

how to make cinnamon scrolls

How to Make Cinnamon Scrolls: A Delicious Homemade Treat

how to make cinnamon scrolls is a question that delights many home bakers and food lovers alike. There's something irresistibly comforting about the aroma of freshly baked cinnamon scrolls wafting through your kitchen. These soft, fluffy, and sweet rolls swirled with cinnamon and sugar offer a perfect balance of spice and sweetness, making them a beloved treat for breakfast, brunch, or an indulgent snack. Whether you're new to baking or looking to perfect your technique, this guide will walk you through the entire process of crafting homemade cinnamon scrolls that rival those from your favorite bakery.

Gathering the Ingredients for Perfect Cinnamon Scrolls

Before diving into the recipe, it's essential to ensure you have all the necessary ingredients on hand. The best cinnamon scrolls start with simple, quality components that come together to create a tender dough and a flavorful filling.

The Basics You'll Need

- **Flour**: All-purpose flour works well, but for extra softness, some bakers prefer bread flour due to its higher protein content.
- **Yeast**: Active dry yeast or instant yeast will help your dough rise and become delightfully fluffy.
- **Milk**: Whole milk adds richness, but you can substitute with almond or oat milk for a dairy-free version.
- **Butter**: Both for the dough and the filling, butter imparts moisture and flavor.
- **Sugar**: Granulated sugar for the dough and a mix of brown sugar and cinnamon for the filling.
- **Eggs**: They enrich the dough and contribute to its structure.
- **Salt**: A small amount balances the sweetness.
- **Cinnamon**: Ground cinnamon is the star spice in the filling.
- **Optional toppings**: Cream cheese glaze or simple powdered sugar icing take cinnamon scrolls to the next level.

How to Make Cinnamon Scrolls: Step-by-Step Guide

Creating cinnamon scrolls involves a few key steps – preparing the dough, rolling it out, adding the cinnamon filling, shaping the scrolls, and finally baking them to perfection. Let's explore each part carefully.

Preparing the Dough

Start by warming the milk until it's just lukewarm—too hot and it might kill the yeast, too cold and the yeast won't activate properly. Combine the milk with the yeast and a teaspoon of sugar, then let it sit for about 5-10 minutes until frothy. This "proofing" step ensures your yeast is alive and active.

In a large mixing bowl, combine the flour, salt, and the remaining sugar. Add in the eggs and melted butter, then pour in the yeast mixture. Mix everything thoroughly until a sticky dough forms. Knead the dough on a floured surface for about 8-10 minutes until it becomes smooth and elastic. Kneading develops gluten, which helps give the scrolls their soft yet structured texture.

Place the dough in a greased bowl, cover it with a clean kitchen towel or plastic wrap, and let it rise in a warm spot for about an hour or until it has doubled in size.

Creating the Cinnamon Filling

While the dough is rising, prepare the filling. The classic filling combines softened butter, brown sugar, and ground cinnamon. The butter should be soft enough to spread easily but not melted. Mix the brown sugar and cinnamon thoroughly before spreading the mixture evenly over the rolled-out dough.

Rolling, Filling, and Shaping

Once the dough has risen, punch it down gently to release excess air. Roll it out on a floured surface into a large rectangle, roughly about 12x15 inches. Spread the cinnamon sugar filling evenly over the dough, making sure to cover every inch for maximum flavor.

Starting from the longer edge, roll the dough tightly into a log shape. Use a sharp knife or dental floss to slice the log into even scrolls, about 1 to 1.5 inches thick. Arrange the scrolls cut-side up in a buttered baking dish, leaving a bit of space between each so they can expand during baking.

Cover the dish and allow the scrolls to rise again for 30-45 minutes. This second rise ensures they become fluffy and light.

Baking to Golden Perfection

Preheat your oven to 180°C (350°F). Bake the cinnamon scrolls for 20-25 minutes or until they are golden brown and cooked through. The smell of cinnamon and sugar will fill your kitchen, signaling that your scrolls are almost ready!

Adding the Finishing Touches: Glazes and Icing

While cinnamon scrolls are delicious on their own, a sweet glaze or icing can

elevate their flavor and visual appeal.

Simple Icing Options

- **Cream Cheese Frosting**: Blend cream cheese, butter, powdered sugar, and a splash of vanilla extract until smooth. Spread it generously over warm scrolls for a luscious, tangy contrast.
- **Powdered Sugar Glaze**: Mix powdered sugar with a little milk or lemon juice to create a thin glaze. Drizzle over the scrolls for a subtle sweetness.
- **Maple or Caramel Drizzle**: For an indulgent twist, drizzle warm maple syrup or caramel sauce over the scrolls just before serving.

Tips and Tricks for Making Cinnamon Scrolls at Home

Making cinnamon scrolls from scratch can be a rewarding experience, but a few insider tips can help you achieve bakery-quality results every time.

Use Room Temperature Ingredients

Bring your eggs, milk, and butter to room temperature before mixing. This helps the dough come together more smoothly and encourages better yeast activation.

Don't Rush the Rising Process

Patience is key. Allowing the dough to rise fully twice makes the scrolls softer and airier. If your kitchen is cold, try placing the dough in a slightly warmed oven or near a radiator.

Experiment with Fillings

While traditional cinnamon and sugar is classic, feel free to add chopped nuts, raisins, or even a splash of vanilla or orange zest to the filling for a personalized touch.

Freezing and Reheating

Cinnamon scrolls freeze beautifully. After shaping and before the second rise, place them on a baking tray and freeze until solid. Then transfer to a freezer bag. When ready to bake, thaw and allow them to rise before baking. Reheat leftovers gently in the oven or microwave for a warm treat.

The Joy of Homemade Cinnamon Scrolls

Learning how to make cinnamon scrolls opens the door to endless cozy mornings and delightful gatherings. The process itself, from kneading the dough to smelling the spicy-sweet aroma as they bake, is as enjoyable as the final bite. This classic recipe is a wonderful way to bring warmth and sweetness into your home, impress family and friends, and even explore creative variations that suit your taste buds. So, next time you crave a comforting baked good, roll up your sleeves and treat yourself to the magic of homemade cinnamon scrolls.

Frequently Asked Questions

What are the key ingredients needed to make cinnamon scrolls?

The key ingredients for cinnamon scrolls include flour, sugar, yeast, milk, butter, eggs, cinnamon, and brown sugar for the filling.

How do you make the dough for cinnamon scrolls soft and fluffy?

To make soft and fluffy dough, use warm milk to activate the yeast, knead the dough thoroughly to develop gluten, and allow the dough to rise in a warm place until it doubles in size.

What is the best way to roll and shape cinnamon scrolls?

Roll the dough into a rectangle, spread softened butter over it, sprinkle evenly with a cinnamon and sugar mixture, then tightly roll the dough from one long edge. Slice the roll into even pieces before placing them in the baking tray.

Can I make cinnamon scrolls ahead of time and bake later?

Yes, you can prepare the cinnamon scrolls, let them rise, then cover and refrigerate them overnight. Bake them fresh the next day for the best texture and flavor.

How do I prevent cinnamon scrolls from drying out after baking?

Brush the baked cinnamon scrolls with melted butter and store them in an airtight container. You can also wrap them in foil to keep them moist.

What are some popular toppings or glazes for cinnamon

scrolls?

Popular toppings include cream cheese glaze, vanilla icing, or a simple powdered sugar glaze. Some also add chopped nuts or raisins inside the filling for extra flavor and texture.

Additional Resources

How to Make Cinnamon Scrolls: A Detailed Guide to Crafting the Perfect Treat

how to make cinnamon scrolls is a question that has intrigued both home bakers and pastry enthusiasts alike. These sweet, spiraled pastries—also known as cinnamon rolls—have become a staple in bakeries worldwide, celebrated for their soft, fluffy texture and the warm, aromatic blend of cinnamon and sugar. Beyond their undeniable deliciousness, cinnamon scrolls offer a versatile canvas for creativity, allowing for variations in dough, fillings, and glazes. This article explores the art and science behind making cinnamon scrolls, examining essential techniques, ingredient choices, and baking tips to achieve the ideal balance of flavor and texture.

The Fundamentals of Cinnamon Scrolls

Cinnamon scrolls are essentially yeast-leavened dough rolled with a mixture of cinnamon, sugar, and often butter, then sliced into individual portions before baking. The resulting pastry is tender and airy on the inside with a slightly caramelized crust. Understanding the foundational elements of dough preparation and filling composition is critical when exploring how to make cinnamon scrolls that stand out.

The Dough: Yeast vs. Quick Breads

One of the primary decisions in crafting cinnamon scrolls lies in the choice of dough. Traditional recipes typically rely on yeast dough, which requires proofing time to develop a light and fluffy texture. Yeast doughs benefit from gradual fermentation, which enhances flavor complexity and creates a soft crumb structure. Alternatively, some quicker recipes use baking powder or baking soda as leavening agents, resulting in a denser texture that resembles a quick bread or muffin.

Yeast dough advantages include:

- Soft, airy texture with a slight chewiness
- Enhanced flavor due to fermentation
- Classic, bakery-style finish

Conversely, quick bread doughs offer:

- Reduced preparation time (no proofing required)
- Easier process for beginners
- Denser, cake-like consistency

For purists aiming for authentic cinnamon scrolls, yeast dough remains the preferred choice, though quick bread variants can still deliver satisfying results with less effort.

Ingredients that Define the Flavor Profile

The core ingredients for the dough typically include flour, sugar, butter, milk, eggs, salt, and yeast. Each component plays a pivotal role in the final product's characteristics:

- **Flour:** All-purpose flour is most commonly used, but bread flour can be substituted for a chewier texture due to higher gluten content.
- **Sugar:** Granulated sugar sweetens the dough, while brown sugar is often incorporated into the filling for its molasses notes.
- **Butter:** Provides richness and tenderness; softened butter is used in the dough, and melted butter is spread over the rolled dough before sprinkling the filling.
- **Milk:** Adds moisture and helps develop a tender crumb.
- **Eggs:** Enrich the dough, contributing to elasticity and color.
- **Yeast:** Essential for leavening and flavor development.
- **Salt:** Balances sweetness and enhances overall flavor.

The filling usually consists of a mixture of cinnamon and sugar, sometimes augmented with additional spices like nutmeg or cardamom, or even chopped nuts and raisins for added texture.

Step-by-Step Process: How to Make Cinnamon Scrolls

The process of making cinnamon scrolls can be divided into several key stages, each demanding attention to detail to ensure a successful outcome.

1. Preparing the Dough

The dough preparation begins with activating the yeast, typically by combining it with warm milk and a pinch of sugar. This step is crucial; the liquid temperature must be between 37°C and 43°C (98°F to 110°F) to avoid killing the yeast or slowing its activity. After proofing, the yeast mixture is combined with the remaining ingredients and kneaded until smooth and elastic.

Kneading can be done by hand or with a stand mixer fitted with a dough hook.

Proper kneading develops gluten strands, which give structure to the dough. The dough is then left to rise in a warm environment until it doubles in size, a process that may take 1 to 2 hours depending on ambient temperature.

2. Rolling and Filling

Once risen, the dough is rolled out into a rectangular sheet, usually about $\frac{1}{4}$ inch thick. Even thickness ensures uniform baking and consistent texture across all scrolls. The rolled dough is brushed generously with melted butter, which acts as a binding agent for the filling, preventing it from leaking during baking.

The cinnamon-sugar filling is then evenly sprinkled across the surface. The quantity of cinnamon and sugar can be adjusted according to taste preferences, but a common ratio is $\frac{1}{2}$ cup brown sugar to 2 tablespoons ground cinnamon. For added richness, some recipes include a pinch of salt or a tablespoon of vanilla extract in the filling.

3. Shaping the Scrolls

After spreading the filling, the dough is carefully rolled lengthwise into a tight log. This rolling technique is critical; a loose roll may cause the scrolls to lose shape during baking, while an overly tight roll can compress the dough and hinder proper rising.

Using a sharp knife, the log is sliced into equal portions, typically 1 to 1.5 inches thick. These slices are then placed into a greased baking dish, spaced slightly apart to allow for expansion.

4. Proofing and Baking

The scrolls undergo a second proofing stage, usually lasting 30 to 45 minutes, to allow the yeast to reactivate and the dough to rise further. This results in a lighter, airier pastry after baking.

Baking times generally range from 20 to 30 minutes at 180°C to 190°C (350°F to 375°F), until the scrolls are golden brown on top and cooked through. Overbaking can dry out the scrolls, while underbaking leaves the dough gummy inside, so monitoring is essential.

5. Glazing and Serving

While optional, glazing cinnamon scrolls adds a finishing touch that can elevate their flavor and presentation. Common glazes include cream cheese frosting, vanilla icing, or a simple powdered sugar glaze. The glaze is usually applied once the scrolls have cooled slightly to prevent melting and sliding off.

Exploring Variations and Enhancements

The versatility of cinnamon scrolls allows for numerous modifications that can cater to different tastes and dietary needs.

Health-Conscious Alternatives

For those seeking healthier options, whole wheat flour or gluten-free blends can replace all-purpose flour, though texture and rise may vary. Additionally, natural sweeteners like honey or maple syrup can substitute refined sugar, and plant-based milk alternatives can be used to make the recipe vegan-friendly.

Flavor Infusions

Beyond the classic cinnamon and sugar, fillings can incorporate ingredients such as:

- Chopped nuts (pecans, walnuts, almonds)
- Dried fruits (raisins, cranberries)
- Spices (cardamom, nutmeg, cloves)
- Citrus zest (orange or lemon)

These additions introduce complexity and texture, creating a more layered flavor profile.

Comparing Homemade Cinnamon Scrolls to Store-Bought

Homemade cinnamon scrolls offer significant advantages over commercially produced versions. The control over ingredients allows bakers to avoid preservatives, artificial flavors, and excessive sugars typically found in store-bought products. Additionally, homemade scrolls retain freshness and can be customized to personal preferences.

However, making cinnamon scrolls from scratch demands time, patience, and some technical skill, especially in yeast handling and dough kneading. For those pressed for time, pre-made dough or cinnamon roll kits can be a practical compromise, though they often sacrifice flavor depth and freshness.

Technical Tips for Perfect Cinnamon Scrolls

- **Temperature Control:** Maintain warm, but not hot, liquid for yeast

activation to ensure optimal fermentation.

- **Kneading:** Adequate kneading develops gluten, contributing to structure and a chewy texture.
- **Proofing Environment:** Use a draft-free, warm spot to encourage consistent rising.
- **Even Rolling:** Uniform thickness prevents uneven baking and texture.
- **Cutting Technique:** Use a serrated knife or dental floss for clean slices that maintain shape.
- **Baking Time Monitoring:** Use visual cues and a toothpick test to verify doneness.

These technical considerations are pivotal when mastering how to make cinnamon scrolls that rival those from professional bakeries.

Conclusion

The journey of how to make cinnamon scrolls blends culinary tradition with the science of baking. Understanding the interplay of ingredients, dough preparation, and baking techniques equips bakers to produce scrolls that are tender, flavorful, and visually appealing. Whether opting for the classic yeast-leavened dough or experimenting with healthier or flavor-infused variations, cinnamon scrolls remain a beloved treat that rewards patience and craftsmanship. Their enduring popularity underscores the universal appeal of warm spices, soft dough, and sweet indulgence—a combination that continues to inspire baking enthusiasts worldwide.

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