

Chocolate, orange and cardamom Easter Blossom Bread

If like me you don't want the children to have a monopoly on sweet treats for breakfast then this decadent Easter blossom bread made from a delicious enriched dough flavoured with orange and cardamom is just perfect. The dough is twisted into a pretty flower that is filled with chocolate spread and drizzled with an orange glaze. This bread is best served warm, simply pull off the petals and enjoy.

Makes 8 generous servings

Ingredients

Dough

500g Strong white bread flour, plus a little extra for dusting
10g Fine table salt
12g Fast action yeast
60g Caster sugar
Finely grated zest of 2 oranges
120ml Milk
120ml water
Seeds from 12 green cardamom pods, crushed
2 Medium eggs
A little vegetable oil for bowl

Filling

160g Chocolate spread

Glaze

Juice of 1 orange
Approx 200g – 250g Icing sugar

1. Put the strong white bread flour in the bowl of a stand mixer that has been fitted with a dough hook. Alternatively you can mix by hand in a large bowl but this is a sticky enriched dough that can be a little bit tricky to handle so on this occasion I would recommend using a machine if you have one.
2. Add salt, fast action yeast, caster sugar and the finely grated zest of 2 oranges. Mix on a slow speed.
3. Gently warm the milk and water with the butter and the crushed cardamom seeds. Once the butter has melted strain the seeds from the liquid.
4. Gradually add the warm milk mix (make sure it's warm and not hot or it will kill the yeast) along with the eggs that have been lightly beaten. Mix for about 5 minutes until the dough is soft and smooth.
5. Tip into a lightly oiled bowl and cover with cling film.
6. Prove until the dough has doubled in size and springs back when you press it, approximately 1 hour.
7. Tip the dough onto a floured surface and knock it back. Shape it into a smooth ball and then roll it into a 30cm circle.
8. Place a small upturned bowl or drinking glass (about 9cm in diameter) in the centre of the circle and using a very sharp knife cut the dough into quarters from the edge of the dough to the rim of the bowl or glass.
9. Cut each quarter into 4 evenly sized wedges then remove the bowl or glass. You should now have 16 wedge-shaped strips surrounding the uncut centre.
10. Take two strips that are side by side and twist them together about 5 times; pinch the ends together then coil the twisted dough into a round. Arrange this round on the uncut dough in the centre of the circle.

11. Continue to twist and pinch the remaining 14 strips together in pairs, coiling and arranging them into 7 petals that surround the central rosette.
12. Make 8 balls of foil about 2.5cm in diameter; wrap these balls in a small square of baking paper. Carefully place 1 in the centre of each petal to ensure that once the bread has baked you have a hollow for the filling.
13. Transfer the loaf onto a baking sheet that has been greased or lined with baking paper, reshaping a little if necessary.
14. Cover the loaf with a clean tea towel or a large polythene bag and leave to prove for approximately 45 minutes until it has doubled in size and springs back when you press it.
15. Pre-heat the oven to 180°C (fan).
16. Remove the tea towel or bag but leave the foil balls covered in baking paper in situ. Bake for 30 – 35 minutes until the bread is golden brown and sounds hollow when you tap it. Transfer onto a wire rack and leave to cool slightly.
17. Fill a disposable piping bag with chocolate spread and snip off the end to give you a fairly wide opening. Remove the foil balls and pipe chocolate spread into each of the 8 hollows.
18. Mix enough of the icing sugar with the juice of 1 orange to make a glaze and fill a disposable piping bag. Snip off just the very tip of the bag and pipe the glaze backwards and forwards across the petals and over the chocolate spread. Allow the glaze to set before serving.

Tips

- The chocolate spread can be replaced by raspberry jam or lemon curd if you prefer.
- You can use teaspoons instead of piping bags to fill and glaze the bread if you don't mind a slightly more informal finish.