

Submitted by: Donna Grotheer

Recipe Name:

Italian Easter Bread

Ingredients:

makes 6 individual loaves

1 package Rapid Rise (instant) yeast (about 2-1/4 teaspoons)

1.25 cups milk

pinch of salt

1/3 cup butter

2 eggs, beaten

1/2 cup sugar

3.5 cups flour (approximate)

1 egg, beaten with 1 teaspoon of water

6 dyed Easter eggs

sprinkles or pearlized sugar

tip: the Easter eggs do not need to be hard boiled. They cook when the bread bakes. Just dye them raw. It works out just fine.

Directions:

In a small saucepan, warm the milk and butter together, just till butter melts. In a large mixer bowl, combine yeast, salt, eggs and sugar. Add the warm (not hot – it will kill the yeast) milk and butter. Add about half the flour and beat until smooth with dough hook. Slowly add the remaining flour to form a stiff dough. Don't worry about how much flour it ends up being, just keep adding until the dough is not sticky anymore.

Knead until smooth with either dough hook attachment or turn out on floured board and knead. Place in a greased bowl, cover and let rise in a warm place until doubled, about an hour.

Punch dough down, divide into 12 pieces. Roll each piece to form a 1 inch thick rope about 14 inches long and, taking two pieces, twist to form a "braid", pinching the ends, and loop into a circle.

Place on two baking sheets lined with parchment paper or Silpats. Cover and let rise until double, about an hour again. Brush each bread with beaten egg wash. Put on the sprinkles or pearl sugar. In the middle of each bread ring, gently place an Easter egg, making an indentation with the egg.

Bake at 350 degrees until golden – about 20 minutes. Cool on rack.