KitchenBooQ

Baba au Rhum (Rum-Soaked Cake)

Serves: 8 | Cooking Time 3 hours 10 minutes | Level: Capable



INGREDIENTS

2 cups (240 g) all-purpose flour
1 tsp active dry yeast
1/4 cup (50 g) granulated sugar
1/2 tsp salt
3 large eggs, room temperature
1/2 cup (115 g) unsalted butter, softened and cubed
1 tsp vanilla extract
1 1/4 cups (280 ml) water
1 cup (200 g) granulated sugar
1/3 cup (80 ml) dark rum
1 cinnamon stick

Notes
For a deeper boozy profile, brush the cooled babas with an extra splash of dark rum before soaking. These cakes freeze exceptionally well; wrap tightly in plastic and foil, then thaw overnight in the fridge before serving. Traditional baba molds are tall and cylindrical, but individual bundt pans or muffin tins work beautifully for home baking. Always use warm (not hot) syrup to soak baked cakes to prevent mushiness while ensuring deep penetration. Refrigerate in an airtight container for up to 4 days. Do not store at room temperature due to the dairy and moisture content; only fridge or freezer storage is safe.

PREPARATION

1. In a large bowl, whisk together flour, yeast, sugar, and salt. Add eggs and vanilla, then mix until a shaggy dough forms. Turn onto a lightly floured surface and knead for 8 minutes until smooth. Gradually add softened butter while kneading until fully incorporated and the dough is elastic and slightly tacky.

2. Place dough in a lightly greased bowl, cover with plastic wrap, and let rise in a warm place until doubled in size, about 1 to 1.5 hours.

3. Punch down the dough and divide into 8 equal portions. Shape each into a tall cylinder or smooth ball and arrange them in a lightly greased 9-inch round cake pan or individual ramekins. Cover and let rise again until puffy, about 45 minutes.

4. Preheat oven to 375F (190C). Bake the babas for 20-25 minutes until deeply golden brown and cooked through. Remove from oven and let cool in the pan for 5 minutes before transferring to a wire rack to cool completely.

5. While the cake cools, prepare the rum syrup. In a small saucepan over medium heat, combine water, sugar, and cinnamon stick. Bring to a gentle simmer until sugar dissolves, about 3 minutes. Remove from heat and stir in dark rum. Let cool slightly until warm but not boiling hot.

6. Place the cooled babas on a serving platter or back in the pan. Using a skewer, poke numerous holes all over each cake. Slowly pour the warm rum syrup evenly over them, allowing it to soak completely into the crumb. Let sit for 15 minutes so they absorb the liquid fully.

7. Cover and refrigerate for at least 2 hours or overnight to allow flavors to meld and the cake to firm up slightly. Serve chilled with lightly sweetened whipped cream on the side.