



The Exciting World of Bread

by Pascale Duguay

Who needs the Pillsbury Dough Boy? You can make your own yummy bread from scratch!

Want to make breakfast, lunch and supper more exciting?

How about baking your own bread? "It takes too long," you say? Guess what. Bread dough doesn't take any more time to prepare than a cake. The part that does take more time is the rising, but you don't have to sit and watch the dough rise. Leave your dough alone for a couple of hours and do other things.

"I've never baked anything! There's no way I can do it," you say? I believe you can! Unlike a cake, bread won't flop down if you open the oven door halfway through baking or if a younger sibling jumps around the stove.

Not convinced yet? Here are seven excellent reasons why you should try baking your own bread.

1. It's easy.
2. It's fun.
3. You don't need special equipment. (Forget the expensive bread machine.)
4. It tastes a million times better than supermarket bread.
5. It smells great. (Nothing equals the aroma of baking bread.)
6. It takes only a few minutes to mix.
7. It's good for you. (Be sure to tell Mom and Dad.)

If you try the following recipe, I guarantee you one thing: You'll never eat a boring sandwich again.

Basic (Yet Wonderfully Fabulous) Bread Recipe

In a small bowl, mix until dissolved:
1 cup lukewarm water
1 teaspoon sugar

Over the mixture, sprinkle:
1 tablespoon yeast (not the instant kind)

Let stand 10 minutes until the yeast has risen to the surface.

Meanwhile, in a large bowl, mix the following together until the solids are dissolved:

2 cups lukewarm water
1/2 cup sugar
1 tablespoon salt
1/2 cup oil or melted butter or margarine

When yeast mixture is ready, stir; then add it to the large bowl. Next, add and mix in:

5 cups whole wheat flour

When all the flour is absorbed, add and mix in:

2 cups all-purpose flour

Now comes the fun part—kneading! If your bowl is large enough, you can knead the dough directly in the bowl. If not, place the dough on a well-floured surface, and shape it into a ball, flattening it somewhat. Grab the edge furthest from you, and fold it towards you. Press the dough down with the heels of your palms. Give the dough a quarter turn and repeat. Add one to two cups all-purpose flour as you knead. Keep kneading dough for five to 10 minutes until it feels smooth and elastic. Add

more flour if the dough is too sticky, or add more water if it's too dry.

When you've finished kneading, put the dough back in the bowl, and cover it with a clean towel. Place it in a warm spot. (I put dough inside the oven with the light on, and then turn the heat to 200 degrees Fahrenheit for about 30 seconds.) Let the dough rise for one to two hours—until it doubles in size.

After the dough has risen, punch it down, and knead it a couple of times to get the air bubbles out. Divide the dough into three parts, shape each one into a loaf, and place them into greased loaf pans. Let the dough rise again for about an hour. Bake at 350 degrees Fahrenheit for approximately 30 minutes, until the tops are brown. Take the loaves immediately out of the pans. If the bottoms are brown and you hear a hollow sound when you tap on the bottoms with your fingers, your bread is ready. Let the loaves cool on a rack—if you can keep everyone from gobbling them up right away.

If you prefer, you can shape some or all of the dough into balls (for sandwich rolls) and place them on greased cookie sheets. Remember, the balls will double in size, so give them enough space. These will take less time to rise and bake: approximately 30 to 45 minutes to rise and 20 minutes to bake.

There's More!

Do you like onion bread? Knead in about one cup of sautéed onions per loaf. Want raisin bread instead? Knead in about a cup of raisins per loaf. Better still, replace the two cups of lukewarm water placed in the large bowl with orange juice, then add raisins before baking, and you've got yourself orange-raisin bread.

Feel like pizza? Simply roll out part of the dough to the desired thickness and size. Prick the entire surface with a fork and bake at 400 degrees Fahrenheit for 10 minutes. The dough will rise slightly as it cooks. Take it out of the oven, slather on some tomato sauce and cover it with your favorite toppings. Pop it back in the oven for another 20 minutes, and enjoy!

The possibilities with this dough are endless. All you need is your imagination to turn your boring mealtimes into something awesome! ☺

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