

One a Penny, Two a Penny, HOT CROSS BUNS

RECIPE

Hot Cross Buns are traditionally eaten on Good Friday; but, because they are so good they are eaten all year round in South Africa.



Ingredients

BUNS:

- 3 teaspoons instant or rapid rise yeast (9 grams)
- 1/2 cup (110g) superfine caster sugar
- 1 1/2 cups (375ml) warm milk
- 4 1/4 cups (640g) bread or plain all-purpose flour
- 2 tsp cinnamon powder
- 2 tsp All Spice can substitute with a packet of Christmas biscuit spices
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 1 1/2 cups (210g) raisons or sultanas
- Chopped apricots
- Some pistachios to sprinkle on top of buns
- 1 - 2 oranges, zest only
- 50g / 3.5 tbsps. unsalted butter, melted and cooled
- 1 egg at room temperature

EXTRA FLOUR FOR DOUGH:

- 1/4 cup (35g) extra bread flour

CROSSES:

- 1/2 cup (75g) flour
- 5 tbsp. water

GLAZE:

- 1 tbsp. apricot jam
- 2 tsp water

Instructions

Place flour, yeast, sugar, all spice, cinnamon, and salt in a large bowl. Briefly mix with stand mixer fitted with a dough hook.

- Add butter, milk, egg, raisins, apricots and zest.
- **Stand mixer:** Mix until a smooth elastic dough forms - 5 minutes on Speed 2 of stand mixer. After 1 minute, add extra flour if required, enough so dough comes away from side of bowl when mixing and does not stick terribly to your fingers.
- **Hand kneading:** Alternatively, dust a work surface with flour and knead by hand for 10 minutes.
- **Dough is kneaded enough** when it's smooth and does not break when stretched.



RISE #1:

- Leave dough in the bowl, cover with cling wrap and place in a warm, wind free place to rise until doubled in size. This will take anywhere between 30 minutes to 1 1/2 hours depending on how warm it is.

FORMING BALLS:

- Line a 31.5 x 23.5 cm / 9 x 13" tray with baking paper with overhang.
- Remove cling wrap and punch dough to deflate.
- Dust work surface with flour, place dough on work surface, shape into a log which will deflate the air. Cut into 12 equal pieces.
- Take one piece and press down with palm, then use your fingers to gather into a ball, and then roll the dough briefly to form a ball. This stretches the dough on one side and gets a nice smooth surface.
- Place the ball with the smooth side up on the tray. Repeat with remaining dough. Line them up 3 x 4.



RISE # 2:

- Spray a piece of cling wrap lightly with any oil, and then loosely place over the tray.
- Return tray to warm place and leave 30 - 45 minutes, until the dough has risen by about 75% (less than double in size).
- Partway through Rise #2, preheat oven to 180°C/350°F (all oven types).
- Now sprinkle the crushed pistachios on top of buns.

CROSSES:

- Mix flour and water until a thick runny paste forms.
- Spoon into a round 3 mm piping bag or small zip lock bag then snip corner.
- Remove the cling wrap and pipe crosses onto the buns. Go slow so it hugs the curves.



BAKING/GLAZE:

- Bake for 22 minutes, or until the surface is a deep golden brown. The surface colour is the best test for this recipe.
- Meanwhile, place jam and water in a bowl, mix to combine.
- Remove buns from oven. Use overhang to lift buns onto a cooling rack.
- Brush with jam mixture while warm. Serve warm.

Best served on day it's baked, as with all homemade bread. Stays fresher and softer if you use bread flour. For the day after, reheating makes all the difference to make them soft and moist again. Place briefly in a preheated oven or cut open, toast them and spread butter and jam. These freeze great, just defrost. To reheat batches, pop them on a tray and cover with foil to avoid the surface getting too crisp, and then reheat at 160C/320F for 8 minutes or so.



Enjoy, Bon Appetite!