



THE DARING BAKERS' OCTOBER, 2011 CHALLENGE: POVITICA

You know when we first did croissants back in [November 2007](#) - there were only SEVEN Daring Baker members!! WOW, have times changed! We're thousands strong.. now think about that.. do you have any idea how much flour, butter, chocolate, Nutella, and almonds were baked together in September of 2011 worldwide? Kind of mind blowing, isn't it? Hehe Sarah, thank you SO MUCH for braving croissants and for bringing back one of the most asked for challenges in Daring Baker history! I remember drooling over 7 different versions of croissants four years ago.. but this past month has had me actually in PAIN craving over all of these AMAZING versions ya'll came up with! Congrats to those who have made croissants many times over, and to those who gave it their first try for this challenge.. I hope everyone realized that although time consuming, croissants aren't that difficult to make and are SO WORTH the time spent. :) Sarah, your enthusiasm and support in the forums was truly appreciated by all.. thank you so much for sharing your experiences, your time and that hilarious video of the lovely Julia Child creating croissants in her kitchen decades ago! Lovely! xoxo

This upcoming challenge is really a show stopper. Truthfully, I had never heard of it before and was instantly saddened that I had never seen nor tasted it before. Not only is it gorgeous once baked, but SO DELICIOUS! So without further ado, here is Jenni's introduction to something very, very special for us to conquer this month!

Hugs!
Lis
xoxo

Hello! My name is [Jenni](#), and I am [The Gingered Whisk](#). I am so excited to be your host this month, and I really hope that you enjoy the challenge that I have prepared for you guys!

I was first introduced to Povitica from a friend of mine. We happened to be at the Farmer's Market and when we passed a particular booth selling specialty breads, and she just went ecstatic. She and her family have been buying these loaves of bread every holiday season, and she was very excited to see them in the middle of the summer. I didn't know what the excitement was about, but the loaves of bread were beautiful, and when sliced, had delicate circular designs on each slice. Each loaf is filled with a sweet filling and rolled, and weighs an amazing 2.5 pounds! It was amazing, delicious, and I promptly bought one.

Povitica (pronounced po-va-teet-sa) is traditional Eastern European dessert bread that is traditionally served during the holiday season. It is also known as Nutroll, Potica, Kalachi, Strudia, just to name a few. Family recipes, and the secrets on how to roll the bread so thin, was passed down through generations of families. However, the tradition of baking this type of bread has become somewhat of

a dying art form, and I thought it would be a wonderful opportunity for us to learn to make this wonderful sweet bread.

After tasting the wonderful bread we had bought at the Farmer's Market, I knew I needed to learn how to make this myself. Especially since that one single loaf cost an arm and a leg (\$25! Really! For one loaf!) I spent days and days trying to find recipes online, but I didn't have any luck (however I just did a search the other day and it seems that a few recipes have sprung up in the meantime). After much research, I created my own recipe for Povitica that I think is a very close match to the delicious loaf of bread I splurged on at the Farmer's Market.

The traditional filling for this bread is an English walnut filling, but other typical fillings also include apple/cinnamon, apricot preserves, and a sweet cheese (like cream cheese).

Recipe Source: I have actually put this recipe together myself!

Blog-checking lines: The Daring Baker's October 2011 challenge was Povitica, hosted by Jenni of The Gingered Whisk. Povitica is a traditional Eastern European Dessert Bread that is as lovely to look at as it is to eat!

Posting Date: October 27, 2011

Notes:

- You do not need to use an electric mixer for this recipe, but you can prepare the dough in one in you prefer.
- Scalded milk is an important step. It used to be used to pasteurize milk, so if your milk is raw, please make sure you do this step. If your milk has been pasteurized, scalding the milk will help to make the bread tender.
- The recipe calls for using a sheet on top of your workspace. This is not necessary, but I did find that it was easier to roll out my dough with one. The dough is very sticky, and using the lightly floured sheet helps to keep the dough from sticking too badly. It also helps that you can move the sheet around as you work, and you can also move to a clean area of the sheet for each loaf that you roll out. I also found that I was able to roll my dough out thinner with the use of a sheet. The sheet is also used for rolling the Povitica up, but again, it is not necessary. And all my dough and filling goo washed out perfectly, so no problems there! If you decide not to use a sheet, a pastry scrapper will come in very handy when you roll up your dough.
- There are two ways that you can roll the dough up. If you watch the video under "Additional Information" you can see that the sheet is lifted and used as momentum for rolling the dough up. This technique takes a bit of finesse, but I encourage you to try it out. However, the dough can be rolled up by hand, like you would if you were making cinnamon rolls.
- There are several different ways that you can finish off your loaves before baking it. If you do not want to finish your loaf off with the cold coffee/sugar mixture that is provided, you can use either egg whites or melted butter.



Mandatory Items: : You must make a traditional Povitica loaf, in a bread pan. It must be rolled out by hand, filled, and wound up as directions show.

Variations allowed: Since this recipe makes 4 loaves, I'm allowing creativity in the option of your fillings. I would like you to try the traditional Walnut filling (except for in the cases of allergies, etc), but the other loaves may be whatever filling you wish.

Preparation time:

To make Dough: 40 minutes

Rising: 1 hour and 30 minutes

Rolling and Assembly: 20 minutes per loaf, a generous total of 1 hour

Baking: 1 hour

Cooling: 30 minutes

To Make the Filling: 15 minutes, including the grinding of the nuts

Equipment required:

- A large work space, like a 4-person table or large kitchen island
- 4 large bowls to rise dough
- Plastic Wrap
- 4 Kitchen/Tea Towels
- 4 bread loaf pans (or as many as you own, and re-use them)
- Rolling Pin
- A Sheet or Cloth (the better the thread count and the softer they are, the less likely the dough will stick)
- Measuring Cups and Spoons
- Wooden Spoons
- Pastry Brush
- Medium Saucepan
- Candy Thermometer
- Small Bowl
- Small Saucepan
- Nut Grinder
- Rubber Spatula
- Pastry scrapper

Povitica (makes 4 loaves)

Ingredients

To activate the Yeast:

- 2 Teaspoons (10 ml/9 gm) Sugar
- 1 Teaspoon (5 ml/3 gm) All-Purpose (Plain) Flour
- ½ Cup (120ml) Warm Water
- 2 Tablespoons (30ml/14 gm/½ oz/2 sachets) Dry Yeast

Dough:

- 2 Cups (480ml) Whole Milk
- ¾ Cup (180 ml/170gm/6 oz) Sugar
- 3 Teaspoons (15 ml/18 gm/2/3 oz) Table Salt
- 4 Large Eggs
- ½ Cup (120ml/115 gm/one stick/4 oz) Unsalted Butter, melted
- 8 cups (1.92 l/1.12 kg/39½ oz/2½ lb) All-Purpose Flour, measure first then sift, divided

Walnut Filling:

- 7 Cups (1.68 l/1.12 kg/2.5 lbs) Ground English Walnuts
- 1 Cup (240ml) Whole Milk
- 1 Cup (240ml/225 gm/2 sticks/8 oz) Unsalted Butter
- 2 Whole Eggs, Beaten
- 1 Teaspoon (5ml) Pure Vanilla Extract
- 2 Cups (480ml/450 gm/16 oz) Sugar
- 1 Teaspoon (5 ml/4 gm) Unsweetened Cocoa Powder
- 1 Teaspoon (5 ml/3 gm) Cinnamon

Topping:

- ½ Cup (120 ml) Cold STRONG Coffee
- 2 Tablespoons (30 ml/28 gm/1 oz) Granulated Sugar
- Melted Butter

Directions:

To Activate Yeast:

1. In a small bowl, stir 2 teaspoons sugar, 1 teaspoon flour, and the yeast into ½ cup warm water and cover with plastic wrap.
2. Allow to stand for 5 minutes

To Make the Dough:

3. In a medium saucepan, heat the milk up to just below boiling (about 180°F/82°C), stirring constantly so that a film does not form on the top of the milk. You want it hot enough to scald you, but not boiling. Allow to cool slightly, until it is about 110°F/43°C.
4. In a large bowl, mix the scalded milk, ¾ cup (180 gm/170 gm/6 oz) sugar, and the salt until combined.
5. Add the beaten eggs, yeast mixture, melted butter, and 2 cups (480 ml/280 gm/10 oz) of flour.



6. Blend thoroughly and slowly add remaining flour, mixing well until the dough starts to clean the bowl.



7. Turn dough out onto floured surface and knead, gradually adding flour a little at a time, until smooth and does not stick. *Note: I did not use all 8 cups of flour*



8. Divide the dough into 4 equal pieces (they will each weight about 1.25 pounds/565 grams)
9. Place dough in 4 lightly oiled bowls, cover loosely with a layer of plastic wrap and then a kitchen towel and let rise an hour and a half in a warm place, until doubled in size.



To Make the Filling

10. In a large bowl mix together the ground walnuts, sugar, cinnamon and cocoa.
11. Heat the milk and butter to boiling.
12. Pour the liquid over the nut/sugar mixture.
13. Add the eggs and vanilla and mix thoroughly.
14. Allow to stand at room temperature until ready to be spread on the dough.
15. If the mixture thickens, add a small amount of warm milk.



To Roll and Assemble the Dough:

16. Spread a clean sheet or cloth over your entire table so that it is covered.
17. Sprinkle with a couple of tablespoons to a handful of flour (use flour sparingly)
18. Place the dough on the sheet and roll the dough out with a rolling pin, starting in the middle and working your way out, until it measures roughly 10-12 inches (25½ cm by 30½ cm) in diameter.



19. Spoon 1 to 1.5 teaspoons (5ml to 7 ½ ml/4 gm to 7 gm) of melted butter on top.
20. Using the tops of your hands, stretch dough out from the center until the dough is thin and uniformly opaque. You can also use your rolling pin, if you prefer.
21. As you work, continually pick up the dough from the table, not only to help in stretching it out, but also to make sure that it isn't sticking.
22. When you think it the dough is thin enough, try to get it a little thinner. It should be so thin that you can see the color and perhaps the pattern of the sheet underneath.



23. Spoon filling (see below for recipe) evenly over dough until covered.



24. Lift the edge of the cloth and gently roll the dough like a jelly roll.



25. Once the dough is rolled up into a rope, gently lift it up and place it into a greased loaf pan in the shape of a "U", with the ends meeting in the middle. You want to coil the dough around itself, as this will give the dough its characteristic look when sliced.



26. Repeat with remaining three loaves, coiling each rope of dough in its own loaf pan.

27. Brush the top of each loaf with a mixture of $\frac{1}{2}$ cup (120 ml) of cold STRONG coffee and 2 tablespoons (30ml/28 gm/1 oz) of sugar. If you prefer, you can also use egg whites in place of this.

28. Cover pans lightly with plastic wrap and allow to rest for approximately 15 minutes.

29. Preheat oven to moderate 350°F/180°C/gas mark 4.

30. Remove plastic wrap from dough and place into the preheated oven and bake for approximately 15 minutes.

31. Turn down the oven temperature to slow 300°F/150°C/gas mark 2 and bake for an additional 45 minutes, or until done.



32. Remove bread from oven and brush with melted butter.
33. Check the bread every 30 minutes to ensure that the bread is not getting too brown. You may cover the loaves with a sheet of aluminum foil if you need to.
34. Remove from the oven and allow to cool on a wire rack for 20-30 minutes.
35. It is recommended that the best way to cut Povitica loaves into slices is by turning the loaf upside down and slicing with a serrated knife.



Half Batch Dough Ingredients (Makes two loaves each 1.25 lbs/565 grams)

To activate the Yeast:

- 1 Teaspoon (5 ml/4 ½ gm) Sugar
- ½ Teaspoon (2½ ml/1½ gm) All-Purpose (Plain) Flour
- ¼ Cup (60 ml) Warm Water
- 1 Tablespoon (15 ml/7 gm/¼ oz/1 sachet) Dry Yeast

Dough:

- 1 Cup (240 ml) Whole Milk
- 6 Tablespoons (90 ml/85 gm/3 oz) Sugar
- 1½ Teaspoons (7½ ml/9 gm/1/3 oz) Table Salt
- 2 Large Eggs
- ¼ Cup (60 ml/60 gm/½ stick/2 oz) Unsalted Butter, melted
- 4 cups (960 ml/560 gm/19¾ oz/1¼ lb) All-Purpose Flour, measure first then sift, divided

Topping:

- ¼ Cup (60 ml) Cold STRONG Coffee
- 1 Tablespoon (15 ml/14 gm/½ oz) Granulated Sugar
- Melted Butter

Half Batch Filling Ingredients (enough filling for the two loaves)

- 3½ Cups (840 ml/560 gm/1¼ lb/20 oz) Ground English Walnuts
- ½ Cup (120 ml) Whole Milk
- ½ Cup (120 ml/115 gm/1 stick/4 oz) Unsalted Butter
- 1 Whole Egg, Beaten
- ½ Teaspoon (2½ ml) Pure Vanilla Extract
- 1 Cup (240 ml/225 gm/8 oz) Sugar
- ½ Teaspoon (2½ ml/2 gm) Unsweetened Cocoa Powder
- ½ Teaspoon (2½ ml/1½ gm) Cinnamon

Quarter Batch Dough Ingredients (Makes one loaf 1.25 lbs/565 grams)

To activate the Yeast:

½ Teaspoon (2½ ml/2¼ gm) Sugar
¼ Teaspoon (1¼ ml/¾ gm) All-Purpose (Plain) Flour
2 Tablespoons (30 ml) Warm Water
1½ Teaspoons (7½ ml/3½ gm/0.125 oz/½ sachet) Dry Yeast

Dough:

½ Cup (120 ml) Whole Milk
3 Tablespoons (45 ml/43 gm/1½ oz) Sugar
¾ Teaspoon (¾ ml/9 gm/0.17 oz) Table Salt
1 Large Egg
1 tablespoon (30 ml/30 gm/¼ stick/1 oz) Unsalted Butter, melted
2 cups (480 ml/280 gm/10 oz/0.62 lb) All-Purpose Flour, measure first then sift, divided

Topping:

2 Tablespoons (30 ml) Cold STRONG Coffee
1½ Teaspoons (7½ ml/7 gm/¼ oz) Granulated Sugar
Melted Butter

Quarter Batch Filling Ingredients (enough filling for one loaf)

1¾ Cups (420 ml/280 gm/10 oz) Ground English Walnuts
¼ Cup (60 ml) Whole Milk
¼ Cup (60 ml/58 gm/½ stick/2 oz) Unsalted Butter
1 Egg Yolk From A Large Egg, Beaten
¼ Teaspoon (1¼ ml) Pure Vanilla Extract
½ Cup (120 ml/115 gm/4 oz) Sugar
¼ Teaspoon (1¼ ml/1 gm) Unsweetened Cocoa Powder
¼ Teaspoon (1¼ ml/¾ gm) Cinnamon

Storage:

There are several options for storing (and eating) your four loaves of Povitica:

- The Povitica will keep fresh for 1 week at room temperature.
- The Povitica will keep fresh for 2 weeks if refrigerated.
- The Povitica can be frozen for up to three months when wrapped a layer of wax paper followed by a layer of aluminum foil. It is recommended to not freeze Povitica with cream cheese fillings as it doesn't hold up to being thawed really well - it crumbles.

Additional Information:

Video:

Povitica from Strawberry Hill - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W6pmqzVJ4c>

This is a promotional video from a company that makes it, Strawberry Hill, but it shows them rolling the Povitica.

Disclaimer:

*The Daring Kitchen and its members in no way suggest we are medical professionals and therefore are NOT responsible for any error in reporting of “alternate baking/cooking”. If you have issues with digesting gluten, then it is YOUR responsibility to research the ingredient before using it. If you have allergies, it is YOUR responsibility to make sure any ingredient in a recipe will not adversely affect you. If you are lactose intolerant, it is YOUR responsibility to make sure any ingredient in a recipe will not adversely affect you. If you are vegetarian or vegan, it is YOUR responsibility to make sure any ingredient in a recipe will not adversely affect you. **The responsibility is YOURS regardless of what health issue you’re dealing with.** Please consult your physician with any questions before using an ingredient you are not familiar with. Thank you! :)*