

Sweet Solution

by Angie

Any man who eats dessert is not drinking enough.

- Ernest Hemingway

Dessert! Catherine had to have a dessert ... and she was dying for a real, homemade cinnamon bun!

There was a recipe she remembered, from a University women's group of all places, a recipe for a bread machine. The recipe was low fat, using no butter to spread, only applesauce. At her height, every pound she gained was visible, so she exercised prudence ... where practical.

The recipe only made eight buns, just enough for she and Vincent she thought, her mouth already watering in anticipation.

As it happened, their brownstone's old apple tree had produced an excess of fruit, and Catherine had wracked her brain for something to do with them all. They had given bushels to William – and the pies he had made were divine. She had made a lot of applesauce, and frozen it in portion-sized bags. Now, with the scent of almost-past-it apples in a basket in the basement to remind her, she decided she had better use them quickly – and for something different.

She dragged out the bread machine from where it was stored at the back of her pantry and regarded it morosely, as she wiped off the accumulated dust. It hadn't been used in years. She had bought it a long time ago, when everyone was 'into' home made bread, and she had used it a lot then. But then she had begun to eat below, and William made such good bread that she had given up trying to outdo ... or even equal him. So for a long time the machine had been used for pretzel dough only – and that was only a small part of the task needed for that recipe. She definitely wasn't up to *that* today.

Catherine wanted something simpler, much simpler. At least the machine took the odious task of kneading out of her hands. All that remained for the cinnamon buns was to roll the dough out, spread it with an applesauce mixture, and let it rise once more before baking. And this time she would add some pecans. Much better than raisins, she decided.

She had to dig out the instruction book to make sure she remembered the order in which to load the machine, but that turned out to be as simple as she remembered. She did as directed and started it on the dough cycle.

Pleased with herself, she focused on making the applesauce, cutting up the remainder of the apples, throwing out any parts that were obviously not good, and filling a pan. She added the other ingredients. It was coming back to her. She remembered that the spreading process was simplified by doing it all in one operation. Well, good. She left the applesauce simmering, so that it would be a nice, thick consistency when the dough was done. Then she sat down to read the newspaper.

The process took longer than she remembered, but she did the tasks as directed and had the cinnamon buns in the oven cooking in due course. The smell was already driving her crazy. She watched the clock, checked the buns to make sure they sounded hollow, then moved the pan onto a cooling rack on the counter.



A few minutes later, she removed them from the pan and let them sit on a platter, still joined together.

Catherine was regarding them with pride when a pair of arms encircled her from the rear. She leaned back into Vincent's embrace.

"Whatever came over you, my love?" he whispered into her ear and nuzzled it. Then he leaned past her to give an appreciative sniff at the cinnamon buns, and she planted a kiss on the side of his face.

"I wanted something sweet and decadent, but not too much so," she told him, turning in his arms so she could hug him.

"All ours?" he asked.

"Oh yes, my love," she assured him. "There's not enough to share, but enough to make us remember them with pleasure, and not to want them again for a long while."

"I like that first part," Vincent murmured. "But the second part is impossible ... for this or anything else. As Hemingway said ... and I paraphrase ... 'dessert without drink first is not enough'. I wish to drink ... of *you* ... first."

Catherine looked up into his eyes and saw the passion blazing there. The cinnamon buns could wait, she decided. But not too long

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