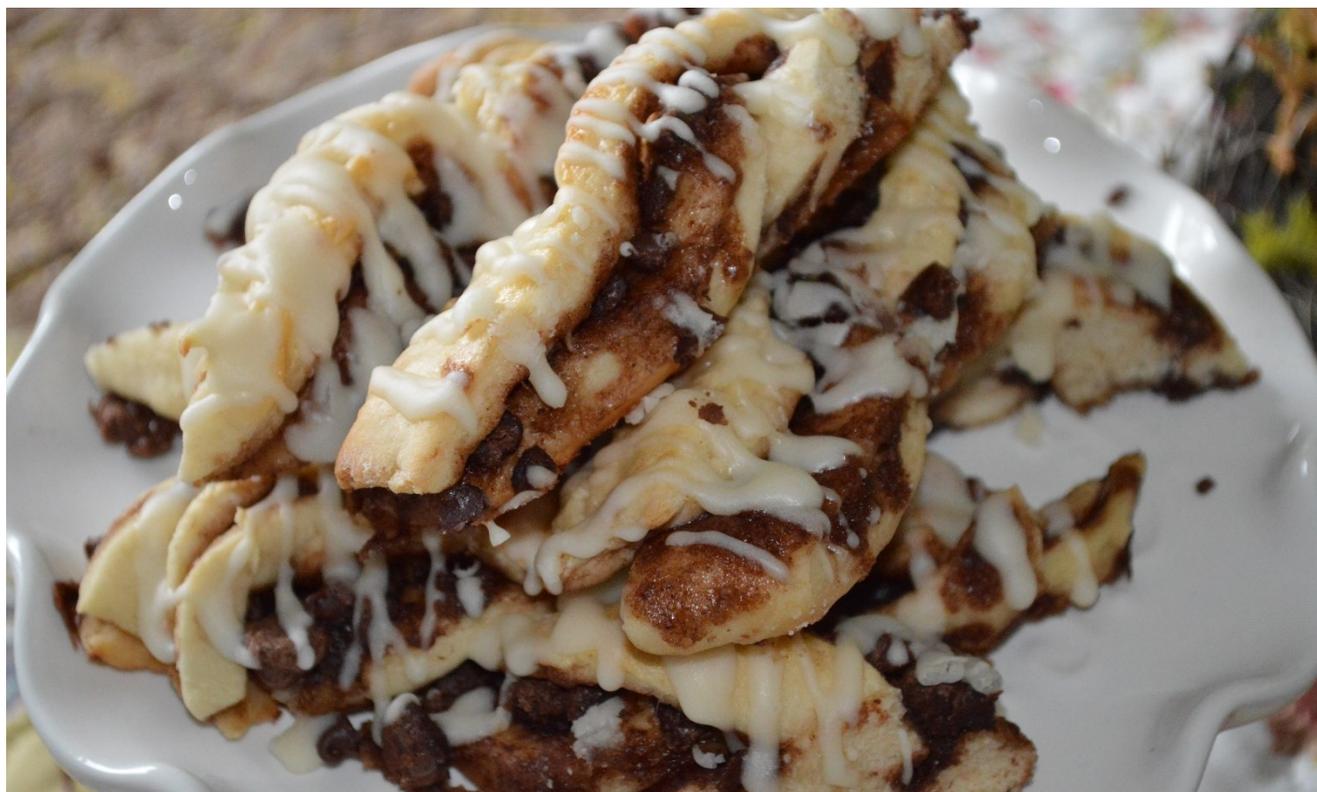


CHOCOLATE CINNAMON TWISTS

A Writer in the Kitchen with MK McClintock

These chocolate twists are best left for special occasions because it is difficult to eat just one, but one is all you need. Luckily, these twists freeze well. The original recipe is from the Red Star Yeast site, contributed by Try Anything Once (could not find the recipe on that site), and I've made a few slight modifications, mostly to the process.



MISE EN PLACE (everything in place; gather; getting the kitchen ready)

1. Read the recipe, including instructions. Make sure you have all your ingredients and tools on hand and enough of what you need.
2. Take your butter, eggs, and cream cheese out an hour prior to baking so they come to room temperature. If you keep a warm house, ½ an hour should suffice.

INGREDIENTS:

For the Dough

- 3 1/2 cups unbleached all-purpose flour
- 1/2 teaspoon sea salt
- 1/4 cup granulated sugar
- 2 1/2 teaspoons yeast (I prefer SAF brand)
- 1 cup milk (lukewarm, 110-115°F; 45 seconds in the microwave or 1 1/2 minutes on the stovetop does the trick)
- 2 Tablespoons unsalted butter (room temperature)
- 1 Tablespoon unsalted butter or baking spray (for the bowl and rubbing on the dough)

Filling and finishing:

- 1/2 cup unsalted butter (melted)
- 1 cup packed brown sugar
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1 Tablespoon cocoa powder (I like Hershey's dark cocoa)
- 1/4 tsp vanilla
- 1 Tablespoon water (for egg wash)
- 1 large egg white (for egg wash)
- 1 cup mini chocolate chips (you can use regular chips, but the mini works better)
- 2 teaspoons granulated sugar

For the Frosting

- 4 ounces cream cheese (room temperature)
- 2 Tablespoons unsalted butter (room temperature)
- 2 cups powdered sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon lemon juice or 1/2 tsp coconut extract, or 1/2 tsp vanilla extract, or 1/2 tsp almond extract (*the almond will produce the most flavor while the coconut or lemon are a complementary undertone*)
- 2 Tablespoons milk (I use non-fat; you may use an extra Tbs of milk if for a thinner consistency)

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Prepare two baking sheets by lining with parchment paper or silicone baking mats.
2. Make the dough: In the bowl of a stand mixer combine flour, salt, sugar and yeast. Add milk and 2 tablespoons butter.
3. Mix with dough hook attachment for about 1 1/2 to 2 minutes or until a dough comes together.

4. Continue to knead for 7-8 minutes on low speed. Dough should be smooth and you should be able to form it into a ball.
5. Rub 1 tablespoon butter all over the dough ball (or coat lightly with cooking spray) and place in bowl. Cover with plastic wrap (I use a tea towel) and let rise until double in size. (Original recipe said to rise for 30 minutes, but I found it takes up to 2 hours.)
6. Once the dough has risen, make the filling. Mix 1/2 cup melted butter with brown sugar, cinnamon, ¼ tsp vanilla, and cocoa.
7. Preheat oven to 350°F.
8. Make egg wash: whisk together egg white and water.
9. Divide risen dough in half, and roll one half into a rectangle, approx. 11×16-inches. (This is tough dough, so it takes a little extra work to get the rectangle. I usually end up with 11x14, which produces great results. The finished twists are soft.)
10. Lay the first rectangle horizontally in front of you. Spread half of the filling evenly onto the dough.
11. Cut the dough in half vertically using a pizza cutter. This will be the fold line. Sprinkle half the mini chocolate chips on one half of the rectangle.
12. Lift the opposite side of the dough rectangle and fold over, placing sides with filling together. Prepare to cut 6 long strips by making a mark lightly in the dough.
13. Cut 6 strips, then take each of those strips and with the pizza cutter, carefully cut down the center of each strip, leaving 1-inch uncut.
14. Taking the two lengths of the first strip, twist/wrap each length. Carefully tuck the ends and lightly pinch any sections that are too open. You will have filling showing. Repeat with each strip.
15. Repeat the process with the second half of the dough. You should have six twists per baking sheet.
16. Brush egg wash on top of the twists. No need for extra sugar.
17. Bake at 350°F for 12 minutes.

To Make the Frosting:

1. Combine the cream cheese and butter on medium speed.
2. Add powdered sugar, lemon juice (or extract of choice) and milk. Mix again until smooth. Add an additional teaspoon of milk for a thinner frosting.
3. Drizzle (or drop) over warm twists.

NOTES:

- Nutritional info may vary based on the type of ingredients used. If you have specific dietary needs or restrictions, you may need to calculate the nutritional info based on the exact ingredients you use.