FOOD & CULINARY

Chelsea Buns Paul Hollywood Recipe

PUBLISHED
November 25, 2026

REFERENCE
#1795583412881595

Introduction: The Magic of Paul Hollywood's Chelsea Buns

There is something deeply comforting about the aroma of freshly baked bread wafting through the kitchen. Among the pantheon of classic British bakes, few treats evoke quite the same sense of nostalgia and indulgence as the Chelsea bun. Soft, enriched dough swirled with a fragrant mixture of cinnamon, dried fruit, and brown sugar, all glazed to sticky perfection — it is a bake that feels both humble and luxurious at the same time. And when it comes to mastering this iconic pastry, few names carry more weight than **Paul Hollywood**. As a legendary baker and beloved judge on *The Great British Bake Off*, Paul Hollywood has refined countless recipes, but his take on the **Chelsea Buns Paul Hollywood Recipe**is widely regarded as the gold standard for home bakers seeking authentic, bakery-quality results.

What makes the Chelsea Buns Paul Hollywood Recipe so special is not just its clear, reliable instructions, but the care it places on technique — from the perfect proofing of the dough to the precise rolling and cutting that gives each bun its signature spiral. Whether you are a seasoned baker or someone trying enriched dough for the first time, this recipe offers a rewarding challenge that ends with a plate of irresistible buns. In this article, we will explore the history behind Chelsea buns, break down each step of Paul Hollywood's method, share expert tips for success, and suggest creative variations so you can make this classic bake truly your own.

The Rich History of Chelsea Buns: A British Baking Tradition

To truly appreciate the **Chelsea Buns Paul Hollywood Recipe**, it helps to understand the storied past of the bun itself. Chelsea buns are believed to have originated in the 18th century at the famous Bun House in Chelsea, London. This establishment was so popular that it reportedly drew crowds from all over the city, including members of the royal family. The original buns were made with a rich yeast dough, filled with spices, currants, and citrus peel, then baked in tightly packed squares before being glazed with sugar syrup.

Over the centuries, the Chelsea bun evolved from a London specialty into a beloved staple across the United Kingdom. Its enduring appeal lies in the contrast of textures — a soft, fluffy crumb with a slightly sticky, caramelized exterior — and the warming sweetness of the filling. Paul Hollywood's version stays true to these traditional roots while incorporating modern baking techniques that ensure consistent results. By following his recipe, you are not just baking buns; you are participating in a culinary tradition that has delighted generations.

Why Paul Hollywood's Recipe Stands Out

There are many recipes for Chelsea buns, but Paul Hollywood's approach is distinguished by its emphasis on **dough development** and **precise fermentation**. Hollywood teaches bakers to look for the "windowpane" test — a moment when the stretched dough becomes thin enough to see light through without tearing. This signals that the gluten has developed sufficiently, which is essential for achieving that signature pillowy softness. His recipe also balances sweetness carefully, ensuring the filling complements rather than overwhelms the delicate bread.

Another hallmark of the Chelsea Buns Paul Hollywood Recipe is its accessibility. Hollywood demystifies techniques that can intimidate home bakers, such as kneading enriched dough and achieving a tight roll. The result is a recipe that feels authoritative yet attainable, which is why it has become a go to for both beginners and experienced bakers alike.

Key Ingredients in the Chelsea Buns Paul Hollywood Recipe

Every great bake starts with quality ingredients, and this recipe is no exception. Below is a breakdown of what you will need and why each component matters.

For the Dough

- Strong white bread flour: The high protein content (around 12–14%) creates the gluten network needed for a light, airy crumb. All purpose flour can be substituted, but the texture will be less chewy.
- Unsalted butter: Enriches the dough, adds tenderness, and contributes to the soft, luxurious mouthfeel. Make sure it is at room temperature for easy incorporation.
- Whole milk: Provides fat and moisture, resulting in a softer crumb. Warm the milk slightly (to about 37°C / 98°F) to activate the yeast.
- Eggs: Add structure, color, and richness. Use large eggs at room temperature to ensure even mixing.
- Fast action dried yeast: Paul Hollywood often recommends this for its reliability. You do not need to proof it in water — just mix it directly with the flour.
- Caster sugar: A small amount feeds the yeast and adds a subtle sweetness to the dough.
- Salt: Essential for balancing flavors and strengthening the gluten structure.

For the Filling

- Unsalted butter (softened): Helps the filling spread evenly and creates a moist, rich layer.
- Light brown soft sugar: Deeper flavor than white sugar, with a slight molasses note that pairs beautifully with cinnamon.
- Ground cinnamon: The star spice. Use a fresh, high quality cinnamon for the most aromatic result.
- Mixed dried fruit: Currants, raisins, and sultanas are traditional. Paul Hollywood often suggests soaking them briefly in warm tea or brandy to plump them up, though this is optional.
- Mixed peel (optional): Adds a tangy citrus note that cuts through the sweetness.

For the Glaze

- Apricot jam or sugar syrup: A warm apricot glaze gives a beautiful shine and a hint of fruitiness. Alternatively, a simple syrup of sugar and water can be used.
- Optional: pearl sugar or flaked almonds for extra texture and presentation.

Step by Step Guide to Making the Chelsea Buns Paul Hollywood Recipe

Now that you understand the ingredients and their roles, let us walk through the process. This recipe requires patience, but the steps are straightforward. Plan for about 3 to 3½ hours from start to finish, including proving and baking time.

Step 1: Prepare the Dough

In a large mixing bowl, combine 500g strong white bread flour, 7g fast action dried yeast, 40g caster sugar, and 10g salt. Mix well to distribute the yeast evenly. In a separate jug, warm 300ml whole milk until it is tepid — not hot, or you risk killing the yeast. Add 2 large eggs and whisk lightly. Pour the wet ingredients into the dry ingredients and mix to form a rough dough.

Turn the dough out onto a lightly floured surface and knead for about 5–7 minutes until it becomes smooth and elastic. Gradually add 75g softened unsalted butter, a little at a time, kneading thoroughly after each addition. The dough will feel very soft and slightly sticky — resist the urge to add too much extra flour. Continue kneading for another 5–10 minutes until the butter is fully incorporated and the dough passes the **windowpane test**.

Place the dough in a lightly oiled bowl, cover with cling film or a damp tea towel, and let it prove in a warm place for about 1 hour, or until doubled in size.

Step 2: Prepare the Filling and Shape the Buns

While the dough proves, make the filling. Combine 75g softened unsalted butter, 75g light brown soft sugar, and 2 teaspoons ground cinnamon in a small bowl. Beat until smooth and spreadable. In another bowl, mix 150g mixed dried fruit (currants, raisins, sultanas) with 50g mixed peel if using.

Once the dough has proved, turn it onto a lightly floured surface and knock it back gently with your fists to release the air. Roll the dough out into a rectangle approximately 30cm x 40cm (12in x 16in). The thickness should be about 1cm (½in). Spread the cinnamon butter mixture evenly over the dough, leaving a 2cm (1in) border along one of the long edges. Sprinkle the dried fruit mixture over the butter, pressing it down lightly so it adheres.

Starting from the long edge opposite the border, roll the dough tightly into a log, using the unbuttered edge to seal the seam. Make sure the seam is underneath. With a sharp knife or a bench scraper, cut the log into 12 equal slices, each about 3–4cm (1¼–1½in) thick.

Step 3: Second Proving

Arrange the slices in a greased or lined baking tin. A 23cm x 30cm (9in x 12in) tin works well. Leave a small gap between each bun — they will puff up during the second prove and bake into each other, creating that classic pull apart effect. Cover the tin loosely with cling film or a tea towel and leave to prove for another 45–60 minutes, until the buns have risen and are touching each other.

Step 4: Bake to Perfection

Preheat your oven to 190°C (170°C fan) / 375°F / Gas Mark 5. Brush the tops of the buns with a little beaten egg for a golden finish if desired. Bake for 25–30 minutes, rotating the tin halfway through, until the buns are deep golden brown and sound hollow when tapped on the base. If the tops brown too quickly, cover loosely with foil.

Step 5: Glaze and Finish

While the buns bake, warm 3–4 tablespoons of apricot jam in a small saucepan with a splash of water, then strain to remove any lumps. Alternatively, make a simple syrup by dissolving 2 tablespoons of caster sugar in 2 tablespoons of boiling water. As soon as the buns come out of the oven, brush them generously with the glaze. This step adds shine and locks in moisture. Allow the buns to cool in the tin for 10 minutes, then transfer to a wire rack. Serve warm or at room temperature.

Expert Tips for Perfect Chelsea Buns Every Time

Even experienced bakers can encounter challenges with enriched doughs. Here are some tried and true tips inspired by the **Chelsea Buns Paul Hollywood Recipe** to help you succeed:

- Resist over flouring: Enriched dough is meant to be soft. Use only as much flour as needed to prevent sticking during kneading. A light dusting is enough.
- Check your yeast: Make sure your yeast is within its expiration date. If you are unsure, you can proof it in a little warm milk with a pinch of sugar — if it becomes foamy after 10 minutes, it is active.
- Roll evenly: A consistent thickness helps the buns bake uniformly. Take your time when rolling out the dough.
- Don’t skip the windowpane test: This is the best way to confirm gluten development. If the dough tears, knead for a few more minutes and test again.
- Use a sharp knife or bench scraper: A dull blade can squash the dough and ruin the spiral. Clean cuts

lead to distinct, attractive swirls.

- Brush with glaze while hot: The heat helps the glaze soak into the surface, giving a beautiful sheen and extra moisture.

Variations on the Classic Chelsea Buns Paul Hollywood Recipe

Once you have mastered the basic recipe, feel free to experiment. Here are some popular variations that still honor the core techniques of the **Chelsea Buns Paul Hollywood Recipe**:

Chocolate Chelsea Buns

Replace the cinnamon and dried fruit with a spread of dark chocolate chips or a chocolate haz

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