Estonian Kringle

Ingredients

2¼ cups (280g) strong white flour
3 generous pinches saffron
2 tablespoons boiling water
½ tsp (2g) salt
¾ cup (180ml) milk scalded and cooled
1 tbsp (15g) sugar
½ teaspoon ground cardamom (or cinnamon)
15g fresh yeast (1 envelope active dry yeast)

2 tbsp (30g) melted butter
1 egg

Filling
¼ cup (50g) softened butter
4 or 5 tbsp (60-75g) sugar
3 tsp (9g) ground cardamom (or cinnamon)
3 tsp grounded almonds, optional

Method

In a medium bowl stir fresh yeast with sugar until it liquefies. Separately, crush the saffron and mix with the boiling water. Allow to sit for at least 10 minutes for the colour to develop.

Stir in the lukewarm milk and then add the egg yolk and melted butter. In a large bowl mix together the flour and salt. Pour the milk mixture over the dry ingredients and start kneading it until it pulls away from the edges of the bowl. Give the dough the shape of a ball. Oil a clean bowl, place the dough and cover with plastic wrap. Let it rise for about 1 hour at room temperature (warm space) until doubled in size.

While the dough rises, whisk together the butter with sugar and cinnamon for the filling. Set aside. Preheat the oven to 200 C (400 F). Line a baking sheet with parchment paper.

On a floured surface, using a rolling pin roll the dough to a rectangle of about 30 x 45cm. Spoon the cardamom filling over top (keep about 1 tbsp of the filling for the end), spreading evenly, leaving a clean 1.5cm border around the edges. Sprinkle the almonds over the cardamom filling. Roll up the dough and using a sharp knife, cut the log in half lengthwise leaving one edge uncut for about 1.5cm.

Start twisting the two pieces, keeping the open layers exposed so the cut ends remain on top. Pinch the ends together and form a wreath. Place on the baking tray and brush with the remaining cardamom filling.

Bake for 20-25 minutes until golden brown. For the last 10 minutes you can reduce the oven temperature to 180 C (350 F).

Serve warm as it is or with your favourite topping. It is gorgeous!