

Auberge Walnut Bread

makes 2 loaves

253 g walnut halves, divided (200 g whole walnut halves & 53 g walnut halves, finely chopped)
420 g boiling water
34 g milk powder
36 g unsalted butter
10 g salt
0.5 g powdered ginger
84 g dark honey
634 g flour, divided in
- 250 g white bread flour
- 15 g flax seed, crushed or ground
- 360 g whole wheat flour
29 g wheat germ
6 g (2 tsp) active dry yeast
milk or cream for brushing during baking

Walnuts: In the morning of the day you plan to bake the bread, spread the walnut halves in a single layer on a cookie sheet and toast them in a 200°C oven for 8-10 minutes. Set aside 200 g onto a plate to cool. Using a very sharp knife, finely chop the other 53 g.

Mixing the dough: Pour just-boiled water into a large mixing bowl. Whisk in milk powder. Immediately add butter, honey, salt and powdered ginger and whisk until the butter has melted and the honey is incorporated.

Add flours, wheat germ and finely chopped walnuts on top of one side of the large bowl and mix them. Wait for this mixture to cool down to 30°C or less. Add the yeast and start kneading.

Kneading: Knead in the bowl (or use your electric mixer's instructions for kneading) until the dough is smooth, "elastic and no longer sticky". Add more flour or water if the dough stays too wet or is too dry after 8 minutes of kneading

Proofing: Cover the bowl with a plate and allow to proof in a draft-free area (oven with only the light turned on is ideal) until the dough has doubled. Cover cookie sheets with parchment paper.

Walnuts and Shaping: Turn dough out onto a lightly floured board and divide in two. Roll each piece into a ball. Cover with a clean tea towel and allow to rest for 20 minutes. After their rest, flatten each ball into a disc and even divide the rest of the walnut halves on top, "pressing the nuts in slightly", then roll each piece of dough to form a log. Joining the ends to make a ring, place each log seam side down on the parchment paper. Cover with a tea towel and allow to rise in a draft-free area until the rings have almost doubled.

Baking: Preheat oven to 190°C. Just before putting the bread in the oven, spray the tops liberally with water. Put the bread into the oven and immediately turn the thermostat down to 180°C. After 35 minutes, brush the tops of the loaves with milk or and continue baking for about 10 more minutes until the loaves are nicely browned and have reached an internal temperature around 96°C (the bread sounds hollow when knuckle-rapped on the bottom). Remove the bread from the oven.

Allow the bread to completely cool on a footed rack before cutting into it. It's still baking inside! Of course you may want to serve warm bread: reheat it after it has cooled completely. To reheat and/or rejuvenate UNSliced bread, turn the oven to 400F for 5 minutes or so. Turn the oven OFF. Put the bread in the hot oven for ten minutes.

(based on recipes for Le Pain de Noix in Auberge of the Flowering Hearth by Roy Andries de Groot and Pane di Noci in The Italian Baker by Carol Field)

Original post can be found on my blog "Notitie van Lien" ©2016.
www.notatievanlien.blogspot.com