

FINNISH-STYLE CARDAMOM CRANBERRY PULLA

INGREDIENTS

1/3 cup dried cranberries
1/2 cup boiling water
2 1/4 teaspoons active dry yeast
1 cup lukewarm whole milk
5 cups all-purpose flour, sifted (plus more for forming the loaf)
1/2 cup granulated sugar
1/2 teaspoon table salt
1 tablespoon dried cardamom seeds, crushed into a fine powder in a spice grinder
7 tablespoons softened butter, cut into 1/2" chunks
2 eggs, lightly beaten (plus another for brushing)
1 cup blanched sliced almonds, chopped, plus more for sprinkling on top

DIRECTIONS

In a small bowl, combine the dried cranberries and the boiling water. Set aside to plump the dried fruit for about 5 minutes. Strain the dried fruit, reserving the water.

In a large mixing bowl or the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the dough hook, combine the yeast and milk. Set the mixture aside for about five minutes to activate the yeast. The mixture should have a foamy top. In a separate bowl, combine the flour, sugar, salt, and ground cardamom. Whisk until well combined.

Add butter, eggs, cranberries, and almonds to the yeast mixture. Then, add in the dry ingredients and mix until it just comes together. If the dough seems too dry, add in a tablespoon at a time of the dried fruit water until the dough comes together. Knead the dough on a well-floured surface for 5 minutes, or until the dough is smooth and elastic.

Cover the bowl with a clean dish towel or plastic wrap and let rise in a warm place until the dough has doubled in volume (around an hour in most cases but can vary). You can also do an overnight cool rise in the fridge. Punch down the dough, cover it again, and let it rise for a short 30 minute rise until just puffy.

On a floured surface, divide the dough into equal halves. Form one half into a large rectangular shape—about 1-2" thick. Cut the rectangle into three long strips—keeping the top of the rectangle connected. Braid the three strips together, folding under the end and pressing it together to seal. Repeat with the other half of the dough so that you have two loaves.

Place both on a large baking sheet covered in parchment paper or silpat. Cover again with a clean dish towel or plastic wrap sprayed with cooking spray and let rise until quite puffy (about 30-45 minutes, but again, can vary).

Toward the end of the rise time, preheat the oven to 400°F.

Brush the loaves with beaten egg, and sprinkle with almonds. Bake in the preheated oven for 25-30 minutes, or until golden brown. Transfer to a wire rack to cool for at least 30 minutes before slicing and serving.