

Chocolate Babka Recipe

I've wanted to eat a babka ever since the famous episode of Seinfeld, The Dinner Party.

A babka is a rich, soft brioche-style bread swirled with silky chocolate cream filling.

This recipe is a bit long and takes multiple phases to make. If you start the evening before, it'll be ready by late morning the next day.

Best enjoyed the same day. Store in an airtight container at room temperature for up to 1 day. You can also freeze it and eat it later after defrosting.

This recipe is adapted from Yotam Ottolenghi's recipe book, via a website 'Pretty Simple Sweet', but also modified for Australian ingredients.

Ingredients

Dough:

- 530 g (~4 1/2 cups) plain flour, plus extra for dusting
- 100g caster sugar
- 1 tablespoon (10 g) instant dry yeast
- 3 large eggs
- 1/2 cup water
- 1 teaspoon fine sea salt
- 150 g unsalted butter, softened and cut into cubes
- Canola/sunflower oil, for greasing

Chocolate filling:

- 200 g dark cooking chocolate pieces
- 100g unsalted butter
- 1/3 cup (80 ml) pure cream
- 30g icing sugar
- 1/3 cup unsweetened cocoa powder
- Pinch of salt

Sugar syrup:

- 1/2 cup (120 ml) water
- 100g caster sugar

Instructions

Make the dough and rise:

1. In a stand mixer with a dough hook, combine flour, sugar, yeast, and salt.
2. Add eggs and water, then mix on medium speed for 2-3 minutes until a rough dough forms.
3. Gradually add butter, a few cubes at a time, mixing on low-medium speed. Scrape the bowl as needed.

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4. Continue mixing on medium speed for about 10 minutes, until the dough is smooth and elastic.
5. Transfer to a large lightly oiled bowl. Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate for at least 12 hours or overnight.
6. Tip: Dough may seem firm after chilling. Let it sit at room temperature for 30-60 minutes before shaping.

Prepare the filling:

1. In a saucepan, combine chocolate, butter, cream, cocoa powder, icing sugar, and salt.
2. Warm gently over medium heat until just boiling, then reduce to low and stir until smooth.
3. Transfer to a bowl and cool until thickened and spreadable (you can chill it briefly if needed).

Shape the babka:

1. Grease two 23 × 13 cm (9×5 inch) loaf pans with oil and line with baking paper.
2. Divide dough in half. On a floured surface, roll one half into a 40 × 30 cm rectangle.
3. Spread half of the chocolate filling over the dough.
4. Roll tightly from the long edge to form a log, seam-side down.
5. Slice lengthwise into two strips. With cut sides up, twist them together like a braid and pinch ends to seal.
6. Place into prepared tin. Repeat with second half of dough.
7. Cover loosely and let rise at room temperature for 1 to 1 1/2 hours, until nearly doubled.

Bake:

1. Preheat oven to 175 °C.
2. Bake loaves for 30-35 minutes, or until golden brown. Internal temperature should reach ~93 °C if using a thermometer.

Make and apply the syrup:

1. While the babka bakes, heat water and sugar in a small saucepan until sugar dissolves. Set aside.
2. As soon as the babka comes out of the oven, brush all the syrup evenly over the tops of both loaves.