

PULL-OUT
ACTIVITY SECTION

THE LAB

Eight pages of things
to make and do

WARNING!
This recipe involves
using an oven. Ask
an adult to help you.



Bake hot cross buns

Discover how yeast makes these delicious Easter treats light and fluffy.

What you need

To make eight buns

- 500g strong white bread flour
- ½tsp salt
- 2tsp mixed spice
- 50g butter, chopped into cubes
- 50g caster sugar
- 200g mixed dried fruit
- 7g sachet easy-blend yeast
- 2 eggs
- 200ml warm milk (not boiling)
- 2 large bowls
- Wooden spoon
- Blunt knife
- Baking tray
- Baking paper
- Cling film

For the crosses

- 3tbsp plain flour
- Honey or golden syrup to glaze

Instructions

- 1 Mix the flour, salt and mixed spice together in a bowl.
- 2 Add the butter and rub it into the dry ingredients with your fingertips. Stir in the sugar and dried fruit with a wooden spoon, then add the yeast.
- 3 In another bowl, beat the eggs into the warm milk. Pour the egg and milk mixture over the dry ingredients.
- 4 Use a blunt knife to mix it all to make a dough. Dust a surface with flour, get the dough out of the bowl and knead it (pull and stretch) for five minutes until it feels stretchy. Place it back in the bowl and cover with a towel. Leave in a warm place for one hour to prove (expand).
- 5 Make eight dough balls and space them out on a baking tray lined with baking paper. Cover the baking tray with cling film and leave in a warm place until the dough balls double in size again. This takes 30–60 minutes.
- 6 Heat the oven to 220°C/fan 200°C/gas 7.
- 6 Mix the plain flour with 2tbsp water until it forms a dough. Roll it out, cut it into 16 strips (two for each bun) and make crosses on each bun.
- 7 Bake for 12–15 minutes until risen and golden. Brush the tops of the buns with honey or syrup.

AN EASTER TREAT

Hot cross buns are traditionally eaten on Good Friday, at the start of Easter weekend.



Make the cross with the flour and water mixture.

How does it work?

The special ingredient in this recipe is yeast – a single-celled fungus that is so tiny it can only be seen with a microscope. There are around twenty billion yeast cells in just one gram of baker's yeast. This microbe is very common in nature. Baker's yeast eats sugar and gives off carbon dioxide gas (the gas that makes fizzy drinks bubbly) and alcohol. When added to warm milk, dry yeast "wakes up" and starts to feed on sugar. It especially likes being in a warm place. As it continues to eat sugar and give off carbon dioxide, the hot cross bun dough puffs up with gas, which is why its volume increases, or rises. Baking the buns kills off the yeast, but the buns remain deliciously, light and fluffy.

We would love to see pictures of your lab experiments. Please send your photos to scienceandnature@dennis.co.uk

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