

OVERALL time: 178 mins

CHRISTMAS TREE BREAD WITH BACON, ONION SPREAD, CUCUMBER AND CELERY SPREAD

Have a bit of fun with your food this Christmas! Turn a can't-fail basic white bread recipe into a Christmas tree bread and serve it up with two fabulous cream-cheese based spreads.

Metric

Number of servings : 8

ingredients

For the bread

- 700 g Bread flour (plus extra for sprinkling)
- 10 g sachet of dry yeast
- 1 Egg white, whisked
- 15 ml Cape Herb & Spice Garlic & Herb
- 500 ml Lukewarm water
- Poppy, sesame and sunflower seeds

For the bacon & onion spread

- 4 rashers back bacon, finely chopped
- 1 onion, finely chopped
- 7.5 ml vegetable oil
- 250 g tub of cream cheese
- 5 ml Cape Herb & Spice Louisiana Cajun Rub

For the celery & cucumber spread

- 7 cm piece of cucumber, seeds removed and diced very finely
- 1 stick of celery, diced very finely
- 250 g tub of cream cheese
- 5 ml Cape Herb & Spice Poké Spice
- zest of one lemon, finely grated
- finely sliced radish, to garnish

- dill tips, to garnish

THIS IS WHAT YOU WILL NEED TO DO

PREP TIME: 150 mins | COOKING TIME: 28 mins

CHRISTMAS BREAD METHOD:

Place the flour, yeast and ***Cape Herb & Spice Garlic and Herb seasoning*** in a large bowl and stir to mix. Add the lukewarm water to the dry ingredients and mix to form a dough. Knead the dough for 10 minutes. (If it is very tacky and sticks to your hands, simply dip your hands in flour a few times.) Shape dough into a ball.

Place the dough ball in another large bowl, lightly painted with vegetable oil so the dough does not stick to the sides. Cover with cling film and allow dough to prove for an hour until it has doubled in size.

Knock the dough back and form 15 equal-sized balls. Use the last bit of dough to cut out a star shape and a trunk for your tree. Pack the dough balls in a Christmas tree shape on a baking sheet lined with baking parchment. (**NB:** Do not let the balls touch, leave about 1cm between them. Once they've proved and baked they will touch and form one unit.) Add the star and trunk and you're done. Allow the dough to prove for a further 45-60 minutes, then paint lightly with whisked egg white and scatter over seeds.

Pop the baking sheet into a pre-heated 200 °C oven for about 25 minutes until baked through and golden. This Christmas tree bread is really best made on the day you'll serve it.

BACON & CARAMELISED ONION CREAM CHEESE SPREAD:

4 rashers back bacon, finely chopped

1 onion, finely chopped

7.5ml vegetable oil

1 x 250g tub of cream cheese

5ml ***Cape Herb & Spice Louisiana Cajun Rub***

METHOD:

Fry the bacon bits until crispy in a non-stick pan, then drain on kitchen towel. Wipe the pan clean, add the vegetable oil and fry the onions over medium heat until golden and caramelised. Combine the bacon and onions with the cream cheese, add our ***Louisiana Cajun Rub*** spice and stir to mix thoroughly.

FOR THE CUCUMBER AND CELERY CREAM CHEESE SPREAD:

7cm piece of cucumber, seeds removed and diced very finely

1 stick of celery, diced very finely

1 x 250g tub of cream cheese

5ml **Cape Herb & Spice Poké Spice**

zest of one lemon, finely grated

finely sliced radish, to garnish

dill tips, to garnish

METHOD:

Mix all the ingredients together, spoon into a pretty serving dish and garnish with radishes and dill tips.

Recipe concept & photography by Lizet Hartley. Lizet Hartley is a freelance stills and reel food stylist, food photographer and recipe developer. In her spare time she – rather predictably – cooks. Get more of her recipes on her blog at <http://www.melkkos-merlot.co.za>

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