



HOT CROSS BUN LOAF

A warm, subtly spiced, comforting hot cross bun is one of our favourite things about Easter. So, we set out to elevate this seasonal favourite by making it into a supersized, and super delicious, hot cross bun loaf – perfect for sharing, and a fun centrepiece for your Easter gatherings. Bursting with bright, zesty, and fruity flavours, we've given the traditional recipe a little twist too!

Prep time 4 hours | Cook Time 30-40 minutes | Serves 8

500g strong bread flour, plus extra for dusting	80g sultanas
2 large Clarence Court Burford Brown eggs, beaten	60g mixed peel
1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon	80g dried cranberries
1/4 teaspoon mixed spice	Finely grated zest of 2 oranges
A few gratings of whole nutmeg	25g plain flour
1/4 teaspoon fine salt	1 teaspoon sunflower oil
75g caster sugar	2-3 tablespoons cold water
7g sachet dry yeast	Juice of 2 oranges
170ml whole milk, gently warmed to hand temp	2 tablespoons marmalade
80g unsalted butter, softened well, plus extra for greasing	

Method:

Grease a 2lb (900g) loaf tin with softened butter.

Sieve the flour, cinnamon, mixed spice, nutmeg, and fine salt into a large mixing bowl. Stir in the sugar and make a well in the centre. Place the yeast in a jug and stir with the warm milk, until dissolved and bubbling. Add the milk, eggs, and butter to the well and mix into a soft dough.

Lightly dust a clean work surface with a little flour or tip into the bowl of a free standing mixer with a dough hook and knead for 7 minutes until smooth and elastic.

Place into a lightly oiled mixing bowl and cover with cling film, set aside in a warm place to rise for 1-2 hours until it's doubled in size.

When time is up, lightly flour a clean work surface. Tip the dough on to the surface and gently knead. A few spoonfuls at a time, sprinkle over the fruit and zest, then knead and fold into the dough. When it's all incorporated, place back in the oiled bowl and cover with cling film. Allow to rise for a further hour.



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Divide the dough into 8 equal size balls (use a weighing scale to make sure they're all the same size). Shape the balls into fat sausages and sit them side by side in the tin. Place the tin in a large sandwich bag and seal it. Allow to rise in a warm place for a further hour. Pre-heat the oven to 180°C/160°C (fan).

Meanwhile mix the plain flour, oil, and cold water in a bowl to make a smooth paste. Spoon into a small piping bag and snip off a small hole. Pipe a little cross on top of each of the hot cross buns. Place the tin in the oven and bake for 30-40 minutes until golden and risen.

Place the juice and marmalade in a small pan and allow to bubble and thicken on a low heat. When the loaf is ready, carefully, and quickly, turn it out of the tin and onto a cooling rack. Brush over the glaze and leave to cool.

Simply serve warm with salted butter. This loaf is best eaten on the day it's made but will come back to a lovely soft loaf if warmed through in the oven the next day. It makes great toast or as the base for a bread and butter pudding too!



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