

Mexican Buns – *Bolillos y Teleras*

Ingredients (for 8 buns)

4 cups	all-purpose flour, plus more for dusting
1 envelope (8g)	quick instant active yeast
2 cups	lukewarm water, approximately
1 tsp	salt
2 tbsp	oil, plus more for brushing



Sprinkle yeast over one quarter of a cup of lukewarm water; allow to rest for one minute. In a large bowl, form a ring with the flour, and pour yeast mixture and one cup of lukewarm water in the centre. Incorporate flour gradually with a spatula; sprinkle salt around the ring and continue incorporating flour to the centre; add two tablespoons of oil. Using hands or a spatula, bring all the flour to the centre, and incorporate with the liquids. Dump the mixture on a clean working surface, and add more water, a little at a time, as needed, until mixture becomes sticky (approximately half a cup); knead vigorously, turning and pounding on the working surface; in the photos below, the dough after five minutes of kneading, and right, after ten minutes:



The total water used, including 1/4 cup (with yeast) and 1 cup (at the beginning), will be between 1 3/4 cups and 2 cups; this will vary according to local weather conditions (temperature and humidity.) Once the dough is smooth, pinch to form a ball and place in a greased bowl with seam facing down. Lightly grease the dough, cover, and let rest in a warm spot away from drafts for ten to fifteen minutes. Meanwhile, prepare two baking sheets by lining with parchment paper; and set aside.

The dough will not double its volume at this time, but it will grow a little and will become much softer and manageable. Cut the dough in half, then each piece in half and repeat, to obtain eight pieces. Take one piece at a time, pinching around to form a ball, then rolling on the working surface with one hand, until smooth.

To make bolillos: flatten one ball into a slightly oval patty, about 1 cm (0.4 inch) thick; fold two small triangles at the top. Roll towards the front forming a cylinder; before finishing rolling, fold two triangles at the bottom. Finish forming into a tapered cylinder, rolling back and forth with extended fingers; place on prepared baking sheet, brush lightly with oil, and then slit the top lengthwise along the centre of the bun with a very sharp knife.

To make teleras: flatten ball as before; place oval patty on prepared baking sheet and mark two grooves lengthwise with the handle of a wooden spoon. Brush with oil.

Let buns rest in a warm spot away from drafts until they double in volume, between one and two hours, depending on the temperature and humidity of the room. In the photos below, *bolillos* before resting and after 1 1/2 hr. (left) and *teleras* before and after rising (right):



Note how the grooves on the *teleras* almost disappeared due to rising of the dough; re-trace the grooves very gently again with the handle of a wooden spoon.

Place a shallow pan or tray with one cup of water in the oven, and pre-heat to 425°F (225°C). The water will evaporate to form steam, so carefully open the oven and place the baking sheets on two shelves. Allow to bake at this high temperature for ten minutes; the buns will rise and start to turn brown. Lower the temperature to 375°F (190°C) and continue baking for another ten minutes. Rotate the trays so the front faces the back, then check every five minutes until buns are crusty and golden brown (15 to 20 minutes). Remove from the oven and transfer to cooling racks. Let them cool down for a few minutes before slicing.

