

Cocoa Currant Buns

100% Whole wheat with fresh whole milk, egg, 100% cacao cocoa powder, currants and vanilla extract

Here is a recipe for designer buns based on the recipe for *soft sandwich buns with fresh whole milk and egg*, with the addition of *cocoa powder, currants, and vanilla extract*. You will realize that extra water is needed to hydrate the dry cocoa powder and currants. Also, the dough may be difficult to mix to a cohesive dough ball using a dough hook in a stand mixer if the gluten type in the flour is weak; it may be better to mix using a paddle.

Using whole spelt flour and the ingredient amounts below, 14% cocoa with respect to the flour, the result is a deeply chocolate snack or breakfast bread that can be eaten without any fixings. However, they can be sliced in half and buttered! They serve in the same situations when a cookie or energy bar might otherwise have been chosen.

Ingredients for 12x 3 inch diameter buns, based on 500 grams whole wheat flour.

<i>Ingredients</i>	<i>Grams</i>	<i>Bakers per cent</i>
100% whole wheat flour	500	100
Base wheat malt flour*	25	5
100% cacao cocoa powder	35 - 70	7-14
Water to hydrate cocoa powder	25 - 50	5 -10
Salt	7.5	1.5
Fresh full fat whole milk at 86°F (30°C)	325	65
Mature whole wheat barm sourdough starter**	50	10
Additional water to correct dough texture	25 - 50	5-10
Currants	200	40
Water to plump currants	20	4
Whole eggs without shell, beaten	100 (~ 2 eggs)	20
Vanilla extract	12.5	2.5

*Base wheat or rye malt grain with diastatic power greater than 100 (degrees Lintner/ pound of grain) is available from micro-brewing supply houses. Grind to whole malt flour using home grain mill.

** See whole wheat barm and sourdough recipes at www.wholegrainconnection.org

Method

[] In mixing bowl, mix flour, malt, and cocoa powder.

[] In a separate container dissolve salt in milk. Add mature barm sourdough and extra water to hydrate cocoa. Mix well and add to flour-mixture in mixing bowl.

[] Mix until ingredients are completely incorporated in a medium stiff, smooth dough. *The dough should be fairly stiff so that it can accommodate the egg when mixed in after first rise. If dough is too stiff, mix in 5-10% water with respect to flour.*

Leave to ferment in a covered container, at 86°F (30°C) for 4 hours, for the first rise.

[] In a separate bowl mix currants with water. Toss well together, cover and leave in a warm place.

[] Return dough to mixing bowl. Add beaten egg. Mix well. *Ideally mixing will be to a smooth and cohesive dough ball, but with a weaker flour or with a softer texture than anticipated, simply mix until well blended. Depending on type of wheat flour used, this dough can be extra stretchy and sticky.*

[] Mix vanilla extract with plumped currants before adding to dough in mixing bowl. Mix just until currants are evenly incorporated.

[] Divide into 12 equal-weight pieces. *If dough is sticky use spatulas to divide and maneuver dough. With moistened hands, round dough pieces between palms of both hands. Rest rounded dough pieces on a board or directly on parchment paper. Cover rounded dough pieces with parchment paper and a moist cloth. Rest at 86°F (30°C) for 15-30 minutes.*

[] Preparation for final rise depends on the planned use of either a stove top steamer or steam-baking in a combi-oven:

- **For stove top steaming in bamboo steamer**, place rounded dough pieces on individual 3 to 4-inch squares of baking parchment paper. Gently press into a disk with fingertips, keeping thickness of a half inch. Cover with a moist cloth and leave for final rise at 86°F (30°C) for 2 hours.

- **For combi-oven steaming on perforated or plain sheet pans**, place 12 rounded dough pieces on a half-size sheet-pan (18 x 13 inches) lined with baking parchment paper. Gently press-stretch dough pieces into a disk with fingertips, keeping thickness of a half inch. Cover with a sheet of baking parchment and a moist cloth. Leave for final rise at 86°F (30°C) for 2 hours. *Note: the cover of parchment paper maintains a continuous shiny crust on top of buns and is kept in place during the oven steaming.*

[] Steam cooking either in stove top steamer or in combi-oven:

- **For stove top steaming in bamboo steamer**, bring water to a boil below a Chinese bamboo steamer. Check water level frequently and replenish water when needed throughout cooking time.

Remove steamer tray and arrange buns on parchment paper on the steamer trays, with enough space to allow steam circulation. Replace steamer tray or basket on steamer. Steam vigorously for 30 - 60 minutes. *Buns are done when they no longer retain an indentation and are springy to the touch. If buns are pasty in texture rather than simply soft, the cooking time was not long enough.*

Remove steamer tray or basket from steamer before removing the buns to a cooling rack.

- **For combi-oven steaming on sheet pans**, set combi-oven to 100% steam at 350°F; usually there is no need to preheat oven. Set timer for 35-40 minutes to start when oven reaches 350°F.

Remove wet cloth from risen buns but leave the parchment paper cover in place. Place baking sheet on rack in center of oven. Steam-bake for 35-40 minutes after temperature of 350 °F is reached. *Buns are cooked when they no longer retain an indentation and are springy on touching. If buns are pasty in texture rather than simply soft, the cooking time was not long enough.*

[] Cool buns on a rack after removing parchment paper.

[] Serve fresh buns after cooling for at least 45 minutes.

Or allow buns to cool completely. Store in a closed container at normal room temperature, between paper towels. Slice in half and lightly toast before serving.