

# Vasilopita

## New Year's Sweet Bread

*Greeks traditionally celebrate the New Year by baking a Vasilopita. Don't forget to insert a coin wrapped in foil into the dough to give good luck to the person who receives it!*

¼ cup milk  
2½ tablespoons unsalted butter  
4 teaspoons solid shortening (butter Crisco)  
1 package active dry yeast  
2 tablespoons warm water  
1 teaspoon sugar  
3-3 ½ cups flour  
¼ teaspoon salt  
½ cup sugar  
½ teaspoon ground coriander  
1 egg  
Coin, well washed and wrapped in foil

### GLAZE (Optional):

1 egg  
1 tablespoon water  
1-3 tablespoons sesame seeds

In a small saucepan, scald milk. Add butter and shortening; let cool to lukewarm. Dissolve yeast in warm water and add sugar. Let sit 5 minutes to proof.

In a food processor with steel blade, place 3 cups flour, salt, sugar, and coriander in work bowl. Pulse on and off to sift. When milk is lukewarm, add dissolved yeast and egg to milk mixture. With motor on, add liquid through feed tube. Process until dough forms a ball, adding more flour if necessary. Dough will be soft. Process 40-60 seconds longer, to knead.

In an oiled bowl, place dough, turning to coat top. Cover and let rise until doubled, 1 ¼ hours. Turn dough onto lightly floured surface. Divide into 3 equal parts. Cover and let rise 10 minutes. \*Use hands to roll each ball into 18 inch ropes. Braid ropes loosely, being careful not to stretch dough. Place a clean coin wrapped in foil inside loaf as it is being braided. Pinch ends together and tuck under slightly. Transfer to baking sheet and cover and let rise until dough doubles, 45 minutes to 1 hour. Be sure loaf has risen long enough before baking or dough will stretch out of shape while baking. (\*Dough may be formed into various shapes such as this simple braid, a twisted rope, a regular loaf-pan size or a rounded smooth dome. Depending on the shape, you may use a standard baking sheet, 9X7 loaf pan or 9-12 inch pie or cake pan.)

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

FOR GLAZE: Whisk together egg and water. Brush glaze carefully over loaf. Sprinkle with sesame seeds. Bake 45 minutes, or until done. If bread becomes too dark, cover lightly with foil to finish baking. Cool on rack.

Bread may be frosted after baking with powdered sugar glaze and decorated with nuts, dried fruit, Jordan almonds or maraschino cherries, if desired.

*Recipe from Festival of GREEK FLAVORS Cookbook*