makes them more of a batter than a dough) our rolls baked up crackly on the outsides, bready just under the crusts, and goopy at the very centers. In Brazil these cheese puffs are served as a morning snack with coffee, but we have spent a lot of time dreaming up different applications—dunked in tomato sauce, stuffed with ham for breakfast, or slit open for a quick sandwich.



INGREDIENTS	INSTRUCTIONS	MAKES 8 ROLLS
<div><div>3 cups tapioca starch</div><div>2 teaspoons plus ¼ teaspoon kosher salt, divided</div><div>¼ teaspoon baking powder</div><div>⅔ cup plus 2 tablespoons whole milk</div><div>½ cup vegetable oil</div><div>1 teaspoon water</div></div>	<div><div>1. Using stand mixer fitted with paddle, mix tapioca starch, 2 teaspoons salt, and baking powder on low speed until combined, about 30 seconds.</div><div>2. Combine milk, oil, and butter in medium saucepan and bring to boil over high heat. With mixer running on low speed, working quickly, pour milk mixture over tapioca mixture and continue to mix on low speed until all ingredients are incorporated, about 3 minutes longer.</div><div>3. Add 2 eggs and mix on low speed until dough comes together, turns shiny and sticky, and clings to sides of bowl, about 8 minutes, scraping down paddle and bowl halfway through mixing.</div></div>	

1½ tablespoons unsalted butter

2 large eggs plus 1 large egg, divided

3½ ounces Parmesan cheese, finely grated (1¾ cups)

3½ ounces Pecorino Romano, finely grated (1¾ cups)

4. Add Parmesan and Pecorino and mix on low speed until cheeses are incorporated, 30 to 60 seconds. Mix with rubber spatula to ensure mixture is fully incorporated. Remove bowl from stand mixer and press plastic wrap directly onto surface of dough. Refrigerate for at least 2 hours or overnight.

5. Adjust oven rack to middle position and heat oven to 450 degrees F/230 degrees C. Stack 2 baking sheets and line top sheet with parchment paper. Divide dough into 8 balls (about 3 ½ ounces each). To form rolls, lightly dampen your hands with water and roll balls between your palms until smooth. Evenly space rolls on prepared sheet.

6. Whisk 1 egg, 1 teaspoon water, and ¼ teaspoon salt together in small bowl. Brush egg mixture over tops of rolls. Place rolls in oven and immediately reduce oven temperature to 375 degrees F/190 degrees C. Bake for 20 minutes. Rotate sheet and continue to bake until rolls are deep golden brown and outer crusts are dry and crunchy, about 20 minutes longer. Transfer rolls to serving platter and let cool for 5 minutes. Serve.