

# Semlor

## Nordic Lent buns (Lent/Easter)

Cardamom buns filled with whipped cream and marzipan are a traditional way to mark Shrove Tuesday and Lent in Scandinavia. Each country has its own unique recipes, but the general principle of a 'semla bun' is the same. These days, they're enjoyed from January until Easter.

This Swedish-style recipe makes 12 good-sized buns.



Good food with love from Scandinavia

# Recipe

## Ingredients - 12 buns

25g fresh yeast (if using dried, read instructions on packet for equivalent)  
80g melted butter  
250ml whole milk  
40g caster sugar  
½ tsp salt  
1 tsp baking powder  
1 egg, lightly beaten  
2 tsp ground cardamom  
Approximately 300-400g plain flour

### Filling:

200g '50% marzipan' (also known as 'Mandelmassa') and a good dollop of custard (or a dash of milk) if needed  
400ml whipping cream  
1 tsp vanilla sugar  
Icing sugar to dust

Melt the butter and add the milk, but keep the mixture lukewarm. Add the fresh yeast and stir until dissolved. Add the sugar and stir again. Stir in half of the flour, along with the salt, baking powder, ground cardamom and half of the beaten egg (keep the other half for brushing).

Mix well until all the ingredients are incorporated, and then gradually add more of the flour until you have dough that is just a little bit sticky to the touch. Take care not to add too much flour, which will only give you dry buns. Knead the dough for at least five minutes in a mixer, longer if doing so by hand. Leave to rise until doubled in size – this will take about 30-40 minutes.

Turn the dough out onto a floured surface. Knead again for a few minutes, adding more flour (only if needed) to get a firmer, but not dry, dough. Cut the dough into 12 equal pieces and shape into balls that are completely round and uniform in size. Place on a baking tray and leave to rise for another 30 minutes.

Preheat the oven to 200-210°C. Gently brush each bun with the remainder of the egg and bake for about 8-10 minutes. Keep a close eye on the buns, as they can burn quickly. Remove from the oven and cover with a damp tea towel immediately – this will prevent the buns from forming a crust.

When the buns have cooled, slice a 'lid' from the buns about 1½ cm from the top (refer to the picture if unsure). Scoop out a third from the inside of the buns and place what you remove in a separate bowl. Mix the almond paste with the inside of the buns until it forms a very gooey mass – you can add a dash of custard or milk at this point to help it along if it's too stiff, but you need a very thick texture. Spoon equal amounts of the filling back into the buns.

Whip the cream with the vanilla sugar until stiff. Using a piping bag, pipe the cream on top of the filling and the bun surface in a large, round circle to ensure that every bite has decent amount of cream. Replace the bun 'lids' and dust lightly with icing sugar.

The buns freeze well - transfer them to the freezer once they've cooled (don't add the filling). Once you've assembled the semla buns, you'll need to eat them the same day.



ScandiKitchen.co.uk  
61 Great Titchfield Street  
London W1W 7PP