



Birdie Beak Rolls

Yeast dough for rolls is softer than bread dough and usually contains eggs, butter or oil, and sugar as well as extra yeast and a minimum of flour. This basic roll dough shapes easily into all the dinner rolls we know and love—Parker House, Butterhorns, Fan Tans, Puffballs, Shamrocks, and Crooked Miles—and the newest addition, a bird-shaped roll, guaranteed to delight everyone at your Birder Banquet.

INGREDIENTS

1 CUP milk scalded
¼ CUP sugar (or to taste)
2 TBSP lukewarm water
½ TSP sugar
1 PKG dry active yeast (2¼ tsp)
1 egg beaten
4-4½ CUPS all purpose flour
5 TBSP melted butter or oil
1 TSP salt
 Currants
 Toasted almond slices

MAKES AT LEAST 2 DOZEN

METHOD

Heat the milk and ¼ cup sugar and cool to lukewarm.

While the milk is cooling, stir ½ tsp sugar into lukewarm water and sprinkle in the yeast. Let soften 10 minutes, until the yeast bubbles up. Add yeast mixture and eggs to the lukewarm milk and stir.

Beat in half the flour, then the oil and salt. Beat in the rest of the flour to make a soft (not sticky) dough. Knead for 10 minutes on a floured board or with a kneading hook and stand mixer.

Let rise until double in a clean bowl, covered with a cloth (about 1½ hrs). Punch down and let rise double again. Punch down.

To shape Birdies, roll out a rectangle of dough and cut into strips 1 inch wide by 4-5 inches long. Tie each strip into a loose knot with a short bit sticking out one end (the head) and a long bit out the other end (the tail). Set on a cutting board so the head is up and the tail on the ground. With a sharp knife or scissors, cut the tail into 3 “feathers.” Press currants into either side of the head for “eyes.”

Set Birdies well apart on a baking sheet. Brush with melted butter. (This helps preserve the shape and creases.)

Bake at 400°F until golden, about 10-14 minutes, depending on whether you’re making chickadees or rock doves.

As soon as the Birdies come out of the oven, use a very sharp knife to make a tiny slit in the front of the bird face and slip in a piece of pointy toasted almond for a beak.