



THE WAY THE COOKIE CRUMBLES

A FOOD BLOG

Whole Wheat Light Brioche Burger Buns (adapted from Smitten Kitchen and Peter Reinhart's *Whole Grain Breads*)

Pre-dough:

1 $\frac{3}{4}$ cups (8 ounces) whole wheat flour
½ teaspoon salt
 $\frac{3}{4}$ cup water

1. Mix all of the soaker ingredients together in a bowl for about 1 minute, until all of the flour is hydrated and the ingredients form a ball of dough.
2. Cover loosely with plastic wrap and leave at room temperature for 12 to 24 hours. (If it will be more than 24 hours, place the soaker in the refrigerator; it will be good for up to 3 days. Remove it 2 hours before mixing the final dough to take off the chill.)

Dough:

8 ounces (about 1 $\frac{2}{3}$ cups) bread flour
1 teaspoon salt
2½ tablespoons unsalted butter, softened
pre-dough
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup warm water
3 tablespoons warm milk
2 teaspoons instant yeast
2½ tablespoons sugar
1 large egg
extra flour or water for adjustments
egg wash: 1 tablespoon milk or 1 egg white or whole egg beaten with 1 tablespoon water
sesame seeds

1. If mixing with a stand mixer: Add the flour and salt to mixer bowl fitted with paddle attachment. Mix on low just to combine. Add the butter and mix on medium-low speed until the mixture resembles crumbs. Cut the pre-dough into about 12 pieces and add them to the flour mixture, tossing the pieces to coat (to keep them from immediately sticking back together). Replace the paddle attachment with the hook. Add the water, milk, yeast, sugar, and egg to the mixer bowl and mix on medium-low until combined, then continue kneading until smooth and elastic, 6-8 minutes. The dough should be just a bit loose and sticky; add flour if necessary.

If mixing by hand: In a large bowl, whisk flours with salt. Add butter and rub into flour between your fingers, making crumbs. Cut the pre-dough into about 12 pieces and add them to the flour mixture, tossing the pieces to coat (to keep them from immediately sticking back together). Add the water, milk, yeast, sugar, and egg and stir with a rubber spatula until a dough forms. Scrape dough onto clean, well-floured counter and knead, scooping dough up, slapping it on counter and turning it, until smooth and elastic, 8 to 10 minutes. The dough will be on the sticky side so it can be a bit messy, but keep in mind that the more flour you knead in, the tougher the buns will get. Try to leave them tackier than you would a round loaf.

2. Spray a bowl with nonstick spray; shape dough into a ball and place it in bowl. Cover bowl with plastic wrap or a damp towel and let rise in a warm place until doubled in bulk, one to two hours.
3. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper or a silicone mat. Divide dough into 8 equal parts. To shape each portion into an even round, gently pull the edges toward a pucker and pinch them together. Gently roll each into a ball and arrange them two to three inches apart on the prepared baking sheet. Cover loosely with a piece of plastic wrap lightly coated in nonstick spray (or a damp towel) and let buns rise in a warm place for about one hour.
4. Preheat oven to 400 degrees with rack in center. Brush egg wash on buns and sprinkle with sesame seeds. Bake, turning sheet halfway through baking, until tops are golden brown and an instant-read thermometer reads at least 185 degrees, about 15 minutes. Transfer to a rack to cool completely.