



Finnish Coffee Bread (Pulla)

Makes 2 Loaves

INGREDIENTS

1 cup milk
5/8 cups sugar + 1 tsp
1/2 tsp salt
1/4 lb butter
1 1/2 eggs + 1 beaten
1 tsp cardamom (pre-ground or preferably freshly crushed)
1 pkg dry active yeast
1/4 cup warm water
4 1/2 cups all-purpose flour + extra for the counter/board

DIRECTIONS

1. Combine yeast, 1 tsp sugar and 1/4 cup warm water (not hot) in a bowl. Set aside to allow the yeast to bloom.
2. Warm milk, sugar, salt and butter over low heat until butter is just melted (do not boil) and then remove it from the heat to cool to almost room temperature.
3. In large mixing bowl, beat eggs with a hand mixer until fluffy. Add crushed cardamom.
4. Add the cooled milk mixture to the eggs, add 1 cup of flour and beat together. Add the bloomed yeast.
5. Beat remaining flour into mixture, 1 cup at a time, until the dough/batter is sticking to the top of the beaters. Use a spoon to stir in the rest of the flour until a soft dough forms that won't stick to your hands. Knead dough until smooth - about 5-7 minutes.
6. Shape the dough into a large ball. Set it in the bottom of the large mixing bowl (or another bowl that is sprayed with cooking spray), cover loosely with a clean tea towel that is sprayed lightly with cooking spray and let the dough rise in warm place until doubled.
7. Punch down the dough and knead again for another 5 minutes.
8. To shape into the traditional braids, roll dough into long strips and braid, tucking the ends under slightly.
9. Carefully move each braid onto greased cookie sheets or pans, cover with clean, sprayed tea towels again and let them rise a second time until doubled. Brush braids with the remaining beaten egg and sprinkle with decorating sugar or sliced almonds.
10. Bake each braid in a pre-heated 350°F for approximately 45 minutes or until light, golden brown.