

Bread, Simple Crusty

Yield: 4 loaves

Source: New York Times, Nov. 21, 2007 Adapted from "Artisan Bread in Five Minutes a Day" by Jeff Hertzberg and Zoe Francois.

Ingredients

- 1½ packages Yeast
- 1½ Kosher Salt
- 6½ cups Unbleached, All-Purpose Flour, more for dusting
- Cornmeal

Method

1. TIME: About 45 minutes plus about 3 hours resting and rising.
2. In a large bowl or plastic container, mix yeast and salt into 3 cups lukewarm water (about 100 degrees). Stir in flour, mixing until there are no dry patches. Dough will be quite loose. Cover, but not with an airtight lid. Let dough rise at room temperature 2 hours (or up to 5 hours).
3. Bake at this point or refrigerate, covered, for as long as two weeks. When ready to bake, sprinkle a little flour on dough and cut off a grapefruit-sized with serrated knife. Turn dough in hands to lightly stretch surface, creating a rounded top and a lumpy bottom. Put dough on pizza peel sprinkled with cornmeal; let rest 40 minutes. Repeat with remaining dough or refrigerate it.
4. Place broiler pan on bottom of oven. Place baking stone on middle rack and turn oven to 450 degrees; heat stone at that temperature for 20 minutes.
5. Dust dough with flour, slash top with serrated or very sharp knife three times. Slide onto stone. Pour one cup hot water into broiler pan and shut oven quickly to trap steam. (F. sprays top of loaf instead.) Bake until well browned, about 30 minutes. Cool completely. (F. cooks it a bit longer. Also says crust is better after it is warmed the 2nd day).

Notes

Variation: If not using a stone, stretch the rounded dough into an oval and place in a greased, nonstick loaf pan. Let rest 40 minutes if fresh, an extra hour if refrigerated. Heat oven to 450°F for 5 minutes. Place pan on middle rack.

For pita: Take very small balls and roll thin. Bake.

Fry bread: Take a smallish ball, pull into a circle, put a bit of olive oil in a frying pan and fry on both sides, adding salt, cheese, oregano, whatever.

For pizza: Do like fry bread, only a big circle. Put toppings on and bake in the oven approximately 8 minutes at 500°F. Put the dough on a pizza stone which has been heated for quite a while.