

Homemade Whole Wheat Bread Tutorial

From Mel's Kitchen Café
www.melskitchencafe.com

For the purposes of the picture tutorial, I used this whole wheat bread recipe:

12-15 cups wheat flour
2 tablespoons instant yeast
1/2 cup vital wheat gluten
1 (1000 mg) vitamin c pill, crushed (optional, but it helps with gluten development)
6 1/2 cups very warm water
2/3 cup oil
2/3 cup honey or sugar
2 tablespoons salt

In a large bowl (or stand mixer, like the almighty Bosch), mix together 5 cups of wheat flour, yeast, vital wheat gluten and vitamin c. Add the warm water and mix well. Add the oil and honey (or sugar) and mix again. Cover the bowl and let the mixture sit for 10 minutes.

Add the salt and start the mixer (or mix by hand), adding the remaining flour until the dough pulls away from the sides of the bowl to form a soft dough. You may not need to add all of the flour! Judge the dough by feel not by the amount of flour you've used. It might be slightly sticky but should hold it's shape. Let the dough knead for 7 minutes in the stand mixer (or 15 minutes by hand).

Form into 5 loaves (for the 8 1/2 X 4-inch loaf pans) and place into greased bread pans. Let rise until the bread is 2 inches above the top of the bread pan. Bake at 350 degrees for 25 minutes or alternately, let the bread rise 1 inch above the top of the pans and then put the bread in a cold oven and turn the oven on to 350 degrees and bake the bread for 32 minutes.

Mixing and Kneading



Add five cups wheat flour to your mixer or large bowl.



Add the vital wheat gluten.



And the yeast.



Pour in the hot water.



Add the honey and oil. I like to use the same measuring cup - doing the oil first and then measuring the honey so it slides right out.



Mix well.



Cover the bowl and let the mixture sponge for 10-15 minutes.



The mixture should be noticeably risen and puffy.



Add the salt and mix.



Start the mixer and add flour gradually until a soft dough is formed.



It is going to look sticky. That's ok as long as it starts to clear the sides of the bowl. In this picture, I've already added all the flour I want to the dough. It will come together more as it kneads.



This dough has been mixing/kneading for about 3 minutes. Notice how the sides of the bowl are clean. That's the key to not overflouring the dough. Sticky but not too sticky. Get it?



The dough has been kneading for about seven minutes and is done. You can see it still clings to the dough hook but it looks much more combined and cohesive than when it first started mixing.



Grabbing a chunk of dough leaves me with extremely sticky fingers. You might think it is way too sticky to form into loaves.



But as I start pushing it around, the dough can form a sticky ball and once it is turned out on a greased countertop, it will come together in an unbelievably soft and tender loaf.

Weighing and Shaping



Before turning out the dough, I grease the bread pans and stack them up.



And I get out the kitchen scale and bench scraper (you can use a knife).



Grease the countertop with cooking spray.



Turn out the dough onto the greased counter. It will be sticky.



A couple of turns on the greased counter and it will come together and be less sticky.



Cut the dough into five chunks. I eyeball it and weigh it to make sure they are all the same.



Each loaf of my dough usually comes out to just about one pound, ten ounces. Any more than that and I know I've overfloured my dough.



The blobs of dough are ready for shaping.



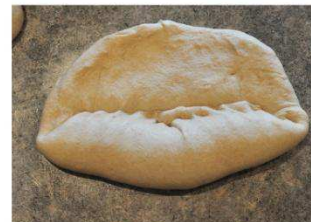
One by one, gently flatten the dough into a thick disc.



Flatten it a little thinner - about an inch or two longer than the bread pan.



Start rolling up the bottom edge, kind of like you would with cinnamon rolls, flattening each seam with the palm of your hand.



Keep rolling and pinching the seam.



About the second roll, start folding in the edges as you go.



Keep a'going.



Roll and fold in the sides until the loaf is completely rolled up.



Pinch the final seam.



Pinch it until well sealed.



By the time the loaf is formed, it should be the size of the bread pan.

Rising and Baking



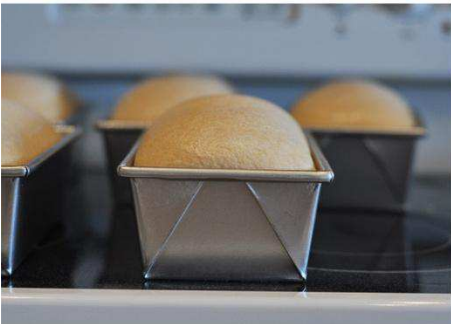
Place each loaf in the greased bread pans.



Five loaves of bread, ready to rise!



Cover the rising loaves with greased plastic wrap.



Let the bread rise until it is about 1 to 2 inches above the rim of the bread pan.



Place the bread in a cold oven. I remove the top rack so that the bread browns evenly.



Bake the bread for 30-32 minutes until the bread is browned and the bread is baked through.



Immediately turn out the bread onto a cooling rack.



Rub the tops of the bread with butter.



Let it cool completely before bagging and freezing (or eating!).