

PENNY SAVER NEWS

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Do you think you could guess someone's age by asking them what food they think of when you say "Easter"? My guess would be that children would say "Easter Eggs and Chocolate Bunnies". Middle-aged adults would say "Easter ham". And a lot of our elders, especially those who started life in another country, would say "Easter bread!" Many, many countries have traditional breads that are only made for Easter.

Often these breads are sweet and rich. There's lots of butter and eggs, nuts and chopped dried fruit, sometimes grated orange or lemon peel for even more flavor.

Greek Easter bread is often baked with a boiled egg, dyed bright red, baked right into the top of the dough. Russian Easter bread is traditionally decorated with white frosting and a single flower on top of a tall loaf. Some breads are made with a filling rolled up inside, like a surprise present you don't see until the loaf is sliced. The filling might be ground almonds, or maybe dates, figs or sweet prunes. Some loaves are twisted into special shapes such as crosses or doves. They are all ways people express their delight at both the religious festival and that Spring is here, flowers are blooming and the weather is wonderful. "Let's Celebrate" is what they are saying.

Are you ready to try baking a loaf of special Easter bread, but not sure about all the steps? Maybe you've never tried to make a loaf of yeast bread before in your life! Well, why not start now? You can bake a couple pans of wonderful dinner rolls to impress your family and friends. Their mouths will be watering when they smell that fresh baked bread coming out of your oven. It will be a special treat for Easter!

Start early, this dough takes awhile to rest and rise in the refrigerator. Use active dry yeast, not instant or rapid rise. That won't grow as well in the refrigerator, and your rolls probably will fall flat when you bake them. Instant yeast is best for bread machines.

Easiest Whole Wheat Dinner Rolls

2 envelopes of active dry yeast	¼ cup honey
1 cup warm water	2 eggs
2 cups hot water	1 ½ tsp salt
¾ cup vegetable oil	6 cups whole wheat flour

Put the 1 cup of warm water in a large bowl. Use a thermometer to check the temperature. The water should be about 110°F. If it's too cold the yeast won't grow fast enough and the dough will be sticky. If it's too hot it will kill the yeast. Add the yeast to the warm water with one tablespoon of the honey. Stir to mix it, then let it sit until it starts to get foamy, about 10 minutes. That's the sign that the yeast is growing.

When the yeast starts to blow bubbles at you with the foam, add 1 cup of the flour to the bowl, then put the rest of the honey, the eggs, oil, salt and the hot water on top. This time the hot water should be about 125°F. Now we want to encourage the yeast to grow faster. If you have a heavy duty kitchen mixer you can use that. Otherwise, use a big spoon to beat all these ingredients together until there are no lumps.

Keep adding the flour, 1 cup at a time, and mixing well after each addition. You don't have to knead this dough, but you do want to beat it while it's still soft enough to beat. That helps develop the protein so the rolls will rise. As it gets stiffer just be sure it gets well mixed. It's good exercise for your arms!

Oil another large bowl well. Put the dough into the greased bowl and roll it around so that it's all coated with oil. Cover the bowl with plastic wrap and put it in the refrigerator for 8-10 hours. It should rise slowly and be puffy at the end.

Oil 2 9x13 inch baking pans. Stir the dough down, so that it's back to its original size. Use a $\frac{1}{4}$ cup measuring cup to scoop balls of dough out of the bowl. Use your hands, with a little oil on them, to roll the dough into smooth balls. Arrange 12 of them in each baking pan.

Heat the oven to 425°F. Bake the rolls for 10 to 12 minutes, until they're golden brown. Now as delicious as they smell coming out of the oven, try to not tear into them right away. If you pull them apart now by taking one out, the rest will probably collapse a little. Let them cool, so that the dough has time to stiffen, before you separate them. Add a little strawberry jam or orange marmalade, and you have a perfect Easter treat!