

Hot Cross Buns

Makes 12

Hands-on Time 1 hour (plus overnight for soaking the fruit)

Proving Time +2 hours

Baking Time 12-15 minutes

Ingredients

- 325ml + 2 tbsp full-fat milk
- 2 chai teabags
- 100g raisins and currants
- 500g strong white bread flour (plus extra for dusting)
- 2 tsp fast-action yeast
- 50g caster sugar
- 1 tsp fine sea salt
- 1 tsp ground mixed spice
- 2 tsp ground cardamom
- 70g unsalted butter (softened)
- 1 medium egg (beaten)
- 40g candied peel
- Oil for greasing (e.g., olive, sunflower, or vegetable)
- 1 medium egg yolk
- 30g plain flour
- 30ml water

Equipment

- Saucepan
- 2 mixing bowls
- Clingfilm
- Small sieve
- Measuring jug
- Kitchen paper
- Large bowl
- Dough scraper
- Baking parchment
- 2 baking sheets
- Pastry brush
- Spatula
- Piping bag with 5mm nozzle
- Wire rack
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Method

1. Infuse the milk

- Heat 300ml milk in a saucepan until nearly boiling. Remove from heat, add chai teabags, and steep for 15 minutes.
- Squeeze the teabags to extract maximum flavour, then pour the milk over the raisins and currants in a bowl. Cover and refrigerate overnight.

2. Prepare the dough

- Strain the fruit, reserving the milk. Press the fruit gently to extract excess milk without mashing it. Set the fruit aside and top up the milk to 300ml if needed.
- In a large bowl, combine the flour, yeast (on one side), sugar, salt, mixed spice, and cardamom (on the other). Add the butter and beaten egg.
- Gradually add the chai milk, mixing with one hand until a dough forms. Knead on a lightly floured surface for 10 minutes until smooth and elastic.
- Place the dough in a lightly oiled bowl, cover with clingfilm, and leave to rise for 1 hour or until doubled in size.

3. Shape the buns

- Line two baking sheets with parchment.
- Add the soaked fruit and candied peel to the dough, folding repeatedly to distribute evenly.
- Divide the dough into 12 equal pieces. Shape each into a smooth ball by dusting your hand with flour and cupping it around the dough, rotating it in a circular motion to tuck the edges underneath.
- Place 6 buns on each baking sheet, spaced about 3cm apart. Cover with lightly oiled clingfilm and prove for 1 hour or until doubled in size.

4. Bake the buns

- Preheat the oven to 210°C/190°C (fan)/410°F/Gas Mark 7.
- Mix the egg yolk with 2 tbsp milk and brush over the buns. Let rest for 10 minutes.
- Combine the plain flour and water into a thick paste. Pipe crosses onto each bun using a piping bag with a 5mm hole.
- Bake one tray at a time on the middle shelf for 12-15 minutes until deep golden. Transfer to a wire rack to cool.

Serving

- Serve toasted or at room temperature.

Enjoy!