

Orange-Date Tea Bread

Bread Book by Beth Hensperger p.110

Yield: One 8 1/2 by 4 1/2 inch loaf

The bread is moist in texture and subtle in flavor with a hint of orange: an absolutely exceptional bread that is not overly rich. Slice thin for breakfast or serve alongside a chicken salad with pecans. After baking, wrap and let stand for one day at room temperature to develop flavor.

- 3/4 cup chopped pitted dates
- 1/4 cup boiling water
- 1/2 cup (1 stick) unsalted butter, at room temperature
- 1-cup sugar
- Grated zest of 1 orange
- 1 egg
- 2 cups unbleached all-purpose flour
- 1-teaspoon baking powder
- 1-teaspoon salt
- 1-cup milk
- 1-teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1/2 cup pecans, finely chopped

Orange glaze

- 1/3 cup granulated sugar
- 3 tablespoons fresh orange juice
- 1 teaspoon orange brandy (HdeH Cointreau)

1. In a small bowl, cover dates with boiling water and macerate 10 minutes, or until soft.
2. In a large bowl, cream butter, sugar, and zest until fluffy. Add egg and beat thoroughly.
3. In another bowl, combine flour, baking powder, baking soda, and salt. Combine mild and vanilla in another bowl.
4. Add flour mixture alternately with mild to creamed mixture, beginning and ending with flour and beating well after each addition. Fold in pecans and soaked dates with their liquid.
5. Spoon batter into a well-greased loaf pan. Bake in a preheated 350F oven for 40-50 minutes, or until a cake tester comes out clean.
6. In a small bowl, combine sugar, orange juice, and brandy. Immediately upon removing bread from oven, slowly pour all of the orange glaze over hot cake. Let cake stand 20 minutes to absorb glaze before turning out onto a rack to cool completely.

