

CHRISTMAS STAR BREAD

Recipe by Sylvia Fountaine – Feasting at Home

Dough

- ¾ c warm milk (40°C)
- 2 c plain flour
- 1 egg
- ¼ c soft unsalted butter, at room temp.
- 2 tsp active dry yeast
- 2 tspn sugar
- 1 tsp salt

Filling

- 1 large egg, beaten
- ¼ c sugar
- 1 tsp cinnamon
- ½ tsp cardamon (or nutmeg)
- ¾ c dried fruit - cherries, blueberries, cranberries
- ¾ c whole almonds

icing sugar



Dough

Warm the milk to 40°C in a saucepan or microwave. Add the heated milk, sugar and active dry yeast to a stand mixer bowl, and mix until combined. Cover with a kitchen towel, and let stand until the yeast is active and frothy, about 5 - 10 mins. Add the remaining dough ingredients, and beat on a low speed until combined and it forms a soft smooth dough, about 3 mins.

Place the dough in a lightly greased bowl, cover, and let rise in a warm spot, for approx. 120 mins, until it's nearly doubled in bulk.

Filling

When dough has doubled in size, beat the egg and set aside. Mix the sugar, cinnamon and cardamon and place in a small bowl. Add the dried fruit and almonds to a food processor and process until coarsely chopped.

To Construct

Divide the dough into four equal pieces. Shape each piece into a ball, cover the balls, and allow them to rest for 15 minutes. On a floured work surface, roll one piece of dough into a 25 cm circle. Place the circle on a baking tray lined with baking paper, brush a thin coat of beaten egg on the surface, then evenly sprinkle with a third of the spiced sugar, a ½ c of the dried fruit /almond mix, leaving 12 mm of bare dough around the perimeter.

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Roll out a second circle the same size as the first, and place it on top of the first filling covered circle. Repeat the layering process — egg, spiced sugar, fruit/nuts. Roll out the 3rd dough circle, add the remaining filling as before. Roll out the final (4th) dough circle, placing it on top of the stack, leaving the top bare.

Place a 6.5 cm round cutter in the center of the dough circle as a guide. With a sharp knife, cut the uncovered circle into 16 equal strips, from the centered cutter to the edge of the dough, through all the layers.

Using two hands, pick up two adjacent strips and twist them away from each other twice so that the top side is facing up again. Repeat with the remaining strips of dough so that you end up with eight pairs of strips.

Pinch the pairs of strips together to create a star-like shape with eight points. Remove the cutter.



Cover the star with a thin towel and let it rise until it becomes noticeably puffy, about 45 mins.

While the star is rising, preheat the oven to 200°C.

Brush the star with a thin coat of the beaten egg. Bake in the oven for 12 to 15 mins, until it's nicely golden with dark brown cinnamon streaks.

Remove the star bread from the oven, and allow to cool for about 10 mins before serving.

Serve warm dusted with icing sugar.

Note: To save a bit of time you can make the star bread the night before, and just pop in the oven the next morning. In the recipe once you get to the point where you have let the completed star rise for 45 mins, then place in the fridge overnight. Next morning remove the star from the fridge while the oven is heating, glaze with the beaten egg and cook as above.

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