## MAY

## Baking School In-Depth: Milk Bread

Milk bread is divinely fluffy, with a downright cloudlike ivory interior and a bronzed, resilient crust that adds to the delicate textural contrast. Its soft and springy texture is thanks, in part, to the tangzhong, a Japanese technique of creating a smooth paste flour and milk. Our Milk Bread Loaf gets its stunning look from an easy shaping technique, but the dough can also be shaped into round buns, as we've done for our Almond Cream Buns, and beautifully flecked Scallion Ropes sprinkled with sesame seeds and sea salt.

## INGREDIENT BREAKDOWN

Excellent recipes require wonderful ingredients. Here's how our recipes' ingredients contribute to making the very best milk bread loaf, buns, and ropes.

WHOLE MILK: Milk is one of two ingredients used to make tangzhong, which is essential for milk bread. The fat in whole milk adds tenderness and richness to the dough, leaving you with an incredibly soft loaf. Also, when the natural sugars in milk heat at high temperatures, they undergo the Maillard reaction, which involves browning in its end stages, thus contributing to the distinct golden color of the crust.

GRANULATED SUGAR: You may notice more sugar in this bread recipe than others, but Japanese-style breads have higher fat and sugar ratios than Western-style breads. They work together to give you with extremely supple bread. Sugar acts as food for yeast, which converts it to carbon dioxide and alcohol in the fermentation process. As a result, sugar ultimately helps to tenderize the dough. The sugar also adds sweetness to balance the salt, contributes to the loaf's golden color, improves the crumb texture, and helps retain moisture along with the tangzhong while the bread bakes and once stored.

RED STAR ${ }^{\circledR}$ ALL-NATURAL ACTIVE DRY YEAST: A standard when it comes to baking with yeast, Red Star ${ }^{\circledR}$ All-Natural Active Dry Yeast is a trustworthy favorite for a reason. Yeast is essential to many bread doughs, and our Milk Bread Dough recipe is no exception. Yeast acts as the leading leavening agent in this bread.

BREAD FLOUR: It may be tempting to substitute all-purpose flour for bread flour, but you won't get as much of a rise in your loaf and your mixing time will be longer. Bread flour is higher in protein and gluten, which allows bread dough to form a stable structure and rise higher. High-protein flour is essential for this recipe to create a strong gluten network with enough protein content to develop the gluten and to handle the enrichment added to this dough. A high-protein flour like bread flour provides enough structure to create a strong gluten network for an enriched dough.

## INGREDIENT BREAKDOWN

KOSHER SALT: It's essential to weigh your salt because different salt crystals measure differently-dough with enough salt prevents the yeast from reproducing too fast, which gives the baker more control of the yeast fermentation. Salt also improves the crust's golden color, strengthens gluten, and enhances the flavor.

EGG: Adding egg to bread dough creates a delicate, tender crumb that leaves you with a melt-in-your-mouth texture. It not only adds richness but also helps with leavening. Much like the leavening power eggs lend to cakes and cookies, the water in the egg white helps create steam that puffs up your dough once it encounters the warmth of the oven. Eggs also give the perfect golden shine to milk bread with the help of an egg wash - an egg whisked with a bit of milk that gets gently brushed onto all of our milk bread recipes right before going into the oven!

UNSALTED BUTTER: Butter adds an incredible decadence and flavor to the enriched dough, creating moist, tender milk bread and a lovely crust.

ALMOND EXTRACT, ALMOND MEAL, AND SLICED ALMONDS: Almond extract gives our Almond Cream Buns a delicate almond essence, and the almond meal provides flavor and a wonderful texture to the cream. This bun's crowning glory is a scattering of sliced almonds, adding perfect crunchy contrast to the fluffy Milk Bread Dough.

SCALLIONS, SESAME OIL, AND GARLIC: Our Scallion Ropes are heady with the aroma of garlic and sesame oil and flecked with scallions, a.k.a. green onions, lending the perfect balance of savory to the slight sweetness in our Milk Bread Dough.

SESAME SEEDS AND FLAKED SEA SALT: Sesame seeds and sea salt add a wonderful crunch and flavor to the Scallion Ropes.

## TOOLS OF THE TRADE

## We recommend this set of tools for our technique



SAUCEPAN: You want a stainless steel saucepan that will heat efficiently and evenly with precise temperature control and no hot spots when making the Tangzhong and scalding the milk when making the dough. (Pictured is the Williams Sonoma Signature Thermo-Clad ${ }^{\text {TM }}$ Stainless-Steel Saucepan.)

WHISK: From dissolving the yeast in warm milk and sugar to whisking the Tangzhong into gentle submission, having a reliable whisk in your baking arsenal is essential. (Pictured is the Williams Sonoma Signature Stainless-Steel French Whisk.)

BENCH SCRAPER: The bench scraper is your new best friend in the kitchen, as it can expertly cut and divide dough and help you efficiently clear your work surface. (Pictured is the Williams Sonoma Olivewood Bench Scraper.)

STAND MIXER: As a beloved energy- and time-saver, a stand mixer will help knead the Milk Bread Dough effortlessly. (Pictured are the KitchenAid ${ }^{\text {® }}$ Artisan Stand Mixer, 5-Qt. and KitchenAid ${ }^{\text {® }}$ Stand Mixer Clear Glass Bowl Attachment, 5-Qt.)

SCALE: Using a kitchen scale ensures you have perfectly equal portions of dough that will bake evenly. (Pictured is the Zwilling Digital Scale.)

## TOOLS OF THE TRADE



BAKING SHEETS/PANS: Designed to bake evenly, these beautiful, golden commercial-quality pans and baking sheets are crafted of aluminized steel for exceptional durability, making them ideal for baking from the Milk Bread Loaf to the Scallion Ropes and the Almond Cream Buns. (Pictured are the Williams Sonoma Goldtouch ${ }^{-}$Pro Nonstick Non Corrugated Cookie Sheet, Williams Sonoma Goldtouch ${ }^{-}$Pro Nonstick Loaf Pan [11/4 lb.], and Williams Sonoma Goldtouch ${ }^{-}$Pro Nonstick Non Corrugated Quarter Sheet.)

PASTRY BRUSH: A pastry brush may be one of the most practical tools in your drawer that takes up the least amount of real estate. We love this wooden, long-handled brush with natural bristles. It's perfect for gently brushing egg wash on the supple surface of the milk bread in every incarnation. (Pictured is the Williams Sonoma Olivewood Pastry Brush [ $11 / 2$ "].)

SPATULAS, MEASURING SPOONS, AND GLASS BOWLS: For all your mixing needs, you really can't beat the basics. Spatulas are perfect for simple stirring and folding, measuring spoons with easy-to-read markings and flat handles give you the most precise measurements, and glass bowls that give you a 360 -degree visual while mixing and proofing the dough are the perfect vessels for measuring and mixing all of your ingredients. (Pictured are the Glass Mixing Bowl 10-Piece Set, Williams Sonoma Ultimate Silicone Spatula Set with Stainless-Steel Handle, and Williams Sonoma Stainless Steel Teaspoon \& Tablespoon Measuring Spoons.)

## TOOLS OF THE TRADE



THERMOMETER: We use an instant-read thermometer to ensure the correct temperature when making the Tangzhong and scalding the milk added to the yeast mixture for the optimal rise. We also use it to check the internal temperature of the milk breads to ensure they are perfectly baked. (OXO Thermocouple Thermometer.)

SHEARS: Heavy-duty shears are both versatile and efficient, and they guarantee a clean snip when using them to create the perfect deep cuts when making our Almond Cream Buns. (Pictured is the Zwilling Shears \& Scissors.)

HAND MIXER: For our Almond Cream Buns, a hand mixer allows for all the power and speed you need but with more control when making the almond cream, also called frangipane. It's excellent at whipping air into mixtures that might not have enough volume for a stand mixer to effectively reach and mix. (Breville Handy Mix Scraper 9-Speed) Hand Mixer.)



## SCALLION ROPES



## MILK BREAD DOUGH

Makes enough for $1(9 \times 5$-inch) loaf, 12 buns, or 6 ropes

This dough procures its magical power from Tangzhong, a paste made from milk and flour to create a white roux. It has two essential purposes: lock in moisture while keeping your loaf, buns, or ropes light and bouncy and keep them fresher longer.

2/3 cup ( 160 grams) whole milk 4 tablespoons ( 48 grams) granulated sugar, divided
1 (0.25-ounce) package ( 7 grams) active dry yeast*
$21 / 2$ to $2 \frac{3}{4}$ cups ( 317 to 349 grams) bread flour, divided
2 teaspoons (6 grams) kosher salt Tangzhong (recipe follows)
1 large egg ( 50 grams), room temperature
4 tablespoons ( 56 grams) unsalted butter, room temperature

1. In a small saucepan, heat milk over medium heat until scalding. (An instant-read thermometer should register $180^{\circ} \mathrm{F} / 82^{\circ} \mathrm{C}$.) Let cool until an instant-read thermometer registers $110^{\circ} \mathrm{F}\left(43^{\circ} \mathrm{C}\right)$ to $115^{\circ} \mathrm{F}$ $\left(46^{\circ} \mathrm{C}\right.$ ).
2. In a small bowl, whisk together warm milk, 1 teaspoon ( 4 grams) sugar, and yeast. Let stand until foamy, 5 to 10 minutes.
3. In the bowl of a stand mixer, whisk together $1 \frac{1}{2}$ cups ( 190 grams) flour, salt, and remaining 3 tablespoons plus 2 teaspoons ( 44 grams) sugar by hand. Add warm yeast mixture, Tangzhong, and egg; using the paddle attachment, beat at low speed until well combined. With mixer on low
speed, gradually add 1 cup ( 127 grams) flour, beating just until a shaggy dough comes together and stopping to scrape sides of bowl.
4. Switch to the dough hook attachment. Beat at low speed until dough is tacky, elastic, and slightly smooth, about 8 minutes; add up to remaining $1 / 4$ cup ( 32 grams) flour, 1 tablespoon ( 8 grams) at a time, if dough is too sticky. Add butter, 1 tablespoon ( 14 grams) at a time, beating until combined after each addition (about 5 minutes total). Scrape sides of bowl and dough hook. Beat until dough is completely smooth and passes the windowpane test, about 12 minutes. (See Note.) Turn out dough onto a clean surface, and shape into a smooth round. 5. Lightly oil a large bowl. Place dough in bowl, turning to grease top. Cover and let rise in a warm, draftfree place ( $75^{\circ} \mathrm{F} / 24^{\circ} \mathrm{C}$ ) until doubled in size, 45 minutes to 1 hour.
*We used Red Star ${ }^{\circledR}$ All-Natural Active Dry Yeast.

Note: To use the windowpane test to check dough for proper gluten development, lightly flour hands and pinch off (don't tear) a small piece of dough. Slowly pull the dough out from the center. If the dough is ready, you will be able to stretch it until it's thin and translucent like a windowpane. If the dough tears, it's not quite ready. Beat for 1 minute, and test again.

## Tangzhong

Makes about $1 / 3$ cup
Essentially a roux, Tangzhong is the crucial component that separates milk bread from all other loaves. To make Tangzhong, you'll need a small heavybottomed saucepan, a whisk, steady low heat, and complete concentration. Keep your instant-read thermometer on hand because things move quickly once the milk and flour begin to thicken. If the Tangzhong overcooks, it will lose its elasticity and that beautiful moisture you want in the loaf.

## 6 tablespoons ( 90 grams) whole

 milk3 tablespoons ( 24 grams) bread flour

1. In a small saucepan, whisk together milk and flour. Cook over mediumlow heat, whisking constantly, until thickened, whisk leaves lines on bottom of pan, and an instantread thermometer registers $150^{\circ} \mathrm{F}$ $\left(66^{\circ} \mathrm{C}\right)$. (Mixture will look like mashed potatoes.) Transfer to a small bowl, and let cool until an instantread thermometer registers $130^{\circ} \mathrm{F}$ ( $54^{\circ} \mathrm{C}$ ) or until room temperature.

## MILK BREAD LOAF

Makes 1 ( $9 \times 5$-inch) loaf

The folding technique is a signature method when making a loaf of Japanese milk bread. The dough is portioned into three equal pieces and then rolled out, folded, and rolled out again. Finally, the dough gets rolled up and tucked away in the loaf pan. The baked loaf can be sliced or satisfyingly pulled apart and shared.

Milk Bread Dough (recipe precedes) 1 large egg ( 50 grams), room temperature
1 tablespoon (15 grams) whole milk

1. Spray a $9 \times 5$-inch loaf pan with cooking spray.
2. Punch down Milk Bread Dough, and let stand for 10 minutes. Divide dough into 3 portions (about 243 grams each). On a very lightly floured surface, roll 1 portion into a $10 \times 6$-inch oval. (Keep remaining dough covered with plastic wrap to prevent it from drying out.) Fold each long side over toward center by about $1 / 2$ inch. Using a rolling pin, flatten dough, making sure it is 5 inches wide. Starting with one short side, roll up dough into a log, pinching seam to seal. (Be careful not to roll up dough too tight.) Place, seam side down, in center of prepared pan. Repeat with remaining dough, placing equidistant between center dough and sides of pan. Cover and let rise in a warm, draft-free place ( $75^{\circ} \mathrm{F} / 24^{\circ} \mathrm{C}$ ) until puffed and holds an indentation when pressed, about 45 minutes.
3. Preheat oven to $350^{\circ} \mathrm{F}\left(180^{\circ} \mathrm{C}\right)$.
4. In a small bowl, whisk together egg and remaining 1 tablespoon ( 15 grams) milk. Brush top of dough with egg wash.
5. Bake until an instant-read thermometer inserted in center registers $190^{\circ} \mathrm{F}\left(88^{\circ} \mathrm{C}\right)$, about 40 minutes, covering with foil halfway through baking. Let cool in pan for 5 minutes. Remove from pan, and let cool completely on a wire rack before slicing.

ALMOND CREAM BUNS
Makes 12 buns

These filled breads are made for almond lovers! A creamy almond filling laced with almond extract and sated with almond meal-also called frangipanegets swathed in pillowy-soft Milk Bread Dough and crowned with sliced almonds.

3 tablespoons ( 42 grams) unsalted butter, softened
$1 / 4$ cup ( 50 grams) granulated sugar
1 large egg white ( 30 grams)
$1 / 8$ teaspoon almond extract
$2 / 3$ cup ( 64 grams) almond meal
$1 / 4$ cup ( 31 grams) all-purpose flour
$1 / 8$ teaspoon kosher salt
Milk Bread Dough (recipe precedes)
1 large egg ( 50 grams), room temperature
1 tablespoon (15 grams) whole milk
$1 / 4$ cup (28 grams) sliced almonds

1. Line 2 rimless baking sheets with parchment paper.
2. In a medium bowl, beat butter and sugar with a hand mixer fitted with beater attachments at medium speed until fluffy, about 2 minutes. Add egg white and almond extract, and beat until combined. Beat in almond meal, flour, and salt until well combined. 3. Punch down Milk Bread Dough, and turn out onto a very lightly floured surface. Divide dough into 12 portions (about 60 grams). Shape each portion into a smooth ball; cover and let stand for 5 to 10 minutes.
3. On a clean surface, using a floured rolling pin, roll 1 dough ball into a 3 -inch disk. Using the rolling pin or your fingers, press on outer edges to make them thinner than center. (Final size should be $3 / 4$ inches wide.) Place 1 rounded tablespoon (18 grams) almond cream in center
of disk. Pinch edges up and around filling until well-sealed. Place dough, seam side down, on work surface. Gently cup with your hand, and rotate dough 2 to 3 times to seal and create a smooth round. Check bottom of round to make sure it is sealed, pinching dough together if needed, before placing on prepared pan. Repeat with remaining dough and remaining almond cream, and place at least 3 inches apart on prepared pans. Using sharp scissors, make 5 equidistant $1 / 2$-inch-deep cuts around sides of each bun. Cover and let rise in a warm, draft-free place ( $75^{\circ} \mathrm{F} / 24^{\circ} \mathrm{C}$ ) until puffed and holds an indentation when pressed, 30 to 45 minutes.
4. Preheat oven to $350^{\circ} \mathrm{F}\left(180^{\circ} \mathrm{C}\right)$.
5. In a small bowl, whisk together egg and milk. Brush top and sides of dough with egg wash. Place almonds in center of each bun.
6. Bake until golden brown and an instant-read thermometer inserted in center registers $190^{\circ} \mathrm{F}\left(88^{\circ} \mathrm{C}\right)$, about 18 minutes. Let cool on pan for 5 minutes. Serve warm or at room temperature.

## SCALLION ROPES

Makes 6 ropes
These Scallion Ropes are incredibly soft and airy with swirls of fragrant garlic and flecked with scallions, also called green onions, throughout the twisted ropes. Sesame seeds and sea salt are a wonderful textural contrast to the supple dough.

1 cup ( 85 grams) lightly packed finely sliced scallion (green onion)
$11 / 2$ tablespoons ( 21 grams) sesame oil
1 teaspoon (4 grams) minced garlic
$3 / 4$ teaspoon crushed red pepper (optional)
$1 / 2$ teaspoon ( 1.5 grams) kosher salt
Milk Bread Dough (recipe precedes)
1 large egg (50 grams), room temperature
1 tablespoon ( 15 grams) whole milk
1 teaspoon (3 grams) white sesame seeds
1 teaspoon (3 grams) black sesame seeds
1 teaspoon (3 grams) flaked sea salt

1. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper.
2. In a small bowl, stir together scallion, sesame oil, garlic, red pepper (if using), and kosher salt.
3. Punch down Milk Bread Dough, and let stand for 10 minutes. On a very lightly floured surface, divide dough into 6 portions (about 120 grams each). On a very lightly floured surface, roll 1 portion into a $10 \times 5$-inch oval. (Keep remaining dough covered with plastic wrap to prevent it from drying out.) Spread about $1 \frac{1}{2}$ tablespoons ( 19 grams) scallion mixture onto dough, leaving a $1 / 2$-inch border on all sides. Starting with one long side, roll up dough, jelly roll style, pinching seam and ends well to seal. Place dough horizontally in front of you. Place hands flat on each end of rope, and simultaneously roll your left hand up and your right hand down 2 to 3 times until dough twists into a tight rope. Lift rope by holding at both ends, and it will naturally start twisting around itself. Twist rope twice, and pinch and tuck ends as you place on prepared pan. Repeat with remaining dough and remaining scallion mixture, and place about 3 inches apart on prepared
pan. Cover and let rise in a warm, draft-free place ( $75^{\circ} \mathrm{F} / 24^{\circ} \mathrm{C}$ ) until puffed and holds an indentation when pressed, 30 to 45 minutes.
4. Preheat oven to $350^{\circ} \mathrm{F}\left(180^{\circ} \mathrm{C}\right)$.
5. In a small bowl, whisk together egg and milk.
6. In another small bowl, stir together all sesame seeds and sea salt. Brush top and sides of dough with egg wash. Generously sprinkle sesame seed mixture onto ropes.
7. Bake until golden brown and an instant-read thermometer inserted in center registers $190^{\circ} \mathrm{F}\left(88^{\circ} \mathrm{C}\right)$, about 25 minutes. Let cool on pan for 5 minutes. Serve warm or at room temperature.

## TRUST IN THE TANGZHONG

Keep a close eye on the temperature while making the Tanzhong - a white roux made of milk and flour. If it overcooks, it loses its springiness and the moisture it adds to the Milk Bread Dough.


1. In a small saucepan, whisk together milk and flour. Cook over medium-low heat, whisking constantly, until thickened, whisk leaves lines on bottom of pan, and an instant-read thermometer registers $150^{\circ} \mathrm{F}\left(66^{\circ} \mathrm{C}\right)$. (Mixture will look like mashed potatoes.) Transfer to a small bowl, and let cool until an instant-read thermometer registers $130^{\circ} \mathrm{F}\left(54^{\circ} \mathrm{C}\right)$ or until room temperature. When making the Tangzhong, a digital thermometer can precisely measure when the starch in the flour gelatinizes. (If you don't have a thermometer, you will know when the Tangzhong is ready by its thickness. It will resemble mashed potatoes.) The gelatinized starch in the Tangzhong creates a softer crumb and gives the bread a longer shelf life.

## TIME TO SCALD

Heating the milk to just the right temperature ensures the dough is warm enough for the perfect first rise but not so hot that it will kill the yeast


1. In a small saucepan, heat milk over medium heat until scalding. (An instant-read thermometer should register $180^{\circ} \mathrm{F} / 82^{\circ} \mathrm{C}$.) Let cool until an instant-read thermometer registers $110^{\circ} \mathrm{F}\left(43^{\circ} \mathrm{C}\right)$ to $115^{\circ} \mathrm{F}\left(46^{\circ} \mathrm{C}\right)$. Don't skip this step! Scalding milk weakens the whey protein in it, allowing the yeast to do its job! Whey protein can weaken gluten and prevent the dough from rising properly.
2. In a small bowl, whisk together warm milk, 1 teaspoon ( 4 grams) sugar, and yeast. Let stand until foamy, 5 to 10 minutes. This step, also known as "blooming" the yeast, is a simple way to dissolve your yeast and make sure it is active.

## TAKING SHAPE

It's time to combine all of the Tangzhong with the rest of the milk bread ingredients as we begin the dough-making process


1. In the bowl of a stand mixer, whisk together $11 / 2$ cups ( 190 grams) flour, salt, and remaining 3 tablespoons plus 2 teaspoons ( 44 grams) sugar by hand. Add warm yeast mixture, Tangzhong, and egg; using the paddle attachment, beat at low speed until well combined. With mixer on low speed, gradually add 1 cup ( 127 grams) flour, beating just until a shaggy dough comes together and stopping to scrape sides of bowl. Adding the flour in two additions ensures all the ingredients are evenly incorporated into the dough.

## THE KNEAD

Allowing the stand mixer to do the kneading is key to getting the perfect dough consistency


1. Switch to the dough hook attachment. Beat at low speed until dough is tacky, elastic, and slightly smooth, about 8 minutes; add up to remaining $1 / 4$ cup ( 32 grams) flour, 1 tablespoon ( 8 grams) at a time, if dough is too sticky. Add butter, 1 tablespoon ( 14 grams) at a time, beating until combined after each addition (about 5 minutes total). Scrape sides of bowl and dough hook. Beat until dough is completely smooth and passes the windowpane test, about 12 minutes. (See Note.) Turn out dough onto a clean surface, and shape into a smooth round. As the butter is incorporated, friction and heat from the mixer will warm it, so the butter mustn't be too warm, as it could melt and separate from the dough. On the other hand, if the butter is too cold, it won't incorporate smoothly into the dough, and pieces of butter will remain even after a long mixing time.
2. Lightly oil a large bowl. Place dough in bowl, turning to grease top. Cover and let rise in a warm, draft-free place ( $75^{\circ} \mathrm{F} / 24^{\circ} \mathrm{C}$ ) until doubled in size, 45 minutes to 1 hour.

## SHAPE \& BAKE: TRADITIONAL LOAF



1. Spray a $9 \times 5$-inch loaf pan with cooking spray.
2. Punch down Milk Bread Dough, and let stand for 10 minutes. Divide dough into 3 portions (about 243 grams each). On a very lightly floured surface, roll 1 portion into a $10 \times 6$-inch oval. (Keep remaining dough covered with plastic wrap to prevent it from drying out.) Fold each long side over toward center by about $1 / 2 \mathrm{inch}$. Using a rolling pin, flatten dough, making sure it is 5 inches wide. Starting with one short side, roll up dough into a log, pinching seam to seal. (Be careful not to roll up dough too tight.) Place, seam side down, in center of prepared pan. Repeat with remaining dough, placing equidistant between center dough and sides of pan. Cover and let rise in a warm, draft-free place ( $75^{\circ} \mathrm{F} / 24^{\circ} \mathrm{C}$ ) until puffed and holds an indentation when pressed, about 45 minutes.
3. Preheat oven to $350^{\circ} \mathrm{F}\left(180^{\circ} \mathrm{C}\right)$.
4. In a small bowl, whisk together egg and remaining 1 tablespoon ( 15 grams) milk. Brush top of dough with egg wash. The egg wash gives the loaf a shiny, dark gold crust.
5. Bake until an instant-read thermometer inserted in center registers $190^{\circ} \mathrm{F}\left(88^{\circ} \mathrm{C}\right)$, about 40 minutes, covering with foil halfway through baking. Let cool in pan for 5 minutes. Remove from pan, and let cool completely on a wire rack before slicing.

## SHAPE \& BAKE: ALMOND CREAM BUNS



1. Line 2 rimless baking sheets with parchment paper.
2. In a medium bowl, beat butter and sugar with a hand mixer fitted with beater attachments at medium speed until fluffy, about 2 minutes. Add egg white and almond extract, and beat until combined. Beat in almond meal, flour, and salt until well combined. This almond cream, which is also called frangipane, has a nutty, sweet taste and adds a richness and wonderful texture contrast to the soft milk bread.
3. Punch down Milk Bread Dough, and turn out onto a very lightly floured surface. Divide dough into 12 portions (about 60 grams). Shape each portion into a smooth ball; cover, and let stand for 5 to 10 minutes.
4. On a clean surface, using a floured rolling pin, roll 1 dough ball into a 3 -inch disk. Using the rolling pin or your fingers, press on outer edges to make them thinner than center. (Final size should be $33 / 4$ inches wide.) Place 1 rounded tablespoon ( 18 grams) almond cream in center of disk. Pinch edges up and around filling until well-sealed. Place dough, seam side down, on work surface. Gently cup with your hand, and rotate dough 2 to 3 times to seal and create a smooth round. Check bottom of round to make sure it is sealed, pinching dough together if needed, before placing on prepared pan. Repeat with remaining dough and remaining almond cream, and place at least 3 inches apart on prepared pans. Using sharp scissors, make 5 equidistant $1 / 2$-inch cuts around sides of each bun. Cover and let rise in a warm, draft-free place $\left(75^{\circ} \mathrm{F} / 24^{\circ} \mathrm{C}\right.$ ) until puffed and holds an indentation when pressed, 30 to 45 minutes.
5. Preheat oven to $350^{\circ} \mathrm{F}\left(180^{\circ} \mathrm{C}\right)$.
6. In a small bowl, whisk together egg and milk. Brush top and sides of dough with egg wash. Place almonds in center of each bun.
7. Bake until golden brown and an instant-read thermometer inserted in center registers $190^{\circ} \mathrm{F}\left(88^{\circ} \mathrm{C}\right)$, about 18 minutes. Let cool on pan for 5 minutes. Serve warm or at room temperature.

# SHAPE \& BAKE: SCALLION ROPES 



1. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper.
2. In a small bowl, stir together scallion, sesame oil, garlic, red pepper (if using), and kosher salt.
3. Punch down Milk Bread Dough, and let stand for 10 minutes. On a very lightly floured surface, divide dough into 6 portions (about 120 grams each). On a very lightly floured surface, roll 1 portion into a $10 \times 5$-inch oval. (Keep remaining dough covered with plastic wrap to prevent it from drying out.) Spread about $1 \frac{1}{2}$ tablespoons (19 grams) scallion mixture onto dough, leaving a $1 / 2$-inch border on all sides. Starting with one long side, roll up dough, jelly roll style, pinching seam and ends well to seal. Place dough horizontally in front of you. Place hands flat on each end of rope, and simultaneously roll your left hand up and your right hand down 2 to 3 times until dough twists into a tight rope. Lift rope by holding at both ends, and it will naturally start twisting around itself. Twist rope twice, and pinch and tuck ends as you place on prepared pan. Repeat with remaining dough and remaining scallion mixture, and place about 3 inches apart on prepared pan. Cover and let rise in a warm, draft-free place ( $75^{\circ} \mathrm{F} / 24^{\circ} \mathrm{C}$ ) until puffed and holds an indentation when pressed, 30 to 45 minutes. If there's too much flour on the dough and it will not pinch to seal, run your fingers along the seam with a little bit of water.
4. Preheat oven to $350^{\circ} \mathrm{F}\left(180^{\circ} \mathrm{C}\right)$.
5. In a small bowl, whisk together egg and milk.
6. In another small bowl, stir together all sesame seeds and sea salt. Brush top and sides of dough with egg wash. Generously sprinkle sesame seed mixture onto ropes.
7. Bake until golden brown and an instant-read thermometer inserted in center registers $190^{\circ} \mathrm{F}\left(88^{\circ} \mathrm{C}\right)$, about 25 minutes. Let cool on pan for 5 minutes. Serve warm or at room temperature.
