

Breads

Easter Dove Bread #1 *Colomba di Pasqua*

Makes 1 Loaf

The Colomba is a sweet bread similar to panettone but it is shaped like a dove and made during Easter all over Italy, most of it commercially these days. This bread, along with many others, was prepared on Good Friday and Holy Saturday, and eaten during Easter week. The recipe has come down through the Galasso family.

INGREDIENTS

1/4 cup warm water (110° to 115°F)
1 tablespoon active dry yeast
1/2 cup warm milk
2/3 cup sugar
8 tablespoons (1 stick) butter or margarine, melted
1 tablespoon grated lemon zest
1 tablespoon vanilla extract
3 large eggs, at room temperature
3 large egg yolks, at room temperature
4 1/2 to 5 cups King Arthur™ Unbleached, All-Purpose Flour
3/4 teaspoon salt
1 large egg white, slightly beaten
1 tablespoon turbinado (raw sugar) or coarse brown sugar

DIRECTIONS

In the large bowl of an electric mixer, put the warm water and yeast and stir to dissolve. Let the mixture proof for 10 minutes. Add the milk, sugar, butter, lemon zest, vanilla, whole eggs, and egg yolks and beat on low speed to blend well. Then beat on medium speed for 3 minutes. Add 4 cups of the flour and the salt and beat on medium speed. Gradually add the remaining flour a little at a time, until a soft dough is formed. You may not need all the flour.

Turn the dough out onto a floured surface and knead until smooth and elastic, about 8 to 10 minutes. Place the dough in an oiled bowl. Cover and let rise until doubled in bulk, about 1 hour.

Punch the dough down, divide it in half, and form 2 balls. Place 1 ball width-wise on a greased baking sheet and gently flatten it into a cylinder 10 inches long and 5 inches thick. Curve the dough slightly in the center.

Pat the other ball of dough into a triangle over the cylinder to form a T. Twist the top third of the body to the right; pinch and shape to form the dove's head, neck, and beak. Twist the bottom third to the left; pull and stretch it into a fan shape to form the tail. With a scissors, cut deep slashes in the wings and tail to resemble feathers.

Cover the dove with a sheet of buttered waxed paper and a towel. Let the bread rise in a warm place until almost doubled, about 20 minutes. Do not let it overrise or the shape will be lost in baking.

Preheat the oven to 350°F.

Gently brush the dove all over with the egg white and sprinkle the wing tips and tail section with the brown sugar. Bake for about 50 minutes, or until the bread is golden brown. Carefully transfer the bread to a rack to cool.

This recipe is from *NELLA CUCINA* by Mary Ann Esposito, published by William Morrow and Company Inc., in 1993.

Breads

Easter Dove Bread #2 *Colomba from CELEBRATIONS*

MAKES 2 BREADS

Colomba is an Easter bread, shaped like a dove. Regional versions are found all over Italy. They may be free-formed by hand or baked in special dove-shaped molds. Some have a cake-like texture, while those made with yeast have the consistency and texture of bread dough. In this version, hard-boiled eggs are nestled in the dough before baking. Place the doves in a colorful basket and use as a centerpiece on your Easter table. They also make a nice Easter gift. These can be frozen once completely cool, but the eggs will not be edible.

INGREDIENTS

6 1/2 to 7 cups King Arthur™ Unbleached, All-Purpose Flour
1 1/4 cups sugar
1 tablespoon baking powder
1 teaspoon fine sea salt
5 large eggs plus 4 hard-boiled large eggs
8 tablespoons (1 stick) butter, melted
1 1/4 cups milk, or more as necessary
1 tablespoon vanilla
2 whole cloves
Colored sprinkles

DIRECTIONS

Preheat the oven to 350°F. Lightly grease two cookie sheets. On a piece of cardboard, make a template: Draw a dove that is 12 inches long from tail to beak and 7 inches across at its widest point. Cut out the form with scissors.

Sift together 6 1/2 cups flour, the sugar, baking powder, and salt into a large bowl. In another bowl, whisk together 4 of the eggs, the butter, milk, and vanilla until well combined. Add to the flour mixture and mix with your hands to form a ball of dough that is smooth and no longer sticky, adding more flour if necessary.

Turn the dough out onto a floured surface and knead until it is smooth. Divide the dough into 2 pieces.

Roll each piece of dough out into a 13 by 11-inch rectangle and transfer to the cookie sheets. Place the template on each piece of dough and cut around it with a pastry wheel or small sharp knife. Remove the scraps of dough. With scissors, cut small V's in the tails to resemble feathers. Stick 1 clove in each head for the eyes. Place 2 of the hard-boiled eggs side by side in the middle of each dove's body. Cut 4 narrow 6-inch-long strips of dough from the dough scraps and cross 2 of them over each egg.

In a small bowl, lightly beat the remaining egg. Brush the doves with the beaten egg and sprinkle with the colored sprinkles.

Bake the doves for 20 to 25 minutes, or until they are lightly browned and firm to the touch. Let them cool slightly on the cookie sheets before removing them to cooling racks.

Note: There is a colored picture of the baked doves nestled in an Easter basket in the cookbook.

This recipe is from *CELEBRATIONS ITALIAN STYLE* by Mary Ann Esposito, published by William Morrow and Company, Inc. in 1995.