Elven Bread

Elven bakers have protected the secret of this bread for millennia. Both nutritious and delicious, a single bite of this mysterious rolled pastry loaf can sustain an adventurer for a day or more of journeying. Sweet and robust in flavor and made of fine grains and rich butter, elven bread is rumored to boast twice the nutritional value of iron rations at only half the weight, making it an essential adventuring fare for elves on the go. Even the most discerning high elves can’t resist this wholesome, cinnamon—and sometimes cardamom-scented treat.

MAKES TWO (5¼-INCH) LOAVES

DOUGH

2 packages (1 ounce each) active dry yeast
1% cups whole milk, lukewarm (110° to 115°F)
2 cups honey
2 eggs, beaten, plus 1 egg for egg wash
1% cup (6 ounces) unsalted butter, melted
2% cup plus 2 tablespoons sugar
1 cup whole wheat flour
5 cups all-purpose flour, plus more for rolling

FILLING

1 cup sugar
1 tablespoon all-purpose flour
1 tablespoon ground cinnamon

GOOEY'S NOTES

TO MAKE THE DOUGH: In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, dissolve the yeast in 1% cup of the lukewarm milk. Add the remaining 1% cups milk, the honey, the 2 beaten eggs, the butter, salt, whole wheat flour, and all-purpose flour. Mix until well combined. Switch to the dough hook attachment and mix on low speed until the dough is elastic and somewhat sticky, about 8 minutes. Alternatively, you can mix and knead the dough by hand on a work surface for about 15 minutes, or as long as it feels a little sticky.

Put the dough in a lightly greased large bowl, flipping the dough once to grease the top and bottom. Cover with a clean kitchen towel or plastic wrap and set aside in a warm place to rise until doubled in size, about 1 hour.

WHILE THE DOUGH IS RISING, MAKE THE FILLING. Combine the sugar, flour, and cinnamon in a small bowl.

In a separate bowl, beat the remaining egg with 1 tablespoon water to make an egg wash.

Generously butter two 8% by 4¼-inch loaf pans. Transfer the dough to a floured work surface, divide in half, and roll one piece into a 6% by 20-inch rectangle. Brush the dough with the egg wash. Then, layer the cinnamon-sugar filling. Starting with one of the short sides, roll the dough into a log. Repeat with the remaining dough, egg wash, and filling. Place the logs, seam-sides down, in the prepared pan. Cover and set aside in a warm place to rise until the center of the dough has created about 1 inch over the rim of the pan, 1% to 2 hours.

Fifteen minutes before the dough is ready to bake, preheat the oven to 400°F with a rack in the middle of the oven.

Bake for 10 minutes, then lower the oven temperature to 350°F and bake until the loaves are golden brown and sound hollow when tapped, 20 to 30 minutes. Remove the loaves from the pans and let cool completely on a wire rack before slicing.
DROW MUSHROOM STEAKS

A delicacy of the great Underdark City of Spiders, Mamleshwarzan, these seasoned riplahark mushroom steaks are harvested fresh from the fungi fields near Lake Dongarten. While their exact agronomy is a closely guarded druz secret, many speculate that fertilizer from the Dongarten sland rotte make these mushrooms grow unusually large, meaty, and nutrient rich. They’re so tasty and chewy, you’ll think you are eating unicorn! This dish has become so popular that it has migrated to the surface. And it’s even rumored to be a favorite of Kananthar of Waterdeep, a notorious beholder who prefers it to surface grown mushrooms as well as raw meat. But make sure to carefully read the label on that bottle of balsamic vinegar—the drow are as famous for their poisons as their sauces.

SERVES 6

3 tablespoons olive oil
2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
3 tablespoons balsamic vinegar
1 tablespoon fresh thyme leaves
1 teaspoon kosher salt
Freshly ground black pepper
6 large portobello mushroom caps (stems removed and discarded)

In a shallow dish wide enough to hold the mushrooms in a single layer, whisk together the olive oil, lemon juice, balsamic vinegar, thyme, salt, and several grinds of pepper. Put the mushrooms in the dish. Set aside to marinate at room temperature for 15 minutes, turning the mushrooms over and spooning the marinade on them halfway through.

Heat an outdoor grill or indoor grill pan over medium-high heat. Grill the mushrooms, flipping to cook both sides, until tender and browned, 10 to 12 minutes. Serve hot or at room temperature.
ROLLRM

The picturesque city-state of Tashalar is known for its jewel coast, temperate climate, and abundant vineyards, as well as for one of its most famed exports—rollrm. This zesty, licorice-infused tonic is noted for its bright, herbal tones and a minty finish. Establishments of the highest pedigree, ranging from the Elfhong Tavern in Backur’s Gate to the Lady Luck in Daggerford (as well as a slew of questionable taprooms), offer up homestead-inn incarnations of this absinthe style classic. For those not inclined to partake in alcoholic imbibement, but who are still seeking a minty beverage, try ever green spruce bark quaff, which also serves as a potent palate cleanser.

SERVES 2

1½ tablespoons sugar
20 large mint leaves, plus 2 sprigs for garnish
Small ice cubes or coarsely crushed ice
4 ounces absinthe
4 ounces seltzer, cold (optional)

In a cocktail shaker, muddle the sugar and 1¾ ounces water until the sugar dissolves and the liquid is syrupy. Add the mint leaves and muddle gently to bruise them and release their fragrance (do not pulverize). Fill the shaker about halfway with ice and add the absinthe. Gently and slowly shake and chill, at least 30 seconds. Fill two chilled old-fashioned rocks, or small Collins glasses, about halfway with ice and divide the Rollrm mixture between them. If using, add half the seltzer to each and stir gently to blend. Holding the mint sprig by their stems, slip them against the back of your hand or forearm (to help release their fragrance), garnish each glass with a sprig, and serve at once.