

FESTIVE RECIPES 2016

Christopsomo

Greek Christmas bread – the dough is enriched with butter, milk, sugar, eggs and mixed peel. Some people add wine or ouzo to the dough for an even more flavoursome loaf. The traditional practice when making this bread is to knead all of your hopes, aspirations and intentions for the new year into the dough and to spend the time it takes to ferment and rise, contemplating the year just gone. Baking it and sharing it with your nearest and dearest ensures that your hopes for the new year come to fruition. Some people decorate the loaf with personal symbols or motifs made from extra dough.

400g plain white flour
100g whole wheat flour
240g/ml warm milk
7g dried yeast
5g salt
1 egg
25g sugar
25g butter, soft

100g candied citrus peel
1tsp crushed anise seeds or ½ tsp crushed fennel seed
½ tsp crushed cloves
½ tsp grated nutmeg

Egg for glazing

1. Start with the dough. Mix all of the ingredients together to form wet sticky dough, Leave this for 10 minutes before kneading it to smooth and elastic dough.
2. Place into an oiled bowl, cover and allow to ferment for 3 - 4 hours.
3. De-gas the dough and cut off about 50g of dough to use later.
4. Flatten the dough into a disk. Imagine a clock and take the edge (or ear) at 12 o'clock and stretch it out a bit and fold it into the centre. Crimp this down and repeat at 3, 6 & 9 o'clock. Now repeat with the other 4 ears. Now turn this over so that the crimps are below and draw the dough towards you, but don't let it roll. This will tighten up the ball further. Continue doing this in a circular motion until you have a proud ball of dough.
5. Place onto a baking tray and cover with a cloth or place the tray into a plastic bag and allow it to proof until doubled in size.
6. At this stage, take your extra dough and roll it out to form a long sausage. Use this to form a cross over the ball, tucking in the ends under the main dough. You can also use the dough to form symbols personal to you and your family and stick them onto the main dough with egg wash.
7. Brush the whole thing with egg and bake in an oven pre-heated to 200°C for 10 minutes, then lower the temperature to 175°C and bake for a further 25 minutes.