Bread & baking / United Kingdom

English Muffins

Thick, yeast-risen rounds cooked low and slow on a cast-iron griddle until their sides are pale gold and their interiors a labyrinth of nooks and crannies that trap butter.

Time 180 min **Servings** 4

What you'll need.

- ☐ 100 % All-purpose flour
- ☐ 65 % Whole milk (warm, 100°F / 38°C)
- ☐ 1.5 % Instant dry yeast
- ☐ 2 % Fine salt
- ☐ 5 % Unsalted butter (softened)
- ☐ 2 % Sugar
- ☐ 10 % Egg (1 large)
- ☐ 5 % Semolina or fine cornmeal (for dusting)

Let's make it.

01 Whisk the warm milk, sugar, and yeast together and let stand 5 minutes until foamy (instant yeast can be added directly to the flour instead). In a large bowl, combine the flour and salt. Add the yeast mixture, softened butter, and egg. Mix until a sticky, slightly wet dough forms. This dough is wetter than typical bread dough — almost halfway between a dough and a batter — and this high hydration is exactly what creates the characteristic open nook structure when the muffins are cooked. Knead by hand 6–8 minutes (the dough will be sticky and want to cling; use a dough scraper and resist adding flour) or 5 minutes in a stand mixer with the dough hook. The finished dough should be smooth, stretchy, and tacky but not unworkable.

02 Let the dough bulk-ferment, covered, until doubled — about 1–1.5 hours. Generously dust a baking sheet with semolina or cornmeal. Turn the dough out onto a lightly floured surface, being gentle to preserve the bubbles. Pat or roll it gently to 1 inch / 2.5 cm thick — no thinner, or the muffins will not have enough interior volume for the nooks. Cut rounds with a 3.5-inch / 9 cm cutter. Lay them semolina-side down on the prepared sheet. Dust the tops generously with more semolina. Cover and proof 30–45 minutes until visibly puffed and jiggly. Do not proof until doubled again — English muffins should go on the griddle slightly under-proofed so they keep rising on the heat.

03 Heat a cast-iron griddle or heavy skillet over low-medium heat — 300–325°F / 150–160°C is ideal. Do not use a non-stick pan (it runs too hot on the bottom). Do not grease the pan — the semolina coating prevents sticking and creates the characteristic slightly crunchy bottom crust. Cook the muffins in batches for 7–9 minutes per side. The sides should stay pale (they cook only from the bottom and top). Flip once when the bottom is medium-gold and a dry-looking line appears about halfway up the side of the muffin — the set interior is visible. After cooking, cool 10 minutes before splitting. Always split with a fork by inserting the tines all around the circumference and pulling apart — never cut with a knife, which compresses the crumb and destroys the nooks.

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Servings are an estimate; check quantities in the source recipe.
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