

Recipes:

3. Pagache 2024

Pagáče (Pagache) with Cheese

12 servings

Note: Sg. pagáč , pl. pagáče

Ingredients:

Leaven

¼ cup of bread flour (or all-purpose)

1 TBSP of confectioners' sugar

2 TSP of active dry yeasts

½ cup of lukewarm milk - about 90 to 100°F (preheat in a microwave)

Dough

2 ½ cups of bread flour (or all-purpose) + **Extra flour** for flouring

½ TSP of whole caraway seeds

½ TSP of salt

½ TSP of ground pepper

½ stick (4 TBSP) of very soft butter –but not melted (room temperature)

1 egg

½ cup of lukewarm milk - about 90 to 100°F (preheat in a microwave)

Filling

1 – 2 cups of shredded cheese of your choice

Brush & Sprinkle with

1 egg

Whole caraway seeds or shredded cheese

Tools

Measuring Spoons & Measuring Cups

2 Small Mixing Bowls (about 1 QT)

2 Whisks

Kitchen Mixer with Hook Attachment or Large Mixing Bowl

Plate or Plastic Wrap
Bowl Scraper or Silicone Spatula
Rolling Pin
2" Round Cookie Cutter (or glass)
Silicone Brush
2 baking sheets with parchment papers

Directions:

Already prepared:

1. Leaven:

1.1. Place into a medium mixing bowl:

¼ cup of bread flour
1 TBSP of confectioners' sugar
2 TSP of active dry yeasts
½ cup of lukewarm milk

Thoroughly stir with a whisk until fully combined (about 30 seconds).

1.2. Cover with plastic wrap or plate.

1.3. Set aside until it doubles in volume (about 15 – 30 minutes).

2. Dough:

2.1. Place into a kitchen mixer with a hook attachment:

2 ½ cups of bread flour
½ TSP of whole caraway seeds
½ TSP of salt
½ TSP of ground pepper

And shortly, hand stir with a whisk.

2.2. Add:

½ stick of very soft butter
1 egg
½ cup of lukewarm milk
Leaven from step 1

Knead at a slow speed until all ingredients are partially combined.

- 2.3. Then increase the speed to medium-high and knead until nicely combined (about 1- 2 minutes).

Note:

The final dough is slightly sticky and can partially stick to the bottom of the bowl. Use a bowl scraper to release it from the hook and the bottom of the bowl.

3. Rising the dough:

- 3.1. Remove the mixing bowl from the mixer and cover it with plastic wrap or plate.
- 3.2. Let it rise in a warm place until it has approximately doubled in size (about 1 - 2 hours).

Start here:

4. Laminate pagáče dough – Phase I

Note: Work on a lightly floured surface.

- 4.1. Using a rolling pin, roll it into a square shape (it can be partially round) until you reach the desired thickness of about 1/4 inch.
- 4.2. Evenly sprinkle shredded cheese over the entire surface of the dough.
- 4.3. Fold the dough into thirds - bring one-third over the middle third, then fold the second third over the first.
- 4.4. From the other side, fold it again into thirds the same way.
- 4.5. Cover with a kitchen towel and let it rest for about 15 minutes.

5. Laminate pagáče dough – Phase II

Note: Work on a lightly floured surface.

- 5.1. Using a rolling pin, roll it into a square shape (it can be partially round) until you reach the desired thickness of about 1/2 inch.
- 5.2. Fold the dough into thirds - bring one-third over the middle third, then fold the second third over the first.

Important:

Do not fold further in this step.

5.3. Cover with a kitchen towel and let it rest for about 15 minutes.

6. Form and proof pagáče:

Note: Work on a lightly floured surface.

6.1. Using a rolling pin, roll it into a square shape (it can be partially round) until you reach the desired thickness of about 1/2 inch.

6.2. Using a cookie cutter, cut out individual pagáče and place them directly on the baking sheet.

Tips:

- It's best to use a round cookie cutter with a diameter of about 2 inches, but you can experiment with other sizes too.
- If you don't have a round cookie cutter, use a glass, preferably with thin walls.
- After you cut all the round shapes, place the remaining unused dough on the baking sheet – it won't be as pretty as the round pagáče, but it will taste equally delicious and give you a nice snack before serving the pagáče.

6.3. Place the baking sheet aside and let the pagáče proof (rest) for about 15 minutes at room temperature.

7. Final preparation & baking:

7.1. Set oven to preheat to 350°F.

7.2. Crack one egg into the mixing bowl and then whisk thoroughly.

7.3. Brush all pagáče with the whisked egg and gently sprinkle with shredded cheese or caraway seeds.

7.4. Bake in a preheated oven until they are fully baked and turned to a nice golden color (about 10 - 15 minutes).

7.5. Remove from the oven and let fully or partially cool (yes, pagáče can also be served warm!).

Pork Cracklings & Lard

1 – 2 LB of pork rinds and **4 – 5 cups** of lard

Ingredients:

5 LB of pork back fat - skinless *

2 cups of water - adjust if needed

Pinch of Salt - adjust if needed

* Pork back fat is standard meat cut. Every hog has enough of it. In Europe, it is normally available in most stores. In the United States, it is for sale less commonly, but it is still very heavily used in meat products. It is a common ingredient for sausages, kielbasas, brats, and other meat products that are commonly eaten. Since butchers utilize this cut for their meat products, they often do not sell it by themselves. In any good butcher store, you can request this kind of cut, and they will gladly prepare it for you (it may just have to be a special order). You can also purchase this cut from some online meat seller (just write "pork back fat" to Google, confirm with enter, and then select the shopping section. Please note that sellers usually ship only in certain parts of the USA, for that reason I'm not providing you with links). Optionally, you can also obtain pork fat from other pork parts while preparing other meals. For example, Boston pork butt or back pork leg can have in packaging a thick layer of fat that people often cut off and dispose of. If you keep this fat layer and freeze it every time you prepare, eventually, you will collect enough to prepare this recipe. And it will be totally free!

Tools:

Measuring Spoons & Measuring Cups

Chef's Knife & Cutting Board

Large Stock Pot or Sauce Pot (about 8 QT or more)

Large Slotted Cooking Spoon

Strainer and paper towel

Large mixing bowl

Medium mixing bowl

Funnel

Large Pickling Jar with Lid (capacity of about 4 – 5 cups)

Directions:

1. Meat Preparation:

- 1.1. Rinse pork back fat thoroughly under cold water to remove surface bacteria.
- 1.2. Then cut into even dice (size based on your preferences; I prefer sizes about $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ ") and place them right in the large stock pot that is not on the stove yet.

Important:

- Fat is usually with minimal or no meat present on it.
- Little meat is okay (leave little parts on it without worries), but if large pieces of meat are present, remove them and use them for another project (yes, they are delicious).
- If you leave too much meat, your pork rinds will still be delicious but may be more chevy than you wish.
- Keep the size of your dice unified as much as possible for even cook, but still use smaller pieces from the side.

2. **Cooking – Part 1:**

2.1. Place stock pot with dice on the stove and set stove to medium heat.

2.2. Add:

2 cups of water

And briefly stir using a large cooking spoon.

Notes:

- Water is added just to begin the process of cooking – it will eventually evaporate.
- It will help to preheat diced pork back fat, which will then start turning into pork rinds by gradually releasing fat (pork lard).
- If you do not use water to start, it will not get properly cooked, and it will start sticking to the pot.

2.3. Bring to a simmer with occasional stirring and cook until the first part of the lard is released.

Notes:

- The first amount of the lard will be very small, and diced pork back fat will turn slightly shiny.
- Do not expect large amounts; expect just the right amount to prevent burning or sticking to the pot.
- At this stage, water should be evaporated, and the amount of the lard should be roughly like how much cooking oil you would use for stir-frying.

3. **Cooking – Part 2:**

- 3.1. Reduce temperature to medium-low and cook with occasional stirring until pork rinds release a significant amount of lard and turn to an appetizing golden color (usually between 30 minutes to 90 minutes based on the size, exact temperature, and quality of pork back fat).

Notes:

- During the whole cooking process, you will have more and more pork lard until the amount of pork lard is the majority of the content in the pot, and the diced pork back fat will start frying in it (last step of cooking).
- Eventually, pork rinds may start sticking to the bottom. Therefore, using a large cooking spoon will allow you to scrape them from the bottom of the pot.
- Do not overthink the cooking time. Pork rinds are going to reach the minimum required safe serving temperature of 145°F within less than the first 10 minutes, and after that, it is just about releasing the lard and turning it into a nice appetizing golden color. If you like a less fatty taste, just simply extend the cooking – just make sure not to burn them. And feel free to take one out and taste it when you get close to making sure it fits your flavor preference (lightly salt it before tasting).

4. **Drain the Lard:**

- 4.1. When pork rinds are cooked to your satisfaction, cover the pot with a lid and very carefully move it to a cool surface, away from the hot burner or the cooling rack next to the stove.

Important:

Minimize the movement of the pot to just the necessary distance, placing it on the closest cold surface. At this point, the oil is extremely hot, potentially reaching temperatures close to 400°F. Burns from hot oil can be very dangerous.

- 4.2. Remove the lid and, using a slotted spoon, gradually scoop all cracklings into the strainer. (Place the strainer into the mixing bowl to allow the cracklings to drip excess fat.)

Important:

- Secure the strainer with a fork or spoon on the mixing bowl to prevent it from slipping.
- Make sure not to use any plastic strainers or non-heatproof plastic utensils, as they could melt in the hot oil.

- 4.3. When all the cracklings are in the strainer, let them drip for about a minute.

- 4.4. Place rinds into a medium mixing bowl and generously salt.
- 4.5. Let the lard cool for at least one hour with the lid removed to make it safer to handle.
- 4.6. Then carefully pour lard into jars while still warm (use a metal funnel if needed).

Notes:

- Lard will turn to white and harden while fully cooled.
- It will melt again if you decide to cook with it later.

5. Serving:

5.1. Pork rinds:

- 5.1.1. Can be served hot, but most often, they are served cold.
- 5.1.2. Let it fully cool at room temperature, place it into the food container, and let it cool for a few hours (or preferably overnight) in the refrigerator.
- 5.1.3. Serve like a snack or appetizer on the bread (use lard like a spread!) or turn it into the spread (recipe here).

5.2. Pork Lard:

- 5.2.1. Cook with lard right way or let it cool when you want to use it as a spread or for later use in cooking or baking.
- 5.2.2. Let it cool fully at room temperature, cover it with a lid, and let it cool for a few hours (or preferably overnight) in the refrigerator.
- 5.2.3. Use for cooking, baking, or spreading on a slice of bread with finely chopped onion and a sprinkle of salt.

Pagáče (Pagache) with Cracklings

12 servings

Note: Sg. pagáč , pl. pagáče

Ingredients:

Leaven

¼ cup of bread flour (or all-purpose)

1 TBSP of confectioners' sugar

2 TSP of active dry yeasts

½ cup of lukewarm milk - about 90 to 100°F (preheat in a microwave)

Dough

2 ½ cups of bread flour (or all-purpose) + **Extra flour** for flouring

½ TSP of whole caraway seeds

½ TSP of salt

½ TSP of ground pepper

½ stick (4 TBSP) of very soft butter –but not melted (room temperature)

1 egg

½ cup of lukewarm milk - about 90 to 100°F (preheat in a microwave)

Filling

1 – 2 cups of pork cracklings

Brush & Sprinkle with:

1 egg

Crystals of salt

Whole caraways seeds

Tools:

Measuring Spoons & Measuring Cups

2 Small Mixing Bowls (about 1 QT)

2 Whisks

Kitchen Mixer with Hook Attachment or Large Mixing Bowl

Plate or Plastic Wrap

Bowl Scraper or Silicone Spatula

Kitchen Food Processor

Rolling Pin

2" Round Cookie Cutter (or glass)

Silicone Brush

2 baking sheets with parchment papers

Directions:

1. Leaven:

1.1. Place into a medium mixing bowl:

¼ cup of bread flour
1 TBSP of confectioners' sugar
2 TSP of active dry yeasts
½ cup of lukewarm milk

Thoroughly stir with a whisk until fully combined (about 30 seconds).

1.2. Cover with plastic wrap or plate.

1.3. Set aside until it doubles in volume (about 15 – 30 minutes).

2. Dough:

2.1. Place into a kitchen mixer with a hook attachment:

2 ½ cups of bread flour
½ TSP of whole caraway seeds
½ TSP of salt
½ TSP of ground pepper

And shortly hand stir with a whisk.

2.2. Add:

½ stick of very soft butter
1 egg
½ cup of lukewarm milk
Leaven from step 1

Knead at a slow speed until all ingredients are partially combined.

2.3. Then increase the speed to medium-high and knead until nicely combined (about 1- 2 minutes).

Note:

The final dough is slightly sticky and can partially stick to the bottom of the bowl. Use a bowl scraper to release it from the hook and the bottom of the bowl.

3. Rising the dough:

- 3.1. Remove the mixing bowl from the mixer and cover it with plastic wrap or plate.
- 3.2. Let it rise in a warm place until it has approximately doubled in size (about 1 - 2 hours).

4. Pork cracklings preparation:

- 4.1. Prepare cracklings according to the recipe or use store-bought.
- 4.2. Then let pork cracklings fully cool or remove from the refrigerator.
- 4.3. Place **1 – 2 cups** of pork cracklings into the kitchen food processor and process them into a paste.
- 4.4. Place aside for the later steps.

5. Laminate pagáče dough – Phase I

Note: Work on a lightly floured surface.

- 5.1. Using a rolling pin, roll it into a square shape (it can be partially round) until you reach the desired thickness of about 1/4 inch.
- 5.2. Spread the crackling paste evenly over the entire surface of the dough.
- 5.3. Fold the dough into thirds - bring one-third over the middle third, then fold the second third over the first.
- 5.4. From the other side, fold it again into thirds the same way.
- 5.5. Cover with a kitchen towel and let it rest for about 15 minutes.

6. Laminate pagáče dough – Phase II

Note: Work on a lightly floured surface.

- 6.1. Using a rolling pin, roll it into a square shape (it can be partially round) until you reach the desired thickness of about 1/2 inch.
- 6.2. Fold the dough into thirds - bring one-third over the middle third, then fold the second third over the first.

Important:

Do not fold further in this step.

- 6.3. Cover with a kitchen towel and let it rest for about 15 minutes.

7. Form and proof pagáče:

Note: Work on a lightly floured surface.

- 7.1. Using a rolling pin, roll it into a square shape (it can be partially round) until you reach the desired thickness of about 1/2 inch.
- 7.2. Using a cookie cutter, cut out individual pagáče and place them directly on the baking sheet.

Tips:

- It's best to use a round cookie cutter with a diameter of about 2 inches, but you can experiment with other sizes too.
 - If you don't have a round cookie cutter, use a glass, preferably with thin walls.
 - After you cut all the round shapes, place the remaining unused dough on the baking sheet – it won't be as pretty as the round pagáče, but it will taste equally delicious and give you a nice snack before serving the pagáče.
- 7.3. Place the baking sheet aside and let the pagáče proof (rest) for about 15 minutes at room temperature.

8. Final preparation & baking:

- 8.1. Set oven to preheat to 350°F.
- 8.2. Crack one egg into the mixing bowl and then whisk thoroughly.
- 8.3. Brush all pagáče with the whisked egg and gently sprinkle with salt crystals and caraway.

Important:

If you plan to not eat each pagáče soon after baking (within about 8 – 10 hours), consider skipping the salt crystals since they will eventually start melting and could soak the pagáče.

- 8.4. Bake in a preheated oven until they are fully baked and turned to a nice golden color (about 10 - 15 minutes).
- 8.5. Remove from the oven and let fully or partially cool (yes, pagáče can also be served warm!).

Disclaimer:

All steps in this recipe are just suggestions, and the author and/or publisher of this recipe is not responsible for the following:

- outcome of preparation
- any health risk related to the incorrect handling of food and/or not following USDA recommendations, such as but not limited to, following the minimum safe serving temperatures
- provide health and dietary advice to readers
- safety during preparation, including incorrect handling of equipment and the equipment's suitability for food preparation, improper cooking techniques, sourcing of ingredients, and anything related to the preparation and consumption of the products of this recipe

All readers are responsible for evaluating if the recipe and its' ingredients and steps fit with their dietary restrictions and can adjust accordingly.