

Pumpkin Boule with Dried Cranberries & Pepitas

From the blog For Love of the Table

285 g. warm water (see notes)
165 g. pumpkin purée/solid pack pumpkin
4 g. (1 1/4 t.) instant or active dry yeast
500 g. bread flour
25 g olive oil
10 g (1 1/2 t.) fine salt
1/8 t. each cinnamon, nutmeg, and ginger
Olive oil for folding
85 g. pepitas, lightly toasted (see notes)
125 g. raisins (left whole, or coarsely chopped)

Place the water in a large mixing bowl and whisk in the pumpkin. Sprinkle the yeast over this mixture and whisk in. If you are using active dry yeast, wait a minute or two for the yeast to soften (instant yeast will dissolve “instantly”). Add the flour, olive oil, salt and spices (in that order) and mix until you have a homogenous mass. (A Danish dough whisk is my new favorite tool for this initial mixing—but if you don’t have one, a rubber spatula or wooden spoon is fine—just remember to scrape all the dough off of your tool and back into the bowl—you don’t want to waste/lose any dough.) Using a rounded bowl scraper, scrape down the sides/clean the bowl so that you have a nice, neat mass of dough. Cover with plastic wrap and let rest for 1 1/4 hour.

After an hour and a quarter, execute the first fold, incorporating the pepitas and raisins at the same time: Drizzle a small amount of olive oil on a sheet pan and spread with your hands (or a brush) so that the dough won’t stick. Scrape the dough in one mass onto the oiled sheet and with lightly oiled hands/fingertips, nudge the dough out into a large rectangle. (Only stretch as much as the dough will allow without tearing.) Scatter two-thirds of the raisins and two-thirds of the pepitas over the bottom two-thirds of the rectangle. Starting with the portion of the dough without any pepitas or raisins, fold the dough in thirds as if you were folding a letter to put it in an envelope. Rotate the dough 90° and repeat this letter/envelope fold with the remaining third of the pepitas and raisins (spreading out the dough as much as it will allow and placing the raisins and pepitas only on the lower two-thirds of the dough). When you are done you will have a square-ish ball of dough with all of the raisins and pepitas encased inside. Place the dough back in its bowl and cover again with plastic wrap.

After 45 minutes, scrape the dough back out onto the oiled sheet and give it another two letter/envelope-style folds exactly as before (only this time you obviously won’t be adding anything to the dough). Return to the bowl and let it remain at room temperature until almost doubled—about an hour. Transfer to the refrigerator to slow down the fermentation and allow the flavor to develop overnight.

The next day, take the dough out of the fridge (it will have more than doubled) and scrape it onto a lightly floured counter. Give it a gentle pre-shape into a loose ball (in doing this, you will effectively deflate the dough—but don't aggressively "punch it down" or "knock it back"—just gently form it into a round). Turn the bowl upside down over the ball of dough and let it rest on the counter for 20 to 30 minutes.

After it has had a rest, scrape most of the flour off of the counter and form the dough into a tight ball/boule by working against the counter. (If any raisins pop through the surface during this process, simply poke them back toward the interior of the loaf and pinch the dough around them—they will burn during the baking process if left exposed on the surface.) Place the loaf with the pinched side/seams down on a semolina dusted or parchment-lined (see notes) sheet pan or pizza peel. Turn the mixing bowl upside down over the dough again and let the loaf rise in a warmish spot until it is doubled (until the dough doesn't spring back—or springs back *very* slowly—when prodded with a floured finger). I often resort to sticking the peel/pan with the loaf in the oven with the light on...or with the proofing function on...when my house is very cold. The loaf should be ready to bake in about 3 hours.

A half hour before you are ready to bake, place a covered 5 quart (or thereabout) Dutch oven in your oven and preheat the oven to 475°. When ready to bake, uncover the loaf and dredge lightly (using a small sieve) with flour. Give the loaf three parallel slashes with a sharp knife or razor blade. Take the Dutch oven out of the oven (be careful...it is screaming hot), remove the lid and transfer the loaf to the pot—either by placing your open hands on either side of the loaf and scooping it up and dropping it quickly and gently into the pot...or by lifting it using the edges of the parchment paper and placing it in the pot with the parchment underneath. Put the lid back on and transfer to the oven. Immediately reduce the oven temperature to 450°. Bake for 30 minutes. Remove the lid from the Dutch oven and continue to bake until the bread reaches an internal temperature of 205°...another 15 minutes (give or take, depending on your oven).

Remove the bread from the Dutch oven and cool on a wire rack (I cool mine just by letting it sit on the "grates" of my gas stove). It should be completely cool before slicing.

Notes:

- Cinnamon and ginger in small quantities enhance yeast activity. In large quantities they have the opposite effect and retard the activity of the yeast. Furthermore, this loaf is not intended to be "spicy" or have any kind of a sweet, "pumpkin spice" flavor profile. The spices are present to add warmth...and a hint of flavor and fragrance evocative of flavors we associate with autumn. Adding extra spice will not do any favors for the yeast...or, in my opinion, the final flavor.
- Yeast thrives and is happiest in a warmish environment. When I mix up this dough, I aim for an initial dough temperature of 80 to 83 degrees. You will need to consider the temperature of the major ingredients (flour, pumpkin and water) in order to achieve this. In the fall and winter my home is cool (somewhere around 67° or less). This means my flour will be about that temperature...and the pumpkin too, if I am just opening a can. But more often than not, I make this bread when I have a portion of a can left...which means the temperature of the pumpkin will be closer to 40°. Since I want my dough to be around 80°, the only way to get

it there is by manipulating the temperature of the water. For me, this means I use hot tap water and then I take the temperature of the water after I put it in the bowl (remember, the bowl is cool too, if it has been at room temperature, and will bring down the temperature of the water). I have found that with room temperature flour...and cold pumpkin...if my water temperature in the bowl is around 115° ...that I end up with an initial dough temperature (right after mixing) of 81°. If your house is significantly warmer than mine...and if your pumpkin is at room temperature...you will need to lower the temperature of the water a bit. And if all of this is too complicated for you, just mix up your dough with warm water. As long as you don't allow your yeast to come into contact with water/liquid that is hotter than 115° you will be able to produce a nice loaf...it will just rise/prove at a different rate than mine.

- To toast the pepitas, spread them in a small baking pan and place in a 350° oven for 7 to 10 minutes—or until some are beginning to turn golden around the edges. You may also toast them in a dry skillet over moderate heat (but you must stir frequently and regularly...and constantly at the end).
- This is not a particularly wet dough and I have not had difficulty moving it from the board to the Dutch oven, but if you are worried that it might stick...or that you will have difficulty scooping it up and moving it to the pot...let it proof/rise on a square of parchment paper. Then when it comes time to transfer it to the Dutch oven, simply lift and move it using the parchment paper. It will not harm the loaf to bake it with parchment paper in the pot.
- November 2024: I didn't have quite enough pumpkin to make the full recipe. So I made exactly 80% of the recipe. If you have ever made this bread, you know it makes a very large loaf. The 80% sized loaf made a more moderately sized loaf that I found particularly appealing.

<https://www.forloveofthetable.com/2020/11/pumpkin-boule-with-dried-cranberries.html>

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