

HOT CROSS BUNS

Be aware that this is a fairly labor-intensive recipe, don't start making them an hour before Good Friday services and expect them to be ready. This would be best done on Maundy Thursday, iced (if doing it the American way) on Good Friday and eaten before Holy Saturday.

The best method for making bread is to weigh your ingredients, so I've included the weight in grams. The Pioneer Woman recipe is close to this one and has cups if you don't have a kitchen scale.

Ingredients

For the Dough:

- 1 1/2 scant cups of full-fat milk
- ½ stick of butter
- 500g strong bread flour
- 1 tsp salt
- Baking Powder
- 1 ½ t. Cinnamon
- ¼-1/2 t. Nutmeg
- vanilla
- 100g sugar (you can add more if you like a sweeter roll, if you're not adding dried fruit)
- 1 tbsp oil (I used grapeseed, you can also use sunflower or vegetable)
- 1 Packet of Yeast
- 1 egg

"Filling" Options:

- 75g sultana
- 50g mixed peel
- zest 1 orange
- 1 apple: peeled, cored and finely chopped **or**
- 1 apple, Peeled cored and finely chopped
- ¼ cup of pecans chopped **or**
- 1 apple: peeled cored and finely chopped
- 75g of dried cranberries
- ¼ cup chopped almonds

For the cross:

- English Style: 75g plain flour, plus extra for dusting
- American Style: 1 heaping cup powdered sugar

For the glaze: 3 tbsp apricot jam

Directions:

Bring the milk to the boil, then quickly remove from the heat and add the butter. Leave to cool until it reaches 100-110 degrees. (I pour mine into a liquid measuring cup and put it in the fridge checking the temperature and stirring often.) Once it reaches the desired temperature, add the yeast to proof.

Put the flour, salt, sugar, baking powder, and spices into a bowl. Make a well in the center. Pour in the warm milk and butter mixture, vanilla and then add the egg. Using a wooden spoon, mix well, then bring everything together with your hands until you have a very sticky dough.

Tip on to a lightly floured surface and knead by holding the dough with one hand and stretching it with the heel of the other hand, then folding it back on itself. Repeat for no more than 5 minutes until smooth and elastic. Put the dough in a lightly oiled bowl. Cover with a tea towel and leave to rise in a warm place for 1 hour or until doubled in size and a finger pressed into it leaves a dent.

With the dough still in the bowl, add your filling ingredients. Knead into the dough, making sure everything is well distributed. Leave to rise for 1 hour more, or until doubled in size, again covered by a tea towel to stop the dough getting a crust.

Divide the dough into even pieces. Roll each piece into a smooth ball on a lightly floured work surface. Arrange the buns on one or two baking trays lined with parchment, leaving enough space for the dough to expand. Cover with a tea towel, then set aside to prove for 1 hour more.

ENGLISH STYLE CROSS: Mix the flour with about 5 tbsp water to make the paste for the cross – add the water 1 tbsp at a time, so you add just enough for a thick paste. Spoon into a piping bag with a small nozzle. Pipe a line along each row of buns, then repeat in the other direction to create crosses.

Heat the oven to 375. Bake for 15 - 20 minutes depending on the size of your buns, until golden brown. Once you remove the buns from the oven, transfer them to a cooling rack. Gently heat the apricot jam to melt, then sieve to get rid of any chunks. While the jam is still warm, brush over the top of the warm buns and leave to cool.

AMERICAN STYLE CROSS: Once the buns are completely cool, mix the powdered sugar with milk or water, about 4 tbsp in all, but do it slowly so that you get a thick paste. (If it's too runny just add more powdered sugar). Spoon into a piping bag with a small nozzle. Pipe a line along each row of buns, then repeat in the other direction to create crosses.

For the original, unadulterated Paul Hollywood recipe go here:

<https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/recipes/2066661/hot-cross-buns>

For the Pioneer Woman recipe: <http://thepioneerwoman.com/cooking/hot-cross-buns/>

And in case your baking luck is better than mine, the King Arthur Easy Hot Cross Buns:

<http://www.kingarthurfLOUR.com/recipes/easy-hot-cross-buns-recipe>

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