

FABULOUS FERMENTS

UTTAPAM

SOUTH INDIAN RICE PANCAKE WITH COCONUT CHUTNEY

BLINI

SOURDOUGH DROP SCONES WITH AUBERGINE CAVIAR & PICKLED BEETROOT

PÃO DE QUEIJO

BRAZILIAN CHEESE BALLS WITH MOJO ROJO

FARINATA

CHICKPEA PANCAKE WITH BRAZED LEEKS AND ROCKET PESTO

BAU

STEAMED BUNS WITH HOISIN TOFU & SESAME KALE



Dosa – Uttapam - Idli

This is an all-purpose batter made from fermented rice and lentils suitable for making Dosa, Uttapam and Idli. One finds variations of this batter throughout India, but it originates from South India. A Dosa is a crispy wafer like pancake often served stuffed with spiced potatoes and accompanied by a coconut chutney and sambar. An Uttapam is a thicker spongier version of a Dosa, often topped with sliced onions and tomatoes. Idli are steamed dumplings made from the same batter. These dishes are gluten free and the combination of rice and lentils make them a good source of protein and complex carbohydrate.

3 cups long grain rice

1 cup skinless split urad dal (skinless black lentils)

½ tsp fenugreek seeds

Salt to taste

1. Soak the rice and urad & fenugreek separately overnight or for 6 – 8 hours
2. Once soaked, drain the water from both and start by blending the dal and fenugreek in a food processor to a semi - smooth paste, adding a little water at a time until you have a thick paste.
3. Separately blend the rice in the same way
4. When both mixtures are ground, place both into a large mixing bowl and add enough water to form a batter. The consistency of the batter should be like thick yoghurt
5. Put the batter aside in a warm (30°C), dark place, covered with a cloth, for 8 - 12 hours to ferment. When it has developed some bubbles and a slightly sour smell, it is ready to use. Add salt to taste and thin down with water to a workable consistency

Idli: You want your batter quite stiff but pourable, like double cream. Idli are usually steamed in special steamers with round or oval moulds into which one spoons the batter before steaming. If you don't have an Idli mould and steamer then oil a conventional steamer and spoon 2 cm of the batter onto the steamer. Smooth down and steam for 10 minutes. Cut up into diamond shapes before serving.

Uttapam: You want your batter looser than for Idli, somewhere between double and single cream. Heat a non-stick large frying pan over a medium heat. Oil this well and ladle or pour about 4 tbsp of batter into the centre of the pan. Using the back of the spoon, smooth this out to cover 2/3rds of the pan. Top this with sliced onions, chopped tomatoes, chopped green chilli and chopped coriander. Pour over a little more oil and cook for about 2 minutes or until golden underneath. Flip over and cook for a further minute on the other side.

Dosa: Thin out the batter to the consistency of single cream. Heat a large, flat non-stick pan to a medium heat and brush with a light coating of oil. Pour about 75ml of batter or 2/3rds of a soup ladle, gently into the centre of the pan. Using the rounded end of the ladle spread the batter in a sweeping, circular motion to form a pancake of 25 cm diameter. Drizzle extra oil all over the surface of the dosa and also around its edges and turn up the heat a bit. Little holes will appear as the batter cooks. When the upper surface is no longer wet or runny, the Dosa is done. Cool the pan a little before starting the next one.

Coconut Chutney

1 tbsp sunflower or coconut oil

4 tbsp freshly grated coconut or 2 tbsp desiccated coconut soaked in warm water

2 small green chillies, finely chopped

1 tsp mustard seeds and 6 fresh curry leaves or 12 dried ones

Method: Heat the oil in a pan over a medium heat and add the mustard seeds followed shortly by the curry leaves, the chilli and then the coconut. Cook gently for a few minutes and season to taste.



Buckwheat blinis

Blinis are an Eastern European crumpet or drop scone. They are traditionally made from the locally available flour, which may be milled from wheat, rye, barley or buckwheat. Buckwheat is gluten free, high in protein and a good source of complex carbohydrates. You can use baker's yeast, sourdough or bicarbonate of soda to leaven blinis. I often use bicarbonate of soda because it is the quickest and makes very light blinis. The same mixture can be used for crepes or galletes simply add more liquid until the mixture pours like single cream. This batter keeps well if refrigerated and cooked blinis can be frozen. Makes 16 large blinis

300g buckwheat flour

325ml dairy or rice milk

2 eggs, lightly beaten

2 tsp bicarbonate of soda Or 3g of instant yeast Or 30g of refreshed rye, wheat or a gluten free starter (rice, teff and buckwheat flours all make lively starters)

1 tbsp brown sugar (not essential, but it offsets the slight bitterness of the buckwheat)

3g/1 shy teaspoon salt

sunflower oil

For instant blini - beat the milk and eggs together in a large poring jug and then gradually stir in the flour, salt, sugar and bicarbonate of soda to make a smooth batter with the consistency of double cream. If the batter feels too thick add some more milk, likewise if it seems too wet add more flour Allow mixture to stand for approximately 5 minutes before using. You may need to add a little more liquid as the batter does thicken.

For yeasted blini – separate the eggs. Beat the milk and egg yolks together in a large poring jug and then gradually stir in the flour, salt, and yeast – allow this to ferment for 2 - 3 hours. Whip the egg whites into stiff peaks and gently fold them into the batter and use as needed.

For sourdough blini – separate the eggs. Beat together the milk, egg yolk, flour, sugar and your refreshed sourdough starter – allow this to ferment in a warm place for 8 – 12 hours or until it is bubbly and active. Gently stir in the salt and whip the egg whites into stiff peaks and gently fold them into the batter and use as needed.

To cook - Heat a non-stick or heavy skillet pan over a medium heat and brush with sunflower oil. Pour about 2 tbsp of mixture per blini into the heated pan. When bubbles appear, turn the blini. Cook until golden. Remove from pan and keep warm. Repeat with remaining mixture.

Aubergine Caviar

1 large aubergine, washed and dried

4 cloves, garlic peeled & pounded to a paste with 3 tbsp olive oil and a good pinch of salt

1 tbsp each chopped coriander, parsley and dill

2 tbsp lemon juice

2 tbsp natural yogurt

Method: Heat a grill or griddle pan and cook the whole aubergine until its is soft and blackened Allow it to cool and scoop out all of the flesh. Chop this roughly and mix with the garlic, herbs, lemon and yoghurt. Season to taste.

Pão de queijo - Brazilian cheese balls

These delicious bread balls originate from Minas Gerais in central Brazil. They are made with tapioca flour, are gluten free and utterly delicious – they are not dissimilar to French Gougères which are made with choux pastry. You can experiment with added ingredients to enhance the flavour - lemon rind, spring onion or toasted sesame seeds all work well. Makes 12 – 16 balls

250ml full-fat milk
125 butter
1 tsp salt
300g tapioca flour
2 eggs
100g Parmesan cheese, grated
1 tsp mild chilli powder (optional)

1. Heat the oven to 220C/200C fan/gas 7. Grease a baking sheet with oil or butter and set aside.
2. In a medium saucepan add the milk, butter and salt and bring to a boil. Remove from heat and add the tapioca flour. Stir it vigorously and let cool a little.
3. Pour the dough into a standing mixer or use a bowl and an electric hand whisk. Beat the dough until its cool. Beat the eggs in one at a time and add in the cheese. Beat again until mixed.
4. It's a sticky dough, so use two wet tablespoons to place golf ball size blobs of dough onto the baking sheet, 5cm apart. Bake for 30 mins until crisp and golden. Remove from the oven and eat while still warm.

Mojo Rojo

Mojo is a dip or condiment originating in the Canary Islands

6 cloves garlic, peeled and worked into a paste with some salt and oil
2 red peppers, roasted with the seeds and skin removed once cooled
1 red chilli, seeds removed and then chopped
1 tsp each of salt, cumin & paprika
2 tbsp red wine vinegar
6 tbsp olive oil

Method: Blend all of the ingredients together in a food processor or using a mortar and pestle. Mojo will last for several weeks if stored in a clean receptacle with a good layer of oil on top.

Steamed buns with hoisin tofu & kale

Steamed buns are found all over Asia, but they originate in China where they are known as bau or bauzi. They are prepared either as stuffed dumplings or as buns which are split and filled after steaming. They are delicious and easy to make. This recipe is for dumpling style bau and will make 20 good size bau.

Dough

500g plain flour
250g warm water
50g sunflower oil
50g caster sugar
7g salt
5g instant yeast
3g baking powder

Mix all of the ingredients together and knead until smooth and the gluten has developed. Place in an oiled bowl, cover and ferment for 2 – 3 hours. Knock back and divide into 20 pieces each about 40g. Roll these into balls and put aside to relax for 20 – 30 minutes.

Filling

250g smoked tofu, cut into small cubes
6 spring onions
200g curly kale or cavolo nero, shredded
1 tbsp sunflower oil
3 tbsp hoisin sauce
1 tbsp soy sauce
2 tbsp clear honey
½ tsp Chinese five-spice powder
½ tsp chilli flakes
1 tsp cornflour, dissolved in 1 tbsp rice wine
1 tbsp sesame seeds, toasted

Heat the oil in a wok or large pan and fry the tofu briefly before adding the hoisin, soy, honey, spice, chilli and cornflour wine mixture. Cook this briefly then add the kale and cover. Cook for 5 minutes or until the kale is wilted then add the sesame seeds. Allow this to cool before making the buns.

To assemble and cook:

1. On a dusted surface, roll out the dough balls into disks about 7cm across. Put a disc in the palm of your hand and add 2 tsps. of the filling. Bring the sides up and pinch together at the top or crimp in a style of your choice. Repeat with the remaining dough and filling.
2. Cut circles of baking parchment and put under each bun, this is to stop them sticking to the steamer. Arrange the buns on a tray with enough space between them so that they don't touch each other.
3. Leave to rise for another 30 minutes
4. Fill the bottom of the steamer pan with water and bring to a boil. Set the steamer with the buns and their liners over the pan and cook for 10-12 mins. You will need to do this in batches. Remove and eat straightaway with lime, chill and soy dipping sauce.

Farinata

Italian style garbanzo pancake - it's delicious, fermented, high protein, vegan and gluten free. You don't need to ferment the batter, but if you do so, it makes the chickpea flour more digestible and the nutrients more available. Serves 4

150g chickpea flour
300g warm water
6 spring onions or a small leek
50ml olive oil
5g salt
Chilli flakes

1. Mix the flour and water and whisk to a smooth batter. Cover and leave in a warm place for 12 - 18 hours. You can do this in two stages which encourages the fermentation. The batter should be bubbly and have a slight cheesy aroma.
2. Preheat the oven to 200°C and line a heavy baking tray with non-stick baking paper.
3. Finely chop the onions or leek and scatter about the bottom of the tray. Dress this with half of the oil.
4. Mix the salt into the batter and whisk. Pour this over the onions or leek - it should be about 1cm thick. Pour over the remaining oil and sprinkle over a pinch of chilli flakes.
5. Bake for about 20 minutes, it should be golden and set with the texture of a well done omelette.
6. Cut into slices and serve hot.
7. If you prefer, you can also make several smaller ones in a frying pan - preheat a thick bottomed oven proof frying pan or skillet to a median heat. Brush liberally with oil and spoon in a ladle full of batter. Using the bottom of the ladle, swirl the batter round so it covers most of the pan. Sprinkle over the onions, chilli and some oil and cook till it is set. Transfer the pan to the oven and cook for a few minutes to brown the top. Serve hot

Rocket, sorrel and hazelnut pesto

This is a strong lemony, peppery pesto which lifts the flavours of simple dishes like farinata or baked polenta. It will keep for up to a week if covered in oil and refrigerated.

100g rocket
100g sorrel
50g toasted hazelnuts
4 tbsp olive oil
1 clove garlic
Salt and Pepper

1. Wash and dry the sorrel and rocket
2. Toast the hazelnuts in a dry pan or under a grill until they are a shade or two darker. Allow them to cool before using them.
3. Place all of the ingredients except the oil in a food processor and start to blend. Pour the oil in, a little at a time, until the pesto has emulsified. Add salt and pepper to taste.

