CHRISTMAS MORNING · DECEMBER 25

Christmas morning star bread

Prep 45 min **Cook** 25 min **Rise** 1 hr 30 min **Total** 2 hr 40 min **Makes** One large star loaf, about 8 servings
Level Medium

ADULT SUPERVISION REQUIRED

Cooking is for children and grown-ups together. An adult should supervise at all times and handle the oven, stovetop, knives, and anything hot. Melted cinnamon sugar and jam bubble inside the layers and stay very hot. Let the star cool for 10 minutes before anyone pulls off a point. A grown-up cuts the strips with the knife or pizza cutter and handles the hot oven.

ALLERGY INFORMATION

Contains wheat (gluten), milk, and egg. If you use jam, check the label for added ingredients. Always read ingredient labels, since brands vary, and ask about food allergies before you cook or share.

INGREDIENTS

Dough

- 3 cups (375 g) all-purpose flour, plus a little for rolling
- ¼ cup (50 g) sugar
- 2¼ tsp (1 packet, 7 g) instant yeast
- ¾ tsp salt
- ¾ cup (180 ml) milk
- ¼ cup (55 g) butter
- 1 egg

Filling and topping

- 3 tbsp (45 g) butter, melted
- ½ cup (100 g) sugar, white or brown, mixed with 1 tbsp ground cinnamon
- Or, instead of the butter and cinnamon sugar, ⅔ cup (200 g) thick jam
- 1 egg yolk beaten with 1 tbsp milk, for brushing
- Powdered sugar, for dusting

METHOD

1. Warm the milk and butter until the butter melts, then cool to just warm (105–110°F, 40–43°C). Mix the flour, sugar, yeast, and salt, add the milk and the egg, and stir to a shaggy dough.
2. Knead for 8 to 10 minutes, until smooth and soft but not sticky. Cover and let rise in a warm place for about 1 hour, until doubled.
3. Divide the dough into 4 pieces and roll each into a 10-inch (25 cm) circle. Lay one on a parchment-lined baking sheet, brush with melted butter, and sprinkle with a third of the cinnamon sugar (or spread thinly with jam). Repeat twice, then top with the last circle, plain.
4. Set a 2½-inch (6 cm) glass upside down in the center. Cut from the glass to the edge into 16 equal strips (quarters, then eighths, then sixteenths). Remove the glass.
5. Pick up two strips side by side and twist them away from each other twice, then pinch their ends together to make a point. Repeat all the way around to make 8 points.
6. Cover and let rise for 30 minutes, until puffy. Heat the oven to 350°F (175°C), then brush the star with the egg yolk mixture.
7. Bake 20 to 25 minutes, until deep golden brown (190°F, 88°C, in the center), covering with foil if it browns fast. Cool 10 minutes and dust with powdered sugar.

LITTLE HELPERS CAN (WITH A GROWN-UP)

- Roll the dough circles (wobbly is fine)
- Sprinkle the cinnamon sugar on each layer
- Twist the points with a grown-up's help
- Dust the star with powdered sugar through a sieve

GOOD TO KNOW

- For Christmas morning, shape the star the night before, cover, and chill up to 12 hours. Let it stand 45 minutes before baking.
- Use thick jam and spread it thinly, since runny jam leaks from the twists.

A BLESSING BEFORE WE EAT

Bless us, O Lord, and these thy gifts, which we are about to receive from thy bounty, through Christ our Lord. Amen. Jesus, bright morning star, lead our family to you as the star led the Wise Men.