**APRICOT ALMOND COFFEE CAKE**

Holiday weekends mean visiting with friends and family. We've created this special breakfast bread recipe perfect for enjoying and sharing with all the guests. This bread freezes well, travels well, and is beautiful and delicious. It makes a super hostess gift, and you can wrap it festively in colored cellophane or tissue paper and ribbon. We recommend wrapping the bread in a layer of plastic wrap and then a layer of foil if you plan to freeze it.  
  
This bread is delicious served with honey butter, which you can easily make by beating together 1/4 cup honey and 1 stick softened butter. Serve in a small crock or bowl.

***Cake***  
1. 1/2 cup warm water  
2. 1 tablespoon active dry yeast  
3. 1/2 cup warm milk  
4. 2 large eggs, beaten  
5. 1/4 cup sugar  
6. 1 teaspoon vanilla extract  
7. 1/2 teaspoon orange oil or 1 tablespoon grated orange rind  
8. 6 tablespoons softened butter  
9. 1/2 teaspoon salt  
10. 4 1/2 to 5 cups King Arthur Unbleached All-Purpose Flour  
11. 1 tablespoon melted butter, to coat dough

Dissolve the yeast in the water. Add 1/2 cup of the all-purpose flour. Let sit for 10 minutes to give the yeast a chance to get going. Add the milk, eggs, sugar, extract, orange oil, butter, and salt. Stir to mix well.  
  
Add the flour, one cup at a time, until the dough forms a shaggy mass. Turn the dough out onto a lightly floured counter and knead it to form a smooth and satiny ball. Add more flour as necessary to keep the dough from sticking to the counter. Place the dough in a bowl and pour the melted butter on top. Spread the butter over the dough with your fingertips. Cover the dough with plastic wrap or a damp towel. Let the dough rise in a warm spot until it has doubled in size. This will take about 1 1/2 hours.  
  
Punch the dough down and turn it out onto a lightly floured counter. Divide the dough into two pieces and knead each one briefly to expel any air bubbles. Roll each piece of dough into a rectangle 1/4" thick, 6" wide and 15" long. Spread each rectangle with filling. Leave a 1" border on the two long edges.  
  
Roll each rectangle up, starting with the long edge. Place each log on a cookie sheet that has been lined with parchment paper. Join the ends of the log together to form a circle. Pinch well to seal the ends together.  
  
Let the coffee cakes rise for 15 minutes. Make several parallel slashes 1" deep in each coffee cake. Let rise again, this time for 20 minutes.  
  
Bake in a preheated 350°F oven for 25 minutes. Let cool for at least 15 minutes before cutting.

***Almond Apricot Filling***  
12. 2 cups boiling water  
13. 2 8-oz. boxes dried apricots  
14. 2/3 cup granulated sugar  
15. 2 teaspoons almond extract

Pour the boiling water over the apricots and cover with plastic wrap so that they can steam. When the apricots have softened, drain them. You can reserve the flavored water for bread dough if you wish. Combine the apricots, sugar, and extract in a food processor and pulse until you have a thick puree. *Yield: Filling for two loaves.*

Nutrition information per serving (1 piece or 1/8 of cake, 131 g): 280 cal, 6 g fat, 5 g protein, 39 g complex carbohydrates, 10 g sugar, 4 g dietary fiber, 49 mg cholesterol, 137 mg sodium, 458 mg potassium, 3 mg iron, 79 mg calcium, 82 mg phosphorus.  
  
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