

Christmas Cake (Panettone)

INGREDIENTS:

Servings: 8 people

Raisins	150 g
Dried figs	6
Brandy	100 ml
Melted butter	75 g
Sugar	100 g
Eggs	3
Egg yolks	2
Salt	1 tsp
All-purpose flour	650 g
Chopped candied orange peel	25 g
Grated rind of 1 lemon	
Vanilla extract	1 tsp
Fresh yeast	20 g
or dry active yeast	10 g
Warm water	200 ml

TOOLS:

Chef's knife
Cutting board
Bowls
Wooden spoon
Slotted spoon
Baking dish or Charlotte mould
Kitchen towel

PREPARATION:

Trim and coarsely *chop the figs*. Place the raisins, figs, and brandy in a bowl and soak them for at least 2 hours, or for as long as overnight. Sprinkle the yeast over the warm water, stirring to dissolve. Let sit for 10 minutes.

In a large bowl, combine the butter, sugar, whole eggs, egg yolks, and salt. Pour in the yeast mixture and stir until smooth. Add the lemon rind and vanilla. Mix in half the flour, keeping the dough smooth and elastic. Add in more flour until the dough pulls away from the sides of the bowl, but is still pliable and soft. Turn the dough out onto a floured work surface, and knead it for 10 minutes. Cover it with a kitchen towel, and let it rest for 10 minutes.

Pat the dough into a circle. Drain the raisins and figs, and sprinkle them with flour. Place them, along with the *diced orange peel*, on top of the dough, and then gently incorporate them into the dough with your fingers. Knead the dough until all the ingredients are uniformly distributed. Place the dough in a greased bowl, turning to coat all sides. Cover and let rise for 2 hours, or until doubled in size.

Fifteen minutes before the rising is finished, preheat the oven to 200° C. Turn out the dough onto a lightly-floured surface and knead briefly. Grease a large baking dish, or a Charlotte mould, and place the dough inside. Brush the top with butter, and let the dough rise again, this time for 1 1/2 hours. Mark the dough with a cross, brush with melted butter once again, and bake for 10 minutes.

Reduce the oven temperature to 180° C, and then continue to bake for 20 minutes. Cool thoroughly on a wire rack before serving.