



Tea Times

In this session we are giving you four recipes for our hospitality tea: Russian Black Bread, Russian Pound Cake, Apple Cake Sharlotka, and Strawberry Cheesecake Vatrushka Buns.

We will also have four Fairy Tale teas:

Fairy Tale Tea 1: *Old Peter's Russian Stories*, "Baba Yaga," by Arthur Ransome

Fairy Tale Tea 2: *Old Peter's Russian Stories*, "Sadko," by Arthur Ransome

Fairy Tale Tea 3: *Old Peter's Russian Stories*, "The Christening in the Village," by Arthur Ransome

Fairy Tale Tea 4: *The Russian Garland*, "Ivan the Peasant's Son," by Robert Steele

"Grab a chance and you won't be sorry for a might-have-been."

~ Arthur Ransome

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Russian Tea Cake



Ingredients

3 $\frac{3}{4}$ c flour
2 tsp baking powder
1 tsp salt
1 $\frac{1}{2}$ c unsalted butter, softened
1 $\frac{1}{2}$ c sugar
5 eggs, large
2 tsp vanilla
1 T brown sugar
1 tsp cinnamon
1 T icing sugar

Directions

Preheat oven to 350°. Grease 2 9-inch loaf pans. Sift the flour with the baking powder and salt and set aside.

Cream butter with sugar until light and fluffy with an electric mixer. Add eggs one by one, then vanilla, and beat on high speed for at least 3 minutes. Gradually add the flour mixture and beat for 2 minutes longer.

Mix brown sugar and cinnamon in a small bowl. Pour $\frac{1}{4}$ of the batter into loaf pans, then sprinkle brown sugar and cinnamon, and add the remaining batter. Bake in the preheated oven for 1 hour. Cool on a wire rack. Dust with powdered sugar and serve.

Russian Black Bread

Ingredients

2 T butter
1 pinch of brown sugar
2 ¼ tsp of active dry yeast
2 T of molasses
1 ¼ c of warm (but not hot) water
2 T of apple cider vinegar
2 T of cocoa powder
½ c of wheat bran
1 ½ c of rye flour
1 ½ c all-purpose flour
2 T of ground coffee or espresso
2 tsp of salt
1 T of caraway seeds (optional)
½ tsp of fennel seeds (optional)



(Note: We don't like the taste of caraway or fennel seeds and therefore chose to exclude them from our recipe. However, you can choose to include them if you like the taste!)

Directions

Mix sugar, yeast, and warm water in a bowl until dissolved, then let stand for about 10 minutes until it becomes foamy. In a saucepan, warm the molasses and butter together until smooth. Add apple cider vinegar and let mixture cook for a few minutes, stirring constantly.

In a large bowl, mix rye flour, all-purpose flour, cocoa powder, coffee, salt, fennel and caraway seeds (if including), and wheat bran. Add molasses mixture and yeast to the flour mixture and combine until it forms a smooth dough. (Add 1-2 T of flour if necessary to make the dough sticky but firm.) Knead on a lightly floured surface for 5-10 minutes until the dough is springy but firm.

Form the dough into a ball and set in a greased bowl. Cover with a slightly damp towel and allow it to rise for two hours.

Preheat the oven to 425° F and add dough to a greased 9-inch loaf pan. Sprinkle with flour, then cut an "X" across the top of the dough, about an inch deep. Bake at 425° for 20 minutes, then reduce heat to 350° and bake an additional 20 minutes. Allow it to cool for 10 minutes on a wire rack.

Strawberry Cheesecake Vatrushka Buns



Ingredients

For the Dough

1 c warm milk
1 T active dried yeast
½ T sugar
⅓ c vegetable oil
1 egg
½ tsp salt
3 c + 2 T bread flour

For the Filling

4 oz cream cheese
2 T sugar
½ c strawberry jam

For the Topping

2 T flour
1 T butter
1 T sugar
1 egg for brushing

Directions

For the Dough

In a small bowl, combine the warm milk, yeast, and sugar and let sit for 5 minutes. Then add an egg and vegetable oil and mix with a fork.

In a large standing mixer, combine the bread flour and salt. Add the liquid ingredients and mix using the dough hook attachment on low for 1 minute, then turn up the speed and continue mixing for 10 minutes until you have a very soft and pliable dough. (Alternatively, you can mix and knead the dough by hand for about 15 minutes.) Take the dough out of the bowl and brush the same bowl with a bit of vegetable oil, then put the dough back in and flip it over so the oily side is on top. Cover with a tea towel and let it sit for 1 hour in a warm place until the dough is double in size.

When the dough is ready, take it out of the bowl. Divide the dough into two equal parts, then divide each part into six equal pieces so that you have 12 in total. Take a dough piece and start tucking sides of it under itself until you have a rough ball, then roll it in a circular motion on a lightly floured surface until you have a tighter ball. Place the dough ball on a baking pan lined with parchment paper. Repeat with the rest of the dough. Make sure your dough pieces are at least 3 inches apart, using two pans if necessary. (The space between them will shrink after they have risen and flattened.) Cover with a clean tea towel and let them rise for 20-30 minutes depending on the temperature of your house. The dough balls won't double in size but will expand.

For the Filling and Streusel Topping

Meanwhile, in a small bowl, combine the cream cheese with sugar and set aside until needed.

In another small bowl, combine the firm (but not fridge-cold) butter, flour, and sugar with a fork. The streusel should have a sandy texture with a few clumps.

Using either the bottom of a jar or your fingers, press firmly in the center of each bun to create a well deep and wide enough to hold 2 T of the filling. Fill each bun with 1 T of the sweetened cream cheese. Then make an indentation in the middle of the cream cheese filling with the back of a spoon and drop a spoonful of jam on top of it.

Brush the sides of each bun with a beaten egg, then sprinkle with the streusel topping. Bake in the preheated oven at 350° for 20 minutes or until the buns are golden.

Apple Cake "Sharlotka"

Ingredients

4 apples
4 eggs
1 c sugar
1 c flour
2 tsp vanilla

Preheat your oven to 350°. Peel, core, and slice your apples. Arrange them on the bottom of a buttered and floured 9" spring form pan.



Whip eggs, sugar, and vanilla for 10 minutes until tripled in size. Add sifted flour to the egg mixture in 4 additions, blending each addition gently. Pour the batter into the pan and smooth the top.

Bake in the preheated oven for 50-60 minutes or until a cake tester comes out clean. Let cool for 20-30 minutes and then remove the sides of a springform pan.