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Basic Bread Recipe

Six loaves 2 Tbsp. salt 2 Tbsp. yeast ½-1 cup sugar ½ cup oil 6 c. hot water 8 c. flour to start (you'll use around 16 c. total)	Two loaves 2 tsp. salt 2 tsp. yeast ¼-1/3 c. sugar 3 Tbsp. oil 2 c. hot water 3 c. flour to start (you'll use around 5-6 c. total)
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Note: water should be no hotter than 130 degrees, or it will kill the yeast. If it burns your hand, it will kill the yeast.

Mix salt, yeast, sugar, oil, water, and the first amount of flour in a bowl. Beat about two minutes with a wooden spoon. Stir in half of what's left, then mix in more until too stiff to stir. Dump out onto a floured counter and knead for 8-10 minutes, adding only enough flour to keep the dough from sticking to the counter. The dough should be smooth and elastic after kneading. (You could use a stand mixer for this instead.)

Cover with a kitchen towel or plastic grocery bag and let rise 1 to 1 ½ hours, or until doubled. Punch down and shape into loaves. Place in greased 8x4 loaf pans and let rise for about 45 minutes or until nearly doubled. Bake at 350°F for about 30 minutes or until the sides of the bread are brown. (Tip a loaf out of the pan to check.) Remove from pans and cool on a rack.

The Two Loaf recipe will make 2 dozen 2 oz. rolls (if you make basic shape rolls, closely spaced, they'll fill a 12x18 baking sheet perfectly), two dozen medium-small or 16 large cinnamon rolls (a trayful), two 8x4" loaves, OR three 1-lb. 'candy cane' loaves.

100% Whole Wheat Bread

Follow above 6 loaf recipe, using all whole wheat flour, and also add *one* of the following:

1/4 c. lecithin, 1/4 c. dough enhancer, or 1000 mg Vitamin C, crushed or dissolved in water. These improve texture and reduce coarseness. Any of the variations below can be made with whole wheat.

Oatmeal-Molasses

For 6 loaves, use 1 c. molasses in place of sugar, 3 eggs, and 2 ½ c. rolled oats. Also good using half whole wheat flour, and/or substituting 1 c. orange juice for 1 c. of the water. After shaping, mist loaf with water or brush with beaten egg white, then sprinkle top of loaf with additional rolled oats.

Or if you have leftover oatmeal from breakfast, dump it into the basic bread recipe. That's it.

Pizza

Use the basic recipe (can reduce sugar to 1/4 c.). To one loaf's worth of dough, knead in 1/4 tsp. garlic salt and 1/4 tsp. oregano if you like an herbed crust. Roll to fit a 12x18 cookie sheet oiled OR sprinkled with cornmeal. Prick all over with a fork and bake at 450°F until lightly browned. Brush with melted butter or olive oil if you like, for extra flavor and tenderness. Spread with 1 small can of tomato sauce (8 oz.), sprinkle with garlic, basil, oregano, thyme, fennel seed, etc. to taste, add toppings, and bake or broil until cheese melts. For a 12" round pizza, use 16 ounces of dough (⅔ as much as a loaf). A two-loaf batch will make two 12x18 pizzas or three 12" round ones.

Pizza Bread

Divide dough into loaves, roll one out to a 8x14" rectangle. Sprinkle with Italian seasoning (or some oregano, fennel, basil, rosemary, and garlic powder), add some pizza toppings (crumbled sausage, dried tomatoes, pepperoni, whatever you want), and top with ¼ -1/2 cup shredded cheese. Roll up so you have an 8"-long loaf, pinch the seam to seal it, and put it seam-side down in a greased bread pan. Let rise and bake, 25-30 minutes at 375°F. For more tomato flavor, eat with pizza sauce, or you can use tomato juice in place of the water in the dough recipe.

Scones or Navajo Tacos

This is a great way to use your dough if it won't rise! Pour oil 2" deep into a pan. Heat to 375°F. If you don't have a thermometer, test by dropping a bread cube into the oil. It will brown in one minute if the oil is the right temperature. Pinch off dough the size of a

golf ball (or bigger, if you like!), then flatten and stretch it to make a circle or oval about ¼- ½” thick. Carefully place it in the oil, cook for a minute or two until the bottom side is browned and the scone has puffed. Flip it over and cook until the reverse side is golden. Drain on paper towels. Serve with honey, honeybutter, or cheese, or with chili, cheese, tomatoes, lettuce, and sour cream for Navajo Tacos.

Breadsticks

You can shape breadsticks either by rolling dough out into a rectangle about ½” thick and cutting into 1” wide sticks, or rolling smaller pieces of dough into ropes. Put on a greased baking sheet, and brush with (or roll them in) olive oil or melted butter, then sprinkle with any seasonings you want. Garlic powder, salt, and Parmesan cheese are a delicious combination, or try any of these: ranch dressing mix powder, sesame seeds, poppyseeds, chopped fresh rosemary, or sage. For the chewiest, most dense breadsticks, bake without letting rise first. For softer, lighter ones, let rise until nearly doubled. And if you like thin, crunchy ones, cut and stretch them until they’re no bigger around than a pencil. 400°F is a good temperature to bake breadsticks.

Lunch Pouches (like “Hot Pockets”)

Roll dough into a 12x18 rectangle; it should be about ¼” thick. Cover and let rest for ten minutes while you prep your filling. This allows the dough time to relax, so it won’t shrink as much when it gets cut. For ham, broccoli, and cheese filling, you’ll need 1 cup diced ham, 2 c. shredded or cubed cheese (such as medium Cheddar, or American), 1-2 cups chopped and lightly cooked broccoli, plus a crushed clove of garlic and/or ¼ c. minced onion if you’d like. Mix together in a bowl. Cut the dough– the 12” side gets divided into two 6” strips, then cut the 18” side every 6” as well. You should have 6 rectangles, each 6x6”. Put ¼ c to ½ c. filling in a row just off center, lengthwise, avoiding the edges. Fold the empty half of the rectangle over the filled half, lining up the edges and crimping to seal. Place on a greased cookie sheet, or one lined with parchment, and bake at 400°F

Chicken Bundles

Roll one loaf’s worth of dough into a rectangle, 12x16. Cover and let rest for ten minutes while you prepare the filling. [This is a good one](#), or use one you prefer. Cut the rectangle into 4” squares- divide the 12” side into 3 strips, then cut the 16” side into 4 strips. Place ½” cup filling on the center of each square; bring up edges to the center and pinch to seal. Place seam-side down on a greased cookie sheet. (If you like, brush with butter and sprinkle with bread crumbs or cracker crumbs.) Bake at 375°F for about 15 minutes.

Cabbage-Beef Rolls

Follow instructions for Chicken Bundles, but use a [ground beef-cabbage filling](#) like this one. (That recipe makes enough filling for two loaves' worth of dough.)

ROLLS

For the six loaf recipe, use 1 c. sugar and 2 eggs, and replace the water with milk. This recipe will make 2-3 trays of closely spaced rolls. For shiny rolls, brush with beaten egg (whites, yolks, or both) before baking, or brush with milk or butter for better browning.

Dinner Rolls

Divide one loaf's worth of dough (24 oz.) into six pieces, then each piece into 12 balls. Pinch bottoms to form a tight, smooth top, evenly space them on a greased cookie sheet, then let rise until nearly double. Bake at 375°F for about 20 minutes, or until browned on the bottom. One loaf will make 12 (2 oz. rolls), which fills a 9x13 pan. To make 24 rolls— which fills an 12x18 cookie sheet— use two loaves' worth of dough.

Butterhorns



Divide 6-loaf batch of dough into six pieces. Roll each piece into a circle 12" across. Brush with melted butter and slice, pizza-style, into 12 wedges. Stretch the wide side of a wedge slightly to make it about an inch wider, then roll up, tucking point under roll. Let rise and bake.

Parkerhouse Rolls

Roll one loaf's worth of dough $\frac{1}{4}$ " thick, cut with a regular-mouth canning ring or 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ " round cutter. Brush the top of each circle with melted butter then fold almost in half, putting the smaller side down. Place them evenly spaced on a greased cookie sheet. Cover and let rise until nearly double. Bake at 375°F for about 20 minutes, or until browned on the bottom.

Cloverleaf and Shortcut Cloverleaf



Divide one loaf's worth of dough into six pieces, then each piece into 12. Grease or spray 12 muffin cups. For shortcut Cloverleaf roll, form each into a smooth ball and place in a greased muffin tin. Snip across top with scissors, then make another snip perpendicular to it, to divide top into 4 points. (Left side of photo.) For Cloverleaf rolls, divide each twelfth into thirds, forming each into a tiny smooth ball; place 3 in each muffin

tin. (Right side of photo.) Cover, let rise until nearly double. Bake at 375°F for about 20 minutes, or until lightly browned.

Next photo: shortcut cloverleaf rolls. On the left: for those who like dark crust and don't mind adding butter when eating their rolls. On the right— barely done (see the browned bottom/sides?) and naturally moist.



Hamburger or hot dog buns

Roll dough ½" thick. Cut with a wide-mouth canning jar ring. Brush with milk or beaten egg white, sprinkle with sesame seeds. For a hot dog bun, you can fold the circle over and stretch to shape, or pinch off about 3 ounces of dough and shape into a 5" long rope. Cover and let rise until nearly double; bake at 375°F for about 15-20 minutes, or until lightly browned. (Below: just-shaped, and ready to bake. What you see is two loaves' worth of dough.)





SWEET BREADS

Make dough the same as for rolls, increasing to 1 c. sugar, add eggs if you want (1 egg for every 2-3 loaves). They make the dough more springy, moist, and tender.

Cinnamon Swirl Bread

Roll one loaf's worth of dough into a rectangle 8"x 20". Sprinkle each rectangle with 1/4 c. sugar and 1 tsp. cinnamon; roll up and place in pan, seam side down. After baking, drizzle with a powdered sugar glaze.

Raisin Swirl Bread

Follow directions for Cinnamon Swirl, but also sprinkle 1 c. of plumped raisins onto the rectangle before rolling it up into the loaf shape. Or forget rolling the dough into a rectangle and instead knead raisins directly into dough (5 cups for the whole batch). (If your raisins are not very moist, put them in a bowl and barely cover them with very hot water. Let soak for ten minutes, drain. Raisins that are too dry will suck moisture out of your dough. The drained liquid can be used in drinks, smoothies, or a batch of muffins or bread.)

Raspberry Swirl Loaf

Roll one loaf's worth of dough into a rectangle 8"x 20". Spread 1/3 c. of raspberry filling onto the rectangle, avoiding the last 2" of the rectangle so it will seal when you roll it up. Place seam side down in a greased 8x4 bread pan. Bake at 375°F for about 30 minutes; the extra density of the filling will make the bread take 5-10 minutes longer to

cook in the center. Any other fruit filling will work, as well. Drizzle with a powdered sugar glaze when cool.

Cinnamon Rolls

The 6 loaf recipe makes 3 (12x18) trays. To make a trayful, divide dough in thirds. Roll one lump into a rectangle about 24"x16", spread it with about 2 Tbsp. softened or melted butter, sprinkle with as much sugar as you can comfortably fit in one hand (about 3 Tbsp.), sprinkle with cinnamon (1-3 tsp.), then roll up to make a 24" long roll. Cut 1" wide rolls using dental floss, and place on a greased cookie sheet. Let rise, then bake at 375°F for about 20 minutes, or until browned on the bottom but not the top.

(overbaking the rolls makes them dry). Frosting for one tray: 2 Tbsp. butter, 1/4 c. milk, 1 tsp. vanilla, enough powdered sugar to get the consistency you like (about 4 cups, or one pound). You can also add a couple ounces of cream cheese to it. This makes 24 rolls. Or make fewer, bigger ones. It will still fill a tray, either way.

Caramel Nut Rolls

Follow directions for cinnamon rolls except sprinkle the rolled-out rectangle with about 1/2 c. brown sugar. Butter a cookie sheet with about 2 Tbsp softened or melted butter, sprinkle it with 1/2 c. brown sugar and 1/2 c. chopped nuts (any kind- my favorites are sliced almonds or chopped pecans). Bake at 375°F for about 20 minutes, or until browned on the bottom but not the top. After baking, flip the whole tray upside down onto another tray or the counter, and let sit 10 minutes. Remove tray straight up, leaving the rolls sugar/nut side up. After cooling, frost with Caramel Frosting. For one tray's worth of caramel frosting, boil together for one minute 1/4 c. butter, 1/2 c. milk, and 1 c. brown sugar. Let cool slightly, then beat in 3-4 c. powdered sugar and 1 tsp. vanilla or maple flavor. Makes 24.

Daisy Ring

Roll one loaf's worth of dough into a circle 15" across. Put a cup in the center of dough and cut from edge to cup to make 20 'petals'. The cup marks the center and prevents you from accidentally cutting into the center. Twist two 'petals' together and pinch ends to seal. Coil one twist into the center where the cup was, coil remaining twists toward center to form a daisy design. Let rise until nearly double, bake at 375°F for about 15 minutes or until browned on the bottom. Cool at least 15 minutes. Top with 1/2 cup jam and drizzle with glaze: 1 1/4 c. powdered sugar, 2 Tbsp. milk or water, 1/4 tsp. vanilla).

Donuts

Roll a loaf's worth of dough ½" thick, cut into doughnut shapes using a speciality cutter or a canning ring and something small like the lid of a spice jar. Cover and let rise until nearly double. Pour cooking oil 2" deep into a pan. Heat to 375°F. If you don't have a thermometer, test by dropping a bread cube into the oil. It will brown in one minute if the oil is the right temperature. Carefully place a few doughnuts in the oil, cook for a minute or two until the bottom side is browned and the doughnut has puffed. Flip them over and cook until the reverse side is golden. Drain on paper towels. Drizzle on glaze, or dunk into glaze. For sugared doughnuts, put ½ c. sugar in a paper bag (add 1 tsp. cinnamon if you'd like), add a still-warm doughnut to the bag, close it, and shake. Remove and repeat with the next doughnut. You can make maple bars, too— cut into 2"x5" rectangles instead of round shapes. The maple glaze recipe is the same as Caramel Icing for the Caramel Nut Rolls, above— just be sure to use the maple extract.

What some of these ingredients do

The roll and sweet bread variations use my basic bread recipe with three tweaks: egg, milk, and more sugar.

Egg

The egg helps make the bread more moist, springy, higher-rising, and tender. The white helps add strength and leavening. The yolk adds a tiny bit of color, plus some richness and tenderness from the natural fats in it, especially from the lecithin it contains. (Talking about lecithin is worth its own blog post!)

Milk

Milk helps a little bit with browning, as well as making the internal structure ("the crumb") softer and smoother. It's one of those things that may be harder for some people to notice, but it makes enough of a difference that I always use it in sweet breads for competitions. If you have powdered milk available, just mix the milk powder in with the other dry ingredients, and use water. For this size batch, you'll use 6 Tbsp powder, which is just over 1/3 c.

Sugar

Sugar makes a big difference in the crust browning, or 'caramelizing', as well as in the flavor of the bread. Sugar can also help the yeasts grow, but it only helps to a certain point. Bread with no sugar will still rise, but will take twice as long. And you can get your bread to brown, too, because of the natural sugars in the flour, but you have to use

a higher temperature. When I'm making bread with no sugar, I bake it between 400 and 450 degrees F, which gives a nice brown crust. If I cook bread with sugar in the dough, if it's cooked that hot, the bread will be black on the outside before the inside is done. When baking sweetened breads like this, then, keep the temperature between 350-400; the bigger the loaf, the lower temperature. Smaller things, like individual rolls, can still handle up to 400 degrees because the insides can cook quickly. The other thing about sugar— helping the yeasts grow— is kind of funny. A moderate amount of sugar is good food for the yeast, but over a certain point actually *slows down* its growth. To compensate for that in a high-sugar dough, let it rise a little longer or add more yeast.

You can use twice as much yeast as I use; it will rise faster. Faster bread, however, is not better bread. It tastes yeasty instead of wheat-y, and some of the nutrients won't be as available to your digestive system. But sometimes speed is more important!