

LE CREUSET SIGNATURE CAST IRON 20cm Round Casserole

Christmas Panettone

Serves 10

This traditional Italian recipe has all the special feels of Christmas and the festive period. This sweet, almond crusted bread is ideal for sharing with family and friends, paired with your favourite tippie or enjoyed with lashings of cream as the perfect end to a festive meal.

Preparation time: 6-8 hours

Cooking time: 40 minutes

INGREDIENTS

120g sultanas
150ml warm water
10g fast action yeast
100g caster sugar
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
1 lemon, peel finely grated
1 orange, peel finely grated
500g strong bread flour, plus extra for dusting
2 whole eggs
2 egg yolks
100g unsalted butter
5g fine salt
100g candied orange peel

For the icing

1 egg white
40g fine ground almonds
10g cornflour
100g caster sugar
2 tablespoons icing sugar
1 tablespoon granulated sugar
15g whole blanched almonds

METHOD

1. First, soak the sultanas for about 30 minutes in 50ml of warm water to soften. In the meantime, dissolve the yeast with the remaining 100ml warm water before adding the sugar, vanilla and citrus peel - this is best done in the bowl of a food mixer with a dough hook.
2. Add the bread flour and knead with the dough hook on a low speed until all the ingredients start to come together. Crack in both the eggs and yolks and continue to combine on a low speed.
3. Slowly add the butter into the dough in small flakes ensuring that the previous butter has been combined before putting the next.
4. Turn up the speed to medium and knead for 15 minutes before adding the salt, soaked

sultanas and candied fruit. Knead until you achieve a smooth, elastic dough. Turn the dough out onto a lightly floured surface and allow to rest for 20 minutes.

5. Fold the four corners of the dough into the centre before proceeding with the traditional "pirlatura" technique: with the hands slightly greased with butter, drag the edges of the dough in a circular motion to cause the ball of dough to start to swirl. Do this a couple of times until the round ball of dough looks twisted, before transferring to a greased bowl.
6. Cover with greased clingfilm and let it prove in a warm place like the oven off with the light on for approximately 2 hours, or until its volume doubles.
7. Transfer the doubled dough onto a lightly floured work surface. Tuck in any edges to create a smooth ball and lay it in the buttered 20cm round casserole, seam side down. Cover again and leave to rise in a warm place until it is 2cm from the top of the casserole - this will take 1-2 hours depending on temperature.
8. Meanwhile, in a bowl, add the egg white with the ground almonds, cornflour and caster sugar, mix well with a whisk. Preheat the oven to 180°C/ 160°C fan/ Gas Mark 5.
9. Gently brush the egg and almond mixture on the panettone, being careful to not touch the casserole as this will prevent your panettone from rising and make it difficult to release once cooked. Sprinkle with granulated sugar, icing sugar and almonds.
10. Put the casserole in the preheated oven for 45-50 minutes, testing with a skewer to ensure it has cooked through before removing from the oven.
11. Allow to cool in the casserole before carefully releasing from the pot - you may want to run a knife round the edge first to ensure the panettone releases cleanly.

Cook's Notes

- Sultanas can be easily replaced with raisins or currants or a mixture of all three. Alternatively, if you don't like dried fruit use chocolate chips in the same quantity - just be sure to eliminate the soaking stage!
- Pirlatura is the rounding of the dough to create a ball-shape and incorporates air into the dough.
- When you are spiralling the dough using the "pirlatura" technique, do not over flour the surface as you need a little resistance from the dough to allow the twist to occur. If you are finding this technique a little tricky, simply tuck in your raw edges and create a smooth dough ball and continue onto the next stage.