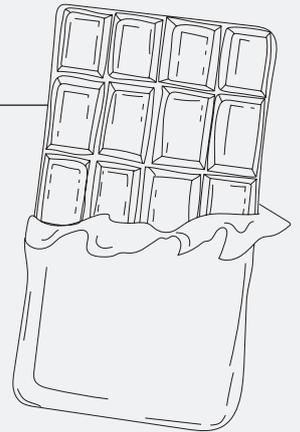


CHOCOLATE HAZELNUT BUNS



Ingredients

Makes 12

- 500g plain flour, sifted, plus extra for dusting
- 15g dry active yeast
- 80g caster sugar
- Pinch of sea salt
- 1/2 tsp ground cinnamon
- 200ml full-cream milk
- 80g unsalted butter, cut into cubes
- 2 eggs
- Egg wash, for brushing
- Pearl sugar, to decorate

Chocolate hazelnut filling

- 100g unsalted butter
- 50g brown sugar
- 100g 70% cocoa chocolate
- 2 tbsp chocolate hazelnut spread
- 1 tbsp cocoa powder
- 1 tsp vanilla bean paste or extract
- 150g toasted hazelnuts, very finely chopped
(I do this in a food processor)

Method

In a large bowl of a stand mixer fitted with a dough hook, combine the flour, yeast, sugar, salt and cinnamon.

Warm the milk together with the butter in a small saucepan over a low heat until the butter has melted. It should be around 40°C. Allow it to cool if too hot. Whisk in the eggs into the milk mixture. With the mixer on low, stream in the milk mixture then increase the speed to high and mix for 3-4 minutes or until the dough looks glossy and elastic. It should be a fairly soft dough but not sticky. Add a little extra flour if needed. Turn the dough into a ball and set aside to rise, covered, in a lightly greased bowl for 1 to 1 1/2 hours or until doubled in size.

Meanwhile, to make the chocolate filling, combine all of the ingredients, except for the hazelnuts, in a medium saucepan. Melt over a low heat, stirring to ensure the mixture doesn't burn. Allow to cool while the dough rises.

Preheat the oven to 180°C. Grease and line two flat baking trays.

Tip the dough onto a lightly floured work surface. Roll out to a 50 cm x 40 cm rectangle. Spread the filling evenly over the entire dough, right up to the edges. Sprinkle with the toasted hazelnuts. Fold the dough into thirds, like a letter. Use a rolling pin to flatten and stretch the dough a little. Trim a small amount from the edges of the rectangle so now you have straight edges. Cut 12 strips from the long side of the dough. Working with one strip at a time, hold the ends and twist to form a rope. Secure one end with your thumb and wrap the rope around three of your fingers twice. Wrap the other end around the top of the circle and tuck it under the circle, releasing it from your hands, to form the bun. Place on the baking tray and repeat with the remaining strips of dough. Leave plenty of room for the buns to spread as they cook. Cover with a tea towel and allow to rise for 45 minutes to 1 hour, or until slightly puffy and risen.

Brush the buns with the egg wash and scatter with the pearl sugar. Bake for 20-25 minutes until golden. The buns are best eaten warm from the oven.

