

Teddy's Cinnamon Bread

A recipe inspired by Keeper of My Heart

In Chapter Four, Jimmy Reeves arrives at Thomas and Teddy's chaotic, love-filled home just as a thin plume of smoke curls out of the kitchen doorway. “The cinnamon bread!” Teddy cries, and the whole household scrambles after her. This is the bread she was baking, made the way a busy 1877 homestead kitchen would have made it: from the same dough as the day's loaves, rolled thin, layered with butter, cinnamon, and sugar, and left to rise before it goes in the oven.

This version is adapted from an authentic 1877 recipe simply titled “Cinnamon Cake,” contributed by a Miss M. K. Wilcox of Selma, Alabama, to *Buckeye Cookery and Practical Housekeeping*, the best-selling housekeeping guide of its day. The original recipe assumes a batch of bread dough already rising on the counter, a good rule of thumb for anyone who wants a truly period-accurate kitchen. A modern, stand-alone version follows.

Yield	Rise time	Bake time
1 loaf, sliced	About 2 hours	30–35 minutes

Ingredients

- 1 batch soft white bread dough (store-bought loaf dough, or your own recipe, risen once and ready to shape)
- 4 tablespoons butter, very soft, plus extra for the pan
- 1/3 cup sugar
- 1 ½ tablespoons ground cinnamon
- 1 egg, beaten with a splash of water, for brushing the top (optional, for shine)

Method

1. Turn the risen dough onto a floured board and roll it into a rectangle about ¾ inch thick, roughly 9 by 14 inches.
2. Spread the soft butter evenly over the surface, all the way to the edges.
3. Stir the sugar and cinnamon together and sprinkle it evenly over the butter.
4. Starting from a short end, roll the dough into a tight log, pinching the seam closed. Tuck the ends under and set the loaf seam-side down in a greased 9 by 5 inch loaf pan.
5. Cover loosely and let rise until doubled, about an hour and a half in a warm kitchen, longer in a cool one.
6. Brush the top with the egg wash if using. Bake at 350°F for 30 to 35 minutes, until deeply golden and the loaf sounds hollow when tapped.

7. Cool in the pan for ten minutes, then turn out onto a rack. Slice once fully cool, or serve warm with extra butter.

A Baker's Note

Keep an eye on the oven. In the story, this loaf nearly meets its end while Teddy is busy wrangling a houseful of children and a fussy baby. History and fiction agree on this much: cinnamon bread and distraction do not mix.

Historical Source

Original 1877 recipe: *Buckeye Cookery and Practical Housekeeping*, Estelle Woods Wilcox, ed. (Minneapolis: Buckeye Publishing Company, 1877), “Cinnamon Cake,” contributed by Miss M. K. Wilcox, Selma, Alabama. Full text available via the Internet Archive: archive.org/stream/cu31924094666199/cu31924094666199_djvu.txt

Recipe developed for readers of *Keeper of My Heart* by Heidi Gray McGill.