

Italian Easter Bread !

Italian Easter Bread – This bread bakes up incredibly soft and slightly sweet. It's perfect for Easter morning!

Servings: 6 individual loaves

Ingredients

1 package 2-1/4 teaspoons rapid rise instant yeast

1-1/4 cup milk

1/4 teaspoon of salt

1/3 cup unsalted butter

2 large eggs, beaten

1/2 cup granulated sugar

4 cups all-purpose flour (more as needed for dusting and kneading)

Vegetable cooking spray or vegetable oil for greasing proofing bowl

1 large egg, beaten with 1 teaspoon of water

6 dyed Easter eggs they do not need to be boiled, they will cook as the bread bakes

Colored sprinkles

Instructions

In a small saucepan, add the milk and butter to the pan. Heat the milk to 120 to 130°F, stirring the milk until the butter melts. Do not allow the milk to go above 130°F.

In a large mixing bowl, combine the yeast, salt, eggs, and sugar. Add the warmed milk and butter mixture. Add 2 cups of the flour to the mixing bowl. Attach a dough hook to the mixer and combine until smooth on medium speed, for about 2 minutes. Scrap side of the bowl with a spatula as needed.

Slowly add the remaining 2 cups of flour to the mixing bowl, kneading the dough on medium-low speed, scraping the sides as needed. Knead until smooth and the dough is stiff, no longer sticky, about 14 minutes. Shape dough into a ball and place into a lightly greased bowl (vegetable cooking spray or oil). Cover the bowl with plastic wrap, and let rise for an hour in a warm place until the dough doubles in size.

Punch the dough down, and then divide into 12 pieces. Roll each piece to form a 1-inch rope, about 14 inches long. Taking 2 pieces, twist the pieces to create a braid shape, pinching the ends together and loop into a circle.

Place the shaped dough on a parchment-lined baking sheet (3 per sheet), spacing the braided dough, so that it has enough room to rise. Loosely cover the baking sheet with plastic wrap and allow to rise for 1 hour, until it doubles in size.

Brush each braided bread with the beaten egg wash. Top with sprinkles, as desired. Gently place one dyed Easter egg in the center of each braided bread ring.

Bake the bread at 350°F until golden brown, approximately 18-20 minutes. Quickly transfer the baked bread to a cooling rack. Enjoy!

Recipe Notes

If the bread starts to brown too much while baking cover loosely with aluminum foil.