



Roti Chanai

Fluffy, flaky roti chanai (or roti canai) is popular in India, Malaysia and Singapore, where it's an essential accompaniment to many curries. In fact it's ideal for soaking up any sauces. My friend Simon Goh, founder of the Chinta Malaysian restaurants, has been making them for over 30 years and he taught me the secrets to roti making.

Makes 2 pieces



INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup plain (all-purpose) flour, plus extra for dusting (150g/5½oz)
- Pinch salt flakes, crushed
- Pinch sugar
- 2 tablespoons milk (40ml)
- 1 tablespoon water
- Butter, for greasing
- Vegetable oil, for greasing

METHOD

1. Combine flour, salt and sugar in a large mixing bowl and make a well in the centre.
2. Combine milk and water and gradually pour it into the well, working it into the flour with your hands to form a stiff dough. If it's too dry, add a little more water a teaspoon at a time.
3. Knead in the bowl for about 5 minutes, until the dough leaves the sides of the bowl and is soft, smooth and elastic; "like Play-Doh", Simon says.
4. Cover with plastic wrap and set aside in a warm place for at least 2 hours, or refrigerate overnight then remove it from fridge at least 30 minutes before shaping to allow it to return to room temperature.
5. Divide dough into 2 pieces.
6. Rub a little butter in the palms of your hands to melt it then pick up each ball and rub it to seal it with the butter; leaving just a little piece of butter on the outside of it if you like.
7. Place them on plate and set aside for 2–3 hours (or cover and refrigerate overnight).
8. Rub a little oil onto a clean, dry worksurface (marble is ideal) and oil your hands as well.
9. Place a ball of dough in the centre and flatten it with your hands, pressing and pushing until it is a fine sheet, roughly rectangular and about the size of a large plate.
10. To get it really thin, pick up the sheet at the edge and flop it back onto the bench a few times; this takes a bit of practice. Keep gently stretching until the dough is translucent; it will look a bit messy at this stage and possibly even tear a little, that's OK.
11. Sprinkle with a few drops of oil, fold each side in to form a neat square (see diagram), then fold each corner in to form an envelope shape (see diagram).
12. Heat a well-seasoned flat grill plate or large heavy-based pan until hot.
13. Working 1 at a time, place roti on the plate, folded side up, and fry for a minute or 2, until golden. Then turn and fry the other side for a further minute or 2, until golden.
14. Remove from heat and quickly crush between your hands to fluff it up. Serve hot.