

Brazilian Cheese Buns (Pão de Queijo)



*1 1/2 cups tapioca starch
1/4 cup cream
1/4 cup water
1 tbsp butter
1/2 tsp salt
1 egg, beaten
1/2 cup grated hard cheese: parmesan,
sharp cheddar, etc.*

A quick note about tapioca starch: it is often labeled as cassava or yuca starch, or tapioca flour, and they're all the same thing.

In a saucepan, combine the cream, water, butter, and salt and bring to a simmer on med/low heat. You want to get it to the point that it's starting to bubble, but not boiling. In a large bowl, add the tapioca starch. When the cream/water mixture is heated, add it to the starch and stir it all together. It will start to clump together, which is fine. Let the mixture cool for five minutes. As it cools, preheat your oven to 400 degrees.

Add the beaten egg to the mixture, and knead together with your hands. It'll get pretty sticky, don't worry about it – the cheese will fix everything in the next step.

Just as I promised, add the cheese and knead, and you should have a pretty sweet dough going at this point.

Roll the dough into 1" balls. You should be able to make 15-20 magic cheese balls. Put them on a baking sheet, then throw them in the oven for 15-20 minutes, until golden brown.

That's it! Let them cool a bit and go to town. They can keep for a few days in a container, and you can nuke them for a few seconds and they'll be nice and soft all over again. You can also freeze the balls prior to baking, to have a pre-made snack that can be ready after 20-25 mins of baking.

Feel free to experiment with the types of cheese, just be sure to use hard cheeses. Also, consider adding spices to pair it with whatever meal your making – maybe a little basil or oregano to go with spaghetti (squash) and meatballs?