

Pistachio, Cardamom, and Chocolate Babka

Makes 2 loaves

Hands-on Time 30 minutes

Proving Time + 4 hours

Cooking Time 30 minutes

Ingredients

- 300g strong white bread flour (plus extra for dusting)
- 2 tsp fast-action yeast
- 1/2 tsp plus 1/8 tsp fine salt
- 235g caster sugar
- 2 tsp plus 1/8 tsp ground cardamom
- 1 large egg
- 120ml full-fat milk
- 180g unsalted butter (softened)
- Oil for greasing (e.g., olive, sunflower, or vegetable)
- 75g pistachios
- 100g chocolate (minimum 70% cocoa solids)
- 2 tbsp cocoa powder
- 1/8 tsp ground cinnamon
- 100ml water

Equipment

- 2 x 2lb loaf tins
- Baking parchment
- Scissors
- Freestanding mixer with dough hook
- Large bowl
- Tea towel or clingfilm
- Rolling pin
- Chopping board
- Knife
- Microwaveable bowl
- Microwave
- Spatula
- Palette knife
- Saucepan

Method

1. Prepare the Dough

- Line the loaf tins with parchment, ensuring the paper is intact to contain the syrup later.
- In the mixer bowl, combine flour, yeast, 1/2 tsp salt, 60g sugar, and 2 tsp cardamom.
- Add the egg and milk. Knead on medium speed for 5 minutes, scraping the bowl to incorporate all ingredients.
- Add 80g softened butter, piece by piece, and knead for another 5 minutes until the dough is slightly sticky.
- Transfer the dough to a greased bowl, cover, and let it prove for 2 hours (or overnight in the fridge) until doubled in size.

2. Make the Filling

- Finely chop the pistachios, leaving some larger pieces for texture.
- Melt the chocolate in a microwaveable bowl in 30-second bursts. Stir in 100g softened butter, 75g sugar, cocoa powder, 1/8 tsp cardamom, 1/8 tsp cinnamon, and 1/8 tsp salt. Let cool and thicken.

3. Shape the Babka

- Roll the dough out on a floured surface into a 40cm x 30cm rectangle.
- Spread the chocolate mixture evenly over the dough, then sprinkle with pistachios.
- Roll the dough lengthwise and cut into two pieces. Slice each piece lengthwise and twist or plait the halves together.
- Place each twisted dough into a lined tin. Cover and let prove for 2 hours.

4. Bake and Add Syrup

- Preheat the oven to 180°C/160°C (fan)/350°F/Gas Mark 4.
- Bake the babka on the middle shelf for 30 minutes until golden.
- While baking, make the syrup by dissolving 100g sugar in 100ml water over medium heat. Simmer briefly, then set aside.
- Pour the syrup over the baked babka immediately after removing it from the oven.
- Let cool in the tins before removing and serving.

Enjoy!