

Prep Time 30 minutes (plus thawing/cooling)

Rise Time 30 minutes

Bake Time 35-40 minutes

Total Time Approximately 1 hour 15 minutes (using frozen dough shortcut)

Servings 6-8

Difficulty Easy

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Ingredients

For the Bread

- 1 (1-pound) loaf frozen bread dough, thawed (or homemade yeast dough, see note)
- ½ cup granulated sugar
- 1½ tablespoons ground cinnamon
- 4 tablespoons (½ stick) salted butter, melted
- Vegetable oil cooking spray or parchment paper

For the Icing

- 1 cup powdered sugar, sifted
 - 2–3 tablespoons water, milk, or fresh lemon juice
 - ¼ teaspoon vanilla extract (optional, for depth)
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Instructions

Step 1: Prepare the Coating

Combine the granulated sugar and ground cinnamon in a shallow dish. Whisk until evenly blended and set aside. The mixture should be a warm, uniform tan color with no streaks of plain sugar.

Step 2: Slit the Dough

Lightly spray two 8½-by-4½-inch loaf pans with cooking spray (or line with parchment, leaving overhang for easy removal). Place the thawed dough on a work surface. Cut the dough lengthwise into two equal pieces. Make 4 crosswise slits in each piece, taking care not to cut all the way through to the bottom. These slits are essential—they create the crevices that trap the butter and cinnamon sugar, giving the bread its signature pull-apart texture .

Step 3: Butter, Coat, and Layer

Brush each loaf generously with melted butter, making sure to work it into every slit and crease. Don't be shy here—the butter is what carries the cinnamon sugar into the interior of the bread .

Roll each buttered loaf in the cinnamon-sugar mixture, packing it into the slits with your hands. If you have leftover sugar mixture, sprinkle it over the tops.

Step 4: Rise

Place the coated loaves in the prepared pans. Set them aside in a warm, draft-free place to rise for 30 minutes. While the bread rises, preheat your oven to 300°F (150°C). The low baking temperature is key—it allows the sugar to caramelize slowly without burning, creating that sticky, gooey exterior .

Step 5: Bake

Bake the loaves for 35–40 minutes, turning the pans around once halfway through for even browning. The bread is done when the top is golden brown and a tap on the bottom of the pan yields a hollow sound . Place a sheet pan on the rack below to catch any buttery drips.

Step 6: Make the Icing

While the bread bakes (or cools), whisk together the powdered sugar and 2 tablespoons of water, milk, or lemon juice in a small bowl. Stir vigorously until smooth and free of lumps. If the glaze is too thick, add the remaining liquid 1 teaspoon at a time until it reaches a pourable but still thick consistency. Add vanilla if desired .

Step 7: Glaze and Serve

Turn the warm breads out onto a wire rack. Drizzle the icing generously over the loaves while they're still warm—it will melt slightly and seep into the crevices. Serve immediately, pulling apart the slices with your hands rather than slicing, just like they do at Dollywood .

Recipe Notes

On the Dough Shortcut: This recipe uses frozen bread dough for convenience, but if you prefer homemade, combine 1½ cups bread flour, ¾ teaspoon active dry yeast, 1 tablespoon sugar, ½ teaspoon salt, and 2 tablespoons melted butter with ½ cup warm water. Knead, rise until doubled (about 90 minutes), then proceed with the recipe .

Why 300°F? The lower oven temperature is intentional. It mimics the Grist Mill's slow-baking method, allowing the cinnamon sugar to caramelize without turning bitter .

Make It Ahead: The bread is best the day it's made, but leftovers can be stored in an airtight container at room temperature for up to 2 days. Rewarm briefly in the microwave before

serving.

Nutrition Information

Note: Nutrition values are estimates and will vary based on exact ingredients and serving size.

Nutrient	Amount (per serving, based on 8 servings)
Calories	~350-470 kcal
Total Fat	12-15 g
Saturated Fat	6-8 g
Carbohydrates	55-70 g
Sugars	25-35 g
Protein	5-6 g
Sodium	150-200 mg
Fiber	1-2 g
Cholesterol	25-30 mg