

# JANUARY

2024

## Baking School In-Depth: Swedish Buns

Swedish buns began popping up in bakeries and cafés in Sweden in the 1920s. Since exotic spices like cardamom and cinnamon weren't readily available then, these buns were considered a luxury. As the economy grew in the 1950s, the path was paved for cardamom and cinnamon buns to quickly become a prized pastry that lives in the hearts and homes of Swedes today.

Swedish buns are intricately twisted pastries imbued with the woody warmth of the southern Indian spice green cardamom. Cinnamon and cardamom are Sweden's most popular bun fillings—with Swedish pearl sugar adorning the cinnamon-filled buns and a dusting of cardamom sugar topping the cardamom-filled ones. It takes some practice to master the stunning shape—give yourself plenty of grace with the first few buns to get the hang of it. And if your knot isn't perfect, don't worry! They will taste wonderful no matter what.

Swedish cardamom buns,  
*kardemummabullar* ↘

← Swedish cinnamon buns,  
*kanelbullar*



# INGREDIENT BREAKDOWN

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Excellent recipes require wonderful ingredients. Here's how our recipe's ingredients contribute to making showstopping Swedish Buns.

**BREAD FLOUR:** Bread flour is high in protein and gluten, which is essential in this recipe. It helps give stability and structure to the enriched dough and allows you to roll, pull, stretch, and shape the dough without it tearing.

**GRANULATED SUGAR:** Sugar acts as food for the yeast, which converts it to carbon dioxide and alcohol in the fermentation process. This helps make the dough tender, creating a soft, supple bun, and adds a bit of sweetness without making it overly sweet. Sugar also contributes to the bun's golden color and retains moisture while it bakes.

**RED STAR® ACTIVE DRY YEAST:** A standard when it comes to baking with yeast, Red Star® Active Dry Yeast is a tried-and-true favorite for a reason. Providing a moderate and steady leavening rate that allows for maximum flavor development, active dry yeast works incredibly well in enriched doughs such as this. The slower action of active dry yeast also makes it the perfect choice for the slow rise of refrigerated doughs like this one. An essential part of this dough's leavening, yeast needs food (sugar and carbohydrates), warmth (the warm milk mixture in this recipe will activate your yeast), and moisture for proper fermentation. Keep in mind, yeast is killed at 140°F (60°C), so keep your thermometer on hand when heating your milk and butter.

**KOSHER SALT:** As a rule of thumb, the ratio of salt to flour in dough is 1.8% to 2% of flour weight. It's important to weigh your salt because different salt crystals measure differently. Dough without enough salt can easily over-ferment. Salt also helps with the color of the buns and enhances the overall flavor.

**FRESHLY GROUND CARDAMOM:** Cardamom adds notes of pine, mint, and citrus and a subtle smokiness, which provides the perfect balance to the buns.





# INGREDIENT BREAKDOWN

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Excellent recipes require wonderful ingredients. Here's how our recipe's ingredients contribute to making showstopping Swedish Buns.

**WHOLE MILK:** We use milk to add fat and flavor to our dough. Milk contains natural sugars that begin browning when heated between 212°F (100°C) and 350°F (180°C), which contributes to the buns' beautiful bronze color.

**UNSALTED BUTTER:** Butter adds decadence to the enriched dough, creating moist, tender buns. Melting the butter into the milk also means the melted butter incorporates more smoothly and evenly, ensuring consistency in flavor and texture in every bite.

**EGGS:** The addition of egg in this dough not only adds richness but also helps with leavening, as the egg whites help create steam that puffs up your dough once it hits the warmth of the oven. Eggs also give the perfect golden shine to Swedish buns with the help of an egg wash—an egg whisked with a bit of water that gets gently brushed onto the buns right before going into the oven!

## **LIGHT BROWN SUGAR AND GROUND**

**CINNAMON:** Light brown sugar is made by mixing granulated sugar with 3.5% molasses, which gives the light brown sugar its lovely color, moist texture, and delicate yet distinctive caramel flavor. The combination of light brown sugar and the sweet, subtle heat of ground cinnamon is a match made in heaven.

**SWEDISH PEARL SUGAR:** Swedish pearl sugar is small, about the size of a dried lentil, and is generally made from sugarcane. Aside from being an elegant adornment on top of the buns, it adds a delightful crunchy texture, which beautifully contrasts the soft, buttery interior of the buns.



# TOOLS OF THE TRADE

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We recommend this set of tools for our technique

**STAND MIXER:** An excellent time- and strength-saver, stand mixers are fantastic at bringing the dough together without the effort of hand-mixing the dough. (Pictured: [KitchenAid® Artisan Stand Mixer, 5-Qt.](#))

**THERMOMETER:** We use an instant-read thermometer to ensure the correct temperature of the milk and butter mixture before adding it to the flour mixture for optimal rise, and it's the best way to test the doneness of the buns. (Pictured: [OXO Thermocouple Thermometer.](#))

**SCALE:** Bakers have long valued the accuracy of a kitchen scale; it's the easiest and fastest route to precise ingredient and dough measurements for the perfect Swedish Buns. (Pictured: [Zwilling Digital Scale.](#))

**SAUCEPAN:** You want a stainless steel saucepan that will heat efficiently and evenly with precise temperature control and no hot spots when heating the milk and butter in the first steps of making the dough for the buns. (Pictured: [Williams Sonoma Signature Thermo-Clad™ Stainless-Steel Saucepan.](#))

**ROLLING PIN:** The best rolling pin is a long, solid piece of wood for even pressure; if properly cared for, it will last a lifetime.

**BAKING SHEET:** Designed to bake evenly, this beautiful, golden, commercial-quality pan is crafted of aluminized steel for exceptional durability, making it ideal for baking our Swedish Buns. (Pictured: [Williams Sonoma Goldtouch® Pro Nonstick Non Corrugated Half Sheet.](#))


**RULER:** A ruler is essential for ensuring even length and width when rolling out dough and will help you get perfectly straight lines for the buns.

**OFFSET SPATULA:** The slender, angled blade of an offset spatula gives you optimal control when spreading the filling evenly into the surface of the dough. (Pictured: [Williams Sonoma Olivewood Offset Icing Spatula.](#))



**WHISK, SPATULA, PASTRY BRUSH, PASTRY WHEEL, MEASURING CUPS AND SPOONS, AND GLASS BOWLS:** For all your mixing needs, you really can't beat the basics. A reliable whisk is essential to have in your baking arsenal; a spatula is the ideal tool for simple stirring. Pastry brushes are essential for brushing the buns with egg wash. We opt for the razor-sharp blade of a pastry wheel to create perfectly formed strips in the rolled-out dough, and measuring cups and spoons are necessary for accuracy in the kitchen. Glass bowls give you a 360-degree visual in every step of this recipe, from watching the dough rise to mixing the cinnamon or cardamom filling. (Pictured: [Williams Sonoma Signature Stainless Steel French Whisk](#), [Williams Sonoma Silicone Wood Spoonula with Classic Wood Handle](#), [Williams Sonoma Olivewood Pastry Brush](#), [Anchor Hocking Glass Measuring Cups](#), and [Glass Mixing Bowl 10-Piece Set.](#))





## SWEDISH CINNAMON BUNS

### SWEDISH BUNS

Makes 15 buns

*Swedish cardamom buns, called kardemummabullar, are yeasted, twisted breads infused with an aromatic butter, sugar, and cardamom filling and topped with a fragrant flourish of more cardamom and sugar. Or you*

*can fill the cardamom-infused dough with cinnamon, sugar, and butter for Swedish cinnamon buns, called kanelbullar, which are heavily adorned with crunchy Swedish pearl sugar. They're best served warm with a cup of steaming coffee or tea, destined to brighten even the bleakest of winter days.*

#### Dough:

- 3¾ cups (477 grams) bread flour, divided, plus more for dusting
- ¼ cup (50 grams) granulated sugar
- 1 (0.25-ounce) package (7 grams) active dry yeast\*
- 2 teaspoons (6 grams) kosher salt



- 2 teaspoons (4 grams) freshly ground cardamom seeds (see Notes)
- 1 cup (240 grams) whole milk
- $\frac{1}{8}$  cup (76 grams) unsalted butter
- 1 large egg (50 grams), room temperature

**Cinnamon filling (option 1):**

- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup (57 grams) unsalted butter, room temperature
- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup (55 grams) firmly packed light brown sugar
- 2 tablespoons (16 grams) bread flour
- 2 teaspoons (4 grams) ground cinnamon
- $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon kosher salt

**Cardamom filling (option 2):**

- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup (100 grams) granulated sugar
- 3 teaspoons (6 grams) freshly ground cardamom seeds (see Notes)
- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup (57 grams) unsalted butter, room temperature
- 2 tablespoons (16 grams) bread flour
- $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon kosher salt

**Topping:**

- 1 large egg (50 grams), room temperature
- 1 tablespoon (15 grams) water
- Swedish pearl sugar (optional), for sprinkling

1. For dough: In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, beat  $\frac{1}{2}$  cups (191 grams) flour, granulated sugar, yeast, salt, and cardamom at low speed just until combined.

2. In a medium saucepan, heat milk and butter over medium heat, stirring occasionally, until butter is melted and an instant-read thermometer registers 120°F (49°C) to 130°F (54°C). Add warm milk mixture to flour mixture; beat at medium speed until combined, 1 to 2 minutes. Add egg; beat at medium-high speed for 2 minutes. Gradually add remaining  $\frac{2}{4}$  cups (286 grams) flour, beating just until combined and stopping to scrape bottom and sides of bowl.

3. Switch to the dough hook attachment. Beat at medium-low speed until a soft, smooth, elastic dough forms, 6 to 10 minutes. (Dough may still stick slightly to sides of bowl but should pass the windowpane test; see Notes.) Turn out dough onto a clean surface, and shape into a round.

4. Oil a large bowl. Place dough in bowl, turning to grease top. Cover and let rise in a warm, draft-free place (75°F/24°C) until doubled in size, 45 minutes to 1 hour.

5. Punch down dough. On a clean surface, pat dough into a 10x6-inch rectangle. Wrap in plastic wrap, and refrigerate for at least 8 hours or up to overnight.

6. For cinnamon filling: In a medium bowl, stir together butter, brown sugar, flour, cinnamon, and salt until well combined.

7. Alternatively, for cardamom filling: In a small bowl, whisk together granulated sugar and cardamom; reserve  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup (50 grams) cardamom sugar in another small bowl. Stir butter, flour, and salt into remaining cardamom sugar until well combined.

8. Let dough stand at room temperature for 5 minutes. On a lightly floured surface, roll dough into a 25x10-inch rectangle, with one long side closest to you. Using an offset spatula, dollop desired filling onto dough, and spread in a thin, even layer to edges. Working from short sides, fold dough in thirds like a letter.

9. Line 2 rimmed baking sheets with parchment paper.

10. Roll dough into an 11x8-inch rectangle, with one long side closest to you. Using a pastry wheel or sharp knife, cut dough lengthwise into 15 strips (about  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch wide each). Holding up one end of 1 strip vertically, gently pull dough in increments until strip is 22 inches long, being careful to keep an even thickness throughout dough so it does not tear. Holding bottom end of strip between index and middle fingers and thumb of one hand, loosely wrap dough strip three times around fingers of

that same hand, overlapping dough slightly. Place thumb of same hand over overlapped dough strands to secure; wrap remaining end of dough perpendicularly, between index and middle fingers, and around overlapping dough strands to form a knot-like shape, tucking loose end under bottom of finished bun as you remove your fingers. Repeat with remaining strips, and place about 2 inches apart on prepared pans. Cover and let rise in a warm, draft-free place (75°F/24°C) until doubled in size and dough holds an indentation when gently pressed, 1 to  $\frac{1}{2}$  hours.

11. Preheat oven to 350°F (180°C).

12. For topping: In another small bowl, whisk together egg and 1 tablespoon (15 grams) water; brush onto buns. Sprinkle with pearl sugar (if using) or reserved cardamom sugar as desired.

13. Bake until golden brown and an instant-read thermometer inserted in center registers at least 190°F (88°C), 15 to 20 minutes, rotating pans halfway through baking. Immediately sprinkle with additional pearl sugar (if using) or any remaining reserved cardamom sugar as desired. Let cool on pans for 5 minutes. Serve warm. Store in an airtight container for up to 2 days.

*\*We used Red Star® Active Dry Yeast.*

**Notes:** *We used freshly ground cardamom seeds. For store-bought ground cardamom, use  $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoons (3 grams) ground cardamom in the dough and 4 teaspoons (8 grams) ground cardamom in the cardamom filling.*

*Windowpane test: Pinch or cut—but don't tear, because this damages the gluten strands—a small walnut-size piece of dough. Then gently and slowly pull and rotate the dough out from its center. If it tears or breaks during the stretch, give your dough another minute of work and then test again. If the dough is too hard to stretch, it's been overmixed.*



SWEDISH  
CARDAMOM BUNS





# MAKING THE DOUGH

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1. For dough: In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, beat 1½ cups (191 grams) flour, granulated sugar, yeast, salt, and cardamom at low speed just until combined. Adding the flour in two additions guarantees all the ingredients are evenly incorporated into the dough.
2. In a medium saucepan, heat milk and butter over medium heat, stirring occasionally, until butter is melted and an instant-read thermometer registers 120°F (49°C) to 130°F (54°C). Add warm milk mixture to flour mixture; beat at medium speed until combined, 1 to 2 minutes. Add egg; beat at medium-high speed for 2 minutes. Gradually add remaining 2¼ cups (286 grams) flour, beating just until combined and stopping to scrape bottom and sides of bowl. Heating the milk and butter to just the right temperature ensures the dough is warm enough for the perfect first rise but not so hot that it will kill the yeast.

## GETTING KNEADY

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1. Switch to the dough hook attachment. Beat at medium-low speed until a soft, smooth, elastic dough forms, 6 to 10 minutes. (Dough may still stick slightly to sides of bowl but should pass the windowpane test.) Turn out dough onto a clean surface, and shape into a round. To make sure the dough passes the windowpane test, pinch or cut—but don't tear, because this damages the gluten strands—a small, walnut-size piece of dough. Then gently and slowly pull and rotate the dough out from its center. If the dough is properly kneaded, you will be able to stretch it—without tearing—until it's thin and translucent. If it tears or breaks during the stretch, give your dough another minute of work and then test again. If the dough is too hard to stretch, it's been overmixed.

## TIME TO RISE

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1. Grease a large bowl. Place dough in bowl, turning to grease top. Cover and let rise in a warm, draft-free place (75°F/24°C) until doubled in size, 45 minutes to 1 hour. Rising times vary depending on the environment, but keep in mind that the amount the dough has risen—the volume—is more important than how long it takes to rise.
2. Punch down dough. On a clean surface, pat dough into a 10x6-inch rectangle. Wrap in plastic wrap, and refrigerate for at least 8 hours or up to overnight.

## PREP THE FILLING

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1. For cinnamon filling: In a medium bowl, stir together butter, brown sugar, flour, cinnamon, and salt until well combined.
2. Alternatively, for cardamom filling: In a small bowl, whisk together granulated sugar and cardamom; reserve ¼ cup (50 grams) cardamom sugar in another small bowl. Stir butter, flour, and salt into remaining cardamom sugar until well combined.



# FILL & FORM

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1. Let dough stand at room temperature for 5 minutes. On a lightly floured surface, roll dough into a 25x10-inch rectangle, with one long side closest to you. Using an offset spatula, dollop desired filling onto dough, and spread in a thin, even layer to edges. Working from short sides, fold dough in thirds like a letter. Letting the dough stand at room temperature for a few minutes allows it to relax a little so it's easier to roll it out. Dotting the surface of the dough with small mounds of the filling and gently spreading all over the surface helps you achieve a perfect, even layer.
2. Line 2 rimmed baking sheets with parchment paper.

# TAKING SHAPE



1. Roll dough into an 11x8-inch rectangle, with one long side closest to you. Using a pastry wheel or sharp knife, cut dough lengthwise into 15 strips (about  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch wide each). Holding up one end of 1 strip vertically, gently pull dough in increments until strip is 22 inches long, being careful to keep an even thickness throughout dough so it does not tear. Holding bottom end of strip between index and middle fingers and thumb of one hand, loosely wrap dough strip three times around fingers of that same hand, overlapping dough slightly. Place thumb of same hand over overlapped dough strands to secure; wrap remaining end of dough perpendicularly, between index and middle fingers, and around overlapping dough strands to form a knot-like shape, tucking loose end under bottom of finished bun as you remove your fingers. Repeat with remaining strips, and place about 2 inches apart on prepared pans. Cover and let rise in a warm, draft-free place (75°F/24°C) until doubled in size and dough holds an indentation when gently pressed, 1 to 1½ hours. Making small notches at  $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch intervals gives you a guide to follow to continue cutting the strips of dough. If you can't pull the strips long enough without the dough springing back, cover with a kitchen towel, let stand for 10 minutes, and then return to it. Keeping the shaping loose is key—a loose knot gives the dough space to proof and expand before baking. Too tight and the strain against itself will cause the bun to unravel.



# BRUSH, ADORN & BAKE

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1. Preheat oven to 350°F (180°C).
2. For topping: In another small bowl, whisk together egg and 1 tablespoon (15 grams) water; brush onto buns. Sprinkle with pearl sugar (if using) or reserved cardamom sugar as desired. The egg wash gives the buns a gloriously golden exterior and helps the cardamom sugar topping or the Swedish pearl sugar stick to the dough.
3. Bake until golden brown and an instant-read thermometer inserted in center registers at least 190°F (88°C), 15 to 20 minutes, rotating pans halfway through baking. Immediately sprinkle with additional pearl sugar (if using) or any remaining reserved cardamom sugar as desired. Let cool on pans for 5 minutes. Serve warm. Store in an airtight container for up to 2 days.



