

Almond Cake

From Baroness Mistress Kathryn Goodwyn

I tend to call this my "foolproof bread" - I have made it once a year for 3 years and it has never failed! Everyone seems to like it. The recipe is from Maxime McKendry, Seven Hundred Years of English Cooking, who used a 1664 cookbook by Hannah Wolley for her original recipe.

2 ½ cups Flour
¼ cup Sugar
1 tsp. Cinnamon
½ tsp. Nutmeg
1 tsp. Salt
1 package dry Yeast
4 tbs. tepid water
2 Eggs
2 tbs. Butter

1/2 tsp. Rosewater
4 tbl. Milk
4 tbl. Sherry
½ cup Almonds
½ cup Currants

egg glaze: 1 egg yolk, beaten with 2 tbl. milk
or cream

Mix 2 ½ cups of the flour, the sugar, spices, and salt in a bowl. Dissolve the yeast in the warm water **[note: I use a pinch of sugar to help the yeast -- Kathryn]**. Make a well in the flour, and put in the yeast, eggs, butter, rosewater, milk and sherry. Mix to blend thoroughly. Add more flour if it is too sticky to knead. Knead for 8-10 minutes. Put dough in greased bowl, covered in a warm place and let rise for about 1 hour or until double in bulk. Punch down. Work in the nuts and currants. Form into a round ball. Put onto a greased baking sheet and let rise for another hour until double in bulk. Brush with egg glaze and bake at 350 degrees for 35-45 minutes.

Sideboard: I use light cream instead of milk in the dough, and tip in more rosewater, sherry, and spices than called for. I mix the nuts and almonds in early; since attempts to knead them in late have them popping out merrily and driving me mad. I bake it in a greased round casserole or a spring form pan.

