

EPIPHANY CAKE

The Church is so generous with joy. She does not end our celebration of the Incarnation with the conclusion of the Octave of Christmas. She extends it to Epiphany! Catholics in America should celebrate with more enthusiasm (think: roaring bonfires, grilled meat, lots of singing, red wine, brown ale, and cake)! So, here's our twist on an Epiphany and Mardi Gras favorite.

INGREDIENTS

3 ½ cups all-purpose flour
1 package (2 ¼ teaspoons) rapid rise yeast
1 cup milk
¼ cup sugar
1 teaspoon salt
2 eggs
6 tablespoons unsalted butter, softened, cut into 12 pieces

CINNAMON FILLING

2/3 cup packed light brown sugar
1 ½ teaspoons ground cinnamon
4 tablespoons unsalted butter, softened

ICING

1 cup powdered sugar
1 tablespoon milk
½ teaspoon vanilla
Decoration: Dark green, purple, and yellow or gold sugars, if desired
Miniature plastic baby, if desired

DIRECTIONS

1. Mix 2 ½ cups flour and yeast in mixing bowl of stand mixer, using the paddle attachment, on low for about 30 seconds.
2. Heat milk, sugar, and salt in a small saucepan over medium heat until sugar is dissolved and milk is between 120°F to 130°F.
3. With mixer on low, pour in liquids and mix until incorporated. Add eggs one at a time. Continue mixing until a shaggy dough forms. Clean off paddle and switch to dough hook. Mix in the remaining 1 cup flour a little at a time, adding more or less flour as needed to make a soft dough. Add the softened butter, a piece at a time, kneading until each piece of butter is absorbed.
4. Knead for eight minutes on low. The dough should completely clear the sides of the bowl. If it is too sticky, add 1 tablespoon additional flour at a time, mixing in thoroughly before

determining if more flour is needed. If the dough seems too dry, spritz with water from a spray bottle a couple of times, mixing thoroughly before determining if more water is needed. Every 2 minutes, stop the machine, scrape the dough off the hook, and then continue kneading.

5. Turn the dough out onto a lightly floured surface and knead a few times by hand to be sure it's smooth and elastic. Form the dough into a ball. Place dough into a greased bowl. Turn once so greased surface is on top. Cover bowl with plastic wrap and refrigerate for 1 hour.
6. While the dough is chilling, make cinnamon filling. In a small bowl, combine the brown sugar and ground cinnamon. Combine butter with cinnamon mixture and mix well.
7. Roll the chilled dough into a 10 x 20-inch rectangle. Spread the filling on half of the long side of the dough. Fold the dough in half covering the filling. Pat the dough down firmly so the dough will stick together. Cut dough into three long strips. Press the tops of the strips together and braid the strips. Press the ends together at the bottom. Gently stretch the braid so that it measures 20 inches again. Shape it into a circle/oval and press the edges together.
8. Transfer the ring to a parchment lined or greased baking sheet. Cover the dough with plastic wrap and let it rise until doubled, about 1 hour. While the dough is rising, preheat the oven to 350°. Bake the cake until it is golden brown, 20 – 35 minutes. Remove from oven and let cool for 10 minutes on baking sheet and then place it on a cooling rack to cool completely before icing. To hide the baby in the cake, if desired, make a small slit in the bottom of the cake and put the miniature plastic baby in after the cake has cooled.

ICING

1. In a small bowl, mix powdered sugar, milk and vanilla until smooth (add additional milk if mixture is too thick or powdered sugar if too thin).
2. Spoon icing over top of the cake. Immediately sprinkle on colored sugar, alternating between the three colors.

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The Magi experienced longing; they were tired of the usual fare. They were all too familiar with, and weary of, the Herods of their own day.

But there, in Bethlehem, was a promise of newness, of gratuitousness. There, something new was taking place.”

—Pope Francis