

New Orleans King Cake Recipe

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Heads up: This recipe makes TWO regular sized king cakes!

PREP TIME: 30 minutes
COOK TIME: 25 minutes
RISING TIME: 3 hours
TOTAL TIME: 3 hours 55 minutes

Ingredients

Dough

- 1 cup milk
- ¼ cup salted butter
- 1 ½ teaspoon salt
- ⅔ cup warm water
- ½ cup granulated sugar, divided
- 1 tablespoon active dry yeast
- 2 large eggs, beaten
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 5 to 5 ½ cups all-purpose flour spooned & leveled (705g to 776g)

Cream Cheese Filling

- 8 ounces cream cheese, softened
- 2 cups powdered sugar
- 2 tablespoons salted butter, softened
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract

Ingredients

Frosting

- 2 cups powdered sugar
- 3 tablespoons milk
- 1 tablespoon salted butter, melted
- 1 teaspoon lemon juice
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract

Instructions

Dough

- Heat milk and butter for 60-90 seconds in a microwave safe bowl. Add the salt, then set aside to cool until just warm (about 120° to 130°F).
- In a separate bowl, combine the warm water, about 1 tablespoon of the sugar, and the yeast. Stir, then let it sit for 5-10 minutes until the yeast is foamy.
- Once the yeast is foamy, add the milk and butter, the remaining sugar, eggs, vanilla, and 1 cup of the flour. Mix well, then continue adding flour while kneading with the dough hook attachment, 1 cup at a time. Only add the additional ½ cup of flour if the dough is really sticky. Knead for 5 minutes on medium speed or 8-10 minutes by hand to create a very soft dough that starts coming away from the sides of the bowl.
- Turn out the dough onto a floured surface and knead a few times by hand until a smooth, round ball forms. Clean and lightly oil the bowl, then return the dough to the bowl, turning to coat. Cover with plastic wrap and let rise in a warm place for 1-2 hours until doubled in size.

Filling

- Combine the softened cream cheese, powdered sugar, softened butter, and vanilla in a bowl. Beat well until smooth. Set aside.

Instructions

Assembly

- Line two baking sheets with parchment paper and set aside.
- Once the dough has doubled in size, punch it down and divide in half. (Remember, this recipe makes TWO king cakes). Roll out one half of the dough into a large rectangle on a lightly floured surface, roughly 10x16-inches. Use a pizza cutter to divide the dough in half lengthwise to create two long rectangles.
- Spread cream cheese filling evenly over the dough and roll up into two long cylinders, just like when making cinnamon rolls. Twist the two logs together into a rope braid, then transfer to the prepared baking sheet, shaping into an oval and pinching the ends together. Repeat with the remaining dough and filling. Cover lightly with plastic wrap and let rise for 30-45 minutes until puffy.
- Preheat oven to 350°F while the king cake is rising. Bake for 25-30 minutes until golden brown and baked through. The cake should be done when it reaches 190° to 195°F on a digital thermometer inserted into the center of each loaf. Remove from oven and cool completely before frosting.

Frosting

- Beat the powdered sugar, milk, butter, lemon juice, and vanilla in a medium bowl until smooth. The frosting should be pourable but thick.

Serving

- Stick a plastic baby figurine into each cake, pushing it down in to hide it.
- Drizzle the frosting over both king cakes, spreading it with a spatula if needed for good coverage. Sprinkle with the purple, green, and gold sugar while the frosting is still wet before it has a chance to set.
- Slice and serve. Whoever gets the slice with the baby gets to be king or queen for the day!