

Barossa Talking Tours



Chocolate Hot Cross Buns - makes 12



Ingredients:

Hot Cross Bun mix:

300 g baker's flour.

It's important to get the right baker's flour here, to make your hot cross buns light and fluffy.

It was recommended to us to use 'Manitoba flour' which comes from wheat grown in the Canadian region of Manitoba (the name derives from the Native Indian tribe that lived in that area).

Manitoba flour has the special characteristic of forming a high quantity of gluten during kneading and cooking and is not as 'strong' or 'high strength' as the standard 'strong baker's flour', as it's known. The Manitoba Flour provides good rise, but is that bit softer and provides a lighter, somewhat fluffy finish - perfect for hot cross buns.

You will need to get Manitoba flour from a specialist providore or good continental deli - it's not the sort of thing you'd buy from a supermarket, for example.

15 g of good quality cocoa

Again we recommend you get your cocoa from a specialist providore or good continental deli.

There's good chocolate and bad chocolate, and there's good and not-so-good cocoa. Good quality cocoa simply is of a higher grade than you get in supermarkets.

60g unsalted butter, softened.

We use Lurpak red-pack butter from Denmark. You can get this in some supermarkets. Otherwise, again, go to a good continental deli.

quarter cup (55g) of castor sugar

teaspoon of ground cinnamon

We use Herbie's spices - available at good continental delis

1 egg, lightly beaten

85g of dark-chocolate chips (from a continental deli)

2 tablespoons of apricot jam

We found a good apricot jam in Coles supermarkets - Bonne Mamam Apricot Conserve - a product of France.

Dough mix:

100 g of baker's flour (see our comments above)

200 ml milk (full cream) heated to lukewarm

2 teaspoons of castor sugar

7 g of dried yeast (again, get this from a continental deli)

Paste mix (for the crosses on the top of the buns):

70 g of plain flour (any plain flour will do here)

third of a cup (80 ml) of milk (full cream)

2 teaspoons of good quality cocoa

25 g of castor sugar

METHOD:

Dough:

Combine all of the ingredients of the dough mix in a bowl, stirring to combine. Cover it with plastic wrap and set it aside for 20 minutes or until it's frothy (it gets frothy because the combination of the milk and yeast begins a fermentation process).

Hot Cross Bun mix:

Sift the flour and cocoa into a large bowl, add the butter, castor sugar, cinnamon, egg and a half-teaspoon of salt (we use Malden Salt, available in supermarkets), and using a wooden spoon, mix to combine.

Add the dough mixture and stir to combine, until you have a soft dough. We added two tablespoons of water to moisten the mix, and stirred it in.

Mixer method:

If you've got a mixer with a dough hook (a KitchenAid, for example) place the mix into the KitchenAid bowl and knead on speed 1 for six minutes, or until the dough is smooth and elastic. Add the chocolate chips to the bowl and stir them in. After this, take the dough out of the KitchenAid bowl and place it into a larger bowl, greased.

Hand method:

If you haven't got a KitchenAid, you must knead the mixture by hand. Place the dough mixture on a clean kitchen bench, sprinkled with flour to stop the dough from sticking. Form the dough into a ball, then, using the ball of your hand, push and squish the dough away from you until it is flattened out somewhat. Fold this on top of itself, and keep pushing the dough out with your hand, again folding the dough on top of itself and turning the dough around as you go. Do this for about 10 minutes until the dough is smooth and elastic. Put this mix back into a bowl (greased), and stir in the chocolate chips with a wooden spoon.

Cover this bowl with a clean tea towel and leave it to 'rise' until it doubles in size (usually this takes one and-a-half hours, depending on the ambient temperature). Here's a tip: Place the bowl, still covered with the tea towel, on the floor of the front seat of your car - on an autumn day, the mild heat inside a car is perfect for making the dough rise, and speeds up the process.



This is how the mixture will look after it has risen and before 'knocking down'.

Once the dough has risen (to about twice its original size), knock it down with your fist. This takes the air out of the dough which builds within the dough as it rises, due to the yeast. Knocking the dough down returns it to its original size.

Divide the dough into 12 equal-sized balls (see below).



We weighed the balls on a digital scale and found that 75 g of mixture made 12 balls.

Place these balls into a greased baking tray, allowing room between the balls for expansion as they cook (see below).



Cover with a clean tea towel and leave in a warm place (remember the car trick!) for a further 45 minutes, or at least until they have doubled in size. While the dough is further proving, pre-heat your oven to 190 degrees Centigrade.

Now is the time to make the paste. Take all the paste ingredients mentioned above and combine them in a bowl. Place the mixture in a piping bag fitted with 0.5cm nozzle and pipe crosses on top of the buns.



Bake for 15-20 minutes, until cooked through.

As the buns are cooking, combine the apricot jam with two tablespoons of water in a small saucepan on a low heat. Once the buns are cooked and taken out of the oven, and while they're still warm, brush them with the jam glaze.



Certainly try one of your buns now - but once the rest have cooled, put them in a freezer bag and place them in the freezer.



When you're ready to wow the rellies, take your hand-made buns from the freezer, cut them in half, zap them in the microwave for 10-20 seconds, smother in butter and serve -- or if you prefer, lightly toast them before serving.

You'll be the hero of Easter!

Base recipe sourced from Delicious magazine, April 2012