

Apple Cider Caramel Apple Cinnamon Rolls

<http://userealbutter.com/2014/10/26/apple-cider-caramel-apple-cinnamon-rolls-recipe/>
adapted from [this recipe](#)

dough

6 1/4 - 6 3/4 cups all-purpose flour
4 1/2 tsps (or 2 pkts) active dry yeast
2 cups milk
1/4 cup sugar
1/4 cup butter
1 1/2 tsps salt
1 egg
flavorless vegetable oil

filling

1/2 cup packed brown sugar
1/2 cup granulated sugar
1/4 cup all-purpose flour
1 tbsp ground cinnamon
1/2 cup butter
3 cups apple, peeled, cored, and small dice
1 cup pecans, chopped

apple cider caramel

2 cups apple cider
1 cup heavy cream
3/4 cup granulated sugar
1/2 tsp ground cinnamon
2 tsps vanilla extract
1/4 tsp sea salt

Make the dough: Combine 2 1/2 cups of flour and the yeast in the mixing bowl of a stand mixer. Place the milk, 1/4 cup sugar, 1/4 cup butter, and 1 1/2 teaspoons salt in a medium saucepan over medium heat. Stir together to dissolve the sugar until the mixture is just warm (the butter should be *just* melted). Pour the milk mixture into the mixing bowl containing the flour and yeast. Add the egg. Beat with paddle attachment for 30 seconds on low speed. Beat on high speed for 3 minutes. Stir in as much of the remaining flour as the dough can take. Knead 3-5 minutes until the dough is smooth and elastic (you can do this with a dough hook and finish by hand or knead by hand). Grease a large bowl with the vegetable oil. Shape the dough into a ball and place in the large greased bowl. Turn the dough over to coat the entire thing with oil. Cover and let rise in a warm place for 45-60 minutes or until the volume has doubled.

Prepare the filling: In a medium bowl, combine the brown sugar, 1/2 cup granulated sugar, 1/4 cup all-purpose flour, and 1 tablespoon cinnamon. Cut 1/2 cup butter into the mixture until it resembles coarse crumbs. Set aside.

Make the apple cider caramel: Pour the apple cider into a medium saucepan and warm over medium-high heat. Let the cider boil down until it has reduced to 1/4 cup in volume (doesn't have to be exact, but no more than 1/3 cup). This took me about 20 minutes. Pour the heavy cream into a small saucepan and heat until just boiling. Cover the pan. Place the sugar in a clean medium saucepan over medium heat. When the sugar begins to melt (this takes several minutes, so be patient), gently swirl it around to distribute the rest of the unmelted sugar. When completely melted, let the liquid sugar turn a medium to dark amber color (depending on how dark you like your caramel). This happens quickly, so keep an eye on it. Slowly pour the hot cream into the caramelized sugar while stirring. It will splatter and bubble, that's okay, keep stirring. You will likely have hardened caramelized sugar at the bottom of your pan and the liquid will be watery. This is okay. Return the pan to low heat and stir until all of the hard caramelized sugar has melted and your sauce has thickened. This took me 20 minutes. Stir in the reduced apple cider, 1/2 teaspoon cinnamon, 1/4 teaspoon sea salt, and vanilla. Yield: 1 1/4 cups.

Assemble and bake the cinnamon rolls: Punch the dough down and turn it out onto a lightly-floured large (bigger than 24×16 inches) work surface. Cover with a damp cloth and let rest for 10 minutes. Butter two 9-inch round pans (preferably 3-inch high, but 2-inch high pans will also work – just bake with foil underneath the pan to catch any caramel drips during baking). Pour half of the apple cider caramel in each pan. Set aside. Roll the dough out into a 24×16-inch rectangle. Sprinkle the cinnamon-sugar filling evenly over the rectangle, leaving a 1-inch margin bare along the long side furthest from you (this is to make sure you can pinch it closed when you roll it up). Do the same with the diced apple and chopped pecans. Starting with the long side closest to you, begin rolling the dough up like a jelly roll or a carpet. You'll have to go in increments to make sure the entire length gets rolled up properly. Pinch the clean edge onto the roll to seal it. Cut the roll into 14 equal-width pieces (about 1.75 inches in width). Set the slices cut-side down in the baking pans (about 7 per pan), cover and let rise for 45 minutes until doubled in volume. Preheat oven to 350°F. Uncover the rolls and bake for 45 minutes until lightly browned. If using 2-inch high pans, you may want to set foil or a baking sheet under the rack to catch any caramel drips. Invert the baking pans onto a serving plate. Makes 14 rolls.