

Garlic, herb and parmesan festive wreath bread

Ingredients for the dough

3 teaspoons dried yeast
315 ml lukewarm milk
1 tablespoon sugar (optional)
1 teaspoon sea salt
50g softened butter
420g plain flour (not bread flour)

Ingredients for the filling

a bunch of fresh herbs, roughly chopped (I used lemon basil, basil, sage, rosemary and garlic chives)
50g softened butter
20g plain flour
1/2 teaspoon chilli flakes
2 cloves of garlic, crushed
freshly ground black pepper
zest of 1/2 lemon, finely grated
freshly grated parmesan
1 egg, beaten

Method

Mix the lukewarm milk, yeast and sugar (if using) together until well-combined. Put the yeast mixture, flour, butter and salt in a bowl and mix thoroughly until you get a dough just firm enough to knead. Knead by hand on a floured surface, or using the dough-hook in a mixer for about 7 - 10 minutes until the dough forms a soft ball that springs back when lightly pressed. Turn the dough into a greased bowl, cover with cling-film and leave to rise for about 45 minutes in a warm place. Near the end of the proving time make the filling so that it's ready to use as soon as the dough has proved.

Beat together the herbs, softened butter, flour, chilli flakes, garlic, black pepper, lemon zest. Knead the dough for about a minute and then roll out in a large rectangle shape on a well floured surface. Spread the filling evenly over the dough, sprinkle over some parmesan, and roll it up, starting from the longest side. Put the dough onto a baking sheet lined with non-stick baking parchment, to form a circle, keeping the seam on the farthest edge. Pinch the ends together to seal the wreath. Snip the dough 16 times from the outer edge of the circle at about 4 cm intervals, cutting two-thirds of the way through, using a very sharp knife or kitchen scissors. Lift and turn every other section of dough towards the centre of the circle. Leave to prove again for about 45 minutes - 1 hour or until the dough has doubled in size. Brush with lightly beaten egg and sprinkle with some grated parmesan.

Bake at 200C/Gas Mark 6/400F for 20 - 30 minutes or until lightly browned and cooked through.

Tear and share as soon as soon as cool enough to do so.