

Chocolate Babka



Serves 10 Prep 55 mins + 2h resting Cook: 1h 05 mins Challenge

Ingredients

For the dough

100ml milk
350g strong white bread flour, plus extra to dust
50g caster sugar
7g sachet fast action yeast
1 large egg, lightly beaten
100 butter, softened & chopped into small pieces
extra butter to grease

For the filling

75g unsalted butter
75g dark chocolate, chopped
150g caster sugar
25g cocoa powder
1tsp ground cinnamon

For the syrup

75g caster sugar

1. Heat the milk in a saucepan until just warm. In a large bowl (or stand mixer with dough hook) mix flour, sugar, yeast & pinch of salt. Add the milk, egg & butter & mix to bring together into a dough, adding 1 tbsp milk if looking a little dry. Shape into a ball, & knead by hand for ± 15 mins (6 min in a stand mixer) until you have a soft dough springing back when pressed. Return to the cleaned-out bowl & cover with oiled cling film. Leave to prove for 2h until about doubled in size (or leave at room temperature for 1 h, then transfer to the fridge overnight & complete the recipe the following day).
2. If the dough was kept in the fridge overnight, set aside at room temperature while you make the filling. Grease a 900g (2lb) loaf tin with butter & line base & sides with baking parchment, leaving an overhang to help get the bread out of the tin later.
3. To make the filling, melt the butter in a small pan. Remove from the heat, stir in the chocolate, sugar, cocoa powder & cinnamon. Set aside to cool briefly.
4. Place the dough onto a lightly floured surface and roll into a rectangle about 50 x 30.5cm. Spread the filling over the dough, covering it completely. Roll up tightly from one of the longer sides into a sausage shape. Carefully lift the dough onto a piece of baking parchment and chill in the fridge for 15 mins (to make it easier to cut).
5. When chilled, cut the dough in half lengthways so you have two long pieces with the inside exposed. Turn each piece so filling faces upwards. Starting from one end, lift 1 piece across the other, twisting together but keeping the filling exposed, to make one long twisted braid. Push ends of the twist together to make the length shorter, & squeeze the dough into the loaf tin (it will fit!) Loosely cover with oiled cling film & leave to prove in a warm place for 1½ - 2h or until 2x size.
6. Preheat the oven to 180C/160C Fan/ Gas 4. Bake loaf for about 50 min - 1h until deeply golden, loosely covering with foil towards the end of cooking time if it is getting too dark. When the babka is almost cooked, make the syrup. In a small pan, gently heat the sugar and 75ml water and stir until dissolved. Bring to the boil, then remove from the heat. Remove the loaf from the oven, brush the sugar syrup all over the top to soak in. Leave to cool completely in the tin before serving.