

Pambazo Buns - Pan para pambazos

Ingredients

4 cups (500 g) flour, plus more to dust
1 tbsp (9 g) dry yeast
2 tsp (12 g) granulated sugar
2 tsp (12 g) salt
4 tsp (20 g) vegetable shortening
OR non-hydrogenated margarine
1 ½ - 1 ¾ cups lukewarm water



In a large bowl, place flour and open a well in the centre. sprinkle dry yeast and sugar in the well, then add half a cup of the warm water. Mix ingredients in the well with a fork or beater. Allow to rest for a couple of minutes, to ensure that the yeast is active, as it starts to bubble, then sprinkle salt on the flour around the edge. Add fat (shortening or as in this case, margarine) and another cup of water. Using a wooden spatula, start to incorporate wet mix with dry ingredients. Add more water gradually, as needed (in this case, another quarter cup). Knead with spatula and/or hands, folding and occasionally flipping the dough; the dough will be very sticky and brittle at first. Continue kneading until the dough is not sticky anymore, may be gathered together, and is very elastic (in this case, 25 minutes). Pick up dough, gently pull edges towards centre to form a ball, and place back in the bowl, seam down. Cover with a clean kitchen towel, and allow to rest in a warm spot away from drafts, until the dough has doubled in size (in this case forty minutes.) Divide the dough into portions for individual buns. For traditional large buns, about ten portions of 100 g each, or for smaller buns, twelve portions of 80 g each. Working with one portion at a time, pull edges back and pinch towards the centre, to form a ball; place ball on working surface, seam side down, and cup ball under one hand, rolling to smooth. Repeat with the rest of the portions. Let the dough relax for a few minutes. Meanwhile, prepare two baking sheets with parchment paper. Make a small mound of flour on the working surface. Place one ball on top, then press down and flatten to form a disc. Flip the disc to cover the other side with flour, then pick it up and using both hands, hold it at two opposite ends and pull, to form an oval. Place oval on prepared tray, and gently pull ends and pat down, to thin the oval to a thickness of approximately one quarter of an inch (around 7 mm). Repeat with each portion. Allow to rest for 25-30 minutes. Meanwhile, preheat oven to 325°F (163°C). Bake for 10 minutes, then switch bottom tray to top shelf and vice versa, and rotate each tray, so the back side faces the front. Because the temperature is relatively low, and the buns are coated with flour, they will puff but not too much, and will remain white on the top side. Bake for another 10-15 minutes until the bottom of the buns has started to brown, then remove from the oven and allow to cool down.