



Zwieback

Zwieback is a rich, pull-apart yeast roll that looks like a snowman without a head. Miriam Toews, Springsong's 2016 Guest Author, culled this zwieback recipe (nothing at all like the German and Scandinavian rusks) from the *Mennonite Treasury*, "the real bible for Mennonites." Covid-19 not only pressed her into service to babysit her grandkids so her adult children could work, but has turned much of the populace into bread-makers. "I've been wanting to bake zwieback with my mom, who's a pro but can't do all the kneading etc. because of her arthritis. But I can't find flour anywhere!!!! So this is really our dream here now, to somehow get hold of enough flour to make zwieback."

INGREDIENTS

- 2½ CUPS** scalded milk
- 1 CUP** shortening
- 2 TSP** salt
- 4 TBSP** sugar
- 1** yeast cake or **1** packet (2¼ tsp) active dry yeast
- 2 TSP** sugar
- ½ CUP** warm water
- 2** eggs beaten (optional, but adds richness to the dough)
- 8-10 CUPS** sifted flour
- MAKES 4 DOZEN ROLLS**

METHOD

In a large bowl, scald milk, add shortening, salt, and 4 Tbsp sugar. Mix well. Cool to body temperature.

In a small bowl, add 2 tsp sugar to the warm water and stir in the yeast. Set in a warm place until the yeast bubbles to the surface.

Add 3 cups of flour to the lukewarm milk and beat well. Then add yeast mixture and beaten eggs. Stir in flour gradually, a cup or two at a time, mixing by hand or using a stand mixer with a dough hook. When enough flour is incorporated that the dough forms a ball, turn the dough onto a floured surface and knead until soft and smooth.

Cover and let rise in a warm place (oven with the light on). When the dough has doubled in bulk (about 2 hours), punch down, knead lightly, then pinch off small balls of dough, about the size of a young hen or a pheasant egg. Place the dough balls 1 inch apart on a greased cookie sheet. Place a smaller ball of dough, the size of a starling's egg but not as small as a bluebird's, on top of the larger ball and press straight down with your thumb. Be sure to centre the top ball and press right down through the bottom ball to the cookie sheet. This will leave a dimple on top, the mark of a good zwieback. Let rise until double (about 1 hour).

Preheat the oven to 410°F. Bake the rolls for 20 minutes or until the bottoms are golden brown. Serve warm or cool. Reserve one quarter of this delicious, slightly sweet dough and knead in chopped nuts and dried fruit for a memorable breakfast bread.

