

A RECIPE FROM THE AUTHOR:

*Jennifer S. Brown on how to recreate Rose Krasinsky's **Cinnamon Kaffe Kuchen***

In *Modern Girls*, Rose spends much of her day in the kitchen. While she would *never* deign to use a recipe—all baking was done not by measurement but by sight and feel—I decided to try and re-create some of her recipes, starting with her *kuchen*. I first tried to make it as she would have, including finding fresh yeast and stirring by hand, but I determined that Rose (and my own great-grandmothers) must have been exceedingly strong: neither I nor my husband were able to mix the thick dough with a spoon for ten minutes as the original recipe called for!

The recipe below came from a cookbook from my own grandmother's kitchen, however, it called for compressed yeast, butter substitutes (the cookbook was a wartime publication), and an awful lot of mixing by hand. I made a few tweaks to better adapt it to a modern-day kitchen. The taste is like a rich cinnamon-y *hallah*—sure to impress your *kaffeeklatsch*.

—Jennifer S. Brown

Cinnamon Kaffe Kuchen

Modernized from *The Jewish Cook Book* by Mildred Grosberg Bellin,
Bloch Publishing Company, 1941

Ingredients:

For the yeast sponge:

½ cup whole milk
1 package (2 ¼ teaspoons) active dry yeast
1 cup sifted all-purpose flour
1 teaspoon sugar
¼ teaspoon salt

For the dough:

1 cup sugar
¾ cup butter at room temperature
3 eggs, well beaten
5 cups sifted all-purpose flour
1 cup whole milk
1 teaspoon salt

Topping:

2 teaspoons melted butter
sugar, cinnamon, chopped nuts

The yeast sponge:

- Heat ½ cup of milk over medium-low heat, stirring it to keep it from burning or thickening. The milk is hot enough when small bubbles appear around the edge.
- Put milk in a bowl and stir in yeast.
- Stir in 1 cup flour, 1 teaspoon of sugar, and ¼ teaspoon of salt. The result will be a very raggedy dough.

- Cover bowl with a dish towel and put in a warm place to rise for 1 to 2 hours. It will rise only minimally at this point.

The dough:

- Using an electric mixer cream thoroughly 1 cup of sugar and $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of butter, until it's light and fluffy, about 3 minutes at medium speed.
- Add the 3 well-beaten eggs, 5 cups of flour, 1 cup of milk, and teaspoon of salt. Add the yeast sponge and mix for five minutes at low speed.
- Cover bowl with a dish towel and allow dough to rise overnight.

Making the cake:

- Roll the dough out to $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch thickness. You can use any size or shape shallow pan—this recipe will make two 8 x 8 square cakes.
- Butter the pan well.
- Take your rolled out dough and put it into the pan. Use your fingers to even it out in the pan, and spread it so it reaches the sides of the pan. Cover the pan with a towel, and let it rise until it's double in bulk.
- When ready to bake, place sugar and cinnamon and chopped nuts to taste in a bowl and mix in butter. Walnuts, pistachios, and pecans are particularly delicious. If you're feeling adventurous, add in nutmeg, cloves, or cardamom. Stir it up until you have clumps you can put on top of the dough. Alternatively, you can simply brush the melted butter on the surface and sprinkle sugar, cinnamon, and chopped nuts, and it will taste just as wonderful, but not look as pretty.
- Bake at 350 degrees. Length of time will depend on the size of your cake pan. For an 8x8 pan, check it at 20 minutes for doneness. To determine if it's cooked on the inside, insert a thermometer. At 190 degrees, it's cooked through.

Enjoy with a cup of tea and your morning *Forverts* newspaper!