Chocolate Apricot Babka Buns Recipe

FILLING
1/3 cup walnuts
1 cup (5 ounces) quartered dried apricots
2 tablespoons brown sugar
1/2 cup all-purpose flour
2 tablespoons Dutch-process cocoa powder
2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
1/8 teaspoon salt
3 tablespoons unsalted butter, cut into 1/2-inch cubes
1. In food processor, pulse the walnuts, apricots, sugar, flour, cocoa, cinnamon, salt and butter until the mixture is crumbly and dark brown.
2. Transfer to a bowl.

GLAZE
2 tablespoons brown sugar
2 tablespoons honey
1 tablespoon unsalted butter
Pinch of salt
1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
1. In a microwave-safe bowl or measuring cup, combine the brown sugar, honey, butter, salt and vanilla.
2. Microwave for 30 seconds, or until the butter melts, the glaze boils and the sugar dissolves.

DOUGH
2 3/4 cups all-purpose flour
2 tablespoons granulated sugar
2 teaspoons instant yeast
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/3 cup milk
3 eggs
1/2 cup (1 stick) unsalted butter, at room temperature, cut into thick slices
Extra flour (for rolling)
1 egg beaten to mix with 1 tablespoon water (for the egg wash)
1. Have on hand an 8-or-9-inch square baking pan, a sheet of parchment paper, and a muffin tin lined with paper liners.
2. In the bowl of an electric mixer fitted with the paddle attachment on low speed, mix 2 cups of the flour, the sugar, yeast and salt together. Add the milk, eggs and butter, and beat on medium speed for 4 minutes, or until it is very sticky and stretchy.
3. Scrape down the sides of the bowl, and on low speed, gradually add the remaining 3/4 cup flour. With the mixer on medium speed, beat for 3 minutes. The dough will be soft.
4. Remove the bowl from the mixer stand and with a spatula, push the dough down into the bowl, scraping down the sides of the bowl to form a loose ball. Cover with plastic wrap and let rise for 2 hours, or until doubled in volume.
5. Line an 8-or 9-inch baking pan with plastic wrap.
6. Pull the edges of the dough in the bowl and stretch them toward the center to deflate the dough. Scrape the dough into the baking pan and pat it flat into the corners. Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate overnight.

7. Remove the dough from the refrigerator. On a floured work surface, roll the dough into a 12-by-14-inch rectangle. Sprinkle the parchment paper lightly with flour and transfer the dough to the paper. Position it with the short side parallel to the countertop. Brush a 1-inch strip of water along the farthest edge of the rectangle. Spread the streusel over the dough, without covering the strip of water. Roll over it gently with a rolling pin to compact it.

8. Roll the dough away from you into a cylinder, lifting the parchment paper to help to you roll it. Enclose the dough in the parchment with the seam on the bottom, set it on a baking sheet and freeze for 30 minutes.

9. Remove the dough from freezer. With a paring knife, mark the log into 12 even pieces. Slide a strand of dental floss under the log. Cross the ends and pull tight to cut the log into slices. Place them in the muffins cups. Cover loosely with plastic wrap. Let rise for 1 1/2 to 2 hours, or until puffed and not quite doubled.

10. Center a rack in the oven and heat the oven to 350 degrees. Brush the buns with the egg wash and bake for 30 minutes, or until browned. While the buns are hot, brush them with the warm glaze.

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