

Cinnamon Rolls

If you really love your family, you'll make these. Not to put on any pressure or anything. But seriously, these rolls will endear them to you forever. Plus, they cover all the major food groups, less the vegetables, so they're practically a complete meal in themselves. Give them an extra helping of spinach at dinner, and you're good.

See Cook's Note on making these rolls a day ahead.

Ingredients

dough

6 tablespoons unsalted butter, cut into slices, plus more softened butter for greasing bowl and baking pan

3 large eggs

1 cup milk

3 tablespoons granulated sugar

2 ¼ teaspoons instant or rapid-rise yeast (1 packet)

1 teaspoon kosher salt

Finely grated zest of 1 orange (1 ½ packed teaspoons), reserving juice for filling

5 to 6 cups all-purpose flour, plus more for dusting

filling

½ cup golden raisins

2 cups pecans

3 ounces sliced pancetta

1 packed cup light brown sugar

2 teaspoons ground cinnamon

6 tablespoons unsalted butter, softened

Glaze

1 cup confectioners' sugar

2 tablespoons milk

¼ teaspoon pure vanilla extract

special equipment

stand mixer with paddle and dough hook attachments

rolling pin

9-inch by 13-inch baking pan

Wire cooling rack set on a rimmed baking sheet

Directions

for the dough

In a microwaveable bowl, melt butter in the microwave, about 30 seconds. Grease a large bowl with softened butter and set aside.

Break the eggs into the bowl of a stand mixer, and beat with the paddle attachment on medium speed until homogenous. Add the milk, sugar, yeast, salt and orange zest, and mix on medium speed until fully combined. Stir in 4 cups of flour, one cup at a time, on low speed, scraping the sides of the bowl if needed to mix in all the flour.

Switch to the dough hook attachment and mix on speed 2 for 3 minutes, until all the flour has been incorporated. Add and knead more flour, no more than ½ cup at a time, until dough clings to the hook and cleans the side of the bowl. Dough will be sticky but formed into a ball around the hook.

Knead on speed 2 for 5 more minutes, until it is soft, smooth and silky to the touch.

Transfer dough to the greased bowl, turning to coat with butter. Cover bowl with plastic wrap and allow dough to rise at warm room temperature until doubled in size, about 1 ½ hours.

for the filling

Butter a 9-inch by 13-inch baking pan and set aside.

While the dough is rising, make the filling. Soak the raisins in the reserved orange juice for 30 minutes.

Meanwhile, preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Toast the pecans on a rimmed baking sheet until lightly browned and fragrant, about 10 minutes, stirring once. Let cool, then chop and place in a medium bowl.

Raise oven temperature to 400 degrees. Line a rimmed baking sheet with parchment and spread the pancetta slices in a single layer. Bake for 10 minutes, then flip slices and bake for 5 more minutes, until the fat has rendered and the meat has started to crisp. Let cool, then chop and add to bowl with pecans.

Drain the raisins, discarding the juice. Add raisins to the bowl along with the brown sugar and cinnamon. Stir in the softened butter until fully incorporated.

When dough is risen, punch it down in the bowl and turn out on a lightly floured surface. Roll to a 12 x 18-inch rectangle, with one long side facing you. Spread the filling evenly on the dough,

leaving a border of 1-inch all around. Roll the dough away from you into a log and pinch the seam to seal.

Place log seam-side down and cut into 12 even slices using a serrated knife. Place slices in the buttered baking pan, arranging 3 by 4, cut sides facing up. Set aside at room temperature to rise, pan loosely covered with plastic wrap, for 45 minutes to an hour. When ready, the rolls should be puffed and pushing against each other in the pan. (See Cook's Note for preparing ahead to this point.)

Meanwhile, preheat oven to 350 degrees. Remove plastic wrap and bake rolls until they are risen and brown, about 40 minutes.

Let cool on a wire rack for 10 minutes while you make the glaze.

for the glaze

In a small bowl, mix confectioners' sugar, milk and vanilla extract.

Drizzle rolls with glaze and serve immediately.

Cook's Notes: Let rolls rise in the pan, loosely covered, in the refrigerator overnight. Bring to room temperature before baking and glazing.

total time: 3 ½ hours

active prep: 65 minutes

serves: 12

difficulty: medium