

Alejandra Botero

I am an adventurer, explorer and traveller born in Bogotá, Colombia. I come from a hardworking family who taught me that life is about different experiences of how to live, things to know and who to be.

So from an early age, I started to explore and gain new experiences.

It wasn't long ago that I learnt to love cooking, but it has become this magical and powerful way for me to spread the love, to bring people together, to connect with the

community and share a culture. There is a beauty that is priceless of being able to tell people who you are, and where you come from by how you cook and sharing your essence through a dish.

Arepas is one of the most traditional dishes in my country. It is a dish that we eat at any time of the day and was always one of my favourite food. It is easy to make, filling, warm and comforting. My mother always said that when we get caught in the busy routine of

life, we easily stop creating spaces to connect with our family and friends. She always made sure she created a safe and loving environment at least once a week to check in on each other or watch a movie together so we could reconnect with one another and arepas was always a part of this familiar tradition.



Arepas, is one of those dishes that make me feel at home, that warms my heart and makes me appreciate my family. I am happy to pass on this simple and delicious recipe and I hope it brings a lot of smiles and creates beautiful valuable memories for everyone.



AREPAS with Aleja

Traditional Colombian Flatbread

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Preparation Time: 15 mins
Cooking Time: 10 mins

Vegan
Gluten Free



INGREDIENTS

¼ cup vegan butter + a little for frying
2 cups areparina (pre-cooked corn flour)
2 cups of shredded vegan cheddar
1 ½ cup of water (divided)
1 teaspoon sea salt
⅔ cup of almond milk

To serve:
Butter
Salt



METHOD

- 1) Into a mixing bowl, add the areparina flour, 1 cup of cheese and salt.
- 2) Make a well in the centre of the mixture and add the melted butter & water mixture.
Mix well.
- 3) Add the milk and continue to mix in.
- 4) Add ⅓ cup of cold water and work into a dough.
- 5) Remove the dough from the bowl, it should be smooth and easy to knead, but doesn't stick to your hands. If sticky, add a little bit of flour. If it crumbles, add some cold water.
- 6) Divide the dough into 6 balls and flatten between your palms to make a thick disc.
- 7) To the centre of each disc, add a little cheese (about ⅓ cup so you have enough for each arepa).
- 8) Fold the dough over making a pocket for the cheese and seal the edges gently. The pocket should be roughly ½ an inch thick. If the dough cracks, you may need a little water, but a little cracking is fine, just seal the edges gently with your fingers.
- 9) Once the arepas are formed, heat a large cast-iron or non-stick pan over medium-high heat. Once hot, add a little butter, then add the arepas to the pan so they don't touch each other.
- 10) Cook for 2-3 minutes or until deep golden brown (a few blackened spots are fine), you're looking to form a slightly crispy crust. Flip the arepas over and cook for another 2-3 minutes, or until the underside is also golden brown.
- 11) Remove from pan and serve immediately with butter and salt. You can also cut the arepa ¾ of the way around to make a pocket and stuff it with anything you like, such as black beans, rice, guacamole, eggs, etc.