The Orchard’s Undoing

Brown Butter Apple Pie Cinnamon Rolls



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Jumbo brown-butter cinnamon rolls layered with apple butter, warm pie spice, and tender apples, finished with maple brown butter cream cheese icing and Maple Silk.

Yield: 8 jumbo rolls | Pan: 9 x 13-inch glass
Oven: 350°F | Bake time: 40 minutes

Soft enriched dough

1 cup whole milk, 105-110°F

2¼ tsp active dry or instant yeast

⅓ cup granulated sugar, divided

2 large eggs, room temperature

6 tbsp unsalted butter, very soft

1 tsp vanilla

4 cups + 1 tbsp all-purpose flour, plus a little for rolling

1½ tsp kosher salt

Brown butter apple pie filling

2 Granny Smith apples, peeled, cored & diced

2 Honeycrisp apples, peeled, cored & diced

6 tbsp unsalted butter

½ cup packed dark brown sugar

Zest and juice of 1 whole lemon

1½ tsp cinnamon

¼ tsp nutmeg

⅛ tsp allspice

⅛ tsp cloves

¼ tsp kosher salt

2 tsp cornstarch

1 tbsp apple cider or water

1 tsp vanilla

Ingredients

Swirl, icing & finishing components

Apple butter cinnamon swirl

5 tbsp unsalted butter

¾ cup packed dark brown sugar

1½ tbsp cinnamon

¼ tsp nutmeg

⅛ tsp allspice

⅛ tsp cloves

Pinch kosher salt

⅓ cup apple butter

Maple brown butter cream cheese icing

6 oz full-fat block cream cheese, softened

2 tbsp unsalted butter

1½ cups powdered sugar, sifted

2½ tbsp pure maple syrup

1 tsp vanilla

Tiny pinch kosher salt

Up to 2 tsp heavy cream

Maple Silk

¼ cup reserved prepared icing

Heavy cream, 1 tsp at a time, as needed

Final garnish

Flaky sea salt

Fresh cinnamon, very lightly dusted

Pure maple syrup, for a very thin finishing drizzle

The Method

Dough, apples & assembly

1. Activate the yeast
Warm the whole milk to 105-110°F. Whisk in 1 tbsp of the measured sugar and 2¼ tsp yeast. Stand 5-10 minutes until foamy.

2. Mix the base
Whisk in the remaining measured sugar, 2 eggs, and 1 tsp vanilla. Add 4 cups + 1 tbsp all-purpose flour and 1½ tsp kosher salt. Mix until shaggy.

3. Work in the butter and knead
Work in 6 tbsp very soft unsalted butter, 1 tbsp at a time, allowing each addition to absorb. Knead 7-9 minutes until smooth, elastic, soft, and slightly tacky.

4. First rise
Cover and rise 60-90 minutes, until doubled.

5. Brown the butter for the apples
Brown 6 tbsp unsalted butter for the apple filling. Add the apples, ½ cup packed dark brown sugar, lemon zest and juice, cinnamon, nutmeg, allspice, cloves, and salt. Cook 5-7 minutes.

6. Thicken and cool
Mix 2 tsp cornstarch with 1 tbsp apple cider or water. Stir in and cook 1-2 minutes until thick and glossy. Remove from heat, stir in 1 tsp vanilla, and cool completely.

7. Prepare the swirl
Brown 5 tbsp unsalted butter and cool until spreadable. Separately combine ¾ cup packed dark brown sugar, 1½ tbsp cinnamon, ¼ tsp nutmeg, ⅛ tsp allspice, ⅛ tsp cloves, and a pinch of kosher salt.

8. Roll and fill
Roll the risen dough to about 18 x 14 inches. Layer in this exact order: dough, browned butter, ⅓ cup apple butter, cinnamon-dark brown sugar mixture, then cooled cooked apples.

Bake, Ice & Finish

The final flourish

9. Shape and rise
Roll from the long edge into an approximately 18-inch log. Slice into 8 jumbo rolls. Arrange in a greased 9 x 13-inch glass baking dish. Cover and rise 35-50 minutes until puffy and crowding.

10. Bake
Bake at 350°F for 40 minutes, with center dough at 190-195°F. Tent at 30-32 minutes only if a lighter top is desired. Let the rolls settle briefly before icing so the centers stay plush, not gummy.

11. Make the icing
Brown 2 tbsp unsalted butter and cool until warm. Beat the softened cream cheese smooth; beat in the brown butter, powdered sugar, maple syrup, vanilla, salt, and up to 2 tsp heavy cream. Keep thick and spreadable.

12. Reserve and ice
Reserve ¼ cup prepared icing for Maple Silk, then spread the remaining thick icing over the warm rolls, leaving some of the dark caramelized apple spiral visible.

13. Make Maple Silk
Thin the reserved ¼ cup prepared icing with heavy cream, 1 tsp at a time, until silky and drizzleable.

14. Finish and serve
Let the icing settle just enough to cling while the roll stays warm and plush. Plate one warm jumbo roll with Maple Silk. Finish with flaky sea salt, a whisper of fresh cinnamon, and a very thin pure maple syrup drizzle. Leave portions of the dark caramelized apple spiral visible.

Storage & reheating

Store cooled rolls covered in the refrigerator because of the cream cheese icing. Bring briefly toward room temperature, then reheat individual rolls gently until warm and soft.