



Soft Cinnamon Rolls

The chief attribute setting these rolls apart from their peers is their texture. While all cinnamon rolls are delicious straight from the oven, they often harden up and become dry as they cool. Thanks to *tangzhong*, an Asian method used to produce light, fluffy, moist yeast bread, these rolls will stay soft for several days after baking.



PREP

20 mins

BAKE

23 to 25
mins

TOTAL

2 hrs 35
mins

YIELD

24 rolls

Ingredients

Tangzhong (starter)

5 tablespoons (71g) water
5 tablespoons (71g) milk, whole preferred
3 tablespoons + 1 teaspoon (25g) King Arthur Unbleached Bread Flour

Dough

all of the tangzhong (above)
4 cups + 2 tablespoons (495g) King Arthur Unbleached Bread Flour
3 tablespoons (21g) Baker's Special Dry Milk or nonfat dry milk
1 3/4 teaspoons (11g) salt
1 tablespoon instant yeast
3/4 cup (170g) milk, whole preferred, lukewarm
2 large eggs
6 tablespoons (85g) unsalted butter, melted

Filling

3/4 cup (142g) light brown sugar or dark brown sugar, packed
4 teaspoons cinnamon

Instructions

- ① **To make the tangzhong:** Combine all of the starter ingredients in a small saucepan, and whisk until no lumps remain.
- ② Place the saucepan over medium heat, and cook the mixture, whisking constantly, until thick and the whisk leaves lines on the bottom of the pan. This will probably take only a minute or so. Remove from the heat, and set it aside for several minutes.
- ③ **To make the dough:** Weigh your flour; or measure it by gently spooning it into a cup, then sweeping off any excess. Mix the tangzhong with the remaining dough ingredients until everything comes together. Let the dough rest, covered, for 20 minutes; this will give the flour a chance to absorb the liquid, making it easier to knead.
- ④ After 20 minutes, knead the dough — by hand, mixer, or bread machine — to make a smooth, elastic, somewhat sticky dough.
- 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 **To make the filling:** Combine the brown sugar and cinnamon, mixing until the cinnamon is thoroughly distributed.
- ⑦ Gently deflate the risen dough, divide it in half, and shape each piece into a rough rectangle.
- ⑧ Working with one piece at a time, roll the dough into an 18" x 8" rectangle.
- ⑨ Sprinkle half the filling onto the rolled-out dough.
- ⑩ Starting with a long edge, roll the dough into a log. With the seam underneath, cut the log into 12 slices, 1 1/2" each.
- ⑪ Repeat with the second piece of dough and the remaining filling.
- ⑫ Lightly grease a 9" x 13" pan. Space the rolls in the pan.

Icing

2 cups (227g) confectioners' sugar
pinch of salt
2 tablespoons (28g) butter, melted
1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
2 to 3 tablespoons (28g to 43g) milk or cream, enough to make a thick but spreadable frosting

- 13 Cover the pan and let the rolls rise for 45 to 60 minutes, until they're crowding one another and are quite puffy.
- 14 While the rolls are rising, preheat the oven to 350°F with a rack in the bottom third.
- 15 Uncover the rolls, and bake them for 22 to 25 minutes, until they feel set. They might be just barely browned; that's OK. It's better to under-bake these rolls than bake them too long. Their interior temperature at the center should be about 188°F.
- 16 While the rolls are baking, stir together the icing ingredients, adding enough of the milk to make a thick spreadable icing. The icing should be quite stiff, about the consistency of softened cream cheese.
- 17 Remove the rolls from the oven, and turn them out of the pan onto a rack. Spread them with the icing; it'll partially melt into the rolls.
- 18 Serve the rolls warm. Store completely cool rolls for a couple of days at room temperature, or freeze for up to 1 month.

Tips from our Bakers

- ☆ With origins in Japan's yukone (or yudane), tangzhong is a yeast bread technique popularized across Asia by Taiwanese cookbook author Yvonne Chen. Tangzhong involves cooking some of a bread recipe's flour in liquid prior to adding it to the remaining dough ingredients. Bringing the temperature of the flour and liquid to 65°C (149°F) pre-gelatinizes the flour's starches, which makes them more able to retain liquid — thus enhancing the resulting bread's softness and shelf life.
- ☆ For just-baked freshness, reheat rolls by tenting with aluminum foil, and heating in a 350°F oven until toasty warm.
- ☆ This recipe is based on our recipe for Japanese Milk Bread Rolls; try them if you're looking for a wonderfully soft, tender dinner roll.
- ☆ Some readers have asked why there's no sugar in the dough for these rolls. First, we feel sugar in dough, being hygroscopic, tends to attract all the water molecules to itself, leaving the surrounding bread with a somewhat dry mouth feel. And second, between their filling and glaze, the rolls have the perfect amount of sugar to taste wonderfully sweet — without seeming too sweet.
- ☆ Want to prepare these rolls ahead of time, freeze or refrigerate them (unbaked), then bake fresh? To freeze, see our blog post, [Freeze! Time-savers for the holidays](#). To prepare the night before, place the shaped buns in the pan, cover the pan, and refrigerate overnight. Next morning, let the buns warm at room temperature

for about an hour, covered. Uncover and bake as directed.

We're here to help. King Arthur Baker's Hotline: (855) 371 2253