

Stollen

This German “cakebread”, traditionally served at Christmas, is quite delicious. It is a slow riser because of the large amount of fruit but well worth the time it takes to make.

25 g/1 oz fresh yeast or 15 g/1/2 oz fast-action dried yeast
2 tbsp warm water
75 g/3 oz sugar
pinch of salt
6 tbsp warm milk
2 tbsp rum
few drops of almond essence
425 g/14 oz plain flour
1 egg, beaten
150 g/5 oz unsalted butter, softened
50 g/2 oz raisins
50 g/2 oz glace cherries, chopped, washed and dried
50 g/2 oz currants
25 g/1 oz angelica, chopped
50 g/2 oz cut mixed peel
40 g/1 ½ oz flaked almonds
sifted powdered sugar, to serve

Blend the yeast in the warm water. Dissolve 50 g/2 oz of the sugar and the salt in the milk. Add the rum, almond essence and yeast liquid. Sift the flour into a bowl, making a well in the center. Add the yeast mixture, egg, 75 g/3 oz of the softened butter cut into small pieces, and the fruit and nuts. Mix to a soft dough and knead for 10 minutes by hand, or 4-5 minutes in a large electric mixer fitted with a dough hook. Return the dough to the bowl, cover with a damp cloth and leave to rise in a warm place until doubled in size - about 2 hours. Knock back the dough and knead it until smooth, then roll it out on a lightly floured surface to a rectangle about 12x8 inches. Melt the remaining butter and brush liberally over the dough, then sprinkle with the remaining sugar. Fold one long side over just beyond the center, and then fold over the other long side to overlap the first piece well. Press lightly together and slightly taper the ends. Place the loaf on a greased baking sheet, brush with melted butter and leave in a warm place until almost doubled in size. Bake in a preheated oven, 375 degrees F, for about 45 minutes until well risen and browned. Cool on a wire rack. To serve, dust heavily with sifted powdered sugar and cut into fairly thin slices.