

BEST Bread Ever

Original recipe credit: Connie Armstrong

Shared by: Delia Creates

Makes 2 large loaves, 3 medium loaves, or 1 large loaf and 2 mini loaves

Ingredients:

2 1/2 cups HOT water

1/3 cup oil

1/3 cup sugar/honey {I fill my cup with oil first, empty it, and then fill it with honey so it doesn't stick to the cup}

1 TBSP salt

3/4 cup flour and about 5-7 cups of flour (divided) *I give flour notes and tips at the end.

1 1/2 TBSP yeast (any kind)

Spray oil

1. Whisk together in large bowl: Water, oil, sugar/honey, and salt.

2. Add: 3/4 cup flour and whisk for 30 seconds then yeast and whisk for 30 seconds more.

3. Add 2-3 cups of flour and mix together with a spoon. If using a mixer, add the rest of the flour. **The total flour should amount to about 5-7 cups--- this does not include the flour used in step 2.** Let the mixer knead the dough for about 5 minutes plus.

If mixing by hand, add the rest of the flour and mix until shaggy looking and hard to work with a spoon. Knead in the bowl a few times and then turn the dough out onto a floured counter. Knead for 5+ minutes. I try to go for 7-8 minutes if I do it by hand.

The dough should be soft but not really sticky.

4. Let rise in a clean, greased, covered bowl for about 30 minutes. You can let it rise on the counter, but it will rise nicely in the oven. Set your oven for 450 degrees for a minute or less then turn it off before placing the oven safe bowl inside.

5. When dough has risen, remove from oven and heat oven to 175 degrees.

6. Grease your bread pans and the counter with spray oil. Divide the dough.

7. Roll out the dough with a rolling pin into a long oblong shape. Roll it out until all air bubbles are gone.

8. Roll a tight cylinder, tuck the ends under or squish them and place it in a greased bread pan. Repeat with remaining dough.

9. Place loaves in warm oven {175 degrees} for about 1/2 hour or until the dough has risen to fill the pan.

Turn the oven up to 350 degrees and cook for about 30 minutes. **The bread is done when you hit the top and it sounds hollow. Don't worry about time as much as this indicator. The bread isn't done until you hear the hollow sound.** If you are worried that the crust is getting too brown, cover it lightly with a piece of foil.

10. Turn out on a wire rack and let cool completely before cutting. Smother the top of the loaves with butter if you desire.

***Tips: I used about 3 c. white wheat flour and 3-4 cups all-purpose. It takes slightly longer to raise and cook than white bread, but not much. If you use all whole wheat the rising and cooking time almost doubles. Add a bit more honey when using more wheat flour for good flavor. Bread flour and just all-purpose flour both work great as well.

*** The times I list for rising and baking are approximate. Weather, altitude, your oven, the moisture content of your flour, etc. can all affect how quickly your dough will rise and bake. Make sure that you check to see that the dough has at least doubled for the first rise, filled the pan for the second rise, and that the you hear the hollow sound to know when it is done baking. All these indicators supersede any time estimates I have given.