

NUT-FILLED CHRISTMAS WREATH BREAD

Bread Ingredients

2 T.	Warm water (105° to 115° F)
1 Pkg.	Active dry yeast
3 T.	Sugar, divided
2	Eggs
¼ cup	Butter, melted, cooled
3 T.	Milk
¾ tsp.	Salt
½ tsp.	Ground cardamom
2½ - 3 cups	All-purpose flour

Cherry-Nut Filling: In medium bowl, combine ¾ cup chopped nuts (hazelnuts, almonds, walnuts, or pecans), ¼ cup each all-purpose flour, chopped candied red cherries, chopped candied green cherries, and softened butter, 2 tablespoons brown sugar and ½ teaspoon almond extract; mix well.

Almond Icing: In small bowl combine 1 cup sifted powdered sugar, 1 to 2 tablespoons milk and ¼ teaspoon almond extract; blend until smooth.

In a large bowl, combine water, yeast and 1 tablespoon sugar; stir to dissolve yeast. Let stand until bubbly, about 5 minutes. Add remaining 2 tablespoons sugar, eggs, butter, milk, salt and cardamom; mix well.

Stir in 1½ cups flour until smooth. Stir in enough remaining flour to make dough easy to handle. Turn out onto lightly floured surface. Knead 10 minutes or until dough is smooth and elastic, adding as much remaining flour as needed to prevent sticking. Shape dough into ball. Place in large, lightly greased bowl; turn dough once to grease surface. Cover with waxed paper; let rise in warm place (85° F) until doubled, about 1 hour. Meanwhile, prepare Cherry-nut Filling.

Punch dough down. Roll out dough on floured surface into 24x9-inch rectangle. Sprinkle Cherry-Nut filling over dough to within 1 inch from edges. Roll up dough, jelly-roll style, beginning on 24-inch side; pinch seam to seal. Using sharp knife, cut roll in half lengthwise; turn each half cut-side up, keeping cut sides up to expose filling. Place dough on greased cookie sheet; shape into a ring. Pinch ends together to seal. Cover, let stand in warm place until almost doubled, about 45 minutes. Bake in preheated 375° F oven 20 minutes or until evenly browned. Remove bread from cookie sheet to wire rack; cool slightly. Prepare Almond Icing; drizzle over warm bread. Serve warm or at room temperature.