



Chris Marshall of Zabouca Breads prepares his special starter for the sourdough blend he uses to create his special hot cross buns.

# THE SLOW BAKER



Marshall is careful not to lose the chill of the butter in his cooking. To prepare this batch of raw butter, he pounds it until it's pliable.



Marshall and Jamal Williams prepare rolls of flour for sourdough hot cross buns. Each wad of dough is weighed 2.8 ounces, which will blossom into a three-inch bun that fits 35 to a baking tray.

Story and photos  
**MARK LYNDERSAY**

**Zabouca Breads, the baking craft shop of Chris Marshall, has been operating in T&T for the last three years. Marshall made the move to his location on Tragarete Road two years ago when the business clearly began to outgrow his home at Flagstaff.**

"There was an accident early one morning with a customer," he recalls, "another Easter again, and I realised I had to make a move and find a place."

He'd begun his adventures in cooking while working as a mechanical engineer in the US, when his wife sent him off to a French culinary school.

"That was it," he remembers. "Now, my wife and kids are in Grenada and I'm here, working."

"Easter," he repeats, shaking his head.

He's at the bakery with new assistant Jamal Williams, a Hotel School student before dawn on the Thursday before the long Easter weekend and it's

becoming clear that their hot cross buns won't meet demand even as they work on this third and final batch.

At least part of the reason is time. "We don't just put some water and flour and icing and push some buns out!"

What begins as flour and almost a dozen ingredients mixed and sprinkled and massaged together into an intricate sourdough mix eventually takes almost six hours to prepare.

Long after Zabouca opens its doors, customers appear, vaguely hopeful that their buns might be ready but already resigned to waiting.

On my way out the door, I take a tentative bite into the hot bun and it's clear what the fuss is all about.

The bread may take long to prepare, but it's worth waiting for. It's rich and tasty with a hint of spiciness that demands a certain amount of relish with each chew.

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The special flavour of Chris Marshall's baking comes from the local ingredients he brings to his kitchen, including this candied orange peel he prepares himself.



As dawn rises, the bakers are fully into the task of preparing hot cross buns, breads and the shop's signature coconut ginger scones.



There is no shortage of mixers and blenders but when Marshall wants to really work ingredients together, he plunges in with his hands.

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The final buns, with the cross masked into them, are glazed after coming out of the oven.

**"We don't just put some water and flour and icing and push some buns out"**  
—Chris Marshall of the baking craft shop Zabouca Breads



Jamal Williams places trays of the shop's gluten free buns into an oven.



Marshall paints the raw dough of buns with a flour and sugar mixture that will be baked into the final treat.

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