

EASTER HOT CROSS BUNS

These hot cross buns are the perfect accompaniment for Easter and if you (accidentally) make a few extra you will then have the perfect excuse to make a delicious hot cross bun and butter pudding.

Method

1. To make the buns, sieve the flour, mixed spice and salt into a mixing bowl, next rub the butter through the mixture using your fingertips. Then add the sugar, yeast, zest of the unwaxed lemon, beaten egg and finally the milk.
2. Mix all of the ingredients together to create a pliable dough and slowly integrate the dried fruit, then turn out onto a floured work surface. Work the dough lightly for around 5-10 minutes, or until the dough has turned elastic.
3. Place the dough into a large mixing bowl and cover with cling film. Leave the dough in a warm location for 1 hour to prove.
4. Turn out the proved mixture onto a floured work surface and knock out the dough to remove any air from the mixture. Return and cover the dough into the bowl for a further 40 minutes.
5. Turn the dough out again onto a floured surface and divide the dough into 12 equal pieces. Roll the pieces into balls and then flatten very lightly into bun shapes. Lightly cover the buns and leave to rest for 45 minutes. Then pre-heat your oven to 240C/220C Fan/Gas 8.
6. To make the topping, mix the 2 tablespoons of plain flour with 3 tablespoons of lukewarm water to make a paste. When the buns have risen, put the paste into a piping bag and pipe a cross on the top of each bun.
7. Place the buns in the pre-heated oven and bake for 10-12 minutes or until they are lightly browned.
8. Gently warm 3 tablespoons of apricot jam on the hob, be sure not to boil.
9. When the buns have cooked and still warm, brush the warmed apricot jam onto the buns. Finally let the buns cool and enjoy.

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Ingredients for the buns

600g strong white flour, plus extra for dusting
2 ½ tsp mixed spice
1tsp salt
50g unsalted butter, plus extra for greasing
75g caster sugar
Zest of 1 unwaxed lemon
1 ½ tsp of dried fast action yeast
1 free-range egg beaten
300ml whole milk
60g dried sultanas
60g dried raisins

Ingredients for the topping

2 tbsp plain flour
3 tbsp apricot jam