



FAMILY RECIPE: SLOVAKIAN CHRISTMAS CHEESE DANISH

INGREDIENTS

- 3 envelopes active dry yeast or 3 cakes compressed yeast
- 1/2 cup very warm water
- 3/4 cup milk
- 1 egg
- 1/3 cup sugar
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 4 cups sifted flour
- 3/4 pound (3 sticks) very cold butter
- Cheese Filling
- 2 packages of Philadelphia Cream Cheese (in the box)
- Real Lemon flavoring (in the lemon container or bottle)
- White Sugar

OPTIONAL FILLING:

Prune Filling (my dad's favorite)

1 jar of Simon Fischer Lekvar Prune Filling (usually found in the aisle with jams and jellies).

DIRECTIONS

1. Sprinkle or crumble yeast into very warm water in a large bowl. (comfortably warm when dripped on wrist) Stir until yeast dissolves, then stir in milk, egg, sugar, and salt.
2. Stir in 3 1/4 cups of flour, beating as you add, to make a soft dough. (set remaining 3/4 cup flour aside for next step) Beat dough vigorously about 2 minutes, or 300 strokes, or until shiny and elastic.
3. Sprinkle board, table, or counter with 2/3 of the remaining flour. Turn out the dough, form into a flat ball, sprinkle with remaining flour. Roll out to a rectangle approximately 12" x 18".
4. Slice VERY COLD BUTTER into thin strips lengthwise, place over 2/3 of dough to form a 12" square.
5. Fold dough, brushing off excess flour each time this way. Fold unbuttered 1/3 over middle 1/3. then opposite and over top. Now fold into thirds crosswise to make a block, 6 x 4. It will be 9 layers deep. Repeat rolling and folding as above 3 more times while rolling. If dough becomes too soft, put in refrigerator for 10-15 minutes, otherwise there is no need to chill. If butter oozes out while rolling and folding, ease it back in and spot area lightly with flour. Sometimes it's necessary to use a little more flour while rolling out, than the recipe calls for. That's a judgment call. Try to keep the dough as soft as possible and yet workable. When you're finished with the rolling and folding, the dough is ready to shape, fill and bake!
6. Roll out the dough. If your work area is small, cut the dough in half and pinch cut top edges (top to bottom) together. Work 1/2 dough at a time. Roll out so that dough is thinner, about 24" x 24". Cut into squares with a knife. Fill as desired with about a teaspoon of filling.
7. For the prune or fruit filling, take one corner to the middle, opposite corner over the middle and tuck under to hold.
8. For the cream cheese, Make a pillow. All four corners to the middle one at a time and then pinch the last two together to hold them. If you want, you can cut up a maraschino cherry and place a piece in the center.
9. Place on trays for baking. (Parchment is highly recommended, otherwise grease pans!)
10. Cover and let rise until double in size or 1 hour. Brush tops with slightly beaten egg; can sprinkle sugar on top-although I never do! Place in preheated 375-400 degree and lower heat to 375 degrees immediately. Bake 15 minutes or until golden brown.

