

Creative Loaf Bread

2-3 loaves

3 cups warm water
2 Tbsp. dry yeast (2 packages)
¼ cup sugar
9-10 cups flour
1 Tbsp. salt
5 Tbsp oil

1 loaf

1 cup warm water
1 Tbsp dry yeast
1 Tbsp sugar
3-3 ½ cups flour
1 Tsp. salt
2 Tbsp. oil

Combine water, yeast and sugar in a large mixing bowl. Let stand until the yeast is dissolved and beginning to bubble. Add half of the flour and the salt. Mix well with a spoon. Add remaining flour and stir. The mixture should be **very dry**. Add more flour if it is not dry. Pour the oil over the dough and knead with your hand, in the bowl, until oil is absorbed and a ball is formed. Let rise until doubled, about 20-30 minutes. Shape into 2 loaves and place in greased pans. Cover and let rise until doubled again. Bake at 375 degrees for 30 minutes or until the loaves sound hollow when tapped on the bottom.

Variations: Let your imagination roll!

Water: Use part milk or replace part of the liquid with an egg for a richer bread. You may use chicken or beef broth for a flavored bread.

Flour: Use up to half whole wheat flour (you may use all whole wheat for a heavier bread and longer raising time); replace 2 cups flour with oatmeal; use part cornmeal, wheat germ, bran, rye, etc. (limit rye flour to 1-2 cups). Or, use up some breakfast cereal!

Sugar: Use brown sugar, honey, molasses, or even some jam or left over frosting.

Additions: (Add them with the first addition of flour.)

Herbs and spices

Raisins

Grated cheese

Sesame, pumpkin or sunflower seeds

Nuts

Shaping:

1. Make a traditional loaf in a 9x5 pan
2. Shape a round or long loaf and bake on a cookie sheet.
3. Divide the dough for each loaf into three and make a braid.
4. Roll the dough into a rectangle, butter it, sprinkle with cinnamon sugar, roll up and bake as a loaf.
5. Or, cut that roll in #4 into one-inch sections and bake them as cinnamon rolls (especially good if you have added an egg to the bread and make it a bit sweeter).
6. Brush the top of the loaf with some egg white or milk and sprinkle with poppy seeds, sesame seeds, etc.