

earl grey cinnamon rolls

makes 10 rolls

I was sure I'd seen this on Pinterest. I'm sure someone else has done it (after all, what hasn't been done before?). But when I went looking for the Earl Grey tea-infused cinnamon roll recipe that had been haunting my dreams, nothing I found quite matched what I was looking for. So, being the intrepid home cook I am, I test drove a couple cinnamon bun recipes and started experimenting with flavors. The result was these fluffy-sticky-bright cinnamon spice rolls, and I just love them.

ingredients

Tea-infused coconut milk:

- 1 cup + 2 Tbsp coconut milk
- 3 Earl Grey tea bags

For the dough:

- Tea-infused milk (reserve 3-4 Tbsp for the glaze)
- 1/4 cup (2 oz) unsalted butter
- 1 (7 g) package active dry yeast
- 1/4 cup white sugar
- 1 egg + 1 egg yolk
- 3 cups AP flour
- 1 tsp salt

For the filling:

- 2/3 cup brown sugar
- 1 Tbsp ground cinnamon
- 1/2 Tbsp ground cardamom
- 1 tsp vanilla powder (*optional*)
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 1/4 cup softened unsalted butter

For the glaze:

- 3/4 cup powdered sugar
- 3-4 Tbsp tea-infused coconut milk
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 1 tsp lemon zest (*optional*)
- pinch salt

notes

Vanilla powder adds depth and funk to the filling, but can be swapped for vanilla paste or extract or omitted if so desired.

Lemon zest brings out the Earl Grey and makes the flavor of these rolls almost savory. Skip it for a more familiar cinnamon roll experience.

preparation

1. Heat coconut milk and earl grey tea bags together over a medium low heat until you can smell the tea and it has visibly flavored the milk.
2. Remove 3-4 Tbsp of milk for your glaze (sometimes some of the milk gets stuck in the tea bags – gently squeeze them out but if you've lost a lot of milk, reserve less – your glaze will be fine but you need at least 3/4 cup of liquid for your dough!).
3. Add butter to the remaining tea milk and melt. Remove from heat and take temperature – you need the mix to be between 100 and 110 F for your yeast. Bloom the yeast in the milk-tea-butter mix.
4. Pour yeasty mix into the bowl of a stand mixer (or a large bowl) and whisk in your eggs and sugar. It should visibly foam up almost immediately.
5. Add flour and gently stir just until a dough starts to form, then add salt, then bring together and knead or knead using dough hook attachment around 10 minutes.
6. Cover and set aside to rise at least an hour.
7. Meanwhile, mix together cinnamon, cardamom, vanilla, and salt for your filling.
8. Once dough has roughly doubled in size, shape it into a roughly 9 x 14 inch rectangle, coat with butter, then cover with filling, and roll.
9. Slice rolled dough snake into roughly inch and a half wide rolls and place in a buttered 9 inch round pan. Allow to rise again until rolls have puffed up.
10. Bake at 350 F for 18-20 minutes or until golden brown and set.
11. Meanwhile, make glaze: Combine tea-milk and powdered sugar, adding more of either as needed until you get a consistency that's not pourable but totally liquid. Add vanilla and lemon zest (if using).
12. Glaze buns while still warm and serve when just cool enough to remove from pan. (They're also great the next day, but when they're still warm and fresh? Wow.)

emily m. duncan