

The Art of (no knead) Artisan Bread

SUGGESTED EQUIPMENT:

- **Baking Stone:** Half-inch thick preferred. Williams-Sonoma lifetime guarantee from cracking.
- **Five-quart or larger, plastic container/lid:** Cambro, Rubbermaid, Tupperware
- **Broiler tray or cast iron pan:** Do not use glass. To create steam for thick crust
- **Pizza peel:** Flat (wooden) board with long handle. Can use flat cookie sheet w/no lips
- **Silicone mats or parchment paper:** Can use to bake on to (450°), must move bread to stone 2/3 through baking
- **Serrated bread knife:** Slashing high-moisture loaves before baking. Can use razor blades or French lames
- **Cooling rack:** Prevent soggy bottom crust
- **Dough scraper:** Leveling off flour, cut dough, clean up
- **Measure cups:** Avoid 2 cup for dry measure. Can distort flour quantity when using scoop-and-sweep method.
 - **Make sure liquid measure is true.** I use Pyrex glass measurers. *(Check volume and weights below.)*
- **Measuring spoons:** Seek a set with half-tablespoon measure in addition to usual suspects
- **Mixers/food processors:** Kitchen-Aid, food processors with 14-cup bowl, w/dough attachments
- **Pastry brush:** To use for egg wash, cornstarch wash, watering loaves
- **Scales:** Digital
- **Whisk:** Wire or plastic to mix dry ingredients (especially vital wheat gluten)
- **Wooden spoon:** For mixing dough, if by hand

INGREDIENTS BY WEIGHT

INGREDIENTS	VOLUME	WEIGHT (U.S. ounces)
Unbleached all-purpose flour	1 cup	5
Whole-wheat flour	1 cup	4½
Vital wheat gluten	¼ cup	1 ¾ ounces
Yeast, granulated (such as SAF)	1 Tablespoon	.37
Salt, kosher or coarse	1 Tablespoon	.55
Veg. oil (canola, olive, etc.)	½ cup	3 ¾
Water	1 cup	8

The Master Recipe: Boule (Artisan Free-Form Loaf)

Makes four (1) pound loaves. Can be easily doubled or halved.

3 cups lukewarm water

1½ tablespoons granulated yeast (2 packets)

1½ tablespoons kosher or other coarse salt. (If using regular salt, use only ¾ tablespoon.)

6½ cups unsifted, unbleached, all-purpose white flour, measured with the scoop-and-sweep method.

Cornmeal for pizza peel

MIXING AND STORING THE DOUGH

Warm the water slightly: It should feel just a little warmer than body temperature, about 100°F. Warm water will raise the dough to the right point for storage in about 2 hours. You can use cold tap water and get an identical final result; then the first rising will take 3 or even 4 hours. That won't be too great a difference, as you will only be doing this once per stored batch.

Add yeast and salt to the water. In a 5-quart bowl or, preferably, in a sealable, lidded (not airtight) plastic food container or food-grade bucket. Don't worry about getting it all to dissolve.

Mix in the flour – kneading is unnecessary: Add all the flour at once, measuring it in with dry-ingredient measuring cups, by gently scooping up flour, then sweeping the top level with a knife or spatula; don't press down into the flour as you scoop or you'll throw off the measurement by compressing. Mix with a wooden spoon, a high-capacity food processor (14-cup or larger) fitted with dough attachment, or a heavy-duty stand mixer fitted with the dough hook until the mixture is uniform. If you're hand-mixing and it becomes too difficult to incorporate all the flour with the spoon, you can reach into your mixing vessel with very wet hands and press the mixture together. Don't knead!! It isn't necessary. You're finished when everything is uniformly moist, without dry patches. This step is done in a matter of minutes, and will yield a dough that is wet and loose enough to conform to shape of its container.

Allow to rise: Cover with a lid (not airtight) that fits well to the container you're using. *Do not use screw-topped bottles or Mason jars, which could explode from the trapped gases.* Lidded plastic buckets designed for dough storage are readily available (such as Tupperware/Rubbermaid or King Arthur Flour's website or kitchen supply stores, such as Williams-Sonoma). Allow the mixture to rise at room temperature until it begins to collapse (or at least flattens on the top), approximately 2 hours, depending on the room's temperature and the initial water temperature. Longer rising times, up to about 5 hours, will not harm the result. You can use a portion of the dough any time after this period. Fully refrigerated wet dough is less sticky and is easier to work with than dough at room temperature. So, the first time you try our method, it's best to refrigerate the dough overnight (or at least 3 hours), before shaping a loaf. (I always use the overnight method.)

ON BAKING DAY

The gluten cloak: don't knead, just "cloak" and shape a loaf in 30 to 60 seconds. First, prepare a pizza peel or cookie sheet without lip, by sprinkling it liberally with cornmeal (or whatever your recipe calls for) to prevent your loaf from sticking to it when you slide it into the oven, preferably on a baking stone. Sprinkle the surface of your refrigerated dough with flour. Pull up and cut off a 1 pound (grapefruit size) piece of dough, using a serrated knife. Hold the mass of dough in your hands and add a little more flour as needed so it won't stick to your hands. Gently stretch the surface of the dough around to the bottom on all four sides, rotating the ball a quarter-turn as you go. Most of the dusting flour will fall off; it's not intended to be incorporated into the dough. The bottom of the loaf may appear to be a collection of bunched ends, but it will flatten out and adhere during resting and baking. The correctly shaped final product will be smooth and cohesive. The entire process should take no more than 30 to 60 seconds.

Rest the loaf and let it rise on a pizza peel/cookie sheet/parchment paper: Place the shaped ball on the cornmeal-covered pizza peel. (Can use Malt-O-Meal cereal or oatmeal.) Allow the loaf to rest on the peel for about 40 minutes (it doesn't need to be covered during the rest period.) Depending on the age of the dough, you may not see much rise during this period; more rising will occur during baking ("oven spring").

Thirty/forty minutes before baking, preheat the oven to 450°F, with a *baking stone placed on the middle rack.* Place an empty broiler tray or cast iron pan for holding water on lowest rack that won't interfere with the rising bread. (Give your stone and water holding pan enough space for air to circulate and heat bottom of stone.)

Dust and slash: Unless otherwise indicated in a specific recipe, dust the top of the loaf liberally with flour, which will allow the slashing knife to pass without sticking. Slash a ¼ inch-deep cross, scallop or tic-tac-toe pattern into the top, using a serrated bread knife.

Baking with steam: After a 30/40 minute preheat, you're ready to bake, even though your oven thermometer won't yet be up to full temperature. With a quick forward jerking motion of the wrist, slide the loaf off the pizza peel and onto the preheated baking stone. Quickly but carefully pour about 1 cup of hot water from the tap into the broiler tray or cast iron pan and close the oven door to trap the steam. Bake for about 30 minutes, or until the crust is nicely browned and firm to the touch. Because, you've used wet dough, there is little risk of drying out the interior, despite the dark crust. When you remove the loaf from the oven, it will audibly crackle, or "sing", when initially exposed to room temperature air. Allow to cool completely, preferably on a wire cooling rack, for best flavor, texture, and slicing. The perfect crust may initially soften, but will firm up again when cooled.

Store the remaining dough in the refrigerator in your lidded (not airtight) container and use it over the next 14 days: You'll find that even one day's storage improves the flavor and texture of your bread. This maturation continues over the 14-day storage period. Refrigerate unused dough in a lidded storage container, (again not airtight)). If you mixed your dough in this container, you've avoided some cleanup. Cut off and shape more loaves as you need them. We often have several types of dough storing in the refrigerator at once. The dough can also be frozen in 1-pound portions in an airtight container and defrosted overnight in the refrigerator prior to baking day.

STORING BREAD

Once cut, store it cut side down on a flat, nonporous surface like a plate or clean countertop. Bags will trap humidity and soften crust.

FREEZING YOUR BREAD

Before eating, thaw in plastic bag. Once thawed, place your unbagged bread in a 375°F oven for 5-10 minutes, until it begins to get firm. You may also try misting your bread with a spray bottle of water just before putting in the oven. Massaging the loaf with moist hands, also works. This helps prevent your crust from crumbling, when you cut it.

VARIATION: Herb Bread

This simple recipe shows off the versatility of this approach. Herb-scented breads are great favorites for appetizers and snacks.

- Follow the directions for the Boule dough and add 1 teaspoon dried thyme leaves (2 teaspoons fresh) and ½ teaspoon dried rosemary leaves (1 teaspoon fresh) to the water mixture.
- Add dried fruit, nuts, seeds, cheese, chocolate chips

FREEZE FLOURS, YEASTS, NUTS

LIGHT WHOLE WHEAT BREAD

3 cups lukewarm water
5 cups AP flour
1½ cups whole wheat flour
1½ Tablespoons instant yeast (as in SAF Instant)
¾ Tablespoon regular salt

Variations with Light Whole Wheat Bread

Add to above recipe:

½ cup cracked wheat
½ cup raisins or dried cherries (can use any dried small fruit)

100% WHOLE WHEAT BREAD

7 cups whole wheat flour
1½ Tablespoons instant yeast (as in SAF Instant) or 2 packets
1 Tablespoon kosher or coarse salt (can use ¾ Tablespoon regular salt)
¼ cup vital wheat gluten (located in the flour aisle)
3¾ cups lukewarm water

Vital Wheat Gluten is added to give the dough a better rise. Make sure vital wheat gluten is mixed well with flour or you will have it clump and have uneven product.

LIMPA (Scandinavian comfort bread)

- 3 cups lukewarm water
- 1½ Tablespoons granulated yeast
- 1½ Tablespoons coarse salt
- ½ cup honey
- ½ teaspoon ground anise seed
- 1 teaspoon ground cardamom
- 1½ teaspoons orange zest
- 1 cup rye flour
- 5½ cups unbleached all-purpose flour
- Cornstarch wash: (Blend ½ teaspoon cornstarch and ½ cup water. Microwave or boil until appears glossy.)
 - Before baking, finish loaf by slashing, painting with cornstarch wash and sprinkling with:
 - ¼ teaspoon ground anise seed
 - ¼ teaspoon ground cardamom
 - 1½ teaspoon sugar

BAUGETTE

- 1 pound (grapefruit-size portion) Boule dough
- Parchment Paper
- 1. Preheat oven/baking stone/broiler tray to 450°.
- 2. Dust dough and cut off 1-pound piece. Cloak and stretch into elongate to form about a 2 inch diameter. Rest dough on parchment paper. Rest 20 minutes.
- 3. Paint water on baguette and slash diagonally across loaf with serrated knife. (Can dust with flour also.)
- 4. Slide baguette/parchment paper onto hot stone. Pour 1 cup water into broiler pan.
- 5. Bake for 25 minutes. Remove loaf from paper after 15 minutes and finish 10 minutes on hot stone.
- 6. Cool on rack.

AMAZE YOUR FRIENDS WITH THE “6-3-3-13” RULE:

If you want to store enough for (8) one-pound loaves, here’s a simple mnemonic for the recipe: 6, 3, 3, 13

- 6 cups water**
- 3 Tablespoons salt**
- 3 Tablespoons yeast**
- 13 cups flour**

Store in a 10-quart lidded container. That’s it. Amaze your friends without a recipe.

Sources for bread-baking products:

- Bob’s Red Mill: www.bobsredmill.com 800-349-2173
- Hodgson Mill: www.hodgsonmill.com 800-347-0105
- King Arthur Flour: www.kingarthurfour.com/shop 800-827-6836
- Penzeys Spices: www.penzeys.com 800-741-7787
- Tupperware: www.tupperware.com 800-366-3800
- Williams-Sonoma: www.williams-sonoma.com 877-812-6235

Recipes and information taken from

- **Artisan Bread in Five Minutes a Day**
- **Healthy Bread in Five Minutes a Day**

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