

Scottish Black Bun

- Serves 10-12
- Takes 40 minutes to make and 2 hours to bake

Ingredients

1. 200g plain flour, plus extra for dusting
2. 200g raisins
3. 400g currants
4. 1 tsp ground mixed spice
5. 1 tsp ground ginger
6. 75g dark muscovado sugar
7. 25g molasses sugar
8. 100g chopped mixed peel
9. ½ tsp bicarbonate of soda
10. 1 tbsp brandy or whisky
11. 1 egg, lightly beaten
12. 3 tbsp milk
13. A generous pinch of freshly ground black pepper

For the pastry

1. 200g plain flour
2. ½ tsp baking powder
3. 50g butter, chilled and cubed
4. 50g vegetable shortening or lard, chilled and cubed

Method

1. Make the pastry. Put the flour, baking powder and a pinch of salt in a large bowl. Add the butter and shortening and rub in until it resembles breadcrumbs. Stir in 4 tablespoons of cold water and mix to a soft dough. Cover with cling film and chill while you make the filling.
2. Preheat the oven to 180°C/ fan160°C/gas 4. Mix all the filling ingredients together in a large bowl, with enough milk to just moisten it.
3. Dust a clean work surface with flour. Roll out three-quarters of the dough to a rectangle large enough to line the base and sides of a 900g loaf tin. Drape into the tin and press up against sides, smoothing out any creases. Tightly pack in the filling and press down well. Roll out the remaining pastry to a rectangle large enough to fit the top. Dampen the edge of the pastry in the tin with water, press the pastry lid on top to seal and trim off the edges. Bake for 2 hours. Allow to cool for 1 hour.

4. Remove the black bun from the tin, then cut into slices to serve.

Chef's tip

'First footing' is an old Hogmanay custom: shortly after midnight, neighbours would visit one another to offer their best wishes for the New Year and take gifts such as black bun (a fruit cake wrapped in pastry) to symbolise that the household would not go hungry that year. This will keep in an airtight container for up to 3 weeks.



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