

Honey Cinnamon Babka | by Sierra Waters

Makes 1 loaf

Equipment

9x5 in loaf pan

Stand Mixer

Rolling Pin

Ingredients

½ cup whole milk

1 teaspoon active dry yeast

2 ½ cups einkorn flour

3 tablespoons honey

½ teaspoon kosher salt

3 tablespoons unsalted butter, chilled and cut into ½ inch pieces

1 whole egg plus 1 egg yolk

Spiced Cinnamon Filling

½ cup pure maple syrup

4 tablespoons unsalted butter

¼ teaspoon white miso paste

3 teaspoons ground cinnamon

⅛ teaspoon ground allspice

⅛ teaspoon ground nutmeg

⅛ teaspoon ground cardamom

¼ teaspoon vanilla extract

Instructions

1. Brush the bottom of a 9x5 loaf pan with butter and line it with parchment paper, leaving a few inches hanging over the sides for easy release later.
2. **Bloom the Yeast:** In a glass measuring cup, measure the whole milk and warm gently in the microwave for 15-20 seconds until lukewarm. Pour about half of the milk into a small bowl. Sprinkle over the yeast and whisk until combined. Set aside to bloom for about 5 minutes. After 5 minutes, whisk the honey into the yeast and milk until incorporated. Set aside.
3. **Make the dough:** In the bowl of a stand mixer with the hook attachment, add the flour, salt, and butter. Toss together with your hands so all the butter chunks are coated in flour. Add the yeast and honey mixture to the bowl along with the whole milk, egg, and egg yolk. Mix on low at first to combine and then increase to medium. Mix until all the flour is incorporated into the dough. The dough should be tacky but not sticky. Pour the dough onto a floured work surface and use the palms of your hands to lightly knead it into a smooth ball. Pressing the dough with your fingertip should bounce back slightly and leave a slight indentation. Place the dough into a glass bowl and cover with plastic wrap. Transfer to a warm spot in your kitchen and allow it to rise for about 1 1/2 hours or until it almost doubles in size. Once that happens, place the dough in the fridge for another 30 minutes. This dough is easier to work with when cold.
4. **Make the Spiced Cinnamon Filling:** In a medium saucepan, add maple syrup, butter, spices, miso, and vanilla. Place over medium heat and whisk until combined, the butter is melted, and the mixture is smooth. Simmer until bubbly for 2 minutes, then take off the heat and pour into a small glass bowl. Place it in

the fridge to firm up until the dough is ready. The filling is easiest to spread when very cold and prevents a mess when rolling up the dough.

5. **Roll, Fill, & Shape:** Take the dough out of the fridge and place the dough on a floured work surface. I like using a silicone baking mat with a ruler on one side to make measuring the dough easier. Using a rolling pin, roll the dough into an 8 x 13 inch rectangle. Next, take the filling and spread evenly over the dough using a spoon or knife. Leave about ½ inch border around the dough. Then begin rolling the dough short side, away from you first, until you have a log.
6. **Twist the loaf:** Using a sharp knife, sliced the log in half gently. Having all the ingredients cold helps this braiding process go much easier. Twist the two pieces together a few times to form a tight corkscrew and pinch the ends together at the top and bottom of the roll. The twist doesn't have to be perfect; do your best before the dough and the filling gets too soft. Carefully transfer the dough to the prepared loaf pan and press down gently to fill out the pan. Cover the pan with plastic wrap and allow it to rise for the last time in a warm spot in your kitchen. Let the dough sit covered until it is very puffy and almost doubled in size, 30-60 minutes, depending on the temperature of your kitchen.
7. Meanwhile, preheat the oven to 350 degrees F. Once the roll is risen, brush with an egg wash. (whisk one egg in a bowl) Bake the babka for 25-30 minutes or until the top is golden brown and firm to the touch. It's better to slightly underbake this bread as it will continue carryover cooking slightly. You can also carefully insert a knife or toothpick in the center of the loaf; if it comes out clean without dough, then it's done.
8. Remove from the oven and let the babka cool in its pan for about 15 minutes. Use the parchment to lift the babka from the pan and transfer it to a cooling rack. Serve warm by itself or with a smear of butter.

9. To reheat, either place in the toaster or microwave until soft again. Enjoy!

Notes:

Dough made with einkorn flour doesn't need excessive kneading because the gluten is very weak.