Basic Brioche Bread

Amount 1 brioche loaf
Time a few hours prep, a few days rising

Ingredients

- 2 tbsp warm water [sponge]
- 1 tbsp sugar [sponge]
- 1/4 instant yeast [sponge]
- 1/2 cup all-purpose flour [sponge]
- 1 large egg [sponge]
- 1 cup and 1 1/2 tbsp all-purpose flour
- 2 tbsp sugar
- 1 1/4 tsp instant yeast
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 2 large eggs
- 8 tbsp unsalted butter, softened

Steps

1. Whisk sponge ingredients to a thick batter.
2. In a separate bowl, mix the flour, sugar, and yeast. Then mix in the salt (direct contact with the yeast may kill the yeast).
3. Dump dry mixture on sponge, cover, and let sit for 2 hours. The sponge will bubble through the flour. For better flavor, refrigerate for 24 hours.
4. Add the eggs and beat for several minutes until the dough masses around the utensil, but still stick to the bowl.
5. [if kneading by hand] Dump on the counter and knead with the stretch and fold or slap and fold technique. Avoid touching the dough with your hands -- use a bench scraper. Add butter slowly, kneading each bit in before adding the next. It will be very messy, but don't add any extra flour. You'll be kneading for a while.
6. [if using a mixer] Knead with a dough hook, adding butter slowly. Let each bit be incorporated before adding more.
7. Once the gluten develops enough for the dough to stay together and retain its shape, scrape it into a greased bowl and let rise until doubled, about 2 hours.
8. Refrigerate for an hour, stir gently to deflate, then refrigerate for another hour.
9. Place dough on floured surface and give it a few business letter turns. Round the dough, then refrigerate in a bowl or bag for anywhere from 6 hours to 2 days (time = flavor).
10. When ready to bake, divide dough into pieces and shape however you like. Let the shaped dough rise for an hour. Bake at 425 F on a stone until the center temperature reaches 190 F.

Notes

The effort and time varies drastically by the amount of flavor you want it to develop. But if you're just going to use it in a glazed desert, skip the extra time because you won't taste it anyway.