



Bethlehem Bread **(inspired by the First Baptist Church of Burnet, TX)**

7 – 7 ½ cups all purpose flour
2 ¼ cups whole milk
2 tsp salt
½ cup sugar
½ cup shortening (I use Spectrum)
2 packages yeast

Line 2 baking sheets with Silpat or lightly grease and set aside.

Warm milk to room temperature. Mix sugar, salt and yeast with milk. Whisk until all lumps are gone and liquid is smooth.

Pour flour into a large mixing bowl, make a well in the center of the flour. Pour the milk mixture into well and begin mixing with a wooden spoon until the dough begins to incorporate. Gradually add shortening until it is thoroughly mixed. Knead dough with your hands until it is smooth and firm.

Remove dough from bowl and place on a prepared baking sheet. Cover with kitchen towel and allow to rise approximately 45 minutes – 1 hour.

After about an hour, cut dough into lemon-sized portions. You should have about 18-20 small portions of dough. Coat each piece of dough with a small amount of shortening to keep the dough moist.

Flatten dough with the palms of your hands into a strip approximately 2" x 6". Using a sharp knife, cut down the center leaving 1" on each end. Pick up the dough at each end, making a figure eight, bringing each end back into the center. Tuck ends into center slice and press gently to mold.

Cover baking sheets with kitchen towels and allow dough to rise for 3 hours. Brush each roll with egg wash and sprinkle with coarse sea salt. Bake in preheated oven at 350 degrees for 15-20 minutes until golden brown.