

Softest Ever Hot Cross Buns - Edd Kimber

Makes 12

75g raisins
75g sultanas
500g strong white bread flour
270ml whole milk
7g fast action dried yeast
1/2 tsp fine sea salt
2 tsp mixed spice
1 tsp ground cinnamon
60g caster sugar
2 large eggs, plus one for egg wash
50g unsalted butter, room temperature
50g mixed candied peel

Cross and Glaze

50g plain flour
50g whole milk
5ml vegetable oil
50ml orange juice
50g caster sugar
1 tbsp honey

A couple hours before you make the dough prepare the fruit and the tangzhong paste. Add the raisins and sultanas to a small bowl and pour over hot brewed black tea. You can use any tea you like and even just water if you don't want to add extra flavour. The key is that the water should be hot, this helps it soak into the fruit and plump it up. Soaking the fruit in this manner makes the fruit more pleasant to eat but also prevents it from burning when the fruit is on the outside of the buns. Leave the fruit to soak for about 30 minutes, before draining and then setting aside to cool.

For the tangzhong add 35g of the flour and 185ml of the milk to a small saucepan and cook over low/medium heat, mixing constantly, until the mixture forms a thick paste. Scrape into a small bowl and cover with a piece of clingfilm, to prevent a skin from forming, and set aside until cool. You can also prepare the tangzhong a day ahead, refrigerating until needed.

When ready to make the dough add the remaining bread flour, yeast, spices, sugar and salt to the bowl of your stand mixer and whisk together to combine. Pour in the remaining milk, the eggs and the tangzhong paste and, with the dough hook attached, mix on low speed until a shaggy dough is formed. Turn the mixer to medium and knead for about 10 minutes or until a smooth silky dough is formed, which is no longer sticking to the bottom or sides of the bowl. With the mixer still running add the butter and continue kneading until the butter is fully combined and the dough is, once again, no longer sticking to the bottom or sides of the bowl. Add the drained dried fruit and the candied peel and knead briefly until evenly mixed into the dough. Scrape out the dough and form into a ball. Place into a lightly greased bowl and cover with clingfilm, setting aside until doubled in size, about an hour.

Tip the risen dough out onto a floured worksurface and press into a flat round. Cut into 12 equal sized pieces and form into balls.

To shape the hot cross buns cover the pieces of dough with a kitchen towel to prevent them drying out. Working with one piece of dough at a time, fold the outer edges of the dough into the middle, doing this a few times to create some tension, pinching the seam to seal. Turn the bun over, seam side down. Cup your hand and cover the ball, making sure the back of palm is in contact with the worksurface and the top of your palm is in contact with the bun. Move your hand in a circular motion, moving the ball with you as you roll. You should be able to feel, also see, the ball become smoother and a little tighter.

Place the buns onto a parchment lined baking tray, a little apart, and cover lightly with clingfilm or a damp kitchen towel. Set aside for until doubled in size, about an hour or so.

Preheat the oven to 200°C (180°C Fan).

To make the cross mix together the flour, milk and oil, until you have a thick smooth paste. Scrape into a piping bag fitted with a small plain piping tip.

Brush the buns with egg wash and pipe each bun with a cross. Bake in the preheated oven for about 20-22 minutes or until golden brown.

Whilst the buns are baking make the glaze. Add the orange juice and sugar to a small pan and cook together just until the sugar has dissolved and the mixture has come to a simmer. Remove from the heat and set aside.

Remove the buns from the oven and whilst they are still hot brush all over with the orange syrup. Allow the buns to cool fully before serving.

Kept covered these buns will keep for 2-3 days.