

Cinnamon-Raisin Ring/Buns/Bread

(with Cream Cheese Frosting)

Recipe makes: 1 large ring, (as shown on photo page), 12 large buns or 2 loaves of bread
No nutritional info given but I'm pretty sure it's fattening.

YOU CAN DEVIDE THIS RECIPE IN HALF WITH THE SAME GREAT RESULTS..
WORKS FROM ELEVATIONS OF SEA LEVEL TO 5500'

Dough

½ c. Water
¾ c. Milk
2 Eggs (sometimes I use 1 if I'm running short)
2 Tablespoons Butter (diced into small bits) or Veg. Oil
1 ½ tsp. Vanilla Extract
1 ½ tsp. Salt
1 ½ tsp. Cinnamon
2 Tbs. Brown Sugar (dark, light..whatever you have)
4 c. Bread flour
2 ¼ tsp. Instant yeast (I guess you could use active but I haven't tried it)

Filling

2-3 Tbs. Melted butter
Cinnamon/sugar mix (let's say..1/2 c. sugar and 1 tbs. Cinnamon (?) ...it's a judgment..use your discretion)
1 c. raisins (doesn't hurt if you rehydrate/soaking in brandy is good but not necessary)
½ c. chopped nuts

Make sure your ingredients are at room temp. If you forget this and the eggs are cold, soak them in a bowl with hot water for about 10 minutes to take the chill off.

First off, beat the eggs with a fork to break the yolks and incorporate the yolks with the white. Just give it a mix.

Then, put all your "dough" ingredients together in a bowl.* Stir with a wooden spoon until it holds together. Remove it from the bowl and knead it on a floured surface for about 6 minutes, adding flour as required until you get a nice, elastic type ball. It really shouldn't be too sticky.

Place dough ball in a bowl that has been greased. Make sure the bowl is at least twice the size of the ball since it will eventually double in size. Cover with plastic wrap and place in a draft free space. Then walk away and don't look back. (really, watched dough does not rise)Temperatures don't seem to matter

much. Just remember that the cooler the room, the longer it takes for the rising process. This is not a bad thing! Usually this will take an hour to an hour and a half. Don't worry about the measurement scale, either. You're going to let it take another rising so after the first "rising" period you'll have a second chance!

Ok, now punch it down (yes, remove the plastic wrap first). Just make a fist (take your rings off if they are more than just bands...the fancy ones get stuck with dough) and stick your fist right down the center. Is there a right and wrong way? I don't think so! Now remove the deflated dough from the bowl and place on a lightly floured surface. Kind of shape it into a ball (don't work too hard at this..it should take less than 30 seconds) and leave it to "rest". Set the timer and come back. Minimum resting time is 5 minutes but you can go as long as 15 minutes (you just don't want it to dry out). Resting allows the dough to relax so it won't be a fight to roll it out.

If you're making the "Ring" leave the dough as a single unit, if making the Buns or Bread divide the dough in half (it's much easier to work in 2 sections)

Now, take your rolling pin, dowel or wine bottle and roll out the dough to $\frac{1}{4}$ " thickness. Roll a bit, turn the dough over, roll a bit. Always roll from the center out. Roll, flip, repeat. Remember, from the center outward. You can try to get a perfect shape and if you find the technique, let me know. I just try to get it more rectangular than round (which is no easy feat).

Once you have the dough at $\frac{1}{4}$ " thick, let it relax on the counter while you melt the butter. (1 minute or so). Then take your basting brush (I get mine at hardware store and run them through the dishwasher..at a buck a piece they're a great bargain!) and paint the dough with the melted butter. Sprinkle with Sugar/Cinnamon Mix, apply raisins and nuts.

Starting at the edge closest to you, make a tight roll. It's OK to squeeze the dough; pinch, pull and push where you need to. It's not going to be perfectly rolled and that's fine. At least it will look homemade :)

If your making the ring, just lay it out (as in photo #1) on a greased and floured (or powdered sugar) 8" X 11" baking pan. Cut $\frac{1}{4}$ " slits every so often to allow for expansion.

If your making the buns, slice your roll in 1" sections (crosswise) and lay them flat in a greased and floured (or powdered sugar) 8" X 11" baking pan

If your making cinnamon bread, pinch the seams shut along the length and at the ends (although nothing horrible is going to happen if you forget to do this) and place, seam down in a greased and floured (or powdered sugar) loaf pans. Cut crosswise, lengthwise or diagonal slits (3) to allow for expansion.

Put the product back in that draft free space. You don't need to cover them. Let rise for another hour. Meanwhile, preheat your oven to 375 degrees. (this takes a good 20 minutes..don't let that 'beep, beep, beep" convince you that the oven is ready..wait 'till the thing is good and heated all around!)

Put your masterpiece in the oven. (if it doesn't look like it has "doubled" in bulk, no fear! It will expand during the initial baking). Bake the Ring for about an hour and 10 minutes, the bread for about 50 minutes and the rolls for about 40-45 minutes. LEAVE THE OVEN DOOR CLOSED FOR THE FIRST 30

MINUTES (No cheating). It's important to keep the heat in while the final rising is occurring. You can check for doneness with a thermometer. Insert into the center. It should read 180-190 degrees. If you don't have a thermometer, you'll have to go by sight. It should look brown. There's a "knock on the bottom and listen for hollow" sound but breads always sound "hollow" to me. When in doubt, leave it in an extra 5 minutes or so.

Remove from oven, remove from pan and let cool on a wire rack.

Cream Cheese Frosting:

1 c. cream cheese,
¾ c. powdered sugar
Dash of milk or cream
1 tsp. Vanilla

Mix all ingredients until well blended

Spread on slightly cooled items.

EAT!

***Or**, put all the ingredients in a heavy duty mixer using a dough hook and blend on slow until the dough climbs up the hook.

*** Or** use the dough setting of your bread maker