

Extra Large White Loaf Bread

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1-3/4 cups milk
2 tablespoons granulated sugar
2 teaspoons salt
2 tablespoons vegetable shortening
1 package active dry yeast
1/2 cup warm water (105 to 115 degrees F)
5-1/2 to 6 cups all purpose or bread flour
Non stick cooking spray

Combine the milk, sugar, salt and shortening in a saucepan and heat until shortening has melted. Meanwhile, mix the yeast with the warm water and a pinch of sugar, stir and allow to sit for 5 minutes. When milk mixture has cooled to 110 degrees F, combine the two in your mixer bowl.

Spoon measure 6 cups of flour into a separate large bowl. Attach dough hook and turn mixer on speed 1, adding in 4 cups of the flour, at about 1/2 cup at a time. Once the flour is incorporated, turn to speed 2 and mix for about a minute. Continuing on speed 2, add the remaining flour until dough begins to cling to the dough hook and cleans the side of the mixer bowl. Continue kneading on speed 2 for about 2 minutes or until dough is smooth and elastic but still slightly sticky.

Spray top of dough with a light coat of non-stick spray, cover bowl with plastic wrap and place into a warm, draft free spot about 1 hour or until doubled.

Punch down and turn dough out onto a lightly floured surface. Shape into a ball, cover with a clean kitchen towel and allow to rest for 10 minutes.

Spray **one 10 by 5 by 3 inch** or **two 8 by 4 inch** loaf pans with non-stick spray. Add some additional bench flour to the countertop if needed. Flatten the dough to release any air bubbles and press or roll into a rectangle roughly 14" long by 8" wide. Going from the short side, roll the loaf up tightly, pinch the seam together, tuck the ends under and place into the prepared pan, seam side down. Return to a warm, draft free spot and allow to rise again about 45 minutes to 1 hour, or until the dough has crested about a 1 and 1/2 inches above the rim of the pan. To prevent the dough from drying out, you can loosely tent the loaf pan with a piece of plastic wrap that has been well sprayed with non-stick cooking spray.

Preheat the oven to 375 degrees F and bake the bread for about 40 to 45 minutes, or until golden brown. Tent with foil the last 15 minutes to prevent from overbrowning. Internal temperature should read at 190 degrees F on an instant read thermometer. When done, remove the bread immediately from the pan and allow to cool on a wire rack.

Cook's Notes: I use Crisco shortening and White Lily flour. Dough can be divided in half and made into two smaller loafs, using 8 x 4 inch loaf pans.

To Hand Knead: If you don't have a stand mixer you can still make bread - it will just take a little extra elbow grease is all! Stir all of the ingredients together by hand using a sturdy wooden spoon. When dough comes together and cleans the side of the bowl, turn dough onto a floured surface and knead, using the heel of your hand to push on the dough, folding it and turning it a quarter turn, until the dough is smooth and elastic but still a little sticky. How long will depend on your speed and strength. Place in a greased bowl, cover, let rise and continue as above.

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