

Salt and Serenity

Maple Walnut Cinnamon Star Bread

There are two unusual ingredients in this recipe that contribute to creating a stellar bread. The first is [dried potato flakes](#) (also known as instant mashed potatoes). The starch in the potato flakes attract and hold more water than the wheat starches in flour, leading to a moister bread. The second is skim milk powder. The protein in the milk results in a more tender texture and higher rise.

Recipe adapted from www.kingarthurbaking.com

Dough:

270 grams (2 cups) all-purpose flour
46 grams (½ cup) dried potato flakes
28 grams (¼ cup) skim milk powder
57 grams (4 Tablespoons) unsalted butter, at room temperature
227 grams (¾ cup plus 2 Tablespoons) lukewarm (105-110°F) water
7 grams (2 teaspoons) instant yeast
25 grams (2 Tablespoons) granulated sugar
1 teaspoon Diamond Crystal kosher salt
1 teaspoon vanilla extract or vanilla bean paste

Filling:

105 grams (⅓ cup) [maple butter](#) (also called maple spread)
65 grams (½ cup) walnut halves, toasted and cooled
98 grams (½ cup) light brown sugar
2 teaspoons ground cinnamon

Assembly:

1 large egg, beaten
Icing sugar, for decorating when baked and cooled

Place all dough ingredients in stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment and mix for 2 minutes at medium speed. Switch to the dough hook and mix for another 5-6 minutes until you have a smooth dough.

Place dough in a lightly greased bowl, cover with plastic wrap and let it rise until doubled in volume, about 1 hour.

While dough is rising, prepare filling. Place walnut halves in food processor and pulse to finely chop. They could also be chopped by hand with a sharp knife.

Mix brown sugar with cinnamon.

When dough has doubled in bulk, divide it into 4 equal pieces (I used my scale, because I'm terrible at precision by eye.) Shape each piece into a ball and cover the dough to rest for 15 minutes.

Roll each ball of dough between two sheets of parchment paper into a 10-inch circle. If the dough starts to shrink back, let it rest for a few minutes. Using a 10-inch round pan or plate as a guide, trim each circle so that it is perfectly round.

Place one dough circle onto a parchment lined baking sheet. Cover dough with ⅓

of the maple butter, leaving a ¼-inch of bare dough around the perimeter. If the maple butter is cold from the fridge, you may need to soften it first for a few seconds in the microwave to make it spreadable.

Sprinkle the dough with ⅓ of the cinnamon sugar and ⅓ of the finely chopped walnuts. Cover with a second circle of dough and repeat the layering process – maple butter, cinnamon-sugar, walnuts, dough circle – leaving the top circle bare.

Place a 3-inch round cookie cutter or small bowl in the center of the dough. Using a pizza cutter or very sharp knife, cut the circle into quarters starting at the edge of the dough and stopping the edge of the bowl. Cut each quarter in half, and then each of those in half again. You will end up with 16 wedges connected to the middle circle.

Using two hands, take 2 wedges that are side-by-side and twist them away from each other two times. Connect the two strands at the end, pinching the ends together to form a point. You will end up with an 8-pointed star. Remove the cutter. Transfer the star with the parchment paper onto a rimmed baking sheet. Loosely cover with plastic wrap or a tea towel and let rise until puffy, 30 minutes.

Preheat the oven to 375°F. Once dough has risen, brush with beaten egg and bake for 20-25 minutes, until golden brown and center of bread registers 200°F on an instant read digital thermometer. Let bread cool for at least 15 minutes. Dust with icing sugar and serve warm or at room temperature.

Leftover bread will keep well wrapped in plastic wrap at room temperature for a few days.