

FUSION FLAVOURSCHIANGMI TALUKDER
LENA

Baking art therapy

It is said that baking is about more than just creating something sweet to eat, and has many psychological benefits. It is a productive form of self-expression and communication. And People who bake use any excuse to heat up their ovens.

Baking for yourself and for others is a form of mindfulness. During the pandemic period, many people started their quarantine time baking. It can be a helpful way to communicate one's feelings as well. The whole process of baking not only ease anxiety and stress, but also allows one's mind to wander and create something artistic, which has the benefit of enhancing creative expression. If you want to cheer yourself up and eliminate stresses, it's time to give baking a try.

WATERMELON BREAD**Ingredients**

3 cups all-purpose flour
3 tbsp granulated sugar
1 cup lukewarm liquid milk
1 egg yolk
3 tbsp softened butter
½ tsp salt
2 tsp instant dry yeast
2/3 cup black raisins

Method

In a bowl, put lukewarm milk, butter, sugar, salt, yeast, and egg yolk, and stir for a while to mix together. Continue adding about 2 cups of flour little by little to make a sticky dough.

Divide the dough into two parts. Take one part and split it in half. Place one big and two smaller parts into 3 separate bowls. Add red or pink food colour to the largest portion of dough and mix until well combined. Put raisins and mix onto a counter. Add flour slowly while kneading, if the bread dough starts to stick. Continue to knead for about 8-10 minutes until the dough is smooth and elastic. Poke any raisins that fall out back into the dough ball. Coat the dough ball lightly with oil/butter and place in a bowl. Cover with plastic wrap and place in a warm spot to rise until it doubles in size.

Repeat the above procedure with one of the small portions of dough by adding green food colour and then add enough flour to knead until smooth and elastic. Place in a covered bowl to rise.

Repeat the same process with last small portions of white dough. No colour required, only add flour and knead. Place into a covered bowl to rise.

After about 1-2 hours, place the red dough ball on the counter, lightly dusted with flour. Punch down to remove large air bubbles and roll into a log shape. The log length should be the same as your bread pan.

Roll out the white dough ball and cover the red log dough with it. Before covering the red dough, brush it with milk or oil. Also brush milk/oil onto white covered log.

Roll out the green dough and cover the white log dough with it. Seal it by pinching hard and place the completed dough into a greased loaf pan. Cover with a damp cloth and let rise.

Bake in a pre-heated oven for 20-30 minutes at 175° C.

APPLE ROSES PUFF PASTRY**Ingredients**

2 cups water
1 medium lemon juice
2 red apple



3-4 tbsp apple or any flavoured jam
1 frozen puff pastry sheet, thawed
Powder sugar for decorating (optional)

Method

Cut the apples into halves and remove the core and seeds. Cut into thin slices, place in a bowl with water and lemon juice and microwave it for about 2-3 minutes. Drain out all the water.

Microwave the jam for 1 minute with a small amount of water, if the jam is too thick.

Unwrap one sheet of thawed puff pastry. Sprinkle small amounts of flour onto the counter and stretch out the sheet with a rolling pin. Cut the sheets into 6 strips, make each strip 2 inches long.

Spread jam onto each strip with a brush and place apple slices, one over another, over halfway from one side of the edge. Fold the bottom half over the sliced apple and roll up carefully and place into greased muffin tray.

Bake at 190° C for about 40-45 minutes.

FOCACCIA BREAD**Ingredients**

500g bread flour
7g dried active yeast
2 tsp sea salt
2 tbsp honey
5 tbsp olive oil
400ml lukewarm water
Herbs, vegetables, for decoration

Method

In a mixing bowl, put flour, yeast, sea salt, and mix everything together. Make a well in the middle of the flour and add olive oil, honey and lukewarm water, while adding water gradually until it makes a slightly sticky dough.

Sprinkle the work surface with flour and tip the dough onto it, knead for 8-10 minutes until the dough is soft and less sticky. Put the dough into a clean greased bowl, cover with a tea towel and leave to rise for 1 hour or until doubled in size.

Grease the baking tray with olive oil. Tip the dough and spread, and stretch the dough to fill the baking tray. Cover and leave it for another 30 minutes.

Put little amount of olive oil over the dough and poke with a finger to release air bubble and decorate with herbs and vegetables as desired. Bake 200° C for 15-20 minutes.

**PAINTED CHIFFON CAKE****Ingredients**

5 egg yolks
40g sugar
100ml liquid milk
50g oil
Pinch of salt
Few drops of vanilla essence (or any other flavour as desired)
120g cake flour

5 egg whites
80g sugar
¼ tsp cream of tartar (optional)
Food colour (red, pink, yellow, green, etc.)

Method

In a large mixing bowl, mix egg yolks, 40g sugar, milk, oil, salt, and essence together and whisk for about 2-3 minutes until sugar dissolves. Add cake flour and whisk to make a smooth batter.

Beat the egg whites with low speed for about 2 minutes. Then add cream of tartar and 80g of sugar gradually and continue beating for 8-10 minutes with medium-high speed until peak meringue forms.

Add the white meringue to the batter gradually and mix it slowly with cut and fold method.

Divide small portion of batter into few parts, according to your desired drawing. Mix food colour and pour into piping bags with small hole to release batter.

Place a baking paper on your bake tin. Draw desired picture with the coloured batter piping bags and bake on a pre-heated oven for 5 minutes at 175° C.

Remove tin from the oven and put the remaining batter over the baked drawn batter and bake it for another 20-30 minutes. Cool down the cake completely and carefully remove the baking paper. Your painted cake is ready to serve.

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