



Kitchen Cheat Sheet: Homemade Kolaches

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Tips and Extras

- Bread flour isn't necessary, all purpose flour will do. Keep in mind that you'll get a softer, fluffier result with the bread flour, though.
- Make sure all ingredients are at room temperature unless otherwise directed in the recipe.
- Use an insta-read thermometer to ensure your liquids aren't too hot or too cold. 110F is the magic temp.
- You can let the dough rise overnight in the refrigerator if you want to.
- Don't put too much flour on your work surface. Using too much flour or overworking the dough will make them tough.
- Homemade kolache are best eaten the same day they are made or frozen.
- You can use all kinds of fillings! Poppy seed filling, lemon filling, or walnut filling are all good.

Storage

Texas kolaches are best eaten fresh – as soon as possible after they are made and definitely the day they are made. If you do hold them until the next day cover tightly and refrigerate.

You can put them in an airtight container and freeze them for longer storage of up to 3 months.

FAQs

What is a Texas Kolache?

Kolache are Czech pastries made of a soft, sweet yeast dough that's filled with a variety of sweet fillings like poppy seed, fruit, or cheese. Klobasnek, also called kolaches around here, are traditionally savory and filled with sausage or other meat.

Can you freeze kolache?

Yes you can! Wrap them tightly in plastic wrap, place them in a freezer container and freeze for up to three months.

What are sausage kolaches called?

Technically, the sweet fruit-filled ones are “kolaches” and the sausage-filled ones are “klobasnek.” But in Texas, we call all of them kolaches because nobody’s got time to argue pastry semantics at 6 a.m.

Why are kolaches so popular in Texas?

Czech immigrants settled in Central Texas in the late 1800s and brought their food traditions with them. Fast-forward a century and now kolaches are as Texan as brisket, big hair, and Dr Pepper.

A little backstory

Texas's Czech Community

Most people don't think of an Eastern European community when they think of Texas. They picture cowboys, and rich oil men with boots and big hats. You may even imagine someone like JR Ewing of the old show, Dallas.

It may surprise you that we have a huge Czech community here in Central Texas. In fact, thanks to a huge influx of Czech immigrants in the late 1800s it's had a lot of influence on what we eat and drink.

We have huge Oktoberfest celebrations complete with polkas and some of our good Texas beer.

Most of all we have kolaches... and I'll bet there's a different kolache recipe for every family with half a drop of Eastern European blood running through their veins.

To the uninitiated a kolache is nothing but a sweet roll. Once you've bitten into the pillowy, sweet softness of a good kolache you know the truth. It's not a sweet roll at all, it's a little bite of heaven.

West, Texas not west Texas

About halfway between Dallas and Austin on I-35 is a small town named West.

Yep, we have west Texas as well as West, Texas.

Anyway, West is known for it's Czech bakeries and especially kolache. Those kolaches have so many different fillings that it takes longer to decide what kind to get than it does to eat it.

How an old cookbook was the answer to my kolache problems

The hardest thing about making these is to get the rich dough just right. It is super soft and for years I was frustrated because that airy, pillowy interior eluded me.

One day I picked up an old cookbook in a bookstore and the kolache recipe called for a hot oven.

Back in the wood burning stove days they didn't have temperature controls.

The instructions called for a cool oven, or a hot oven or whatever. Old recipes can be confusing unless you happen to know things like a hot oven is 400F to 425F.

Most call for the homemade kolache recipe to be baked in a 375F oven.

Y'all, the first time I nervously put kolache dough in the 425F oven I worried that it would burn. I watched those kolaches through the door and when they were golden I checked the interior with my insta-read thermometer. 180 degrees which is exactly the temperature the interior of bread products should be when they're done. It only took 10 minutes!

The previous owner of the cookbook liked to make notes. She also wrote on the edge of the recipe "whip the dough to make it light". So the second time I made these kolaches I kneaded the dough on high speed for a minute at the end of the kneading time. Worked like a charm!