

TACO PANCAKES (WIP)

INTRODUCTION

REV. 00

So... ANYWAYS... I have watched Chef John's (Food Wishes) Chinese Scallion Pancakes once or twice (or more now). It has typically rotated through by the YouTube algorithm and every time it came up, I found it somewhat intriguing, I KNEW I could do something with it, but it wasn't until very recently that it hit me... TACO PANCAKES !!! The idea was essentially to use taco ground beef, tomatoes, and onions (and maybe some shredded cheddar) as the filling in place of the green onion. The "roux" would be made from the taco beef grease instead of the typical oil / flour.

This is still DEFINITELY a work in progress. The first time I made this, it turned out so much better than I had any right to believe it would, but I knew it needed work. What you see here is my current best thoughts on what it should be. TRY AT YOUR OWN RISK!!!

Oh... by the way, the amounts are also not worked out yet. You will have a TON of left over ground beef, tomatoes, and onions, but they are all very tasty and I am sure you won't have any problem finding something to do with them!

One final thing... This is still a WIP, but reflects my latest and greatest as to what I think will work the best. I am also doing this a kinda of a hybrid between a food experiment write up and recipe write up. As such, the pictures may diverge slightly from the text

REV. 01

This time we are going to use self-rising and shoot for 65% hydration and we are going to do flour and water in grams instead of cups. Based on my last measurements, 1 cup of King Arthur flour is 155g. King Arthur says 120g per cup for AP flour and 113 for self-rising flour. Little bit of a discrepancy there. Based on a conversion to mL, 1 cup of water is 237g. 2 ½ cups AP flour should be 388g. 65% of that is 252g. To maintain the same boiling water / room temp ratio we will split it up as 189g boiling, 63g room temp. To make "nicer" numbers, let's go with 390g flour, 190g boiling water, and 65g room temp water.

I am also backing off the shallow fry and going to a "dry" fry. Not quite ready to go the over route yet. I am also backing down on the cook temp a bit to let the interior cook a bit more before the outside browns too much

REV. 02

Had another go at this last night, hence another round of changes today. Some are tweaks, some are a little more major, such as the roux. I think I still have a few more go arounds ahead of me, but I am slowly getting closer!

On second thought... the revisions were a bit more major than I thought!

INGREDIENTS

THE DOUGH (IF YOU HAVE SELF RISING FLOUR)

<u>Qty.</u>	<u>Unit</u>	<u>Item</u>
390	g	Self-Rising Flour
1	Cup	Water for Boiling
65	g	Room Temperature Water
1	cup	Room Temperature Water (to be used as needed)
½	TSP	Morton's Kosher Salt
AR	-----	Light Olive Oil

THE DOUGH (IF YOU DON'T HAVE SELF RISING FLOUR)

<u>Qty.</u>	<u>Unit</u>	<u>Item</u>
390	g	All Purpose Flour
1	Cup	Water for Boiling
65	G	Room Temperature Water
1	cup	Room Temperature Water (to be used as needed)
1 1/8	TSP	Morton's Kosher Salt
3 3/4	TSP	Baking Powder
AR	-----	Light Olive Oil

THE FILLING – PART I

<u>Qty.</u>	<u>Unit</u>	<u>Item</u>
~1.3	Lb	80 / 20 Ground Beef
1	1 oz pack	Old El Paso Hot and Spicy Taco Seasoning
2/3	Cup	Water

THE FILLING – PART II

<u>Qty.</u>	<u>Unit</u>	<u>Item</u>
5	Medium	Roma Tomatoes
1	Medium	Sweet Onion

THE ROUX

<u>Qty.</u>	<u>Unit</u>	<u>Item</u>
1	1 oz pack	Old El Paso Hot and Spicy Taco Seasoning
6	TBSP	Bacon Fat
4	TSP	Self-Rising Flour

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

Qty.	Unit	Item
AR	-----	AP Flour
AR	-----	Sour Cream or Your Topping of Choice
AR	-----	Ghee

Flour... I like King Arthur, but any brand should do

Insert standard blurb about salt here

If your tap water is funky, use bottle or distilled water

The “smaller” packs of ground beef generally come in at around 1.3 lbs at the grocery stores I usually frequent

Hey! I like the Old El Paso stuff! One of these days, however, I might take a shot at making my own seasoning

Topping of choice... I think Sour Cream works really well for this, but use whatever you like! Taco sauce, salsa, cheese sauce, etc., etc.

Don't have bacon fat? Try ghee?

Don't have ghee? LVO should do in a pinch

SPECIAL TOOLS

- Stainless steel chop sticks
- Food Saver (or similar vacuum sealer)
- Vacuum seal bags or bag rolls
- Vacuum seal bag holder [vii]

PREPARATION – DAY BEFORE

THE DOUGH

- 1) Put flour into a stainless steel bowl
- 2) Whisk in the salt (and baking soda if you are not using self-rising flour) until thoroughly incorporated
- 3) Measure out the room temperature water, and an additional cup of room temperature water (for the “As Required”)
- 4) Heat the “boiling water” to boiling [i]
- 5) Weigh out 190g of boiling water
- 6) Mix the boiling water into the flour a little bit at a time with the stainless steel chop sticks

- 7) Mix room temperature water into flour a little bit at a time
- 8) Continue to mix until a shaggy dough forms
- 9) Turn out the dough onto a lightly floured work surface
- 10) Knead the dough until it is smooth, but still a bit tacky. Maybe about 5 minutes, but your mileage may vary. If the dough seems too dry, dip your fingers in the room temperature water and sprinkle on the dough a little bit at a time as needed and as kneaded [ii]
- 11) Form the dough into a ball by continually tucking the edges up under itself towards the center until you have a smooth ball
- 12) Apply a very light coating of LVO then wrap with plastic wrap
- 13) Let the dough rest in the fridge overnight

THE FILLING – PART I

- 1) Heat a 10-12 inch pot on med-hi
- 2) Add the ground beef and cook 6 – 7 minutes, breaking up the beef and stirring as it cooks. You want it fairly fine
- 3) Stir in the water and seasoning and heat to boiling
- 4) Reduce the heat to a simmer and continue to cook for an additional 3-4 minutes, stirring often
- 5) Drain the ground beef through a strainer into a 1 quart measuring cup
- 6) Put the ground beef and the juice in separate storage containers and stick in the fridge

THE FILLING – PART II

- 1) Rinse and pat dry the tomatoes
- 2) De-seed and degunk the tomatoes [iii]
 - a. Cut the tomatoes into quarters length-wise
 - b. For each tomato quarter
 - i. Slice off the very tip of each side
 - ii. Place skin side down on the cutting board
 - iii. Press the tips of each end down so that the skin side is flat against the cutting board
 - iv. Slice the seeds and gunk off the tomato meat
 - v. Scrape off any excess seeds and gunk
- 3) Finely dice (but not to the point of mush) the tomato. It should make about 2 cups
- 4) Let the tomatoes drain through a strainer into a 1 quart measuring cup
- 5) Rinse the onion and pat dry
- 6) Cut off the root and stem ends
- 7) Remove the outer paper. Remove the outer layer as well if it is rubbery
- 8) Finely dice (but not to the point of mush) the onion. It should make about 2 cups
- 9) Place the diced tomatoes and onions in separate Tupperware containers and stick in the fridge until needed the day of

PREPARATION – DAY OF

- 1) Check Sous Vide machine water and replace as required
- 2) Heat the Sous Vide machine to 195 deg. F [vi]
- 3) The morning of, measure out 6 TBSP of bacon fat and put in a 1 quart vac seal bag
- 4) Add the contents of a 1 oz pack of taco seasoning to the bag, along with the reserved juice (it should be solidish by now) from cooking the ground beef, and 4 TSP self-rising flour, and vacuum seal
- 5) Place the bag in the Sous Vide machine and heat until needed, but, at the very least, a couple of hours
- 6) About an hour or so before you are ready to start, pull the dough from the fridge and let sit out for at least one hour
- 7) Pull the tomatoes, onions, and meat from the fridge
- 8) Weigh the dough and split into 3 even portions
- 9) Form each portion into a ball by continually tucking the edges up under itself towards the center until you have a smooth ball
- 10) Lightly flour your work surface [iv]
- 11) Form each portion of dough in a shape with about the same proportions as a big Twinkie
- 12) Pull the roux from the sous vide, put in a Pyrex measuring cup, and whisk thoroughly
- 13) For each dough portion
 - a. Press down and flatten into a rectangle with your hands. Try to keep the sides as straight as possible and the thickness as even as possible
 - b. Roll the dough until is about 12 inches long or about as long as your typical run of the mill rolling pin is wide. Try to keep as rectangular a shape as possible, stretching, bunching, and hand forming where necessary.
 - c. Letter fold the dough, rotate the dough 90 deg. and roll out to about 12 inches long. Try to keep as rectangular a shape as possible, stretching, bunching, and hand forming where necessary
 - d. Letter fold the dough, rotate the dough 90 deg. and roll out to about 12 inches long. Try to keep as rectangular a shape as possible, stretching, bunching, and hand forming where necessary
 - e. Rotate the dough 90 deg. and roll out as thin as possible. Try to keep as rectangular a shape as possible, stretching, bunching, and hand forming where necessary
 - f. Whisk the taco juice roux then brush (or spoon spread) all over the up side of the dough. If the taco juice roux is starts to solidify, nuke it in the uWave as required
 - g. Evenly sprinkle the dough with ground beef, breaking up and larger chunks as you [v]
 - h. Evenly sprinkle the dough with the tomatoes, onions, and cheese [v]
 - i. Tightly roll the dough along the short axis. Pull, stretch, and scrunch as you roll to keep it as even as possible. Make sure that you do not push the filling forward as you roll; you may need to do a “lift” and roll
 - j. Squeeze and stretch the roll lightly starting from the center and proceeding outwards. The goal is both to stretch and even out the roll, but more to even it out
 - k. Coil the roll about its short axis to create a tightly packed spiral
 - l. Tuck the tail end of the roll under the spiral
- 14) Heat your cast iron pan on mediumish
- 15) Pour in enough oil to lightly coat the bottom of the pan and wipe excess with a paper towel

- 16) Place each spiral between two sheets of parchment paper, press down with your hands to flatten somewhat, then roll out to about $\frac{1}{4}$ of an inch thick with your rolling pin. Try to be careful about the filling breaking through the dough, but it is not a huge deal if it does. Keep the pancakes between the parchment paper sheets until you are ready to cook them
- 17) After you have all the pancakes rolled out you can either let them sit for a tick tock or cook them immediately
- 18) Melt ghee in the uWave
- 19) Brush each pancake with ghee (both sides) and place in the pan
- 20) Grab you pan cover [viii], squirt in a some water around, but not on, the pancake, and immediately cover the pan
- 21) Cook for 2 minutes, 30 seconds
- 22) Flip, squirt around a little more water, and put the cover back on
- 23) Repeat steps 21 and 22 until you achieve you desired level of doneness [ix]
- 24) Place the pancakes on a cooling rack in a half-sheet pan as they finish cooking and cover with a second half-sheet pan
- 25) Dollop out some Sour Cream or the topping of your choice
- 26) Plate
- 27) ENJOY!!!

CLOSING THOUGHTS

REV. 00

- The dough was VERY gluteny and springy. Need to work on this. Next time maybe all boiling water.
- Maybe use the self-rising King Arthur flour due to its lower protein content. Theoretically, this will result in a flakier pancake
- Not flouring the work surface, or keeping it VERY lightly floured, keeps the dough stretched out
- There is only enough roux for 3 pancakes, definitely not enough for all of the meat, tomatoes, and onions
- Next time flatten with hands before rolling out
- When rolling, make sure that you do not push the rolling forward as you roll. May need to lift and roll
- At some point, let's try the PASTA MACHINE (but I am not sure if it will be wide enough)
- "Shimy" pin as roll. Hand form as roll out to keep as close to a rectangle as possible
- This was WAY better than I had any reason to hope to expect
- My qualms about too much grease in the pan were well founded. I think my previous experiments with tortillas in "dry" vs "wet" pans should have warned me more than they did (or more accurately, I should have paid more attention). Basically too much oil soaks into the tortilla and makes it, well, too greasy
- I got nice browning on the outside, BUT the inner dough was still a bit "undercooked." Does that mean I should have done a lower temp? I don't know, especially in relation to oil temp. Maybe I should do an oven cook followed by a pan cook? Maybe just a low in a "dry" pan with a cover?
- Can I get more filling in vs bread? This might be "challenging". I have had passing thoughts that maybe I should "food process" it to a finer texture? I am thinking two parts ground beef to one part diced tomato to one part diced onion. I am a little worried that this will ruin the texture though
- Re-heating in a preheated 350 deg. oven for 10-15 minutes seems to work well. GREAT NEXT DAY LUNCH!!!
- Need to figure out a Roux to use with the leftover ground beef, diced tomatoes, and diced onions

REV. 01

Had another go at this last night. With mixed results, well maybe not "mixed", but it was definitely a learning experience. A few notes

- I think the dough was better this time. Still a little "springy", but not as "springy" as it was last go around
- I had an epic "fail" wrapping the first one. I think part of it may have been overstuffing it, but I think it was more due to rolling it along the long axis. You know what though? In the end it worked out! Even with the blowouts, which actually got worse after rolling it into a pancake, the end product still wound up being pretty good!

- I think the letter fold helped out somewhat with keeping the rolled out dough in a more rectangular shape. I also think a French rolling pin may help as well and will give that a try next time
- The self-rising flour wound up weighing an average of 149 g / cup over two cups
- By the way.... One of the reasons why the last round may have been dry was that some of the water boiled off during heating which, in retrospect, makes sense
- The 65% hydration dough was nice and soft. I may or may not decide to kick up the hydration a bit more
- I think making additional roux with LVO and a pack of taco seasoning was a good idea. HOWEVER, letting it sit and heat in the sauce pan, maybe not so much. It wound up being a little burned almost, probably because I did not stir it constantly. I think Sous Vide may be perfect for this. Maybe with bacon fat

NOTES

- i. The microwave is fantastic for this! Should only take a minute or two
- ii. Try not to over work the dough. It may result in a tougher, chewier end product
- iii. I think it was only fairly recently that I started paying attention to deseeding and degunking tomatoes. It really does make a difference in certain applications, such as this one
- iv. And I mean lightly. For the tougher, more elastic doughs, a less floured work surface actually holds the shape of the rolled dough better
- v. There is a fine balance here. You want as much filling as possible, but you don't want so much that it tears the dough when you roll it up. It may take a few tries to find your happy space
- vi. It takes my machine about 1 hour, 15 minutes to get to 200 deg. F
- vii. Vac seal bag holders are VERY handy, especially if you are pouring in liquid
- viii. I used one of my heat / melting domes
- ix. I wound up doing each side twice

PICTURES











































