**PAN DULCE MEXICANO: CONCHAS**

Makes 15

**For the buns**

250g bread flour

250g all-purpose flour

7g salt

12g instant yeast

1 cup whole milk

1 ½ tsp vanilla extract

2 eggs

90g granulated sugar

6 Tbsp. unsalted butter, softened

30g lard or non-hydrogenated vegetable shortening

In a bowl with a stand mixer, the flours, salt, yeast, milk, vanilla, eggs, and sugar and mix for 2 minutes, using a dough hook. Cut the butter and lard into cubes and add to the mixer. Continue to knead for about 5-7 minutes, or until the dough clears the sides of the mixer and forms a “bakers window” when stretched. The dough will be sticky, but do not be tempted to add more flour unless the dough has trouble clearing the sides of the mixer. If more flour is needed, only add a tablespoon or so at a time. (you likely won’t need more than a couple tablespoons).

Place the dough in an oiled bowl, cover, and refrigerate for 8 hours, or overnight.

Line 2 baking sheets with parchment paper and set aside.

Divide the dough into 16 equal portions. Each ball will weigh approximately 60-65 g. Take a small ball of dough in one hand and place on a lightly floured surface. Cup your hand over the dough, forming a “C” shape with your hands. Using a circular motion, roll the dough into a smooth ball. Repeat with remaining dough and place 8 conchas on each baking sheet.

Let the conchas rise for 2 hours or until doubled in size. In the meantime, make the topping.

**For the topping**

100 g all-purpose flour

100 g powdered sugar

6 Tbsp. unsalted butter, softened

1 Tbsp. lard or shortening

1 ½ tsp vanilla extract

¼ tsp baking powder

5-7 drops of pink and orange gel food coloring

1 egg, beaten

Place the flour, sugar, butter, lard, vanilla, and baking powder in a mixing bowl and beat with a paddle attachment on medium speed for 1-2 minutes or until the ingredients form a ball of soft dough.

Divide the dough into 3 equal portions by weight. In one portion, knead in the pink food coloring, and in a second portion, knead in the orange coloring. The third portion will remain plain.

Once the buns are proofed. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Divide each color of dough into 5 equal portions, by weight. Roll each into a ball, forming 15 balls.

Brush each proofed bun with the beaten egg.

Line a tortilla press with an open zip top bag or plastic wrap and press each ball into a round disk. Carefully peal the topping from the plastic and place on top of each bun. Using a sharp knife, cut a shell pattern in the top of each bun, being careful to only cut through the topping, and not surface of the actual bread dough.

Bake for 20-22 minutes, or until the exposed bun is light golden, and the bun registers 200 degrees with an instant read thermometer. Remove from the pan and let cool.

*OPTIONAL: immediately roll each bun in sugar when the come out of the oven before cooling.*

Adapted from https://flanandapplepie.wordpress.com/2015/10/19/pan-dulce-mexicano-conchas-mexican-sweet-bread-shells/#more-572