

PANETTONE DI NATALE

[ONE LARGE LOAF]

Two sheets of dough, one heavy with fruit and nuts, the other, plain, rolled together and baked into a circular loaf in a tube pan, become Italian Christmas Fruit Bread. This is richer than most other panettone recipes but that is as it should be—it's for the holidays.

INGREDIENTS

1 package dry yeast
½ cup lukewarm water (105°–115°)
½ cup all-purpose flour
¾ cup (1½ sticks) butter, room temperature
½ cup sugar
3 eggs, room temperature
3 egg yolks, room temperature
1 teaspoon vanilla
1 teaspoon salt
4 cups all-purpose flour, approximately
⅓ cup raisins, rinsed and patted dry
½ cup each shredded candied lemon peel, citron and
chopped blanched almonds
1 tablespoon sugar
2 dozen whole blanched almonds

BAKING PAN

Tube pan, buttered or Teflon.

PREPARATION

20 mins.

In a small bowl dissolve yeast in water. Stir briskly with a fork or metal whisk. Blend in ½ cup flour and let the sponge stand until it is bubbly—about 5 minutes.

In a large bowl cream together butter and sugar and follow this with eggs and egg yolks. Beat thoroughly until well mixed. Add yeast, vanilla, salt and about 4 cups of flour—one cup at a time. Stir with a wooden spoon until it becomes too difficult to turn—then work in by hand. When it is soft, but not sticky, turn from the bowl onto a floured board or counter top.

KNEADING

6 mins.

Knead the dough and divide the ball in two equal parts. One half is put aside to rest while the other half receives the raisins, candied peel, citron and chopped nuts. Work the fruit and nuts in well.

FIRST RISING

50 mins.

Keep the two halves separate. Place them in greased bowls, cover tightly with plastic wrap and move to a warm place (80°–85°) to rise until doubled in bulk. You can test if they have risen by poking a finger in them; the dents will remain.

SHAPING

30 mins.

Punch down the two doughs, turn them onto the floured surface, and knead again for 3 minutes. Butter pan, sprinkle it with sugar, and stud the bottom with whole blanched almonds.

Roll the plain dough into a triangle. (The long side—about 24 inches—will encircle the tube, with the ends

overlapping.) Roll out the fruit dough the same size. Lay it on top of the plain. Beginning at the base of the triangle, roll up the two doughs, and fit them into the prepared pan. Try an experimental circle before dropping the dough into the pan to be certain the ends overlap, and, together, are about the same thickness as the center of the roll.

SECOND RISING
1 hour

Cover the pan with wax paper and place in a warm spot to rise until dough has doubled in bulk.

BAKING
400°
10 mins.
350°
50 mins.

Preheat oven to 400°. Bake in a hot oven for 10 minutes, reduce the oven temperature to moderate (350°) and continue to bake for another 50 minutes, or until the loaf tests done. Insert a metal skewer or wooden toothpick into the center of the loaf. If it comes out clean and dry, the loaf is done. If moist particles cling to the probe, return the loaf to the oven for an additional 10 minutes. Test again.

FINAL STEP

Remove bread from the oven and turn from the pan and place on a cooling rack. Slice in wedges.