

Enhance Easter feast with fruit-filled bread

Easter marks the end of Lenten fasting, and for many, that signals a sumptuous Easter feast, complete with festive sweet breads. In some homes, the practice of serving an Easter bread started with an ethnic tradition, while in others, it is simply an occasion to enjoy good, homemade bread.

Whatever your holiday traditions, you'll want to try these luscious fruit-filled breads for your Easter celebration. Pearadise Braid and Raisin Filled Crown are attractive enough to double as your centerpiece, but they don't require hours in the kitchen. Hot roll mix with fast-acting yeast is the key to speedy preparation in both recipes.

A refreshing, sweet blend of pears and dried fruit, spiced with nutmeg and mace, makes up the filling in Pearadise Braid. The attractive shaping is easy to do following the step-by-step directions in the recipe. After rolling the dough into a rectangle and spreading the filling down the center, make cuts along both sides of the dough and crisscross the strips over the filling.

For a whimsical Easter look, add pink and green coloring to the glaze and drizzle it over the braid after it cools.

Moist, plump raisins and a cinnamon-sugar mixture create the swirled filling in Raisin Filled Crown. The golden bread, that starts with hot roll mix, gets its tall, crown-like shape from the Bundt pan in which it bakes.

Blanched almonds placed in the bottom of the pan form the bread's decorative topping.

2 tsp. sugar
1/2 cup water
1/2 cup milk
2 tsp. margarine or butter, softened
1 egg
Filling:
2 tsp. margarine or butter, softened
16-oz. can sliced pears, drained and very well drained
1/2 cup dried pitted prunes or raisins
1/4 cup sugar
1/4 tsp. nutmeg
1/4 tsp. mace
Ginger:
1/4 cup powdered sugar
1 tsp. margarine or butter, softened
1 1/2 to 2 tsp. milk
Few drops red or green food color, if desired

Grease large cookie sheet. In small saucepan, heat water, 1/2 cup milk and 2 tablespoons margarine until very warm (110 to 120); margarine does not need to melt. In large bowl, combine yeast, warm milk, flour mixture and 2 tablespoons sugar; mix well. Add warm liquids; stir until dough pulls cleanly away from sides of bowl. Turn dough onto lightly floured surface. With greased or floured hands, shape into ball. Knead dough for 5 minutes until smooth. Cover dough with large bowl; let rest 5 minutes.

On lightly floured surface, shape dough into 14x12-inch rectangle using floured rolling pin or hands. Carefully transfer rectangle of dough to prepared cookie sheet. Spread with 2 tablespoons margarine. In small bowl, combine pears, prunes, 1/4 cup sugar, nutmeg and mace. Spread filling lengthwise down center third of dough.

Using sharp knife or scissors, make 2 1/4-inch cuts 1 1/4 inches apart along 14-inch sides. Starting at one end, crisscross strips alternating from side to side, overlapping ends to enclose filling.

Heat oven to 375 degrees. Place wire rack over large pan filled with very hot tap water. Cover dough completely with towel; let rise on wire rack until light, 25 to 30 minutes. Uncover dough. Bake at 375 degrees for 25 to 30 minutes or until golden brown. Cool completely on wire rack.

In small bowl, combine powdered sugar and 1 tablespoon margarine. Stir in milk and few drops food color until desired consistency. Drizzle over braid. Refrigerate leftovers. 1 loaf.

RAISIN FILLED CROWN
2 tsp. margarine or butter, softened
2 tsp. sugar
14 to 16 whole blanched almonds
16-oz. pkg. hot roll mix
2 tsp. sugar
1/2 cup water
1/2 cup milk
2 tsp. margarine or butter
1 egg
Filling:
2 tsp. margarine or butter, softened
1/2 cup sugar
1 tsp. cinnamon
1/2 cup raisins

Generously grease 12-cup fluted tube pan using 2 tablespoons margarine; sprinkle with 2 tablespoons sugar. AP

range almonds in clusters of 3 in decorative pattern in bottom of prepared pan.

In large bowl, combine yeast from foil packet, flour mixture and 2 tablespoons sugar; mix well. In small saucepan, heat water, milk and margarine until very warm (110 to 120 degrees); margarine does not need to melt. Add warm liquids and egg; stir until dough pulls cleanly away from sides of bowl. Turn dough onto lightly floured surface. With greased or floured hands, shape dough into ball. Knead dough for 5 minutes until smooth. Cover dough with large bowl; let rest 5 minutes.

On lightly floured surface, shape dough into 14x10-inch rectangle using floured rolling pin or hands; spread

with 2 tablespoons margarine. Combine 1/2 cup sugar and cinnamon; sprinkle evenly over dough. Sprinkle raisins evenly over sugar mixture. Starting with 14-inch side, roll up tightly. Pinch seam edge firmly to seal. Form into ring; pinch ends together to seal. Place seam side down over almonds in prepared pan.

Heat oven to 350 degrees. Place wire rack over large pan filled with very hot tap water. Cover dough completely with towel; let rise on wire rack until light, about 30 minutes. Uncover dough. Bake at 350 degrees for 25 to 35 minutes or until golden brown. Invert onto serving plate immediately. Serve warm. 1 coffee cake.

Hamburger is in this company dish

Want something special for a company dinner? Pinwheel Loaf Wellington is a unique twist on a traditional dish.

PINWHEEL LOAF WELLINGTON
1 envelope onion soup mix
2 lbs. ground beef
1/2 cup soft bread crumbs
1/2 cup catsup
3 eggs
1 tsp. oregano
6 slices cooked ham
2 cups shredded mozzarella cheese (about 6 oz.)
Pastry for double-crust pie

In large bowl, combine onion soup mix, ground beef, bread crumbs, catsup, 2 eggs and oregano. On waxed paper, shape mixture into 10 inch by 12 inch rectangle; top with ham and cheese, leaving a 1-inch border. Roll, starting at 10-inch end, jelly-roll style; seal edges tightly.

Roll pastry into 12 inch by 14 inch rectangle; arrange over loaf. Press pastry around base of filling to seal; trim excess. Prick with fork and brush with remaining beaten egg. Place on rack in baking pan; bake 1 hour or until done. Makes about 8 servings.

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