

## **Hot Cross Buns**

*recipe adapted from Nadine Ingram*

### **Fruit**

70g sultanas

65g raisins

### **Dough**

400g strong bakers flour

60g unsalted butter, softened

60g brown sugar

10g dried yeast

200ml milk

1 tsp salt

1 egg

2 tsp ground cinnamon

1 tsp freshly grated nutmeg

½ tsp ground ginger

½ tsp ground cloves

### **Cross mixture**

75g plain flour

75ml water

1 tbsp olive oil

¼ tsp freshly grated nutmeg

¼ tsp ground cinnamon

### **Glaze**

50g castor sugar

50ml water

Before doing anything you need to rehydrate the dried fruit so they stay nice and plump when baking. Put your currants and sultanas in a bowl and cover with boiling water from the kettle. Let them soften while you make the dough (10 mins or so) and then drain.

To make your dough place all the dough ingredients into the bowl of your stand mixer fitted with a dough hook. Mix on low for 5 minutes. I like to use the lowest setting on my kitchenaid and take it nice and slow. The dough will remain quite sticky looking but all the flour should have been mixed in by this point. Increase your mixer to medium speed for another 10 minutes. This is an important step for your dough to develop the protein that helps your buns have a nice even crumb and structure. When the dough is ready it should look as though it is peeling away from the bottom and sides of the bowl (it still will look quite stocky but you should notice it is more of a ball that pulls off the side of the bowl as it spins).

Add the rehydrated fruit, you can mix it into your dough on the lowest setting but I find sometimes you need to get your hands in and evenly dispense the fruit with some very light folds using your hands. Remember you don't want to over work it.

Place the dough in a large, lightly oiled bowl and cover with plastic. Stick it in a nice warm place, at this time of year on the bench with a bit of sunlight is perfect. Leave to rest for 2 hours and doubled in size.

Line a baking sheet with baking paper and set aside.

Tip the dough onto a lightly floured surface and give it one final fold with your hands. Cut the dough into even portions. I go somewhere between 90-100g per portion and end up with anywhere from 10-12 buns. It doesn't matter how many you get out of it just so long as they are even in weight.

Roll each portioning into a little bun shape, tucking the dough underneath and arrange on the baking tray. If too sticky use a little flour on your hands. Once all your buns are rolled and nestled next to each other on the tray cover with a tea towel and return to the warm spot for 30mins. If you're making on a particularly cold day things might take a little longer to rise so just be patient, I sometimes stick my tea towel in the microwave for 30 seconds to make sure its nice and warm.

Preheat the oven to 180 degrees.

To make the cross mixture whisk all ingredients in a bowl, use your instincts if it is too runny make sure to add more flour, too thick add a little more water and oil in equal parts. Pour into a piping bag and once your buns have doubled in size and are looking like the right size and shape, pipe your crosses.

Place the buns in the oven and bake for 15 minutes, then, without opening the oven door, reduce the temperature to 170C and bake for a further 15 minutes or until the buns are golden. If you do peak halfway through (I do) you may notice the white crosses seem to 'melt' into the bun but don't fear they come out looking beautiful once its all done.

To make the glaze, place all the glaze ingredients in a small saucepan and stir over medium heat until the sugar has dissolved and the mixture begins to boil. Simmer for about 5 minutes or until it is thick and syrupy. While the buns are still hot brush the tops liberally with the sticky glaze.

Serve fresh, toasted with butter and make sure you keep them airtight.