

Bread making- factsheet

Learning about food and having an interest in it encourages children to take an interest in the foods they eat. It also helps them to make informed decisions as consumers when they get older. This is a good foundation since it promotes food as an enjoyable part of everyday life, but also teaches that "we are what we eat", so what we eat matters for our health and well-being. Bread making is a great activity to involve children in- they love kneading the dough and if you're prepared for a bit of mess it's a great way to spend a wet Sunday afternoon together.

Many of us rely on shops for our bread but, recently, there has been a significant increase in the number of people investing in bread-making machines. It seems more and more of us are seeking to relive our memories and jog our taste-buds.

Bread-making machines are time-saving, but although they produce delicious loaves, popping all the ingredients in a machine and leaving it to get on with it, isn't quite as satisfying as making a crusty loaf of bread in the old-fashioned way.

There's nothing complicated about it but there are a few important things to remember.

- First of all, preferably, you need a warm room in which to make the dough. If you don't have that, you definitely need a warm place, such as airing cupboard, or draught-free sunny window-sill, where you can leave the dough to rise.
- Use the special bread-making flour you can buy. It's called strong or very strong flour and comes in different varieties including white, wholemeal and soft grain.
- It's important to measure everything accurately and to follow the recipe carefully. When you're experienced in bread-making, you can try varying quantities or ingredients but the first few times it's best to do as you're told!

White bread

What you need:

- 285 ml warm water
- 1½ tablespoons butter, melted
- 2 teaspoons granulated sugar
- 2 teaspoons salt
- 250 g strong white flour
- 250 g soft grain strong white flour
- 1¼ teaspoons easy bake yeast

What you do:

Put all the ingredients in a large bowl and mix thoroughly to make soft dough. Shake some flour over the working surface and turn the dough out onto it. Knead the dough for 10 minutes.

Kneading is a folding and pushing process. Fold the dough over towards you and then push it away using the heel of your hand (the bit at the bottom of your palm). Turn the dough round a quarter circle, and repeat. Fold, push, turn. Keep on doing this until the dough is smooth and not at all sticky.

Now place the dough in a greased loaf tin, cover it with a clean t-towel, and leave it in a warm place to rise (prove) until it's doubled in size.

While it's rising, which can take an hour or more, preheat the oven to 220oC, gas mark 7. When the dough has risen, brush the top with milk for a golden crust. Turn the oven down to 200oC, gas mark 6, and bake in the centre of the oven for 25- 30 minutes.

The bottom of the loaf should sound hollow when tapped – but use oven gloves to take it from the oven and to tip it out of its tin.

Allow to cool before cutting and enjoying a thick slice, spread with butter!

To make bread rolls, shape the dough and place 4 cm apart on a greased baking sheet, before proving.

To make a cottage loaf, divide the dough into two, one larger than the other. Roll both into balls. Place the smaller ball on top of the larger and press together.

To make a plaited loaf, divide the dough into three equal pieces. Roll out into sausage shapes and plait together.

For a light wholemeal loaf, follow the same method as above but use these quantities:

- 225 ml warm water
- 3 tablespoons sunflower oil
- 2 tablespoons runny honey
- 1½ tablespoons salt
- 250 g very strong white flour
- 250 g strong wholemeal flour
- 1½ teaspoons easy bake yeast