

Christmas Stollen

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(Makes one loaf of stollen)

Bread:

- **375 grams bread flour**
- **10 grams instant yeast (preferably osmotolerant yeast)**
- **50 grams granulated sugar**
- **160 grams lukewarm milk**
- **60 grams egg, beaten**
- **½ tsp mixed spice or cinnamon**
- **7 grams salt**
- **75 grams unsalted butter, cubed**

Filling:

- **50 grams currants**
- **100 grams dark raisins**
- **100 grams golden raisins**
- **25 grams candied lemon peel**
- **50 grams candied orange peel**
- **50 grams blanched almonds, chopped**

Almond Paste:

- **200 grams almond paste ***
- **grated zest of 1 lemon**
- **1 tbsp beaten egg**

Topping:

- **30 grams melted butter**
- **confectioners' sugar**

To prepare the fruit: Place currants and raisins in a bowl and pour over hot water. Let sit for 15 minutes, drain and pat dry with paper towels.

Almond paste: Mix almond paste with zest and beaten egg. The almond paste should be smooth and supple, not too wet not too dry.

For the dough, combine the flour, yeast, sugar, milk, egg, mixed spice/cinnamon and salt into the bowl of a mixer fitted with a dough hook. Mix on a slow speed for 2 minutes, then on a medium speed for a further 6 - 8 minutes, until you have a firm dough. Add the butter piece by piece and continue to mix for a further 4 - 5 minutes until you have a soft, glossy, elastic dough, scraping down the bowl periodically to ensure that the butter is thoroughly incorporated.

Cover the bowl and let the dough stand for 15 minutes. Add the currants, raisins, candied lemon and orange peel and almonds and carefully knead into the dough until evenly distributed. Shape the dough into a ball and place it in a lightly greased bowl. Cover and let the dough rise until puffy, about 60 minutes.

Turn the dough out onto a lightly oiled counter, pre-shape into a light ball and cover to rest for 20 - 30

Flatten the loaf with a rolling pin, making sure to leave the top and bottom half of the dough a little thicker. Make a sausage shape out of the almond paste, a bit shorter than the length of the bread and place it in the middle. Fold the dough in half, making sure the thicker edges land against each other, the top edge lands more on the thinner center section. Now press the dough between the bump of the almond paste sausage and the thicker outer edge down firmly.

Transfer the stollen to a baking sheet lined with parchment paper, cover with plastic wrap and let rise at room temperature until slightly less than doubled in size, about 45 minutes. In the meantime, preheat the oven to 180°C/350°F.

Bake the stollen in the preheated oven for 35 minutes until golden brown. Keep a close eye on your stollen, if the browning process goes too quickly you can lower the oven temperature to 160°C/320°F, about 20 minutes into the baking process, and/or protect it with some aluminum foil.

Leave the stollen to cool on a rack for 10 minutes then brush it with the melted butter. When completely cooled dust it with confectioners' sugar. Wrap airtight and store at room temperature for up to 1 week. Freeze for longer storage.

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