

Almond Puff Loaf

King Arthur Flour (but this is an old-old recipe I've had for decades)



FIRST LAYER:

1/2 cup butter, cut into pats or 1/2-inch cubes, (8 tablespoons)*

1 cup All-Purpose Flour

1/4 cup water

*If you're using unsalted butter add 1/4 tsp salt

SECOND LAYER:

1 cup water

1/2 cup butter (8 tablespoons)*

1 cup All-Purpose Flour

3 large eggs, at room temperature; warm them, in the shell, in hot tap water for 10 minutes if they're cold from the fridge

1 teaspoon almond extract

*If you're using unsalted butter add 1/4 tsp salt

TOPPING:

2/3 cup jam, or preserves (preferably apricot or peach)

2/3 cup sliced almonds, toasted in a 350F oven for about 7 to 10 minutes, or until they're a light, golden brown

1/2 cup confectioners' sugar, or glazing sugar

1 teaspoon vanilla

4 teaspoons milk, or water (approximately)

Yield: 2 loaves

Per Serving (excluding unknown items): 257 Calories; 16g Fat (54.4% calories from fat); 4g Protein; 26g Carbohydrate; 1g Dietary Fiber; 71mg Cholesterol; 138mg Sodium. Exchanges: 1 Grain(Starch); 1/2 Lean Meat; 0 Non-Fat Milk; 3 Fat; 1 Other Carbohydrates.

Carolyn T's Blog: tastingspoons.com

Servings: 16

NOTE: Be sure to use only LARGE eggs.

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F. Lightly grease (or line with parchment) a large cookie sheet.

2. First layer: In a medium-sized mixing bowl, combine the butter, flour, and salt (if you're using it), working the butter into the flour with a pastry blender or fork, your fingers, or a mixer. Mix until everything is crumbly, then stir in the water. The dough will become cohesive, though not smooth.

3. Divide the dough in half; if you're using a scale, each half will weigh about 4 5/8 - 5 ounces. Wet your hands, and shape each piece of this wet dough into a rough log. Pat the logs into 10" x 3" rectangles on the sheet, leaving at least 4" (but preferably 6") between them, and 2" on each side. These puff up in the oven (hence the name), and you need to leave them room for expansion.

4. Second layer: In a medium-sized saucepan, bring the water and butter to a boil. Stir until the butter melts, then add the flour (and salt, if you're using it) all at once. Stir the mixture with a spoon till it thickens, begins to steam, and leaves the sides of the pan; this will happen very quickly.

Transfer the stiff batter to a mixing bowl, or the bowl of an electric mixer. Beat it at medium speed for 30 seconds to 1 minute, just to cool it down a bit.

5. Add the eggs one at a time, beating well after each addition; beat until the batter loses its slippery look, and each egg is totally absorbed. Mix in the almond extract.

6. Divide the batter in half. Spread half the batter over one of the dough strips on the pan, covering it completely to the outer edges. Repeat with the remaining batter on the 2nd and dough. With a spatula (or your wet fingers) spread the batter until it completely covers the entire bottom layer of dough. Smooth it out as best you can.

7. Bake the pastry for 50 minutes to 1 hour, or until it's a deep golden brown. Remove it from the oven, and transfer each pastry to a wire rack.

8. Topping: Spread each warm pastry with about 1/3 cup of jam or preserves.

9. Sprinkle the toasted almonds atop the jam. By this time, your beautifully puffed pastries are probably starting to sink; don't worry, this is all part of the plan.

10. Icing: Stir together the sugar, vanilla, and enough milk or water to form a thick but "drizzlable" icing.

Drizzle the icing atop the pastries. Cut into squares or strips to serve.