

VETEBULLAR (CARDAMOM AND CINNAMON BUNS)

From Fika - The Art of the Swedish Coffee Break by Anna Brones & Johanna Kindvall.



Makes 30 to 36 buns, or 2 lengths

Bullar (buns) are perhaps the quintessential component to a Swedish coffee break, and *vete* in Swedish means “wheat.” *Vetebullar* is therefore the general term for wheat-based dough that can be turned into any number of bun creations.

Kanelbullar (cinnamon buns) and *kardemummabullar* (cardamom buns) are common variations on this type of bun, and while the traditional “roll” form is common, there are twisted varieties as well. Typically they are baked and served in paper liners. *Kanelbullar* are such an iconic pastry that an entire day in Sweden is devoted to them (October 4, for those considering celebrating).

This recipe has both filling varieties, and once you’ve mastered the dough, you can start experimenting with your own fillings. If a Swede knows one thing, it’s this: no matter what the variation, *bullar* are always best fresh out of the oven, and make for a wonderful smelling kitchen!

Dough

7 tablespoons (3.5 ounces, 99 grams) unsalted butter
1½ cups (360 milliliters) milk
2 teaspoons active dry yeast
4½ cups (1¾ pounds, 638 grams) all purpose flour
¼ cup (1.75 ounces, 50 grams) natural cane sugar
1½ teaspoons whole cardamom seeds, crushed
¼ teaspoon salt

Filling

7 tablespoons (3.5 ounces, 99 grams) unsalted butter, room temperature
½ cup (3.5 ounces, 99 grams) natural cane sugar
3 to 4 teaspoons ground cinnamon or whole cardamom seeds, crushed
2 additional teaspoons crushed cardamom seeds, if making filling using cinnamon

Topping

1 egg, beaten
Pearl sugar or chopped almonds

To prepare the dough, melt the butter in a saucepan; then stir in the milk. Heat until warm to the touch (about 110°F/43°C).

In a small bowl, dissolve the yeast in 2 to 3 tablespoons of the warm mixture. Stir and let sit for a few minutes until bubbles form on top of the yeast.

In a large bowl, mix together the flour, sugar, cardamom, and salt. Add the yeast mixture along with the remaining butter and milk. Work together with your hands until you can make the dough into a ball.

Transfer the dough to a flat surface and knead it until smooth and elastic, 3 to 5 minutes. The dough should feel moist, but if it sticks to your fingers add a tiny bit of flour. The dough is fully kneaded when you slice into it with a sharp knife and see small air bubbles throughout. Return the dough to the bowl, cover with a clean tea towel, and place in a draft free place to rise until doubled in size, about 1 hour.

Grease a baking sheet, or place medium paper liners directly on the sheet.

Make the filling right before the dough has finished rising. Using a fork, cream the butter together with the sugar and the spices until you get an evenly mixed, spreadable paste.

When the dough has finished rising, take half of the dough and place it on a flat surface. Roll it out with a rolling pin to an 11 by 17 inch (28 by 43 centimeter) rectangle. Place the rectangle on the surface so that the long side is closest to you.

Carefully spread half of the filling on top of the rolled out dough so that it covers the entire area; be sure to go all the way to the edges. Begin at the long side near you and roll the dough upward. Slice the roll into 15 to 18 equally sized slices and place them, rolled side up, on the baking sheet or in the paper liners. If using a baking sheet, pinch the ends of the slices to keep them from pulling away during baking. Repeat with the second half of the dough. Cover the buns with a clean tea towel and let rise for 45 minutes.

Preheat the oven to 435°F (225°C).

When the buns have risen, carefully brush them with the beaten egg and sprinkle each with the pearl sugar.

Bake for 8 to 10 minutes. If you are baking a length, bake for an additional 10 minutes. Remove from the oven, transfer the buns from the baking sheet to the counter, and cover with a tea towel to cool. Serve freshly baked, and if not eaten right away, store in the freezer once they are completely cooled.

VARIATIONS

Instead of rolling the dough to make the classic bun shape, you can also make twists, a common formation when making cardamom buns, as well as baking a length and cutting a design into the dough.

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