

Olive's Kitchen

Hot Cross Buns - Better than store-bought!

Use the recipe below as a starting point. It is a combination of methods from various sources but hopefully you will be more than happy with the result. The recipe gives buns that have a "hint" of fruit in each one. But you could try the recipe with up to double the volume of fruit; mix and match the fruit depending on what is at hand. And you could vary the variety or volume of spices. This recipe is not too sweet: add more sugar (and salt) if desired. Experiment with some of the optional ingredients listed. Use half the volume of yeast if you know it is quite active and gives a good rise. Form the buns into balls and place them next to each other on a suitable tray. The buns should expand onto each other in the final rise and while cooking they help each other rise further in the confines of the tray. See the Olive's Kitchen link for more hints and photos: <http://cicadabay.com/oliveskitchen/hot-cross-buns/>

For 12 hot cross buns:

The fruit:

- 150 g sultanas
- 50 g currants
- 50 g mixed peel
- 100 g raisins, chopped if large
- 50 g chopped dried peaches or pears or apples (optional)
- 25 to 50 g chopped dried apricots or glace fruits (optional)

Dry ingredients:

- 450 to 500 g strong white flour (Lighthouse brand "Bread and Pizza")
- 14 g active dry yeast
- 50 g caster sugar
- 1 tsp allspice
- 1 tsp ground cinnamon
- 1 tsp ginger powder
- ½ tsp ground cloves
- ¼ tsp grated nutmeg
- ¼ tsp cardamom powder (optional)
- 1 to 2 tps cocoa powder (for colour, optional)
- ¼ tsp salt

Wet ingredients:

- 300 ml lukewarm milk



- 50 g butter, melted
- 1 egg
- 1 to 2 tsp vanilla essence

For the crosses:

- 50 g or ½ cup plain flour
- about 50 ml water

For the glaze:

- 60 g caster sugar
- 50 ml water
- (or 1/3 cup marmalade melted in the microwave)

Method:

Soak the fruit in a little hot water (or in brandy, sherry or similar) for 30 minutes. (Use just enough liquid to plump them and drain off any excess later if too wet.)

Combine all the dry ingredients in a mixing bowl for a machine with a dough hook or another suitable bowl if you are mixing and kneading by hand. (continued over)



Olive's Kitchen

Warm the milk. Melt the butter (for example, microwave in a cup), add to the milk, stir through. Briefly whisk the egg in the container used for the butter. Add to the milk with vanilla. Stir well.

Drain excess liquid from the fruit. Add the fruit and wet mixture to the dry ingredients. Combine well then knead for six minutes or so, or until the dough forms, though it will still stick to the sides. If it is too wet, add a little more flour, but a sticky, stretchy dough is what you are after. If the dough is not kneaded enough the buns might be crumbly and heavy. But don't over-knead.

Tip the dough into a large bowl sprinkled with a little flour. Form a rough flattened ball. Cover with cling film. Leave to rise in a warm place for an hour or so, or until it has doubled in size.

Meanwhile prepare the baking tray – use a Swiss roll tin or equivalent of around 30 cm by 24 cm and 3 to 4 cm high. Spray or butter or line the base and sides.

Tip the dough onto a lightly floured clean surface, knock back gently and cut or pull into 12 even pieces. Gently roll each piece into a ball in your hands or on the bench. Place the balls on the baking tray spaced up to 1cm apart but touching is fine. Cover with cling wrap and allow the balls to rise and expand into each other - this could take 20 minutes to 40 minutes depending on how warm your warming spot is.

Set the oven to 200°C.

While the buns are rising, make the batter for the crosses. Whisk the flour with some of the water to a smooth paste - if it's too stiff add a little more water; aim for a mixture that is not as runny as cream but can be poured. If you are not fussy about the crosses, pour the mixture into a jug. Otherwise, pour into a piping bag or into a plastic sandwich bag (and snip one corner when ready to use). Once the buns are fully risen, pour or pipe a line of batter the length of each line of buns and then the width of each row.

Bake the buns in the preheated oven at 200°C for 25 minutes, turning the tray if required.

Transfer to a cooling rack or leave in the tray. To make a glaze for the buns, combine the caster sugar and water and boil for two minutes in a saucepan or melt in the microwave, then brush over the buns hot from the oven. Alternatively, melt some marmalade and brush over.

Serve:

Makes 12 large hot cross buns. Serve when ready with lovely (salted) butter!

Equipment:

Swiss roll tin or equivalent of around 30cm by 24 cm and 3 to 4 cm high.

Difficulty and Time:

Reasonably difficult (4/5). 20 minutes to prepare ingredients and knead the dough. Up to two hours for proofing the dough and balls. 5 to 10 minutes for the crosses. 25 minutes baking.

Notes and variations:

- As well as or instead of the fruit, add up to ½ cup quality dark chocolate buds.
- If you leave off the crosses you have fruit buns that can be cooked anytime!
- For a sweeter version use more sugar in the dough (and add a dash more salt).
- Reheat cold buns gently in the microwave. Freeze excess buns until needed.