



# finnish pulla

recipe: adapted from allrecipes.com,  
with adjustments to the notes and method

Yields 2 loaves.

- 1 cup homogenized (whole) milk
- 1/2 cup granulated sugar
- 1 teaspoon ground cardamom
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 cup water, 110°F
- 1/2 package dry active yeast (about 4 grams or 3/4 teaspoon)
- 2 eggs, beaten
- 4 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1/4 cup unsalted butter, melted and cooled slightly
- 1 egg, beaten well (for egg wash) - prep this just before using
- about 2 tablespoons granulated sugar (for garnish)

Mise en place - begin by getting organized. Read through the entire recipe before beginning. Measure out all of your ingredients. Line a large baking sheet with parchment paper. This recipe takes a few hours to make - be sure you've allowed enough time. Useful tools: kitchen scale, digital thermometer, stand mixer with paddle and hook attachments.

Warm (scald) the milk in a small saucepan over medium heat, stirring frequently, until it bubbles, then remove from heat. Let cool until lukewarm. (This is a great time to double check that your ingredients are ready, and that your butter is melted and cooled so that it is still liquid, but only warm to the touch.)

Whisk together the sugar, cardamom and salt, and set aside.

In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, sprinkle the yeast over the warm water and then whisk gently until dissolved. (The water should be 110°F - if your bowl is cold, be sure to warm your water slightly more, as it will cool when it hits the bowl. It's always best to take the temperature of the water once it's in the bowl, before adding the yeast.)

Add 1 cup of the all-purpose flour, the sugar mixture, lukewarm milk, and the 2 beaten eggs. Mix until combined - about 30 seconds - you will have a soupy batter.

Switch to the dough hook attachment. Add about 1.5 cups more flour and mix on medium speed until the dough is well combined - about 1 minute - the dough will be very sticky and loose.

Add the melted butter and mix well on medium-low speed until the butter is incorporated - about 1 minute. The dough will slap around the bowl a little and then become glossy, sticky, and seem slightly wet/loose.

Add the remaining flour and mix on medium-low until well-combined and you have a stiff-ish dough which is pulling away from the bowl of the mixer. (Another 1-2 minutes.) At first the dough will be raggedy, but it will come together and start cleaning the sides of your mixing bowl while becoming smooth.

Remove the dough from the bowl, place on a lightly floured surface, invert the mixing bowl and use it to cover the dough. Let rest for 15 minutes.

Knead the dough by hand until smooth and satiny. This will take a few minutes. Gently press your finger into the dough to test for doneness - it should spring back. Shape into a rounded ball/mound. This doesn't need to be perfect.

Place in a lightly greased mixing bowl, then turn/flip the dough to grease the top. Cover with plastic wrap pulled tightly over the top and a clean dishtowel. Let rise in a warm place until doubled in size, about 1 hour or more. If your dough isn't rising, it could be that your kitchen is too cool and dry. See my notes on faking a proofer if this is the case. (<http://movitabeaucoup.com/2015/01/16/bread-baking-tools/>)

Punch down the dough - just a couple of light punches straight down into the dough - gently re-shape in the bowl, and let rise again until almost doubled. This will generally take less time (about 30 minutes).

Turn the dough out on a lightly floured surface, give it just a couple of kneads, and then divide into two equal parts. A scale will ensure even division. Divide each half into 3 equal pieces (you will now have six equal portions of dough). Roll each piece into a 10-12 inch strip. Braid 3 of the strips into a loaf, pinching the ends well and tucking under just a little. Repeat with the remaining 3 strips.

Place the 2 braided loaves onto a large baking sheet lined with parchment paper. Leave room between the loaves and at the edges of the pan, as they expand when baking. Let rest for 15-20 minutes, covered with a clean dish towel. Preheat your oven to 350°F during this time.

Brush each loaf lightly with egg wash (beat an egg very well, no strings of egg white should be visible), being sure to brush the sides of the loaf as well, and then sprinkle generously with sugar.

Bake for 25 to 30 minutes. Rotate pan midway through baking. Bread should be a deep golden brown on top, and register at about 200°F (or just under) on your thermometer. Test the internal temperature of your bread by inserting the thermometer in the centre of the loaf, being sure that the tip isn't touching the hot pan.

Remove loaves from baking sheet at allow to cool completely on a wire rack.