

# BAKING WITH LICKER

BONUS RECIPES

# NORI BRIOCHE

**Buttering you up for this nori  
state of affairs.**

Brioche is the buttery, delicious bad boy of the bread world. Just look at that cultured and seductive golden-brown tan. It was one of the first yeast breads I learned to make way back when I started cooking in the dinosaur era. Born in France, brioche has a rich and tender texture due to the large amounts of butter and eggs in the dough. This is one of the most versatile breads in sweet or savory form. Try using one as your cheeseburger bun and you can thank me later.

Nori is a Japanese dried seaweed that carries a crackling texture and a distinctively robust umami flavor. You've had nori in your sushi hand rolls, but if you remember it as being slightly chewy, then it wasn't very fresh. You can taste the difference at a top-notch sushi joint, where nori is so dry and crisp that it basically melts in your mouth. We are going to make a nori powder and incorporate it into a traditional brioche dough. This will produce a buttery, slightly sweet and salty bread that is perfect on its own or as an epic sandwich bun. Once you master the base recipe, you can create incredible variations. However, I highly recommend you try this salty super-powered recipe first. I promise you won't be nori.







<b>Nori Brioche (Two 8-inch by 4-inch loaf pans)</b>	
<b>Ingredients</b>	<b>Grams</b>
Warm Water (43-46C) (110-115F)	80
Active Dry Yeast	10
All-Purpose Flour	440
Nori Powder (finely blended or chopped)	5
Sugar	10
Salt	6
Eggs	200
Butter (room temperature, softened)	225

**Simply remove the nori powder and shredded nori if you want a kickass plain brioche. This recipe was designed for balance and can be used for sweet or savory applications.**

**These baked brioches will freeze nicely for up to three months. I usually make a big batch and keep them in my freezer for french toast, burgers or just a quick snack sandwich, just in case. Pop your brioche back in the oven to refresh it and enjoy.**

### **Preheat Oven:**

### **Method:**

1. Prepare the 8-inch by 4-inch loaf pans with non-stick spray or oil, and line the bottom of the pans with a piece of parchment or wax paper.
2. Grease a large-sized bowl with non-stick spray or a little oil and set aside.
3. In a small-sized saucepan, warm the water to 43-46C (110-115F). When you reach the desired temperature, pour the warm water into a small-sized bowl and sprinkle the active dry yeast directly into it. Whisk to dissolve and let it sit for about 5 minutes until it becomes frothy/foamy.
4. In a stand mixer with the dough hook attachment, mix all the ingredients together on low speed for about 1-2 minutes. Scrape down the sides of the bowl with a spatula to ensure a uniform mixture.
5. Turn the mixer to medium-high speed for 10-12 minutes until the dough is smooth and no longer sticking to the sides of the bowl. This dough takes longer for the gluten to develop, so be patient. Remove the dough from the bowl and place it on a lightly floured surface. Use your hands to knead the dough for 1-2 minutes. Place the dough in a prepared bowl with plastic wrap or a mildly damp kitchen towel directly covering the dough.
6. Let the dough rise in a warm area of your kitchen (around 24C or 75F) until it has doubled in size. This may take 1.5 hours to 2 hours depending on the temperature of the room.
7. Remove the dough from the bowl and punch it down on a lightly floured surface. Divide the dough in two and place them in the prepared loaf pans with plastic wrap or a mildly damp kitchen towel directly covering the dough.

1. Let the dough rise again in a warm place (around 24C or 75F) for about 1.5 hours to 2 hours until they have doubled in size and look quite puffy.
2. Bake at 204C (400F) for 20 minutes, then reduce the heat to 180C (356F) for 25-30 minutes. If the loaves darken too much during baking, cover them with tinfoil. You will know the nori brioche loaves are done when they are golden-brown or if the internal temperature reads 88C (190F) on a digital thermometer.
3. Remove the brioche from the oven and either transfer to a wire rack or allow them to slightly cool on the counter.
4. Refer to the cake construction directions below.

<b>Nori Brioche Topping</b>	
<b>Ingredients</b>	<b>Grams</b>
Honey	50
Shredded Nori	25

**Spice it up and add a few grams of your favorite spice mix to the dough. Chinese five spice, shi-chimi togarashi, or even apple pie spice work beautifully.**

#### **Cake Construction:**

1. In a small-sized saucepan, warm the honey up just until it boils, then brush it on top of the brioche. Sprinkle the shredded nori right on top of the honey.







# MILLE FEUILLE

**Layer upon layer of a crispy, crunchy, old-fashioned smackdown.**

Ah yes, the venerable mille-feuille. A French icon. A true legend. And the proud bearer of one of the most badass names in pastry: “the cake of a thousand leaves.” Immensely epic, like an old Kurosawa samurai film. You can trace mille-feuilles back to 1600’s France, but some say its origins were more “ancient” than that. No matter where it came from, we know that mille-feuille has long been a global phenomenon. It’s also known as a napoleon (it wasn’t named after the French guy because “napoleon” actually refers to the city of Naples), a millefogle, or sometimes a... vanilla slice? I suppose we can’t nail every name.

There is nothing quite like smashing your fork through this delicate tower. Traditionally made with puff pastry and vanilla pastry cream, mille-feuille requires a lot of time, patience and practice. The purpose of this recipe was to achieve a top-notch replica that is easy to make while also being incredibly delicious. So, I am using caramelized phyllo dough instead, which you can easily prepare in no time. I know it is not quite the same as puff pastry, which is an out-of-body experience when done right. But when puff pastry goes wrong, it becomes a sweet Greek tragedy. This recipe is your safety net, and you can graduate to a more authentic puff pastry once you’ve mastered this version. However, you might find that these golden caramelized layers, lovingly tucked in with spectacular yuzu pastry cream and fresh berries, already provide all the satisfaction you need.

Caramelized Phyllo Dough (One pack of phyllo)	
Ingredients	Grams/ Amount
Phyllo	3 sheets
Butter (melted)	200
Icing Sugar	200

**Preheat Oven: 175C (347F)**

**Method:**

1. Place 1 sheet of phyllo on a piece of parchment paper and brush the entire sheet with melted butter.
2. Sift a thin layer of icing sugar over the entire sheet of buttered phyllo.
3. Place a second phyllo sheet on top and repeat this process. Then repeat the process again with the third sheet. Do not forget to flip over the phyllo stack and apply butter and icing to the bottom side. Place the phyllo stack in the refrigerator for 30 minutes to let the butter set.
4. When chilled, the phyllo is easier to cut if you want to cut it into squares or circles. Or, you can leave it as a full sheet and then break them into irregular shapes after baking, as I have done.
5. Place the phyllo stack in between two silicon mats or two pieces of parchment paper, then place this between two full-sized baking sheets to maintain its flatness. Bake at 175C (347F) for 10-12 minutes. Rotate the phyllo halfway through to ensure even baking. You will know the phyllo is done when it is a beautiful gold-en-brown.
6. Remove the phyllo from the oven and either transfer to a wire rack or allow the phyllo to completely cool on the baking sheet.
7. Refer to the cake construction directions below.

Yuzu Pastry Cream	
Ingredients	Grams
Heavy Cream	215
Whole Milk	215
Yuzu Juice (unsalted, unsweetened)	50
Sugar	100
Egg Yolks	120
Cornstarch	35
Butter	40

You can prepare the phyllo in advance. Brush your three layers of phyllo with butter and icing sugar as above, then put parchment paper on both sides and freeze it for up to three months. Whenever you are ready to bake, pull it out of the freezer and put it straight into the oven.



**Method:**

1. In medium-sized saucepan, bring the milk, heavy cream, yuzu juice, and half the sugar to a boil.
2. In a medium-sized bowl, whisk the remaining sugar, egg yolks, and cornstarch until it becomes a smooth paste.
3. Temper the egg yolks by whisking in the hot milk mixture in three increments. Be sure to whisk constantly to prevent curdling.
4. Return the mixture back into the saucepan. Bring it to a boil on medium heat while whisking constantly. When the mixture bubbles, remove from the heat and whisk in the butter. Use a fine sieve to strain the pastry cream into a medium-sized bowl. Cover the top of the cream with plastic so a skin doesn't form.

**Mille Feuille Construction:**

1. In a stand mixer with the whisk attachment, rigorously whisk the yuzu pastry cream until it is smooth and creamy. You can do this in a medium-sized bowl with a whisk as well.
2. Break the sheet of phyllo into irregular shapes. Personally, I like it when none of the pieces look the same.
3. Begin building your phyllo mille-feuille by layering the phyllo, yuzu pastry cream and fresh berries. Make it as high as you like!

Other Mise En Place	
Item	Grams/Amount
Strawberries (halved)	50
Blueberries (halved)	50
Blackberries (halved)	50
Raspberries (halved)	50
Icing Sugar (for decoration)	By eye

Sift some cinnamon powder, cocoa powder, spices or even dry herbs as you apply the icing sugar. It adds another dimension to your mille-feuille.

# BREAD PUDDING

**We ain't got money. But we got bread.**

Never throw out your stale bread, because bread pudding is pure genius. It began around the 11th century, when poor cooks struggled to finish all of their stale bread. A nameless savior decided to pour custard in with the bread, bake it, and consume. The rest is history. In the old days, it was known as “poor man’s pudding” due to its popularity with the financially challenged. But nowadays, you might find it under some fancy foam in a Michelin-starred joint. From such plebian origins, seldom has such culinary greatness resulted.

Everyone has stale bread in their house. You can make croutons, sure, or you can make BREAD PUDDING. I know which one I’m making. Stale bread, croissants, baguettes, or my chosen hero for this tale, brioche, are all up to the task. I find it really hard to control myself around this bread pudding. The top layer is addictive due to the pieces of brioche that stick out from the creamy, silky custard, resulting in a super-crispy and triumphant texture. The yuzu adds a perfect citrus undercurrent that amplifies every aspect of this dish. You can serve bread pudding right out of the oven or chill it until it totally sets. You can always warm it up when you want it, provided you did not eat the whole thing after you made it. I’ve never done that.





<b>Bread Pudding (One 9-inch by 13-inch baking pan)</b>	
<b>Ingredients</b>	<b>Grams</b>
Brioche, Croissants or Challah (a few days old, 2-inch rough cubes)	400
Fresh Berries (blueberries, strawberries, raspberries and blackberries, halved)	150
Eggs	300
Sugar	200
Whole Milk	438
Heavy Cream	438
Yuzu Juice (unsalted, unsweetened)	75
Salt	2

The custard is merely a starting point for you to add any flavors you want. You can also add dried fruit, chocolate chips or toasted nuts to make anyone swoon. One of my favorite variations is blending Japanese sesame paste into the custard before drenching my stale croissants. Then I add ripe bananas and chocolate chunks.

### **Preheat Oven: 160C (325F)**

#### **Method:**

1. Prepare the baking pan with non-stick spray or by applying butter to the bottom and sides of the pan. Set aside.
2. Place the stale bread and assorted berries into the baking pan.
3. In a medium-sized bowl, whisk the eggs, sugar, milk, heavy cream, yuzu juice, and salt until you have a uniform mixture. Strain the mixture with a chinois or a fine sieve to remove any impurities.
4. Pour the mixture into the baking pan until the bread is completely covered. Push the bread down so that it absorbs the liquid like a sponge. If needed, add more of the mixture to ensure the baking pan is full. Let this sit outside, covered up with plastic wrap for 1 hour.
5. Bake at 160C (325F) for 40-45 minutes. You will know your bread pudding is done when the custard is set and the top is golden-brown. If the bread pudding is browning too fast, cover it with tin foil.
6. Remove the bread pudding from the oven and either transfer to a wire rack or allow it to completely cool on the counter. Serve right away or store it in the refrigerator. This is delicious both warm and cold.

I always urge people to pair warm bread pudding with ice cream or sorbet. Any flavor of ice cream works, there are no wrong answers. That hot vs cold temperature difference in a dessert melts my head every time.