

CHRISTMAS BRAID

4 cups milk, warmed*
1/2 cup warm water
1/2 cup oil
3/4 cup Xagave or honey
2 eggs
2 Tbsp. gluten flour
2 Tbsp. Saf yeast
2 Tbsp. dough enhancer
9 cups whole wheat flour

*You may substitute 4 cups hot water and 1 1/3 cup powdered milk for the milk
In the Bosch bowl equipped with the dough hook, place milk, water, oil and honey or Xagave and eggs. On top add 5 cups of whole wheat flour, and the yeast, salt, gluten and dough enhancer. Turn on speed one for 20 to 30 sec. to develop the gluten. Add remaining 4 cups of whole wheat flour (turn up to speed 2 if using a Universal Plus) until the dough starts to pull away from the sides of the bowl. Let knead 8 to 10 min. Oil the counter and remove dough from bowl. Divide into 3 and roll out one of the parts into a 8" wide by 12" long rectangle 1/2 inch thick. Place one of the fruit fillings down the middle. Slice 1 inch wide strips up both sides of the rectangle so that the slits are equal and even on both sides. Slice just 1/3 of the way across the width of the rectangle almost touching the filling down the middle. Begin the braiding process by pulling over or nearly completely covering the filling on a diagonal. Then pull the strip opposite over top of the filling being sure to cover the end of the first strip completely. Alternate going back and forth with this braiding process being careful to cover the previous strip's end as you go. When you get to the final 2 strips, fold them together over the two ends, so that the juice from the filling does not leak out. Pick it up gently and place it on a greased baking sheet and put in a warm oven (turn on to 200 and then off) to rise for 20 min. Turn oven up to 350 degrees F. to bake for 30 min. or until done. Remove from baking sheet to a rack to let cool and decorated with icing or cherries or nuts.

(I use a Silpat or Parchment Paper under the rolled rectangle to move the braid to a baking pan easier)

FILLINGS FOR BRAID

1. Soak dates in water for 10 min. and grind through a meat grinder attachment or food processor attachment. Add enough apple sauce to make a thick filling. Nuts can be added too.
2. Soak 1 lb of raisins for 10 min. then squeeze out excess water and grind through a meat grinder attachment or a food processor. Add Applesauce to make filling thicker.
3. Fresh apple slices, with cinnamon, and sugar sprinkled generously on top and dotted with butter.