

Japanese Milk Bread

Makes 1 loaf

Hands-on Time 1 hour

Proving Time +2 hours

Baking Time 30 minutes

Ingredients

- 240ml full-fat milk (plus 2 tbsp for egg wash)
- 375g strong white bread flour (plus extra for dusting)
- 2 tsp fast-action yeast
- 40g caster sugar
- 1 tsp fine sea salt
- 35g unsalted butter (softened, plus extra for greasing)
- 1 medium egg (beaten)
- Oil for greasing (e.g., sunflower or vegetable oil)
- 1 medium egg yolk (for egg wash)

Equipment

- Saucepan
- Spatula
- Large bowl
- Clingfilm
- 2lb loaf tin
- Baking parchment
- Scissors
- Rolling pin
- Knife or dough scraper
- Mixing bowl
- Pastry brush
- Wire rack

Method

1. Make the paste

- In a saucepan, mix 120ml milk and 25g flour. Cook over medium heat, stirring continuously, until thickened into a paste. Let cool.

2. Prepare the dough

- In a large bowl, combine 350g flour, yeast, sugar, salt, beaten egg, and 35g softened butter. Add the cooled paste.
- Gradually mix in the remaining 120ml milk until a dough forms.
- Knead the dough on a clean surface for 10 minutes until smooth and elastic.

3. First prove

- Lightly grease the bowl with oil, add the dough, and cover with clingfilm. Let it prove until doubled in size.

4. Shape the loaf

- Grease a loaf tin and line with baking parchment.
- Knock back the dough and divide it in half.
- Roll each half into a long strip (60–70cm long, 20cm wide). Fold the sides into the middle, then roll up like a Swiss roll.
- Place the rolls side by side in the prepared tin.

5. Second prove

- Cover the tin with lightly greased clingfilm and let the dough prove until doubled in size.

6. Bake the loaf

- Preheat the oven to 180°C/160°C (fan)/350°F/Gas Mark 4.
- Mix the egg yolk and 2 tbsp milk for the egg wash. Brush it over the dough.
- Bake on the middle shelf for 30 minutes, or until golden and hollow-sounding when tapped.

7. Cool and serve

- Let the loaf cool in the tin for 30 minutes, then transfer to a wire rack to cool completely.
- Serve sliced with jam, butter, or toasted.

Enjoy!