



THE DARING BAKERS' DECEMBER, 2010 CHALLENGE: STOLLEN

Simona, you've given us such a wonderful challenge of making our own Crostata in our very own kitchens, but you've also shared an amazing recipe for Pasta Frolla that I think many of us can agree we'll be using over and over again! Thank you so much for being such a great host and showing us how delicious Crostata can be!! As to all of you amazing Dber's.. Simona gave us quite a few suggestions for fillings, but you gals & guys went above and beyond! Simply genius! Simply delicious! As ALWAYS you did an AMAZING job!! :D

Now it's time for me to put my nagging hat on again (sorry!).. I still need Member Spotlight questionnaires filled out, PRETTY PLEASE! :D You can find the questionnaire [HERE](#) - just fill it out (if you could fill out at least 15 - or all of them, it's up to you) and send it to me at lamiacucina AT adelphia DOT net - don't forget to attach a photo too! Instructions regarding the photo are at the end of the questionnaire.

And finally - the 2010 Daring Kitchen Holiday Gift Guide is finally out- check it out [HERE](#) and download the extended version (includes all 100 items) to find some really unique and fun gift items!

Happy Holidays everyone! Hugs! xoxo

Hi Everyone...My name is Penny and I am sooo excited to be hosting a challenge...and a little nervous too....especially since it is the Christmas one! I finally decided on Stollen - a very traditional German Christmas bread that tastes fabulous and looks pretty. We are going to create it in the shape of a wreath so it won't exactly be traditional, as the shape of the cake was originally meant to represent the baby Jesus wrapped in swaddling clothes. It looks spectacular though!!! Since this is such a busy time of the year, I kept it pretty straightforward so you will get great results...but it is bread and I know bread can sometimes be intimidating. Some versions are made with starters but not this one. Creating a starter takes a little time which we don't have a lot of in December and we don't need any more stress right now. Some have Marzipan in the middle and others have Quark, a type of cheese. This version is simple and doesn't have an overwhelming amount of fruit or nuts in it :)

This month I am inviting you to make this wonderful Stollen.

Stollen <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stollen> is a bread-like [fruitcake](#) made with yeast, water and flour, and usually with [zest](#) added to the dough. Candied orange peel and candied citrus is often also added.

Over the centuries, the cake changed from being a simple, fairly tasteless "bread" to a sweeter cake with richer ingredients. The [Advent](#) season was a time of fasting, and bakers were not allowed to use butter, only oil, and the cake was tasteless and hard.

Recipe Source:

I used a combination of recipes:

- A recipe from a German friend who bakes Stollen every year.
- Part from Peter Reinhart – I love his techniques – Bread Baker’s Apprentice
<http://www.amazon.ca/Bread-Bakers-Apprentice-Mastering-Extraordinary/dp/1580082688>
- Part from Martha Stewart where she demonstrated (along with her mother) a stollen in a wreath design
http://www.marthastewart.com/recipe/stollen-wreath-bread-with-mrs-kostyra?video_id=0

And of course, a lot of support, testing and ideas from someone I consider a friend and who many of you have got to know in his posts, Audax Artifex. Thanks Audax!

Blog-checking lines:

The 2010 December Daring Bakers’ challenge was hosted by Penny of Sweet Sadie’s Baking. She chose to challenge Daring Bakers’ to make Stollen. She adapted a friend’s family recipe and combined it with information from friends, techniques from Peter Reinhart’s book.....and Martha Stewart’s demonstration.

Posting Date: Because of the holidays you can post any time between December 23 thru December 27, 2010

Mandatory Items: You must make the recipe as provided with the exception of the variations below. I encourage you after you make the first one to make some variations.

Variations allowed: You can substitute the raisins with cranberries or other dried fruit. You can substitute the lemon and orange zests for other zests example lime. Fresh yeast is difficult to find but if you can get it, you will notice the difference. Fresh yeast has good rising qualities and produces excellent tasting bread. If you are using fresh yeast: use double the weight of the active dry yeast that is in the original recipe. Example: if the recipe calls for 1/2 oz of active dry yeast use 1 oz of fresh yeast and you will have similar rising times as the original recipe.

Since this would make a great Christmas gift, whether it would be a whole one or a half, it would be fun to see how you would creatively package it!

Preparation time:

The following times are approximate. I suggest you gather and scale/weigh/measure (mise en place - <http://www.epicurious.com/tools/fooddictionary/entry/?id=3523>) all your ingredients before you begin mixing.

- Approximately 1 hour first stage – then rest overnight or up to 3 days
- 2 hours to warm up after refrigeration
- 15 minutes shaping
- 2 hours proofing
- 30-45 minutes baking

Equipment required:

- Mixer with dough hook or strong arms and hands
- Mixing bowl
- Bowl to soak raisins
- Small saucepan
- Sheet of plastic or plastic wrap to cover when proofing
- Bench or pastry scraper (very handy for cutting dough and also cleaning work surface)
- Rolling pin
- Dough whisk can be handy but not necessary
- Pastry Brush
- A scale is really important to have when making bread so I strongly advise you to get one. You do not have to have one though. (would make a good Christmas gift!)
- Sheet Pan or round Pizza pan
- Parchment Paper

Stollen Wreath

Makes one large wreath or two traditional shaped Stollen loaves. Serves 10-12 people

Ingredients

¼ cup (60ml) lukewarm water (110° F / 43° C)
2 packages (4 1/2 teaspoons) (22 ml) (14 grams) (1/2 oz) active dry yeast
1 cup (240 ml) milk
10 tablespoons (150 ml) (140 grams) unsalted butter (*can use salted butter*)
5½ cups (1320 ml) (27 ozs) (770 grams) all-purpose (plain) flour (*Measure flour first - then sift- plus extra for dusting*)
½ cup (120 ml) (115 gms) sugar
¾ teaspoon (3 ¾ ml) (4 ½ grams) salt (*if using salted butter there is no need to alter this salt measurement*)
1 teaspoon (5 ml) (6 grams) cinnamon
3 large eggs, lightly beaten
Grated zest of 1 lemon and 1 orange
2 teaspoons (10 ml) (very good) vanilla extract
1 teaspoon (5 ml) lemon extract or orange extract
¾ cup (180 ml) (4 ¾ ozs) (135 grams) mixed peel (*link below to make your own*)
1 cup (240 ml) (6 ozs) (170 gms) firmly packed raisins
3 tablespoons (45ml) rum
12 red glacé cherries (roughly chopped) for the color and the taste. (*optional*)
1 cup (240 ml) (3 ½ ozs) (100 grams) flaked almonds
Melted unsalted butter for coating the wreath
Confectioners' (icing) (powdered) sugar for dusting wreath

Note: If you don't want to use alcohol, double the lemon or orange extract or you could use the juice from the zested orange.

Directions:

Soak the raisins

In a small bowl, soak the raisins in the rum (or in the orange juice from the zested orange) and set aside. See Note under raisins.



To make the dough

Pour $\frac{1}{4}$ cup (60 ml) warm water into a small bowl, sprinkle with yeast and let stand 5 minutes. Stir to dissolve yeast completely.

In a small saucepan, combine 1 cup (240 ml) milk and 10 tablespoons (150 ml) butter over medium - low heat until butter is melted. Let stand until lukewarm, about 5 minutes.

Lightly beat eggs in a small bowl and add lemon and vanilla extracts.

In a large mixing bowl (4 qt) (4 liters) (or in the bowl of an electric mixer with paddle attachment), stir together the flour, sugar, salt, cinnamon, orange and lemon zests.

Then stir in (or mix on low speed with the paddle attachment) the yeast/water mixture, eggs and the lukewarm milk/butter mixture. This should take about 2 minutes. It should be a soft, but not sticky ball. When the dough comes together, cover the bowl with either plastic or a tea cloth and let rest for 10 minutes.

Add in the mixed peel, soaked fruit and almonds and mix with your hands or on low speed to incorporate. Here is where you can add the cherries if you would like. Be delicate with the cherries or all your dough will turn red!

Sprinkle flour on the counter, transfer the dough to the counter, and begin kneading (or mixing with the dough hook) to distribute the fruit evenly, adding additional flour if needed. The dough should be soft and satiny, tacky but not sticky. Knead for approximately 8 minutes (6 minutes by machine). The full six minutes of kneading is needed to distribute the dried fruit and other ingredients and to make the dough have a reasonable bread-dough consistency. You can tell when the dough is kneaded enough - a few raisins will start to fall off the dough onto the counter because at the beginning of the kneading process the dough is very sticky and the raisins will be held into the dough but when the dough is done it is tacky which isn't enough to bind the outside raisins onto the dough ball.

Lightly oil a large bowl and transfer the dough to the bowl, rolling around to coat it with the oil. Cover the bowl with plastic wrap.

Put it in the fridge overnight. The dough becomes very firm in the fridge (since the butter goes firm) but it does rise slowly... the raw dough can be kept in the refrigerator up to a week and then baked on the day you want.

Shaping the Dough and Baking the Wreath

1. Let the dough rest for 2 hours after taking out of the fridge in order to warm slightly.
2. Line a sheet pan with parchment paper.
3. Preheat oven to moderate 350°F/180°C/gas mark 4 with the oven rack on the middle shelf.
4. Punch dough down, roll into a rectangle about 16 x 24 inches (40 x 61 cms) and $\frac{1}{4}$ inch (6 mm) thick.



Starting with a long side, roll up tightly, forming a long, thin cylinder.



Transfer the cylinder roll to the sheet pan. Join the ends together, trying to overlap the layers to make the seam stronger and pinch with your fingers to make it stick, forming a large circle. You can form it around a bowl to keep the shape.



This was before I pinched it together

Using kitchen scissors, make cuts along outside of circle, in 2-inch (5 cm) intervals, cutting 2/3 of the way through the dough.



Twist each segment outward, forming a wreath shape. Mist the dough with spray oil and cover loosely with plastic wrap.



Proof for approximately 2 hours at room temperature, or until about 1½ times its original size.

Bake the stollen for 20 minutes, then rotate the pan 180 degrees for even baking and continue to bake for 20 to 30 minutes. The bread will bake to a dark mahogany color, should register 190°F/88°C in the center of the loaf, and should sound hollow when thumped on the bottom.

Transfer to a cooling rack and brush the top with melted butter while still hot.

Immediately tap a layer of powdered sugar over the top through a sieve or sifter.

Wait for 1 minute, then tap another layer over the first.

The bread should be coated generously with the powdered sugar.

Let cool at least an hour before serving. Coat the stollen in butter and icing sugar three times, since this many coatings helps keeps the stollen fresh - especially if you intend on sending it in the mail as Christmas presents!

When completely cool, store in a plastic bag. Or leave it out uncovered overnight to dry out slightly, German style.



The stollen tastes even better in a couple of days and it toasts superbly.... so delicious with butter and a cup of tea....mmmmm

Storage

The more rum and the more coatings of butter and sugar you use the longer it will store.

The following is for the recipe as written and uses the 45 mls of rum and two coatings of butter and icing sugar

1. Stollen freezes beautifully about 4 months
2. The baked stollen stores well for 2 weeks covered in foil and plastic wrap on the counter at room temperature and
3. One month in the refrigerator well covered with foil and plastic wrap.



Additional Information:

Here is a link to recipes to make your own candied citrus peel

http://www.harvestwizard.com/2006/12/candied_citron_recipe.html

<http://video.about.com/candy/Make-Candied-Citrus-Peel.htm>

<http://userealbutter.com/2007/10/09/candied-orange-peels-recipe/>

Kneading Bread

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dWj8oHMPFm0>

Martha Stewart's wreath

<http://www.marthastewart.com/recipe/stollen-wreath-bread-with-mrs-kostyra>

Host's Note:

I hope you like the challenge and feel free to use any of the photos!

Disclaimer:

**Note: The Daring Kitchen and its members in no way suggest we are medical professionals and therefore are NOT responsible for any error in reporting of gluten-free ingredients. If you have issues with digesting gluten, then it is YOUR responsibility to research the ingredient before using it. If you have allergies, it is YOUR responsibility to make sure any ingredient in a recipe will not adversely affect you. If you are lactose intolerant, it is YOUR responsibility to make sure any ingredient in a recipe will not adversely affect you. If you are vegetarian or vegan, it is YOUR responsibility to make sure any ingredient in a recipe will not adversely affect you. Please consult your physician with any questions before using a product you are not familiar with. Thank you! :)*