

COLORED *BEIJUS* - prepared with fruits and vegetables

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Beijus or *tapiocas*, as they are known in Brazil, are delicacies produced from cassava starch, gum or sour starch, and with the possibility of the addition of the dough from this same root, all of which are largely appreciated in the Northeastern region of the country. There are two main varieties: crispy griddle-roasted *beijus* without fillings, or filled with coconut and sugar, called *beijus de cambraia* or in strips; or soft, folded and consumed with assorted fillings, denominated soft *beijus* or stuffed *tapioca*.

The ingredients needed for the production of traditional *beijus* or *tapiocas* are water (one part), cassava starch, gum or sour starch (two parts in weight) and a pinch of salt. The water is mixed into the starch to homogenize the dough, all the while checking for the right point of moisture to allow it to be sieved and turned into a thinner dough. The product is then prepared on a hot griddle or on a (previously heated) frying pan.

Traditionally white, *beijus* are acquiring new colours, smells, flavours and nutrients when water is substituted by fruit pulp or vegetable extracts.

Tasting evaluations demonstrated consumers' preference in the *Recôncavo da Bahia* region, especially in the towns of Cruz das Almas and Santo Antônio de Jesus, for *beijus* flavoured with beets, onion, pineapple, guava and passion fruit. Other observations refer to the increase in sales of producers and growing interest from municipal governments in including these snacks in school meals. Gum biscuits, cookies and other products are also sold by the producers.

Figure 1. Beiju producer from the Cadete Community – Cruz das Almas, BA

Figure 2. Beijus on sale at the municipal market in Cruz das Almas, BA

Embrapa Mandioca e Fruticultura regularly hosts training events for technicians, association producers and rural communities at the Cassava Technology Centre (*Centro de Tecnologia de Mandioca – CTM*), located in Cruz das Almas, BA. It also improves equipment to increase the efficiency in the production of *beijus* and to improve the hygienic conditions of cassava products and derivatives both in Brazil and in other countries in which cassava is of social and economic importance.

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