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JAPANESE MILK BREAD ROLLS

4.5 stars

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Also referred to as Hokkaido milk bread, these rolls are incredibly soft and airy thanks to a simple technique involving a roux "starter," known as tangzhong. The roux is mixed into the final dough, producing wonderfully tender bread each and every time.

Print recipe

Recipe box

AT A GLANCE	
PREP 30 mins.	
BAKE 28 mins. to 32 mins.	
TOTAL 4 hrs	
YIELD 8 rolls	
Nutrition information [#recipe-nutrition]	

Ingredients

 [Measuring Standards \[/guides/recipe-success/ \]](/guides/recipe-success/)

Choose your measure: ☒ Volume ☐ Ounces ☐ Grams

TANGZHONG (STARTER)

3 tablespoons water

3 tablespoons whole milk

2 tablespoons King Arthur Unbleached Bread Flour or Organic Bread Flour [/shop/items/king-arthur-organic-bread-flour-5-lb]

DOUGH

2 1/2 cups King Arthur Unbleached Bread Flour [/shop/items/king-arthur-unbleached-bread-flour-5-lb] or Organic Bread Flour

2 tablespoons Baker's Special Dry Milk [/shop/items/bakers-special-dry-milk-16-oz] or nonfat dry milk

1/4 cup sugar

1 teaspoon salt

1 tablespoon instant yeast [/shop/items/saf-red-instant-yeast-16-oz]

1/2 cup whole milk

1 large egg

1/4 cup (4 tablespoons) melted unsalted butter

Instructions

1. To make the tangzhong: Combine all of the ingredients in a small saucepan, and whisk until no lumps remain.
2. Place the saucepan over low heat, and cook the mixture, whisking constantly, until thick and the whisk leaves lines on the bottom of the pan, about 3 to 5 minutes.
3. Transfer the tangzhong to a small mixing bowl or measuring cup and let it cool to room temperature.
4. To make the dough: Combine the tangzhong with the remaining dough ingredients, then mix and knead — by hand, mixer, or bread machine — until a smooth, elastic dough forms.
5. Shape the dough into a ball, and let it rest in a lightly greased covered bowl for 60 to 90 minutes, until puffy but not necessarily doubled in bulk.
6. Gently deflate the dough, divide it into 8 equal pieces, and shape each piece into a ball.
7. Place the rolls into a lightly greased [round bun pan](/shop/landing.jsp?go=DetailDefault&id=11898). [/shop/landing.jsp?go=DetailDefault&id=11898] Cover the pan, and let the rolls rest for 40 to 50 minutes, until puffy. To use another pan, see "tips," below.

8. Preheat the oven to 350°F. Brush the rolls with milk or egg wash (1 large egg beaten with 1 tablespoon cold water), and bake for 28 to 32 minutes, until golden brown on top; a digital thermometer inserted into the center of the middle roll should read at least 190°F.
9. Remove the rolls from the oven. Allow them to cool in the pan for 10 minutes, then transfer them to a rack to cool completely.
10. Yield: 8 rolls.



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TIPS FROM OUR BAKERS

- * These rolls can also be baked in a 9" round metal pan for about 25 minutes.
- * To make a loaf: After the dough's initial rise, divide it into four equal pieces. Flatten each piece into a rectangle, then fold the short ends in towards one another like a letter. Flatten the folded pieces into rectangles again and, starting with a short end, roll them each into a log. Place the logs in a row of four — seam side down and side by side — in a lightly greased 9" x 5" loaf pan. Cover the loaf and allow it to rest/rise for 40 to 50 minutes, until puffy. Brush the loaf with milk or egg wash and bake at 350°F for about 30 minutes, until golden brown on top and a digital thermometer inserted into the center of the loaf reads at least 190°F. Remove the loaf from the oven, and cool it on a rack.

Ingredient weight chart

How to measure flour

High-altitude baking

Tips & techniques

Tools & pans

Baker's yeast

RECOMMENDED FOR YOU



SAF Red Instant Yeast - 16 oz.



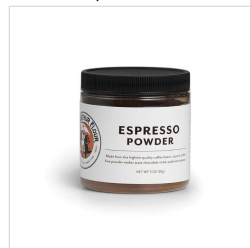
Baking Parchment Paper - Set of 100 Half-Sheets

\$5.95



Vietnamese Cinnamon - 3 oz.

\$22.95



Espresso Powder - 3 oz.

\$6.95



King Arthur Unbleached All-Purpose Flour 5 lb.

\$4.95

\$7.95



Lemon-Blueberry Scone Mix

\$6.95

Reviews

4.5 stars

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★★★★★

05/04/2018

Barbara
from Tehachapi CA

Great recipe. Love using it for Cinnamon Rolls. Always add 1/4 cup potato flakes, as I do for all of my yeast dough recipes. Something about the flakes makes the yeast dough more tender, lasts longer. Have no idea what it is, but it makes a difference. Notice when I don't add them, so it has become a habit.

★★★★★

05/04/2018

Sarah
from CA

Great recipe! I made these without a stand mixer - the dough was lovely and soft and easy to knead. I made 8 lunch rolls. I used a silicone baking mat and they were ready in 25 minutes. Very happy to have fresh soft rolls for school lunch in the morning!

★★★★★

04/27/2018Katie
from Peoria

Made these last night with soup. The rolls turned out soft and delicious. I used AP flour because that's all I had and omitted the milk powder because I didn't have that either. The changes didn't seem to affect the outcome, I did end up adding more liquid as the dough seemed too stiff. I baked nine big rolls in a 9x9 glass pan. Next time I'll probably make 12 smaller rolls just as a personal preference. Great recipe!

★★★★★

04/24/2018Christine
from MI

This recipe has become an instant favorite! It has consistently produced delicious rolls that stay fresh for days and freeze beautifully. I prefer dividing the dough into 12 pieces and making slightly smaller rolls; to me, they are a better dinner roll size when done this way. They also make amazing buns for hamburger sliders when sliced and lightly toasted!

★★★★★

04/18/2018Neelie
from Mercer County NJ

It 's the very best homemade bread I have ever made, a ten star winner, to be sure. But me being me, I swapped out the water for whey, leftover from making skyr, since I had it on hand. Better to buy water with minerals in bread makeing, if you don't have whey, or if you have chlorinated city water. The rolls came out high, light and fluffy and they will holdover just as the other reviewers mentioned for several days. Don't do a long slow rise in the refrigerator, it won't work out as well. Oops.

★★★★★

04/13/2018QL7
from Pittsburgh

I used the volume measurements and mixed and kneaded the dough by hand. I also made them into rolls, and baked them in an 8 in. cake pan. Couldn't have been easier, and they look and taste great. I'll surely be making these often, and will do the next recipe as a loaf. By the way, I am a fairly novice bread baker. Thanks for a great recipe!

★★★★★

04/06/2018Amber
from FI, USA

Loved this so much. As a novice bread baker this was a perfect starter bread to sink my teeth into and my family too! I did have a question, If I wanted to premix my dry ingredients in ziplock, would that have any negative effects? Like on the yeast?

Hi Amber! We'd recommend mixing all of your dry ingredients together except for the yeast. Leave the yeast in your freezer to keep it fresh and add it when you're actually mixing up the dough. Happy baking! Annabelle@KAF

★★★★★

04/04/2018

Darcy
from Colorado

Recipe worked great at high-altitude without any changes. Novice bread baker at 5000ft, and I like to try a recipe straight before making altitude adjustments since there are SO MANY options to tweak. The bake time was much faster (maybe 20 min?), and the buns were huge but texture and taste were spot on. Going to try the loaf shape next.

★★★★★

04/03/2018

Shirls

As a follow up to my all purpose flour blunder, I remade the recipe today using proper bread flour and wow this is exactly what I've been looking for. I had a loaf of milk bread in Tokyo years ago and have never forgotten about it. This totally takes me back. This recipe has replaced the KAF golden pull apart 100%. The dough is incredibly easy to put together and the dough is incredibly tender right out of the gate. I reduced the sugar to 2 tbs and salt to 1/2 tsp and the results were stellar. Incredibly soft interior with a golden crispy top and bottom. I'm looking forward to trying the recipe with fresh yeast.

★★★★★

04/03/2018

Cecilia
from VIC

Thank you for sharing this super fluffy and tasty recipe! I'm a novice baker and was able to get these buns (partly) there. Can anyone please explain why my bread rolls ended up with so many little air bubbles which caused the surface to crack and become distorted? There were already lots of little bubbles after the 1st proof which I punched down, but after shaping and proofing the buns again, there was even more of it. What am I doing wrong? After the 1st proof should I actually knead all the air out again, or just a light punch down? Thank you.

It doesn't sound like you've done anything wrong, Cecilia. Do you put your dough in the fridge at all? Cooler temperatures cause breads to blister on the surface. An over abundance of air can be a great thing, and will give your breads a nice, airy texture. Annabelle@KAF

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