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by Liz Robb

Hot Cross Buns



Ingredients

280 ml milk
50g butter
500g strong white flour
Sprinkling of salt
75g golden caster sugar
2 level teaspoons of fast action yeast
2 eggs
Oil
130g mixed fruit (sultanas, currants, raisins and mixed peel)
1 teaspoon of mixed spice
1 teaspoon of cinnamon
Freshly grated nutmeg
2 tablespoons of plain flour

Preparation

1. 1. Warm the milk in a small saucepan until it is just about to boil. Turn off the heat and add the butter, cut into pieces, and stir in. Put to one side to cool a little.
2. 2. Into a large bowl, sift the flour and add a sprinkling of salt, put in the yeast powder and sugar and mix together. Check that the milk and butter mixture is now only warm
3. pour it into a well in the centre of the flour, stirring it in. Beat one of the eggs and stir that in too.
4. 3. Flour your hands well and pull the mixture together to make a dough
5. don't worry if it is a bit sticky at this point. On a lightly floured surface, begin to knead the dough, repeatedly pushing it out and folding it back on itself. Knead until the dough feels really stretchy and smooth, for about five minutes. Lightly oil a bowl, put in the dough, then cover with a clean tea towel and leave to rise in a warm place for an hour, or until the dough has doubled in size. [Some recipes omit this proving and go straight on to the next stage].
6. 4. Add the mixed fruit, mixed spice, cinnamon and a grating of fresh nutmeg to the dough and knead it until the fruit and spices are evenly spread through it. Leave it to rise as described before.
7. 5. Cut the dough into 14 – 16 pieces of equal size then roll and shape them into buns. On a lightly oiled baking sheet, place them well apart. Leave to prove in a warm place again, covering lightly with a clean tea towel, for 30 - 60 minutes.
8. 6. Beat the second egg and brush each bun lightly to glaze. Then, in a small bowl, mix the plain flour with sufficient water to make a stiff paste, adding a little at a time. Pipe a cross shape on top of each bun. [If you don't have a nozzle and piping bag, just fold a

sheet of greaseproof paper to make a bag and snip off the end

9 I did this and it worked just as well].

10 7. Place in a preheated oven, 220 degrees or 200 degrees fan oven, and bake for 15 – 20 minutes, depending on the heat of your oven. Once baked, place on a wire rack to cool.

11 These buns are at their best served warm, split and spread with butter, but they will keep for a couple of days in an airtight tin. I think they taste better toasted and buttered after the first day.

Cooks Note

Variations:
For a sweeter glaze, omit the egg glaze before baking and brush with diluted golden syrup or apricot jam while still warm.

As an alternative to making flour paste crosses to apply, just omit stage 6 and instead make a deep cross in each bun with a sharp knife before baking, glaze with milk and sprinkle with sugar.