



## Chocolate Chip Hot Cross Buns

I love hot cross buns at Easter, however my kids turned their noses up at them. Then I discovered this recipe with chocolate chips. Irresistible. You can of course use 50g of currents or raisins if you prefer, but this way the kids will even help make them!

- 400g strong white bread flour,
- 7g sachet fast-action dried yeast
- 50g golden caster sugar, plus 1 tsp
- 1 tsp mixed spice
- 1 tsp ground cinnamon
- 250ml warm milk
- 1 medium egg, beaten
- 50g butter, melted, plus extra for greasing
- 100g chocolate chip (milk or dark)
- 50g plain flour
- For the glaze (optional)
- 2 tbsp apricot jam

1. Put the strong flour, yeast, caster sugar and 1 tsp salt in a bowl with the spices and mix. Make a well in the centre and pour in the milk, egg and butter. Start mixing with a plastic or wooden spoon and finish with your hands. If the dough is too dry, add warm water, or extra flour if it's wet.
  2. Knead the dough on a floured surface for 10 mins until it becomes smooth and springy. This will be a bit too much work for children, so get them to start the kneading, then when they get tired, take over.
  3. Transfer to a clean, lightly greased bowl and cover loosely with a clean, damp tea towel. Leave in a warm place to rise until roughly doubled in size – this will take about 1 hr depending on how warm the room is.
  4. Tip the dough onto a lightly floured surface and flatten. Scatter over the chocolate chips (or dried fruit), and knead the dough a few more times. Divide it into 8 even portions – (halve the dough, then halve each portion twice more = 8)
  5. Roll each portion into a smooth round and place on a greased baking sheet in 2 rows of 4, leaving some room between each bun for it to rise. Cover with a tea towel again and leave in a warm place to prove for 20 mins, until almost doubled in size again or just touching.
  6. Heat oven to 200C/180C fan/gas 6. Mix the plain flour with 1 tsp sugar and 4-5 tbsp water to give you a thick paste. Spoon into a piping bag and pipe white lines on the buns to make crosses. Bake for 20 mins until they are light brown.
  7. If you want to enjoy the buns untoasted, gently heat the jam in a pan or the microwave, and brush over the buns using a pastry brush. If you are going to toast them, then don't glaze them as the jam will burn.
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