



RECIPE: CRANBERRY AND ROSEMARY CHRISTMAS WREATH

Makes: 1 Wreath Loaf

Ingredients

160g Water (at room temperature)
6g Fresh Yeast or 3g Dried Fast Action Yeast
250g Strong White Bread Flour, plus extra for dusting
4g Salt
3g Rosemary Leaves (finely chopped, about 1 tsp)
15g Butter (softened)
40g Dried Cranberries,
Poppy Seeds
Sesame Seeds

Method

Making the Dough

1. In a large mixing bowl weigh the water then stir in the yeast to dissolve.
2. Reset the scales to 0 and weigh the flour, salt and rosemary directly into the bowl. Dot over the soft butter and mix everything together with your dough scraper.
3. Tip the dough out onto a clean surface and knead well for 8 minutes - don't add any extra flour at this point, just keep scraping up the dough every once in a while if it's sticking (see Tip below).
4. Lightly dust the work surface with flour and flatten out the dough as much as you can without tearing it. Sprinkle over half the dried cranberries, patting lightly with your palms to stick to the dough. Roll up the dough like a Swiss roll to enclose them fully.
5. Turn the dough roll 90° (a quarter turn) and flatten out again with your fingers or knuckles. Sprinkle over the remaining cranberries, pat down and roll up as before.
6. Cup your hands under the roll of dough, turning as you do. Cup and turn gently until the dough forms a rough ball.
7. Place it back in your mixing bowl and dust the top lightly with flour. Cover with a clean cloth and leave to rest at room temperature for 60-90 minutes.

Dividing and Shaping

1. Dust your work surface with a little flour. When the dough has puffed up nicely, turn it out and use your fingertips to knock out the air and lightly flatten it into a rough circle.

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2. Divide into 4 equal portions, cutting the dough with your dough scraper.
3. Press one of the pieces flat then roll it up like a tight Swiss roll. Repeat with the remaining pieces so you end up with 4 short sausages of dough.
4. Roll each piece back and forth under your palms to create 4 long strands, each about 50cm in length. Dust with a little flour as you go to stop them sticking.
5. Sprinkle a good layer of poppy seeds in a shallow bowl or dish. Do the same with the sesame seeds in a separate bowl. Dampen a clean J-Cloth or similar with water and lay out flat on the work surface.
6. Roll one dough strand over the cloth to slightly dampen the surface then dip in the bowl of poppy seeds, tossing or rolling as you need to fully cover the strand in seeds. Take a second strand and do the same with the sesame seeds. Leave the final 2 strands plain.
7. To shape the 4-strand plait, place all 4 strands vertically on the surface in front of you and pinch the tops together lightly to join together and stick to the work surface.
8. Think of the strands as 2 pairs - left-hand and right-hand. Starting with the right-hand pair, cross the right piece over the left. Then do the same with the left-hand pair, cross right over left. Now take the 2 pieces that are now in the middle and cross these left over right.
9. Keep repeating this sequence until you reach the end of the strands:
 - Right-hand pair: Right over left
 - Left-hand pair: Right over left
 - Middle pair: Left over right
10. Pinch the ends firmly together to seal. Go back to the top of your strands, there will probably be an unplaited section where they are stuck down - repeat the same plaiting process here to neaten up the ends and pinch together. You should now have a long plait with 2 sealed pointed ends, roll these to thin points to make joining the wreath easier.
11. Line a large tray with baking parchment. Lift the plait carefully onto the tray and form into a ring, looping the pointed ends underneath each other and tucking under to seal.

Final Proof

1. Cover the tray with a cloth and rest at room temperature for 45-60 minutes.
2. Preheat your oven to 200°C/Fan 180°C/Gas Mark 6 and place a deep roasting tin in the bottom.

Baking

1. Just before baking, boil the kettle.
2. Transfer the baking tray to the oven and carefully pour 2-3cm of hot water from the kettle into the tin at the bottom. Quickly shut the door to trap the steam and bake for 25-30 minutes until crisp and golden. Transfer to a wire rack to cool.

Tips from me...

A little video on getting that PERFECT wreath shape:

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- [Bread Tip #124: How to Shape A Christmas Wreath Bread](#)

This wreath makes a fantastic display as part of a festive cheeseboard or with cold cuts on Boxing Day. It's really nice to put a whole Chaource or baked Camembert in the centre of the wreath. To make sure your wreath has a big enough hole for the cheese, shape and bake it around something of a similar size - I use a buttered ramekin or small ovenproof bowl.

I've got a few flavour combos for baked Camembert that I love if you fancy trying that:

- [Baked Herb Camembert](#)
- [Sweet Onion Camembert](#)

I find weighing out liquids in grams WAY more accurate than measuring in volume. To do it, just place an empty jug onto your scales, make sure it is set to zero, and pour in the amount you need.

Dough scrapers are my go-to most useful piece of bread making kit. I use them for mixing the dough, cutting it, scraping out bowls, cleaning the table, LITERALLY everything. If you don't have one yet you can get yours at bakewithjack.co.uk/shop