Preparation Time: 20 minutes
Freezing Time: 1–2 hours (essential)
Cook Time: 4–6 minutes (fried) or 8–10 minutes (baked/air-fried)
Total Time: Approximately 1 hour 30 minutes to 2 hours 30 minutes
Yield: 16–20 sticks (about 4–6 servings)
Difficulty: Easy to Moderate

Table of Contents

- Ingredients
  - For the Mozzarella Sticks
  - For Serving
- Equipment
- Instructions
  - Step 1: Prepare the Cheese
  - Step 2: Set Up the Breading Station
  - Step 3: Double-Bread the Sticks
  - Step 4: Freeze
  - Step 5a: Fry (Traditional Method)
  - Step 5b: Air Fry (Lighter Method)
  - Step 5c: Bake (Oven Method)
  - Step 6: Serve
- Time and Intensity Guide
- Nutrition (Estimated per Stick, Based on 18 Sticks)

Ingredients

For the Mozzarella Sticks

- 1 pound (450 g) low-moisture mozzarella block, cut into ½-inch × 3-inch sticks (about

16–20 sticks)

- ¾ cup all-purpose flour
- 2 large eggs, beaten with 1 tablespoon water
- 1½ cups plain breadcrumbs (panko gives the crispiest coating; regular fine crumbs work too)
- ½ cup grated Parmesan cheese (optional, for extra flavor)
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1 teaspoon dried oregano
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon black pepper
- Cooking spray or neutral oil for frying

For Serving

- Warm marinara sauce

- Ranch dressing
- Pesto or garlic aioli (optional)

Equipment

- Cutting board and sharp knife
- Three shallow bowls (for flour, egg, and breadcrumbs)
- Baking sheet lined with parchment paper
- Plastic wrap or freezer bags
- Deep skillet or Dutch oven (for frying) or air fryer/oven
- Instant-read thermometer (if frying)
- Tongs or slotted spoon
- Paper towels

Instructions

Step 1: Prepare the Cheese

Cut the mozzarella block into sticks roughly ½ inch thick and 3 inches long. Pat them completely dry with paper towels—moisture on the surface causes the breading to slip off. If the cheese is soft and squishy at room temperature, chill it in the freezer for 10–15 minutes before breading so it holds its shape. (Note: Pre-shredded or string cheese can work, but block cheese gives the best texture and doesn't ooze out as quickly.)

Step 2: Set Up the Breading Station

Arrange three shallow bowls in a row:

1. Flour — seasoned with a pinch of salt and pepper
2. Egg wash — eggs beaten with 1 tablespoon water
3. Breadcrumbs — mixed with Parmesan (if using), garlic powder, oregano, salt, and pepper

Step 3: Double-Bread the Sticks

Working in batches, roll each cheese stick in the flour, shaking off the excess. Dip it into the egg wash, letting the excess drip back into the bowl. Then roll it firmly in the breadcrumbs, pressing gently so the coating adheres. For extra insurance against blowouts, repeat the egg-and-breadcrumb steps a second time—this double coating is what keeps the cheese contained. Place the breaded sticks on the parchment-lined baking sheet in a single layer.

Step 4: Freeze

Cover the baking sheet loosely with plastic wrap and freeze for at least 1 hour, ideally 2 hours. This step is non-negotiable: the frozen cheese firms up so the interior cooks slowly while the outside crisps, preventing leaks. Breaded sticks can be frozen for up to 2 months in a freezer bag; cook from frozen.

Step 5a: Fry (Traditional Method)

Pour 2 inches of neutral oil into a deep skillet or Dutch oven and heat to 350°F (175°C). Fry the frozen sticks in batches of 4–5 for 2–3 minutes, turning once, until deep golden brown. Don’t overcrowd—the oil temperature will drop and the coating will turn greasy. Drain on paper towels and serve immediately.

Step 5b: Air Fry (Lighter Method)

Preheat the air fryer to 390°F (200°C) for 3 minutes. Lightly spray the basket and the tops of the frozen sticks with cooking spray. Arrange in a single layer with space between them and air fry for 7–9 minutes, flipping halfway, until golden and crisp. Check at 6 minutes—air fryer models vary.

Step 5c: Bake (Oven Method)

Preheat the oven to 425°F (220°C) and line a baking sheet with parchment. Lightly spray the frozen sticks with cooking spray and bake for 8–10 minutes, turning once, until golden brown. For extra crunch, broil for the final 1–2 minutes, watching closely.

Step 6: Serve

Let the sticks rest for 1 minute (the cheese will be extremely hot), then serve with warm marinara, ranch, or your favorite dip. Mozzarella sticks are at their best within 10 minutes of cooking—the coating softens and the cheese firms as they cool.

Time and Intensity Guide

Phase	Time	Heat/Intensity	Visual Cue
Chill cheese (optional)	10–15 min	Freezer	Firm, easy to handle
Breading	10–15 min	Room temp, hands-on	Even coating, no bare spots
Freezing (essential)	1–2 hrs	Freezer	Rock-solid sticks
Oil heating (fried)	5–8 min	Medium-high	350°F (175°C)
Frying	2–3 min per batch	350°F (175°C)	Deep golden brown
Air frying	7–9 min	390°F (200°C)	Golden, crisp, puffed
Baking	8–10 min	425°F (220°C)	Golden brown, coating set

Nutrition (Estimated per Stick, Based on 18 Sticks)

Nutrient	Amount
Calories	~110–130 kcal
Total Fat	~6–7 g
Saturated Fat	~3.5–4 g
Cholesterol	~30 mg
Sodium	~180–220 mg
Total Carbohydrates	~8–9 g
Fiber	~0.5 g
Sugars	~0.5 g
Protein	~6–7 g
Calcium	~15% DV