

EASTER BREAD (OSTERZOPF)

INGREDIENTS

1 cup warm water, between 100-110F
1 tablespoon granulated sugar
2 teaspoon instant or dry active yeast
450 grams all-purpose flour (about 3 3/4 cups)
6 tablespoons vegetable oil, divided
4 tablespoons honey
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/2 cup sliced almonds (optional)
1/2 cup hagelzucker (pearl sugar)
3 hard boiled, red colored eggs

INSTRUCTIONS

In the work bowl of your stand mixer, sprinkle 1/2 cup of the flour, then the sugar and the yeast. Add warm milk, stir and allow to sit for about 15 minutes, until a sponge starts to form. Add to the yeast mixture, 3 tablespoons of the honey, 4 tablespoons of the oil and the salt. Bit by bit, add the remaining flour (you may not need all of it). Mix the dough until it comes together, then knead by hand or with your dough hook, into a soft, smooth dough. Place the dough into a greased bowl, cover with plastic wrap and let it rise in a warm place until it has doubled in size, about 60-90 minutes.

Preheat oven to 400F.

When the dough has doubled, place on a lightly floured surface and knead for a minute or so. Divide the dough into three pieces and create three long snakes. Braid together, and then create a circle. Place onto a silpat or parchment lined baking sheet. Combine the remaining 2 tablespoons of oil with the remaining 1 tablespoon of honey and using a pastry brush, brush the braid. Sprinkle on the slices almond (if using) and pearl sugar. Nestle the three eggs into the braid (you may have to push in hard, as you don't want the falling out while baking) at evenly spaced intervals.

Bake in a preheated oven at 400F until golden and baked through, about 30-35 minutes. Check the bread regularly after 20 minutes and cover the top with a piece of aluminum foil if the top is browning too much. Let cool on a wire rack completely before serving.