

Hot Cross buns



For the dough

450g strong white bread flour, plus extra for dusting
50g caster sugar
1 x 7g sachets easy-blend yeast
50g unsalted butter, plus extra for greasing
200ml warm milk
1 egg, beaten
oil, for greasing

The spices and dried fruit

1 tsp ground cinnamon
½ tsp mixed spice
¼ tsp grated nutmeg
100g dried mixed fruit (or any other raisins/sultanas/currents/peel etc)

For decoration

2 tbsp plain flour
2 tbsp granulated sugar

Method:

1. MEASURE THE DRY INGREDIENTS INTO A BOWL

First, weigh the flour (450g) and sugar (50g) and add them to a mixing bowl. Then measure in the salt (pinch), then add the yeast. Finally, measure out the dried fruit and spices and add them to your bowl.

2. PREPARE THE WET INGREDIENTS

Measure the butter (50g), then melt it either in the microwave or gently over the hob. Measure the milk (150ml) into a jug and heat that gently (or pop in

the microwave as well.) Neither need to be too hot as that will kill the yeast – lukewarm/tepid so you can comfortably hold your finger in the mixture is about right.

Crack the egg into a small bowl just in case any shell goes in. If it does, fish it out with a larger piece of shell as it will stick to that better than it will your finger.

Make a well in middle of the flour and tip the egg into the centre. Mix it a little before adding the butter, milk.

3. MAKE THE DOUGH

Mix everything together until you have a soft dough. If you're doing this in a mixing bowl, start using a spoon and once it starts to come together finish with your hands.

Knead the dough in your bowl or lightly oiled or floured work surface until it becomes smooth and springy. It'll take at least 5-10 minutes or longer depending on how much fun your are having!

Pop the dough in a clean bowl, cover it and leave in a warm place until it has roughly doubled in size. It'll probably take about an hour depending on how warm it is.

4. MAKE THE HOT CROSS BUNS

Once the dough has risen, tip it onto a lightly floured surface and get your kids to knock it back which basically means, punch and knead it a little to knock the air out.

Divide the dough into 12 even amounts then roll them into balls. This is good job for kids who want to practice their maths – get them to divide in half, in half again and then third each piece of dough.

Put them on to a greased baking tray or a baking tray lined with greaseproof paper or baking paper. Leave a little room between them as they'll expand.

Cover them loosely with cling film and leave the buns to rise for 20 minutes or so. They should roughly double in size again.

5. PREHEAT THE OVEN TO 190C/170 FAN.

Mix approximately 2 tablespoons of flour with a little water until you have a smooth paste. The mixture needs to be runny enough to pipe but not so runny that it won't hold it's shape once piped. Pop it in an icing bag, icer with a small nozzle or if you don't have a piping bag, pop it in a small freezer bag and cut small hole in the corner.

Pipe crosses on each of the buns. We just went all the way across them in one direction then did the same in the other direction.