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Good Morning! Cinnamon Buns
with Cream Cheese Frosting
Makes 12 large cinnamon buns

When company is in the house, we find it the perfect excuse to make cinnamon rolls. We mix the dough and icing ahead of time, then pull the magic out of the refrigerator and bake in the morning for our guests. The fabulous aromas of fresh cinnamon bread baking in the kitchen rouses them from their beds in a most wonderful way. Pair these cinnamon buns with your best cup of coffee and enjoy a marvelous breakfast with family and friends!

Dough Ingredients:

1/2 cup sugar
1 cup whole milk
8 tablespoons (1 stick) unsalted butter
1/2 teaspoon ground cardamom
2-1/2 teaspoons salt
1 cup lukewarm water
2 packages active dry yeast
7 cups all-purpose flour, plus additional for dusting
3 eggs, room temperature

Cinnamon-Sugar Filling:

8 tablespoons (1 stick) unsalted butter, softened
1/2 cup sugar
1 teaspoon cinnamon

Cream Cheese Frosting:

8 oz. cream cheese, room temperature
2 cups confectioner's sugar
4 tablespoons (1/2 stick) unsalted butter
1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
1/2 teaspoon almond extract (optional)
1-2 tablespoons milk
Pinch of salt

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Directions:

1. Place the sugar in a large mixing bowl, or the bowl of a stand mixer.
3. In a small saucepan, heat the milk, butter, cardamon, and salt to scalding – hot, just short of a simmer. Pour the hot mixture over the sugar. Stir gently until the sugar is dissolved. Allow the mixture to cool to lukewarm. The cardamom will bloom in the heat and send wonderful aromas throughout the kitchen!
4. Dissolve the yeast by adding the 2 packages of yeast into 1 cup of lukewarm water (110 – 115°F). After a few minutes, the yeast should begin blooming and display foaminess on the water's surface.
5. Add the yeast mixture to the lukewarm milk mixture. (Make sure that the milk mixture has reached a lukewarm temperature; too hot, and it will kill the yeast, too cold, and the yeast's growth will slow).
6. Add 2 cups of the flour to the milk-yeast mixture. It will be a thin batter at this stage. Add the 3 room temperature eggs, beat well.
7. Add an additional two cups of the remaining flour a cup at a time and mix well. The dough should have a thick batter-like consistency at this stage.
8. Add the remaining flour, approximately 3 more cups, one cup at a time, or just until the dough begins to stay away from the pan. The dough is quite sticky at this stage. Continue to stir vigorously in the bowl with a large wooden spoon or with the dough hook of a stand mixer; this kneads the bread and forms the bread's texture. (The dough will be too sticky to knead by hand; use the dough hook, or a sturdy wooden spoon.)
9. Allow the dough to rise in a greased bowl in a warm location and away from drafts until doubled in bulk, about 1 – 1.5 hours depending on the room's ambient temperature.
10. When doubled, punch the dough down. Knead a few times in the bowl to bring the dough into a ball again. It will have lost much of its stickiness by this stage and have a nice elasticity.

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11. Place the dough in the refrigerator to chill for 3 hours or up to two days.
12. Two hours before serving, remove the dough from the refrigerator. Roll the dough into a rectangle, about 24" x 15". (The chilled dough will no longer be sticky; you'll find it easy to stretch into shape. Dust the surface and your hands lightly with flour if necessary, but avoid adding too much additional flour to the dough.) Smear the softened butter over the dough. Sprinkle with a mixture of the cinnamon and sugar.
13. Roll the rectangle beginning on the long side. With the seam side down, cut the dough roll into 2-inch pieces. Place cut side down in a lightly oiled 9" x 13" pan in a 3 x 4 arrangement. Allow the rolls to rise for 15-20 minutes.
13. Bake in a 350°F for 40-45 minutes. Check the rolls at the 20-minute mark to see if the tops are browning too quickly. If so, tent with foil while the bread continues to bake on the inside. The rolls are done when the internal temperature reaches 180°F. (This is a good use of your remote probe thermometer – prevents underbaking or overbaking!)
14. When baked, allow the buns to cool in the pan on a cooling rack.
15. For the icing, mix the softened cream cheese, confectioner's sugar, softened butter, vanilla and almond in a medium bowl with a hand mixer. Drip in the milk a teaspoon at a time and whisk until the consistency of a very thick frosting. (The icing may be mixed up to 3 days ahead of time and stored, well-covered, in the refrigerator. Allow the icing to come to room temperature prior to frosting the rolls.) Frost the cooled rolls, serve and enjoy!