



LIGHTHOUSE CHOCOLATE BREAD

Preparation: 30 minutes
Proving time: 3 hours
Cooking time: 40 minutes
Use: 1 large baking sheet
Makes: 2 small oval loaves

- 20g (1oz) fresh yeast
or 2½ teaspoons active dried yeast
- 325ml (11fl oz) warm water
- 125g (4½ oz) caster sugar
- 1 large egg yolk
- 25g (1oz) unsalted butter, softened
- 600g (1¼ lb) unbleached white bread flour
- 10g (½ oz) salt
- 30g (1oz) cocoa powder
- 250g (9oz) dark chocolate,
minimum 60% cocoa solids, roughly chopped
- 1 egg yolk for glazing

Combine the yeast, water and a generous pinch of sugar in a bowl and set aside for 5–10 minutes until bubbly. Add the egg yolk and butter to the yeast mixture.

If using a freestanding mixer, place all the remaining ingredients in the bowl and mix with the paddle for 1 minute on low speed to combine. Add the yeast mixture and mix with the paddle until well blended. Switch to the dough hook and mix first on low speed and then on medium speed until the dough is smooth and elastic – this takes about 4 minutes in total. Add a little extra water if it looks too dry.

If working by hand, combine the dry ingredients in a separate bowl and mix briefly with a spoon to blend. Then add the dry ingredients to the yeast mixture in three batches, stirring well with a spoon between additions. Add the chocolate pieces last. Knead the dough on a lightly floured surface for 8–10 minutes until the dough is smooth and elastic. Add a little extra water if it looks too dry.

Place the dough in a lightly oiled bowl, cover with clingfilm and leave to prove for about 2 hours in a warm, draught-free area.

Turn out the dough on to a lightly floured board and punch down. Divide into two equal pieces and shape each into an oval. Place both ovals on a greased or parchment-lined baking sheet, cover with a damp tea towel, and leave to prove for about 1 hour, or until doubled in size.

Preheat the oven to 220°C/425°F/gas mark 7.

Beat the egg with a fork and brush over the surface of the loaves. Place them on the baking sheet and bake for 15 minutes. Lower the temperature to 190°C/375°F/gas mark 5 for a further 25 minutes. Watch the loaves carefully during the last 5 minutes to avoid scorching the tops. Cool on a wire rack.

HINT: To make the heart shapes roll the dough into long snakes about 3cm (1in) in diameter by 37cm (15in) long. Shape into hearts and snip into the top cleavage and inside curves of the heart shape before baking. Make sure you keep an eye on the cooking time as chocolate bread can be ruined easily if baked for too long.



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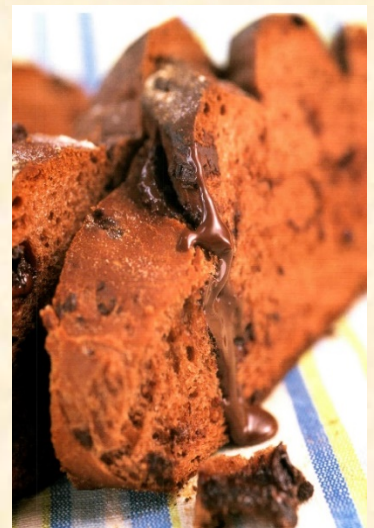
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