



BRAZILIAN 'FRENCH BREAD'

Pão Francês, or “French bread,” is the most popular bread in Brazil. But no Brazilian consumer would expect his baker to sell him a large loaf or a traditional French baguette if he asks for Pão Francês. Instead, he will find himself with light-colored wheat rolls that only have a French-sounding name for historical reasons.

The misleading name “French Bread” is thought to have originated in the early 19th century, when Brazil gained its independence and the upper classes took pleasure in visiting far-off destinations in Europe, especially France. Upon their return, the travelers gave their bakers rapturous descriptions of the delicious bread they had enjoyed in Paris. The loaves, common in France at that time, were short and cylindrical, with a firm crumb and a golden-brown crust – forerunners of the baguette that did not acquire its elongated shape until the 20th century.

So following these descriptions, Brazilian bakers tried to imitate this European specialty – an experiment that was not entirely successful. “Brazilian French Bread” is quite different from the European original that inspired it. The dough sometimes even contains fat and sugar.

NAME VARIES BY REGION

The Brazilian bakers showed their ingenuity in respect to the name as well as the recipe – other terms for Pão Francês include “Pãozinho” (roll) and “Pão de Sal” (salt bread). It is known as “Pão Careca” (bare bread) in the state of Para, “Pão Jacó” (Jacob’s bread) in the state of Sergipe, “Cacatinho” (stick bread) in the Rio Grande do Sul, and in the town of Ribeirão Preto it is called a “Filãozinho,” meaning a queue – an allusion to the fact that the rolls stick together in rows resembling a queue.

Pao Frances, also known as ‘French bread,’ is the most popular bread in Brazil. Photo courtesy of Mühlenchemie.

by Luciano Pereira, Irair Ferreira and Martina Mollenhauer

Pão Francês is bread widely eaten in Brazil that has a historical connection to France

WHEAT COMPETES WITH MAIZE AND CASSAVA

Generally speaking, wheat products do not have the same significance in Brazil as in many other countries. That mainly has to do with local eating habits. In Brazil it is common to eat a substantial, hot meal at midday and again in the evening, mostly with meat, beans and vegetables. Light snacks such as sandwiches, toast slices or savory, filled rolls tend to be an exception. Products made from maize and cassava flour are popular, too.

MARKET DOMINATED BY ARTISAN PRODUCTION

The annual per capita consumption of “French Bread” is about 35 kg, most of which comes from artisan bakeries. According to the market intelligence service, “Euromonitor International,” 84% of all baked goods were produced by artisan bakeries in 2014.

Although there is a growing trend toward packaged, industrially-produced foods, Brazilians still stick to their traditions when it comes to bread and similar products.

STANDARD INSTEAD OF PREMIUM PRODUCTS

At present, most Brazilian consumers are satisfied with inexpensive, standard bakery products; premium goods and specialties are still a niche market. Nevertheless, “Euromonitor International” is expecting a change in buying behavior as a

A typical recipe for Pão Francês

Ingredients	Percentage (%)	Parts
Wheat flour	60.6	100.0
Water, approx.	36.4	60.1
Salt	1.2	2.0
Yeast	1.2	2.0
Dough conditioner	0.6	1.0
Total	100.0	165.1

growing middle class and higher incomes will lead to a considerable increase in quality awareness in the bakery segment as elsewhere.

Because of this, the baking industry will have to adjust to greater challenges in respect of the use of raw materials, production equipment and the qualifications of its employees. In the case of Pão Francês, attention should be given to excellent, high-class quality – for this product is the most important advertisement for any bakery.

The following is a list of the most common mistakes made in production, and how to avoid them:

Problem: Low bread volume

Possible causes:

- Fermentation time too short
- Too little yeast
- Unsuitable flour with too little enzymatic activity

Solutions:

- Prolong the fermentation time of the dough
- Use more yeast
- Use suitable flour
- Increase or adjust flour treatment (Alphamalt FBP)

Problem: inadequate shred

Possible causes:

- Too little hemicellulase
- Fermentation time too long
- Dough too warm
- Flour too weak

Solutions:

- Add more hemicellulase to the flour
- Shorten the fermentation time
- Use cold water
- Use more oxidizing agent

Generally speaking, wheat products do not have the same significance in Brazil as in many other countries.

- Use more steam in the oven
- Increase humidity in the fermentation chamber

Problem: Pale crust (white)

Possible causes:

- Too little enzymatic activity
- Fermentation chamber too dry
- Fermentation time too long
- Oven temperature too low
- Baking time too short

Solutions:

- Add more alpha-amylase to the flour (Alphamalt VC 5000)
- Increase humidity in the fermentation chamber
- Reduce the fermentation time
- Set the oven to a higher temperature
- Prolong the baking time

Problem: Dark crust, soft crumb

Possible causes:

- Enzymatic activity too high
- Oven too hot
- Short baking time

Solutions:

- Use wheat flour with lower enzymatic activity; add less alpha-amylase (Alphamalt VC 5000) to the flour
- Set the oven to a lower temperature
- Prolong the baking time

Problem: Holes in the crumb

Possible causes:

- Flour too weak
- Doughs too warm
- Fermentation chamber too warm
- Too much yeast
- Mixing and resting times too long
- Too much oil or fat in the doughs

Solutions:

- Use stronger flour; adjust flour treatment (use suitable Alphamalt FBP to go with Mulgaprime 16 / Mulgaprime SSL/Alphamalt Gloxy/ Alphamalt EFX Swift)
- Use cold water

- Set a lower temperature in the fermentation chamber
- Use less yeast
- Shorten processing times
- Remove any oils/fats from the table and the cutter, or reduce the quantity

Problem: Too little crispness

Possible causes:

- Dough too firm
- Flour too weak
- Baking temperature too low
- Doughs too dry and bucky
- Too little enzymatic activity

Solutions:

- Increase the flour treatment (Alphamalt FBP, Mulgaprime 16, Mulgaprime SSL)
- Use stronger flour
- Set the oven to a higher temperature
- Increase the amount of liquid in the recipe
- Adjust the enzymatic activity (Alphamalt FBP)

Problem: Blistered crust

Possible causes:

- Flour too weak
- Incorrect machine setting
- Fermentation time too long
- Doughs too soft
- Fermentation chamber too warm

Solutions:

- Use stronger flour; use suitable Alphamalt FBP
- Increase the pressure of the dough molding machine
- Shorten the fermentation time
- Reduce the amount of liquid in the recipe
- Reduce the temperature in the fermentation chamber 

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