Bread & baking / Georgia

Adjarian Khachapuri

Georgia's boat-shaped cheese bread from Adjara — a yeasted dough folded into an oval vessel and filled with a molten mixture of suluguni and imeruli cheese, then baked until the crust browns and a raw egg and pat of butter are dropped into the bubbling center at the table.

Time 130 min **Servings** 4

What you'll need.

- ☐ 100 % All-purpose flour (plain flour)
- ☐ 55 % Warm water (35–38°C)
- ☐ 10 % Warm whole milk
- ☐ 1.5 % Instant yeast
- ☐ 2 % Fine sea salt
- ☐ 2 % Sugar
- ☐ 4 % Neutral oil or melted unsalted butter
- ☐ 250 g Suluguni cheese (or low-moisture mozzarella), grated
- ☐ 150 g Imeruli or feta cheese, crumbled
- ☐ 2 whole Eggs — 1 per khachapuri for the center, plus 1 for egg wash
- ☐ 30 g Unsalted butter, cold, cut into small cubes

Let's make it.

01 Combine flour, yeast, salt, and sugar in a large bowl and stir to mix. Add the warm water, warm milk, and oil. Mix until a shaggy dough forms, then turn out onto a lightly floured surface. Knead firmly for 8–10 minutes until the dough is smooth, elastic, and springs back when poked. Khachapuri dough is enriched and moderately hydrated — it should feel soft, slightly tacky, but not sticky, and should window-pane finely. Form into a ball, place in a lightly oiled bowl, cover with a damp cloth or plastic wrap, and leave at room temperature for 1 hour or until doubled in size.

02 While the dough proofs, combine the grated suluguni and crumbled imeruli (or feta) in a bowl. Toss together with your hands, breaking up any large feta clumps so the two cheeses are evenly distributed. The filling should look like a loose mixture of stringy melting cheese and crumbled salty cheese. Taste: it should be boldly salty and milky. If using feta in place of imeruli, taste before adding any extra salt — feta is often saltier than imeruli. If the cheeses feel very dry, stir in 1–2 tablespoons of water or milk to help them bind into a cohesive filling once melted.

03 Preheat the oven to 230°C (450°F) with a heavy baking sheet or baking stone inside. Punch down the proofed dough and divide into two equal pieces. On a lightly floured surface, roll each piece into an oval about 30 cm x 18 cm. Spread half the cheese filling across the center of each oval, leaving a 4 cm border around the edge. Roll the long sides of each oval tightly inward over the cheese, creating two raised walls. Pinch and twist each short end firmly into a point to form the prow and stern of the boat — the pinched ends hold the walls together during baking. The boat should hold its shape when lifted. The cheese will be almost fully enclosed, peeking through a narrow gap at the top center.

04 Slide the parchment with the shaped boats onto the preheated baking sheet in the oven. Bake at 230°C (450°F) for 12–15 minutes until the dough walls are deeply golden-brown with some charred spots at the edges and the cheese is bubbling and gooey across the top. Remove from the oven. Working quickly, use a spoon to gently press a small well in the center of the bubbling cheese in each boat. Crack one egg carefully into each well — the yolk should sit visibly, the white spreading slightly into the molten cheese. Return to the oven for exactly 3 minutes: the white should be just set at the edges while the yolk remains completely liquid and runny. Remove and immediately add cubes of cold butter over the hot cheese.

05 At the table, stir the runny egg yolk and melting butter vigorously into the molten cheese center, swirling with a fork until everything is incorporated into a rich, glossy, scrambled-looking sauce. Tear pieces of the crust rim and dip and drag them through the cheese mixture — this is the correct and only way to eat Adjarian khachapuri. The outer bread acts as an edible spoon. Eat immediately while the cheese is still flowing. No cutlery required.

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Servings are an estimate; check quantities in the source recipe.
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