

Hot Cross Buns

450g strong plain flour
25g fresh yeast or 15ml (1 level tablespoon) dried yeast
1 level teaspoon caster sugar
150ml milk
60ml water
1 level teaspoon salt
 $\frac{1}{2}$ level teaspoon mixed spice
 $\frac{1}{2}$ level teaspoon powdered cinnamon
 $\frac{1}{2}$ level teaspoon nutmeg
50g caster sugar
50g butter/vegan spread, melted and cooled
1 egg beaten
100g currants
2-3 tablespoons chopped mixed peel

Glaze

60ml milk and water
3 level tablespoons caster sugar

Place 100g of the flour in a large mixing bowl and add the yeast and 1 level teaspoon sugar. Warm the milk and water to about 43C, add to the flour and mix well. Set aside in a warm place until frothy - 10-15 minutes for fresh yeast, 20 minutes for dried.

Sift together the remaining 350g flour, salt, spices and 50g sugar. Stir the butter and egg into the frothy yeast mixture, add the spiced flour and the fruit and mix together. The dough should be fairly soft. Turn it out on to a lightly floured surface and knead until smooth. Leave to rise until doubled in size - about 1-1 $\frac{1}{2}$ hours. Turn the risen dough out onto a floured surface and knock out the air bubbles, then knead.

Divide the dough into 12 pieces and shape into buns, using the palm of one hand. Press down hard at first on the table surface, then ease up as you turn and shape the buns.

Arrange them well apart on the floured baking sheet and put to rise for about 30 minutes.

To make the crosses you could use some shortcrust pastry rolled out thinly and cut into thin strips. Damp the pastry strips and lay two on each bun to make cross. Or mark a cross on each bun with a sharp knife.

Bake in the oven at 190C (375F) mark 5 for 15-20 minutes, until golden brown and firm to the touch.

Meanwhile, heat the milk and water and sugar gently together. Brush the hot cross buns twice with glaze, then leave to cool.