

Coconut-Chocolate Babka

Directions

Yield: Approximately 10 thick slices

Ingredients:

- ½ Cup Half & Half
- 2 ¼ tsp Yeast, Dry Active (1 packet)
- 1/3 Cup, plus 1 tsp Sugar, granulated (divided)
- 6 Tbsp Lard (room temperature, divided)
- 2 ea Eggs, plus 1 yolk
- 1 tsp Chai spice
- 1 tsp Salt
- ½ Cup Applesauce

- 3 ½ to 4 Cups Flour, bread
- 1 ea 13oz Jar Chocolate-Hazelnut Spread
- ½ Cup Cacao nibs
- ¼ Cup Coconut, sweetened shredded

Procedure:

1. Heat the half & half to 115 degrees. Sprinkle in the yeast and 1 teaspoon of the sugar. Stir gently to combine and let sit until foamy (about five minutes).
2. Place 4 tablespoons of the lard into the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with a paddle attachment and whip until light and fluffy.
3. In a medium bowl, gently mix the eggs and remaining sugar. Slowly add this mixture to the lard in the stand mixture on medium speed until fully incorporated. Add the chai spice, salt, applesauce and yeast mixture. Continue to mix until fully incorporated.
4. Change the mixer attachment to the bread hook. With the mixer on low speed, slowly add the flour ½ cup at a time. Stop the mixer and scrape down the sides of the bowl as needed. Add enough flour so that the dough forms a ball and pulls away from the sides of the mixer. It will be just slightly sticky. Continue to let the mixer knead the dough for another 4 minutes.
5. Use ½ tablespoon of the remaining lard to grease a large bowl and a piece of plastic wrap. Place the ball of dough into the bowl and cover. In a warm space, allow the dough to rise for 60 minutes or until doubled in size.
6. Use another ½ tablespoon of lard to grease a 9X5 inch loaf pan. Roll the dough out to a 10 X 18 inch rectangle. Spread the chocolate hazelnut spread over the entire surface of the dough leaving a 1/2 in border around the edges. Sprinkle the cacao nibs evenly over the chocolate spread.
7. Starting from the short end, roll the dough up into a log, pinching the ends closed as you go. Then, using a sharp knife, cut the log in half lengthwise, leaving it attached at the top by about an inch. Take the two pieces of dough and twist them around each other. Tuck the ends under the loaf and place it in the greased loaf pan. Cover and let rise 90 minutes to 2 hours. The dough should reach the top of the loaf pan when fully risen.
8. When the dough has risen, preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Melt the remaining tablespoon of lard and brush it over the top of the loaf. Bake the bread for 40 minutes, tenting it with foil for the last 15 minutes to prevent excess browning.
9. Remove the bread from the oven and allow it to cool for ten minutes before removing from pan. Allow bread to fully cool on a
10. Before serving, sprinkle the coconut over the loaf and cut with a serrated knife into thick slices.