



HOME MADE BREAD

I've baked our bread a long time. It seems quick and easy now. I'll share my secrets and my basic recipe, which you can vary.

A

2 1/2 cups warm (95 to 110F) water

1 TB or one packet dry yeast

1/4 cup honey or molasses

B

2 cups white flour

1 tsp salt

1/2 cup gluten flour (optional)

C

½ cup of one or more of these...wheat germ, oat bran, flax meal, rolled oats, corn meal, quinoa, other flour
Nuts, dry fruit, more sweetener, or herbs to taste

D

5 to 7 cups wheat or white flour

Put A-list ingredients in a blender and let stand about half an hour so yeast organisms come to life and double in number, making lots of carbon dioxide bubbles.

Add B-list ingredients to the blender. Gluten flour makes a smoother texture without expensive bread flour. And it's optional.

Whiz blender for about 3 minutes. Pour the batter into a big bowl. Add C-list ingredients and mix well.

Add D-list flour until you have a stiff dough that holds its shape. Dump dough out on a floured counter, scrape out the bowl dregs and add to the loaf. With oily hands, sprinkle flour around the sticky parts and knead the dough -- roll, smash, roll, boff. Re-oil hands as needed. Add flour as needed. The pre-blending has already developed the gluten strands so in less than five minutes you should have a nice springy texture.

Pop the kneaded dough back in the bowl. Turn on the oven to 300F for 5 minutes, turn it off again, put the bowl of dough in and let it sit for an hour as the oven cools off. It will double in size.

Bring risen dough out, dump it on the floury counter, cut it in half and form two loaves. Shape them into globes or wieners to bake on a cookie sheet, or put them into oiled loaf pans. You can also turn part of the dough into a pizza crust, calzone wrap, muffins,

flat pita bread, etc. If you make loaves, slice patterns in the top of the loaves with a very sharp knife, to allow the skin to expand during the second rising. Pop the formed dough into a cool oven. Set the oven for 350F. As the oven warms up, the bread will rise again, then the yeast will die and the loaf will bake. In 50 to 60 minutes, it's done.

Let it cool a few minutes before you tear into it. Don't wrap it up until it's quite cool or it will sweat and get the outside wet.

Thanks to Barbara Shaw for this recipe from her book ["Local Pleasures: Northwest Seasonal Cooking"](#)