

The Ultimate Fried Cheese Bites: Crispy, Gooey Perfection at Home

A few simple ingredients are all you need to create this masterpiece.



OVEN
365°F

TIME
2-4 min

METHOD
Air fryer

PRINT
Recipe Card

INGREDIENTS

The Cheese: 16 oz small fresh mozzarella balls (often called "ciliegine"), drained and patted very dry

For the Breeding Station: 1 cup All-Purpose Flour

2 large Eggs

1 tbsp Milk or Water

1 cup Panko Breadcrumbs

1 cup Italian-Style Breadcrumbs

1/2 cup grated Parmesan Cheese

2 tsp Garlic Powder

1 tsp Dried Oregano

1 tsp Salt

1/2 tsp Black Pepper

For Frying: Vegetable or Canola Oil, for frying (about 4-6 cups)

For Serving: Warm Marinara Sauce

Cheese: Fresh mozzarella balls are perfect for their shape and flavor. You can also use string cheese cut into 1-inch nuggets. The key is to use a low-moisture mozzarella. If your fresh mozzarella seems very wet, let it sit on paper towels for a while to dry out.

Breadcrumbs: I love using a 50/50 mix of Panko (for extra crispiness) and Italian-style breadcrumbs (for flavor). If you only have one, that's perfectly fine.

Seasoning: Feel free to adjust the seasonings in the breadcrumb mixture. A pinch of cayenne for heat

or some dried parsley for color are great additions.

Step-by-Step Instructions:

Set Up the Breading Station: You'll need three shallow dishes. Dish 1: Whisk together the flour, salt, and pepper.

Dish 2: In a separate dish, beat the eggs with the milk or water.

Dish 3: In the third dish, combine the Panko breadcrumbs, Italian breadcrumbs, Parmesan cheese, garlic powder, and oregano.

The First Coat: Working with one mozzarella ball at a time, dredge it in the flour mixture, shaking off any excess. Then, dip it into the egg wash, making sure it's fully coated. Finally, roll it in the breadcrumb mixture, pressing gently to adhere. Place the coated ball on a parchment-lined baking sheet. Repeat with all the cheese balls.

The Second Coat (Don't Skip This!): For an extra-sturdy, leak-proof crust, you're going to double-coat them. Once all the cheese balls have one coat, dip them back into the egg wash and then again into the breadcrumb mixture. This double layer is a key to success.

THE MOST IMPORTANT STEP: FREEZE! Place the baking sheet with the double-coated mozzarella bites into the freezer for at least 1-2 hours (or up to 3 months for a make-ahead appetizer). Do not skip this step! Frying from frozen is the secret to preventing the cheese from melting and leaking out before the crust has time to become golden and crispy.

Cooking Instructions:

Heat about 3 inches of oil in a heavy-bottomed pot or Dutch oven to 365°F (185°C). Use a thermometer for accuracy.

Working in small batches, carefully add the frozen mozzarella bites to the hot oil. Don't crowd the pan.

Fry for 2-4 minutes, turning occasionally, until they are deep golden brown and crispy.

Use a slotted spoon to remove them from the oil and place them on a wire rack or paper towel-lined plate to drain. Serve immediately.

Preheat your air fryer to 375°F (190°C).

Arrange the frozen mozzarella bites in a single layer in the air fryer basket. Do not overcrowd.

Spray the tops of the bites generously with cooking spray. This helps them get golden and crispy.

Air fry for 6-8 minutes, flipping them halfway through, until golden brown and crispy. Serve immediately.

Tips for Success:

Dry Your Cheese: Excess moisture is the enemy of a

crispy crust. Pat your mozzarella balls thoroughly dry before you start breading.

Double Coat for Security: The double layer of breading creates a robust wall that keeps the molten cheese inside where it belongs.

DIRECTIONS

1. **Set :** Up the Breeding Station: You'll need three shallow dishes. Dish 1: Whisk together the flour, salt, and pepper.
2. **Dish 2:** In a separate dish, beat the eggs with the milk or water.
3. **Dish 3:** In the third dish, combine the Panko breadcrumbs, Italian breadcrumbs, Parmesan cheese, garlic powder, and oregano.
4. **The :** First Coat: Working with one mozzarella ball at a time, dredge it in the flour mixture, shaking off any excess. Then, dip it into the egg wash, making sure it's fully coated. Finally, roll it in the breadcrumb mixture, pressing gently to adhere. Place the coated ball on a parchment-lined baking sheet. Repeat with all the cheese balls.
5. **The :** Second Coat (Don't Skip This!): For an extra-sturdy, leak-proof crust, you're going to double-coat them. Once all the cheese balls have one coat, dip them back into the egg wash and then again into the breadcrumb mixture. This double layer is a key to success.
6. **THE MOST IMPORTANT STEP: FREEZE!** Place the baking sheet with the double-coated mozzarella bites into the freezer for at least 1-2 hours (or up to 3 months for a make-ahead appetizer). Do not skip this step! Frying from frozen is the secret to preventing the cheese from melting and leaking out before the crust has time to become golden and crispy.
7. **Cooking Instructions: Method 1: Deep-Frying (The Classic)**
8. Heat about 3 inches of oil in a heavy-bottomed pot or

Dutch oven to 365°F (185°C). Use a thermometer for accuracy.

9. Working in small batches, carefully add the frozen mozzarella bites to the hot oil. Don't crowd the pan.
10. Fry for 2-4 minutes, turning occasionally, until they are deep golden brown and crispy.
11. Use a slotted spoon to remove them from the oil and place them on a wire rack or paper towel-lined plate to drain. Serve immediately.
12. Method 2: Air-Frying (The Lighter Alternative)
13. Preheat your air fryer to 375°F (190°C).
14. Arrange the frozen mozzarella bites in a single layer in the air fryer basket. Do not overcrowd.
15. Spray the tops of the bites generously with cooking spray. This helps them get golden and crispy.
16. Air fry for 6-8 minutes, flipping them halfway through, until golden brown and crispy. Serve immediately.
17. Tips for Success: Dry Your Cheese: Excess moisture is the enemy of a crispy crust. Pat your mozzarella balls thoroughly dry before you start breading.
18. Double : Coat for Security: The double layer of breading creates a robust wall that keeps the molten cheese inside where it belongs.
19. Freeze : Solid: A minimum of one hour in the freezer is non-negotiable. Two hours is even better. This ensures the outside cooks faster than the inside melts.
20. Serving Suggestions: These golden nuggets of joy are practically begging to be dipped. A side of warm marinara sauce is the classic, non-negotiable pairing. But if you're building an epic appetizer spread for a party, think bigger! Imagine dipping these into a bowl of warm, savory Beer Cheese Dip or the incredibly delicious dip from How I Turned a Classic Sandwich Into the Ultimate Cheesy Hot Dip.
21. Storage and Leftover Tips: Make-Ahead: The best way to store these is in their pre-cooked state. Follow all steps up to the freezing, then transfer the frozen, breaded bites to a freezer-safe bag. They can be cooked directly from frozen whenever a craving strikes.
22. Reheating: Leftovers are rare, but if you have them, reheat them in an air fryer or a 375°F oven for 5-7 minutes to bring back the crispiness. Avoid the microwave.
23. More Recipes You Will Love: If you're planning a party and need more can't-miss appetizer ideas, these are guaranteed hits:
24. For the ultimate cheesy pull, this : Crockpot Nacho Dip is legendary.
25. For another fantastic party food hack, you have to try these Totchos (Tater Tot Nachos).

SWAPS & NOTES

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The key is to use a low-moisture mozzarella.

If your fresh mozzarella seems very wet, let it sit on paper towels for a while to dry out.

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

Dry Your Cheese: Excess moisture is the enemy of a crispy crust.

Pat your mozzarella balls thoroughly dry before you start breading.

Double Coat for Security: The double layer of breading creates a robust wall that keeps the molten cheese inside where it belongs.

Freeze Solid: A minimum of one hour in the freezer is non-negotiable.

More recipes: [ChefManiac.com](https://chefmaniac.com)

Original recipe: <https://chefmaniac.com/the-ultimate-fried-cheese-bites-crispy-goey-perfection-at-home/>