



How to Make Cinnamon Raisin Bread

Packed with plump, juicy raisins and rich cinnamon swirls, this easy-to-make bread is guaranteed to please.
by Daniel Leader



Cinnamon and sugar were the first two ingredients I ever mixed together by myself. As a kid, I loved stirring the fine brown spice into sweet sugar crystals and watching as a cinnamon cloud wafted above the bowl. Whenever guests arrived at our house, I'd beg them to try my very own recipe for cinnamon toast.

Even now, as a veteran baker of 28 years, I'm still a sucker for that cinnamon-sugar combination, especially in cinnamon raisin bread. The aroma of a loaf baking in the oven is one of the most me to making an outstanding loaf of cinnamon raisin bread: cheerful that I know. The recipe here is based on a cinnamon raisin bread I offer in my bakery on the weekends. The dough is easy to make, the swirl of cinnamon and sugar always comes out beautifully, and the resulting raisin-studded loaf is utterly addictive, especially when slathered in butter and served with a cup of freshly brewed coffee. But the best part? People beg to make it.

BAKER'S NOTES

Over the years, I've learned a few tricks to making an outstanding loaf of cinnamon raisin bread:

Soak the raisins before adding them to the dough. Hydrating raisins in hot water makes them plump and juicy. It also prevents them from absorbing water from the dough as it bakes and drying it out. Don't soak the raisins too long, though—they'll break down and shred when mixed into the dough, resulting in raisin "smears."

Use cinnamon in the filling and in the dough. This ensures that the bread will have warm cinnamon notes that are impossible to miss.

Opt for instant yeast. While other types of yeast need to be dissolved in liquid before they're used, instant yeast can be added directly to the dry ingredients, which makes this recipe that much easier to prepare.

Reach for fine sea salt. Sea salt comes from evaporated sea water and contains trace amounts of minerals. It tastes better than table salt, which often contains additives. That said, in a pinch, table salt will do.

Let the mixer do the work. Kneading the dough strengthens the wheat protein (or gluten) and encourages the yeast to

reproduce, which causes the dough to rise. Although you can knead the dough by hand, using a stand mixer is easier.

Give the dough a final fold. Folding the dough a couple of times after it has rested will reinforce the gluten structure for better leavening.



Grease the pans thoroughly. If the pans aren't well greased, the bread's filling will stick to them, making the loaves hard to remove.

Brush melted butter over the baked loaf. The butter makes the crust a bit softer and adds extra flavor.

Roll in the Cinnamon Swirl

