

Jumbo Fresh-Milled Cinnamon Rolls

Six bakery-size rolls in a 9 by 13 pan, made with the homemade AP blend

These are the big, soft, pull-apart rolls you get in a mall bakery, and I wanted to see whether whole grain could get there without the roll turning dense and dry. It can, but three things carry the load. A tangzhong, which is a cooked flour paste that holds water in the crumb. A twenty-five minute rest after the flour meets the milk, so the bran softens before you build any gluten. And a heavier hand with the filling than feels reasonable. The cornstarch in the filling is not a typo; it keeps the sugar in the spiral instead of on the bottom of the pan.

The dough is wetter than a white-flour sweet dough. Do not add flour to fix that. Let the rest and the knead do their work, and it will come together.

Makes 6 jumbo rolls	Pan 9 by 13 inch	Proof 80F, about 2 hours total	Oven 350F, 26 to 30 minutes
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Ingredients

Weights are the recipe. The cup measures are close, but fresh-milled flour packs differently every time you mill, so use the scale if you have one.

Tangzhong

30 g	about 1/4 cup	fresh-milled AP blend
150 g	2/3 cup	whole milk

Dough

530 g	about 4 1/4 cups	fresh-milled AP blend
200 g	3/4 cup plus 1 tbsp	whole milk, warm to the touch
2		large eggs, room temperature
85 g	1/3 cup plus 1 tbsp	granulated sugar
9 g	1 tbsp	instant yeast
9 g	1 1/2 tsp	fine salt
85 g	6 tbsp	unsalted butter, very soft

Filling

170 g	3/4 cup	unsalted butter, very soft
220 g	1 cup, packed	dark brown sugar
20 g	2 1/2 tbsp	cinnamon, Vietnamese or Korintje if you can get it
	1 tsp	cornstarch
	1/2 tsp	fine salt

For the pan

100 g	scant 1/2 cup	heavy cream, warm
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Frosting

115 g	4 oz	cream cheese, soft
60 g	4 tbsp	unsalted butter, soft
180 g	1 1/2 cups	powdered sugar
	1 tsp	vanilla extract
	1 tbsp	whole milk

Method

- 1 Cook the tangzhong. Whisk the 30 g of flour and 150 g of milk in a small pan until smooth. Cook over medium heat, stirring the whole time, until it thickens to a pudding and the whisk leaves lines in it, two to three minutes. Scrape it into the mixer bowl and let it cool until it is just warm, not hot.
- 2 Mix and rest. Add the 530 g of flour, the warm milk, eggs, sugar and yeast to the tangzhong. Mix on low only until there is no dry flour left. Cover the bowl and walk away for 25 minutes. This is the step that makes the crumb soft; the bran drinks the milk before you start working the gluten.
- 3 Salt, then butter, then knead. Add the salt and mix on medium-low for 5 minutes. Add the soft butter a tablespoon at a time, letting each one disappear before the next. Then knead on medium for 8 to 10 minutes, until the dough clears the sides of the bowl and you can stretch a piece thin enough to see light through. It will feel softer and stickier than you are used to. That is right.
- 4 First rise. Round the dough into a greased bowl, cover, and proof at 80F until doubled, 60 to 75 minutes. On a warm counter it will take longer and that is fine.
- 5 Make the filling. Beat the soft butter, brown sugar, cinnamon, cornstarch and salt into a smooth paste. It should spread like soft frosting. If your butter is cold it will tear the dough, so wait.
- 6 Roll and fill. On a lightly floured counter, roll the dough to an 18 by 12 inch rectangle with the long side toward you. Spread the filling all the way to the edges except for a bare half inch along the far long edge. Roll it up tight from the near edge, pinch the seam closed, and turn it seam side down.
- 7 Cut and second rise. Cut six pieces, each 3 inches wide, with unflavored floss or a serrated knife. Set them cut side up in a buttered 9 by 13 pan, two rows of three. Cover and proof at 80F until puffy and touching each other, 50 to 65 minutes.
- 8 Cream and bake. Heat the oven to 350F. Pour the warm cream into the pan around and between the rolls, not over the tops. Bake 26 to 30 minutes, until deep golden and 190F in the center of a middle roll. If the tops are browning fast at 18 minutes, lay a piece of foil loosely over the pan. Past 200F they dry out, so trust the thermometer, not the clock.
- 9 Frost warm. While they bake, beat the cream cheese and butter smooth, then add the powdered sugar, vanilla and milk. Spread it over the rolls while they are still warm so it melts down into the spirals.

Notes from my kitchen

Bake ahead. Shape and cut the rolls, set them in the pan, and freeze the whole pan as soon as the second rise has just started. Bake from frozen at 350F and add 10 to 12 minutes. This is how I get a fresh pan on a weekday morning without getting up at five.

Cinnamon. Vietnamese cinnamon has the most oil, which is where the smell that fills the house comes from. Korintje is a close second. The cinnamon in the grocery aisle will work; it will just be quieter.

Softer still. If you want them softer than whole grain usually gets, sift out a spoonful or two of the coarsest bran from the blend before you mix. I keep it in for the flavor and take the trade.

Yeast. The 9 grams is set for an 80F proofer. On a warm counter it may run fast; watch the dough, not the clock.

This roll closes out the freshly milled flour series. If you have followed along from the first loaf, you already have everything you need to make it: the blend, the rest, and the patience to leave a wet dough alone.