

Pão de queijo (Brazilian cheese bread)

80ml water
80ml milk
120ml olive oil
1 teaspoon salt
270g tapioca flour
2 teaspoons minced garlic
70g freshly grated Parmesan cheese
2 beaten eggs

Pre-heat the oven to 190°C. Combine the olive oil, water, milk and salt into a saucepan, placing over high heat. When the mixture starts to boil, remove it from the heat immediately. Stir the tapioca flour and garlic until smooth. Set aside for 10 minutes.

Combine the Parmesan cheese and egg into the tapioca mixture. Stir it well until the mixture gets chunky like cottage cheese. Make round balls with about 2 to 3 tablespoons worth of the mixture and place them on a baking tray. Bake them in the pre-heated oven until lightly browned, or around 15 to 20 minutes. Best eaten whilst still warm.

Panettone

2 eggs, plus 1 yolk
1 teaspoon vanilla paste or extract
500g plain flour
2 x 7g sachets easy-bake dried yeast
100g caster sugar
200ml warm milk
200g soft butter
140g mixed dried fruit
100g mixed candied peel
Milk, for brushing
Pearl sugar, for sprinkling on top

Pre-heat oven to 190C. Beat the eggs and yolk with the vanilla. In a large bowl, mix the flour, yeast, sugar and ½ tsp salt. Add the warm milk and egg mixture, then beat to a very soft, sticky dough with a wooden spoon. Cover with cling film and leave in a warm place until the dough has doubled in size.

Drop large muffin wraps into 10 clean, 200g size cans or use a muffin tray. Blend the butter, fruit and peel into the risen dough, preferably with your hands. Cut into 10 equal pieces and drop a piece into each prepared can. Cover again and leave until they are very well risen. Gently brush the panettone with milk, sprinkle with the sugar and bake for 25-30 minutes until golden. Eat fresh.

Tomato, Pesto and Mozzarella Focaccia

500g strong white bread flour, plus some for dusting
½ teaspoon salt
325ml water
7g sachet fast-action yeast
2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil, plus some for drizzling
100g cherry tomatoes
125g ball mozzarella, drained
5 tablespoons pesto, see recipe, below
Sea salt, to serve (optional)

Put the flour into a bowl with the salt and the yeast. Add the water and oil to the flour and then mix well. Tip the dough out onto a worktop lightly dusted with flour and work it by pulling and stretching for at least 10 minutes. Try to get as much air into it as possible. Put the ball of worked dough into a well-oiled bowl, cover with a little more oil and a tea towel. Leave to rest until doubled in size.

Now stretch the dough out onto a baking sheet until it's about 20 x 30cm. Leave the dough to rise again to about half as high again, about 30-40 minutes in a warm place, loosely covered with a tea towel.

Heat oven to 200C. When the dough has risen, press your fingers into it gently to make some holes and put in the cherry tomatoes. Bake for about 15 minutes, then remove from the oven. Tear over the mozzarella, then bake for another 5-10 minutes until golden and cooked through. Drizzle over the pesto and scatter with sea salt, if you like. Serve straight away.

Pesto recipe:

75g grated parmesan
1 bunch basil
240ml olive oil
3 cloves garlic
1-2 teaspoons lemon juice
Salt and pepper to taste

Put it all in a magimix and blend until smooth. Store leftovers in the fridge.

Pretzels

500g strong white bread flour
7g sachet fast-action dried yeast
25g dark brown muscovado sugar
50g unsalted butter, melted
plain flour, for dusting
oil, for greasing
3 tablespoons bicarbonate of soda, baked (see below)
1 large egg, lightly beaten, for glazing
flaked sea salt, to serve

Put the bicarbonate of soda onto a foil-lined baking tray and bake at 120C for 1 hour. Put the flour, yeast, sugar and 1 teaspoon salt in a large bowl and mix together to combine. In a large jug, mix together 300ml lukewarm water and the butter. Make a well in the flour mixture and pour in the water, mixing together to form a rough dough. Tip out onto a floured work surface and knead for 10-15 minutes or until smooth and elastic. Put the dough in a lightly oiled bowl, cover with oiled cling film and set aside until doubled in size, about 1hr.

Once risen, knock out the air bubbles in the dough and divide into 8 equal pieces. Using your hands, roll each piece into a long rope about 60cm long. To form into pretzels, lay the rope in a U-shape with the curve pointing towards you. Take the two ends and cross them over. Take the ends, lift them backwards and press them into the curve of the U-shape. Repeat with the remaining dough. Heat oven to 200C.

Carefully place the pretzels on a baking tray lined with parchment and lightly greased with oil. Cover lightly with oiled cling film. Set aside for about 20 minutes until puffy - not fully risen like bread dough. Fill a medium-sized saucepan with water, bring to the boil, add the baked bicarbonate of soda, then reduce the heat to a low simmer. One at a time, carefully lift the pretzels into the pan and cook for 20 seconds per side. The pretzels will rise to the surface; flip with a slotted spoon. Use the spoon to gently lift the pretzels from the pan and return them to the baking tray. Once they have all been cooked in the water, lightly brush with the egg and sprinkle with flaked sea salt.

Bake in the oven for 20-25 minutes or until a rich, dark brown. Allow to cool on the baking tray for 10 minutes, then transfer to a wire rack to cool completely. Best served on the day they are made but can be frozen for up to 1 month.

Pulla or Korvapuusti – Finnish Cinnamon Rolls

500ml lukewarm milk
2 sachets of active dry yeast
180g caster sugar
½ teaspoon salt
1 tablespoon ground cardamom
1 egg
About 1kg strong bread flour
170g butter, at room temperature

Filling:

150g soft butter
6 tablespoons caster sugar
2 tablespoons cinnamon

For the egg wash:

1 egg
Pearl sugar to sprinkle

Pre-heat the oven to 200C. Combine the yeast, 800g flour, salt, sugar and cardamom in a large bowl. Add the warm milk, egg and butter and knead until well combined. Continue to knead the dough, gradually adding the remaining flour until the dough comes cleanly away from the sides. Shape into a ball and leave to rise in a warm place until doubled in size.

Punch down the dough and divide into 2 equal portions. Roll out into 2 large rectangles. Spread half of the filling over each of the rectangles. From the long side, roll into a tight tube shape. Cut into triangles, 2cm at the short end and 5 cm at the long end. Place the cinnamon rolls onto lined baking sheets and press each point tightly into the centre with your index finger. Cover and leave to rise again for about 30 minutes.

Lightly whisk the egg and egg wash the rolls. Sprinkle with pearl sugar. Bake the rolls until golden to dark brown in colour. They are best eaten whilst still warm from the oven but can be frozen.

Fresh Herb Fougasse

500g strong white bread flour, plus extra for dusting
10g fine salt
7g sachet instant yeast
2 tablespoons olive oil, plus extra for greasing and drizzling
350ml warm water
2 teaspoons chopped fresh rosemary, plus extra to finish
2 teaspoons chopped fresh thyme
2 teaspoons chopped fresh sage
Fine semolina, for dusting
½ teaspoon dried oregano
Sea salt flakes, crushed, to finish

Grease a large plastic container with a little olive oil. Line two large baking sheets with baking parchment or silicone paper. Put the flour, salt and yeast into the bowl of a freestanding electric mixer fitted with a dough hook. Add the olive oil and three-quarters of the water. Begin mixing on a low speed. As the dough starts to come together, add the remaining water very slowly, then mix for another 8 minutes on a medium speed. Add the rosemary, sage and thyme and mix for a minute until the herbs are evenly distributed in the dough. When ready, the dough will be very elastic and you should be able to stretch it away from the bowl.

Tip the dough into the oiled container. Cover and leave to rise until at least doubled in size – about an hour. The dough should be bouncy and shiny. Mix equal quantities of white flour and semolina together and use to heavily dust the work surface. Carefully tip out the dough. It will be quite loose and flowing, but don't worry. Divide the dough in half. Lift each piece of dough onto the prepared baking sheets and spread out into flat ovals. Using a pizza cutter make two cuts in a line down the middle of the ovals with a gap between them, stopping 2cm from each end. Then make 12 diagonal cuts in the dough, 6 either side of the central cuts, forming a leaf design, then stretch the dough out slightly to emphasise the holes.

Place the baking sheets inside large plastic bags and leave to prove in a warm place for 20 minutes. Preheat the oven to 220C. Drizzle over the oil, sprinkle over the oregano and bake for 15–20 minutes, or until the fougasse sounds hollow when tapped on the base. Remove from the oven and while still hot, brush with more olive oil and sprinkle with the sea salt.