



ITALIAN BRIOCHES

Makes 16 brioches

INGREDIENTS:

- 3 tablespoons of lukewarm water
- 1 1/2 teaspoons active dry yeast
- 1/3 cup granulated sugar
- 3 egg yolks (at room temperature)
- 1 egg white (for egg wash) (at room temperature)
- 2 3/4 cups unbleached all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 lemon, zested
- 1 orange, zested
- 1 Vanilla bean (or 1 teaspoon vanilla extract)
- 2/3 cup whole milk
- 1/4 cup oil (vegetable, canola or sunflower)
- 1/2 cup Nutella
- 1/3 cup whole hazelnuts, skins removed, roasted and coarsely chopped



PHOTOGRAPHY AND STYLING BY IGLIKA PETROVA

DIRECTIONS:

1. Place the warm water (a bit warmer than lukewarm, but not too hot to kill the yeast), in a medium bowl and mix in 1 teaspoon of sugar, sprinkle the yeast over the mixture. Let sit until yeast foams and almost doubles its size, about 10-15 minutes.
2. Combine the flour, salt and sugar in a large mixing bowl and mix with a whisk. Run a sharp knife over the vanilla bean, split it like butterfly and scrape out the seeds with the back of the knife. Add the vanilla beans to a small sauce pan and pour the milk. Heat the milk and vanilla mixture over low heat, mix regularly until the milk is lukewarm or a little bit warmer, about 1 minute.

Hand method:

3. Make a well in the center on the flour mixture and add the milk, yeast mixture, egg yolks, lemon and orange zest. Mix with your hand starting from the center of the well and working your way out by adding flour from the sides of the bowl. While mixing, slowly incorporate the oil by adding a small amount each time. Form a soft bowl and transfer it to a lightly floured surface and knead for about 10 minutes by adding small amounts of flour if necessary. The dough should be soft and it should bounce back when pressed with your finger.

Stand mixer method:

3. Place the flour mixture, milk mixture, yeast, egg yolks, lemon and orange zest in the bowl of the mixer. Slowly add the oil, one teaspoon at the time, incorporating well between additions. Mix on medium speed for 1 minute and then knead on medium-high speed for 5 minutes. The dough should be soft and it should bounce back when pressed with your finger.

4. Transfer the formed ball into a large lightly oiled mixing bowl. Brush some oil on the top of the dough, cover the bowl with plastic wrap and let it rise in a warm draft-free place until it doubles its original volume, about 1-2 hours depending on the temperature at your home.
5. While the dough is rising, mix the Nutella with the crushed roasted hazelnuts. Leave at a room temperature until ready to use.
6. Punch the risen dough with your hand to remove some of the air, transfer it to a flat lightly floured surface, cut in half and form a ball with each half. Take one of the balls, sprinkle some more flour onto the surface and over the ball, and roll it with a rolling pin until the circle becomes 13" in diameter. Using a sharp knife cut the dough into 8 equal triangles, using sharp strokes without dragging the knife through the dough.
7. Take one of the triangles, stretch it a bit more, about 5x7.5", place a teaspoon of the Nutella mixture in the center of the wide end of the triangle. Roll the triangle to form a brioche, starting from the wide end of the triangle and moving to the thin end. Do not squeeze or tighten the roll too much while rolling. Repeat the process with the rest of the triangles and the second ball of dough.
8. Divide the brioche between two 14x16" baking trays lined with parchment paper. Cover well with plastic wrap. The wrap should not be too loose or too tight (the brioche will rise and they need some room but also they shouldn't form a skin). If baking the same day, let the brioche rise until they double its size, about 1 hour. If baking the next day, place the trays in the refrigerator and take them out 30-40 minutes prior to baking.
9. Preheat the oven to 350°F.
10. Make an egg wash by mixing the preserved egg white with 1 tablespoon of water. Brush each brioche with the egg white sprinkle it with raw crushed hazelnuts if desired.
11. Place one of the trays in the oven and bake for about 20-25 minutes (depending on your oven) while rotating the tray halfway through the baking. Repeat with the other tray (if you have a fancy schmancy oven you can bake them at once).

Let the brioche cool for at least 20 minutes before enjoying.