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What Are Brigadeiros & Why Do Brazilians Love Them So Much?

The first time you see brigadeiros you might think they are chocolate truffles, but they are actually more similar to fudge. But according to Renata Stoica, founder of [tiny B Chocolate](#), they are so much more, “Brigadeiros are Brazil’s favorite sweet treat. They are traditionally made from sweetened condensed milk, cocoa powder, and butter, and then rolled into bite-sized balls and coated in a variety of toppings like nuts, sprinkles, and coconut.” She goes on to explain, “The result is a creamy, intense treat that’s full of flavor and texture. Almost like a truffle, just a little fudgier and without a hard shell. These days you can find brigadeiros in a wide variety of flavors from the classics like milk chocolate and coconut to new edgier flavors like mimosa and lemon pie.” You’ll also find that tiny B is taking the base recipe far beyond one simple confection.



HISTORY OF BRIGADEIROS

Invented in Brazil, the history of the brigadeiro is somewhat murky. It is said to be named for a presidential candidate and Air Force Brigadier, Eduardo Gomes and sold as a fundraiser for his campaign by women who had recently won the right to vote.

While “the Brigadeiro” Gomes didn’t win the election, the candy became incredibly popular and can be found in the US, often made by Brazilians like Stoica.

A BRAZILIAN CONFECTION



Stoica explains their popularity saying that Brazilians love brigadeiros because they’re sweet, beautiful, and easy to eat wherever you are. She goes on to explain, “They’re also an essential addition to any celebration or party. In fact, I think most Brazilians would agree a party isn’t a party without brigadeiros!” A staple at birthday parties, they are easy to make but also available commercially.

For Stoica, creating confections dates back to childhood. She started making chocolate with her mother and sisters when she was just 10 years old. Says Stoica, “We made chocolate to sell to our local community in Brazil and would spend hours in the kitchen making and packaging our chocolate creations. Easter eggs were our specialty however brigadeiros were my passion.”

Since then, she has spent countless hours coming up with a long list of delicious new brigadeiro flavors. These flavors are often inspired by a drink, a dessert, or even pantry leftovers but can take hundreds of attempts until she and her team are comfortable with the result. Says Stoica, “Once it gets the approval from our resident team of brigadeiro experts, we’ll scale the recipe and start production. It’s this part of the business I love the most!”

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CHOCOLATE FOR BRIGADEIROS

While not revealing her recipe, Stoica shares that since founding her company, she has been committed to using premium chocolate, that had a consistent and clean flavor and came from a local company. She did some blind tastes among friends and family, and the winner was [Guittard](#), one of San Francisco's oldest family-owned chocolate companies. Since then she says, "We've continued to use a variety of their dark and milk chocolates and have never considered switching for our main product lines."

From time to time though she collaborates with other chocolate companies for a seasonal offer. Last Easter she did a special collaboration with Brazil's [Kopenhagen](#) that recently launched in the USA and she says, "We also have an ongoing collaboration with [Dandelion Chocolate](#), a bean-to-bar company from the Bay Area."

BRIGADEIROS FLAVORS

Like chocolate truffles, brigadeiros come in a wide variety of [flavors](#). Says Stoica, "With over 25 flavors in our online store, it's hard to choose a favorite! That said, I still have to stick with two classic Brazilian favorites—Milk Chocolate and Coconut & Cream—and then I'd recommend three fresh and fruity options—Orange & Milk Chocolate, Passion Fruit & White Chocolate, and Strawberry Lemonade."

BRIGADEIRO PRODUCT EXTENSIONS



While there are many companies selling brigadeiros, Stoica has innovated the base recipe creating many new offerings. She notes, “Brigadeiro is incredibly versatile. Once you’ve made the mixture, you can roll it into traditional truffle balls, bake with it, turn it into a hot fudge sauce, and even eat it with a spoon.”

She adds, “When we started tinyB, I really wanted to bring some of this versatility to our products. Over the years we’ve launched a spreadable brigadeiro for baking, gooey brigadeiro-filled cookies, sugar-free and vegan brigadeiro alternatives, and of course, lots of fun new flavors.”

Most recently tiny B has been offering [DIY chocolate experience kits](#). Says Stoica, “Now customers can get together with friends and family and roll and decorate their own brigadeiros and even bake their own [brigadeiro cookies](#). The kits are designed to be simple, social, and above all, delicious.” There are kits for holidays and for seasonal specialties including [summer popsicles](#) and soon-to-launch snowmen.



THE FUTURE FOR BRIGADEIROS & TINY B CHOCOLATE

Over the past two years Stoica’s business has pivoted from just being a chocolate company to being a chocolate experience company. She says, “We now host daily virtual and in-person team-building events to hundreds of people all over the world. Participants receive one of our DIY Kits and then we host them in a fun and entertaining event where they discover the world of Brazilian brigadeiro and make their own delicious treats.”



She adds, “In the future, I think there’s still lots of room to add new fun and engaging chocolate experiences that center around brigadeiros. For example, this fall and holiday season you’ll see a few fun new experiences like Halloween-themed chocolate brigadeiro popsicles, gourmet filled brigadeiros, festive brigadeiro cookie donuts, and also wine and brigadeiro pairing. It’s safe to say, we’re having fun coming up with new experiences for everyone!”



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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Amy Sherman is the editor-in-chief of The Chocolate Professor. She is the author of several cookbooks including *Williams Sonoma New Flavors for Appetizers* and *A Microwave, A Mug, A Meal*. She has written about chocolate for the Fine Chocolate Industry Association, *Tasting Table*, *Epicurious* and KQED’s *Bay Area Bites*. She is also editor-in-chief of sister publications [The Cheese Professor](#) and [The Alcohol Professor](#).

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