

# Chocolate Babka

By Margo Tikijian

Ingredients:

## **The dough:**

4 ½ cups/531 grams all-purpose flour  
1/3 cup/67 grams sugar  
1 ½ tsp salt  
Zest of one orange (optional)  
½ tsp freshly grated nutmeg or ground cinnamon  
1 tsp vanilla extract  
4 large eggs, room temperature, beaten  
10 tbsp/140 grams unsalted butter, room temperature  
½ cup/118 milliliters whole milk  
1 tbsp or 1 package active dry yeast

## **Filling option #1**

1/2 cup/50 grams powdered sugar  
1/3 cup/30 grams cocoa powder  
130 grams dark chocolate  
120 grams butter

## **Filling option #2 fudge-y**

½ cup/100 grams granulated sugar  
1/3 cup/177 milligrams heavy cream  
6 ounces/170 grams dark/bittersweet chocolate  
8 tbsp/112 grams room temp. butter, cubed  
2 tsp vanilla extract  
Pinch of salt

## **Simple syrup**

2/3 cup/135 grams granulated sugar  
2/3 cup/158 milliliters water

Combine in a saucepan and cook till sugar is completely dissolved. Remove from heat. Can be stored in refrigerator if made ahead.

## HOW TO MAKE

### The dough on day 1:

Step 1: Heat up the milk and a pinch of sugar until just lukewarm (around 100° to 110°)

Add the yeast and stir. Let sit 5 minutes. This is to make sure the yeast is alive.

Step 2: Place the flour, sugar, salt, orange zest, nutmeg or cinnamon in the mixer bowl. Whisk Together the eggs and yeast/milk mixture. Add to the flour mixture. Turn mixer or Processor on and mix/pulse until it's well incorporated. Add in the butter pieces one at a time. You want the butter to slowly incorporated and for the dough to look shiny and elastic. This could take up to 15 minutes.

Step 3: Remove the dough from the mixer. It will be rather tacky to the touch. Place in a greased bowl with enough room to allow for rising. Cover tightly with plastic wrap. Let rise for at least an hour (possibly 2) or until it has puffed up and risen.

Step 4: Remove the plastic. Punch down with your hands. Cover tightly with plastic wrap. Refrigerate overnight or four at least 4 hours. The longer time is better as it allows for more flavor development.

### Making the filling

#### Filling #1:

Step 1: sift together the dry ingredients

(just to make sure there are no hard lumps.

Step 2: Melt the chocolate and butter together – microwave for about 1 minute. Stir until the chocolate is completely melted.

Step 3: Add in the powder sugar/cocoa combination and whisk until smooth.

#### Filling #2 (fudge-y):

Step 1: In a saucepan over medium low heat, add in the heavy cream, sugar and pinch of salt. Simmer and stir until sugar is dissolved. About 5 minutes. Add in the chocolate, butter and vanilla and stir until smooth. Let cool to room temperature. (This can be made ahead of time and refrigerated. Bring to room temperature to use)

### Dough on day 2:

Preheat the oven to 350°

Step 1: Prepare two bread loaf pans by greasing lightly and then lining up and above the edges for easy removal.

Step 2: Remove the dough from the refrigerator. Divide evenly in half. On a lightly floured surface roll into a 9x17 rectangle. Remember to move the dough in between rolling's to make sure it is not sticking to the surface. Add a dusting of flour to the surface if needed. Spread half the filling over the dough. Starting with the wider side and roll. Place seam side down on a sheet pan. Repeat with the other half. If using the fudge-y filling, place in freezer for 10 minutes.

Step 3: Slice each roll in half lengthwise. Then with the twist the two halves over and under each other. Like you're braiding only with two strands rather than three. Bend the twist in half so that the two ends meet. Place in loave pan, tucking the ends under to fit.

Step 4: Cover with a large plastic bag (or clean kitchen towel) and let rise in a warm spot for at least an hour or until it's nice and puffy – it may not double in size.

Step 5: Remove from bag or towel and bake 40 to 50 minutes or when poked with a tester it comes out clean or an instant read thermometer registers between 185 to 210.

Step 6: As soon as the babkas are out of the oven, pierce all over with a skewer or small knife. Then pour and brush the simple syrup all over the babkas. Let cool on a cooling rack completely before serving.