

NEW ENGLAND HOT DOG BUNS

Makes 8 to 10.

By Dennis W. Viau; an original recipe.

The hot dog buns in New England are different from those in most of the USA. They have white sides and a browned top. When separated, the buns can be buttered on the sides and toasted. The hot dog fits into a cut along the top of the bun rather than along the side, which makes holding condiments neater.



Ingredients:

For the dough:

½ cup (113g) water, slightly warmed (100°F/38°C)
1 tablespoon active dry or instant yeast
Pinch of sugar
¾ cup (175ml/175g) whole milk, warmed slightly (100°F/38°C)
4 cups (567g) all-purpose flour
3 tablespoons (12g) dry (powdered) milk
2 tablespoons (23g) sugar
2 large eggs (94g), room temperature
1½ teaspoons salt
6 tablespoons (85g) butter

Optional egg wash:

1 egg
1 tablespoon whole milk

Directions:

Combine the warm water and yeast in a large bowl (or the bowl of a stand mixer). Stir in the pinch of sugar and let the mixture rest for several minutes to activate the yeast. It will foam. Stir in the milk.

Add about half the flour along with the milk powder, sugar, and eggs. Mix to form a batter. Add the remaining flour a little at a time with all the salt and mix until a moist and slightly sticky dough forms. You might need to adjust the flour or add a little more water to get the desired consistency. Knead until smooth and elastic, 8 to 10 minutes. Kneading can be done with a dough hook in a stand mixer. Add the butter, about 2 tablespoons at a time and work into the dough until thoroughly combined. The dough will separate each time the butter is added, but continue kneading until the dough comes together again.

Place the dough in a large buttered bowl, cover with plastic wrap, and allow to rise in a warm place until doubled in bulk, about 1 hour. Rising time might take longer if your kitchen is cold.

Punch the dough down and divide into 8 to 10 evenly-sized pieces (the size and number will depend on your hot dogs). Roll each piece into a long roll slightly longer than the size of your hot dogs and arrange in your baking pan. You can use a 9x13-inch (23x33cm) baking pan or a 6x15-inch (15x38cm) hot dog bun pan. Alternatively, you could place the rolls side-by-side on a baking sheet.

Cover lightly with plastic wrap and let rise until doubled, about 45 minutes. Optional: Combine the egg and milk to make an egg wash and lightly brush the rolls just before baking.

Heat the oven to 375°F (190°C). Bake 20 to 25 minutes until golden on top. Carefully remove from the pan and allow to cool on a rack. Slit each roll down the middle, about ¾ of the way toward the bottom.

STEP-BY-STEP

1



Combine the yeast with the warm water and a pinch of sugar. Stir to dissolve and let rest a few minutes to activate the yeast.

2



Stir in the warmed milk.

3



Add about half the flour with the powdered milk, sugar, and eggs. Mix to form a batter.

4



With the machine running (or mixing by hand), start adding the flour, a little at a time, with the salt and combine until a dough forms. It should be moist and a little sticky. Knead 8 to 10 minutes.

5



Add the butter, about a third at a time, working it into the dough until it comes back together again. The dough will break up initially, but it will eventually return to a homogenous dough.

6



When I'm making dough for bread or rolls, the consistency I look for is to see the dough pulling away from the sides of the bowl but sticking a little in the bottom. This tells me the dough has the right ratio of wet to dry ingredients.

7



Another way to check the dough: Kneading quickly it should not stick to your hands or the counter, but if you squeeze the dough and pull your hand away slowly it should stick a little to your hands.

8



Cover the dough and let rise in a warm place until doubled in bulk, about an hour.

Note: I have a lot more dough here because I made a double batch for two different sizes of hot dog buns.

9



Cut the dough in 8 to 10 pieces. If you want them to be exactly the same, you can use a digital scale. I prefer them to look more homemade.

10



Shape each piece into a long roll and arrange in a greased or lined baking pan. These rolls are extra long to accommodate 11-inch (28cm) hot dogs. Cover and allow to rise until doubled, about 45 minutes.

11



These rolls are shorter for standard-sized hotdogs. I am using a pan made specifically for making New England style hot dog buns, but I am using it differently. I lined the bottom with several folds of aluminum foil for a flat bottom.

12



Optionally: After the second rise you can combine 1 egg with about a tablespoon of milk to make an egg wash. Coating the rolls will give them a shine (see below) when they are baked.

13



This is my pan of hot dog buns. I don't mind the irregular shape. It will tell friends these hot dog buns were homemade rather than manufactured in a factory. And egg wash gives them an appetizing shine.



Conclusion

For serving, separate each bun and cut a slit along the center, about $\frac{3}{4}$ of the way toward the bottom of the bun. Butter the sides of the bun and toast in a skillet. Nestle a heated frankfurter inside and add your favorite condiments. I prefer to fry the hot dog in the skillet while I'm toasting the bun.