

“Someone’s been monkeying with my brioche!” ... brioche as monkey bread, cinnamon swirls, & beyond

Brioche. Even the word sounds like a kiss, but brioche is basically just French for “biscuit.” Let’s pause for some SAT prep here: Biscuit is to Brioche as Kissing is to French Kissing.

Here I’ve taken some liberties with the dough of a classic *brioche à tête* that Marie Antoinette would have been happy to eat, stripped off its egg-wash and assembled it with pull-apart munching and post-bake glazing in mind.



Ingredients: (you might as well double this, especially if there are kids around)

Starter

½ C white flour

½ C warm milk

2 t yeast

Dough

5 eggs

2 C white flour

1 C whole wheat flour (trust me, no one will be able to tell, and now it’s “healthy”)

¼ C sugar

¼ t Cardamom (optional, but highly recommended)

1 t salt

1 C butter, cold, cut into small cubes

Finishes

Cinnamon Sugar: ½ C white sugar, ¼ C cinnamon

Quick Caramel: 1 C brown sugar, 1 stick hot melted butter, ¼ C heavy cream, whisked

Quick white fondant: 1 C sifted powdered sugar, heavy cream whipped in to make a thick paste

Directions: In the bowl of your stand mixer (this one is easier with a cold machine rather than warm hands) combine yeast with warm milk and add the flour. Proof for 20 minutes and nicely rising. In a separate bowl, combine dries. Whisk eggs by hand and add to starter in your stand mixer. Using dough hook attachment of stand mixer, combine dries with the wets and add butter to the dough, which will come together as a tacky mass. Mix for five minutes, adding a bit of flour as necessary to make a smooth dough. Cover refrigerate for at least two hours and up to two days before the next step.

From here, it's choose your own adventure

- A) Cinnamon swirls: roll out your dough on a cold surface until you have a large rectangle a quarter inch thick. Spread with cinnamon sugar. Roll. Cut your roll across the grain to make a dozen pieces of standard thickness. Arrange in well-greased baking tray with enough space to nearly double in size. Cover to rise for 1-2 hours. Bake at 400 for 25 minutes or until a rich golden brown.
- B) Monkey bread: ball up the dough into smaller-than-golf-ball-bigger-than-marble pieces (many hands makes light work here, and kids love this job). Roll balls in cinnamon sugar mixture and coat with goodness. Assemble in well-greased baking dishes or spread on a sheet like cookies. Bakes well in a bundt pan or bread loaf pan as well, though I recommend going no more than three layers deep for a uniform bake. Cover to rise for 1-2 hours. Bake at 400 for 25 minutes or longer for larger forms.

Caramel sauce: drizzle over either configuration just before baking

Fondant sauce: drizzle over cinnamon buns when cool.