

Crusty Rosemary French Bread

Makes 2 loaves

Ingredients:

- 2 ¼ cups water, warmed to between 105F-115F or just warm to the touch
- 3 tablespoons granulated sugar
- 2 tablespoons yeast
- 1 tablespoon salt
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 5 ½-6 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 egg white, slightly beaten
- 1 tablespoon milk
- 1 ½ tablespoons fresh rosemary, chopped

Directions:

1. Stir the sugar and yeast into the warm water until mixed completely, let sit for about 5 minutes until the mixture is foamy. Add the salt, oil, and about 3 cups of flour to the mixture, mix with a dough hook on low speed until blended.
2. Add 1 ½ more cups of flour and blend, then add the remaining flour ½ cup at a time, mixing in between additions. The dough should not stick to the sides of the bowl anymore but should have a slightly sticky feel to it when touched with your finger (make sure the dough doesn't get too dry because of too much flour). Knead the dough in the mixer or by hand for 3-5 minutes. Rest the dough for about 10 minutes then either turn on the mixer for 8-10 seconds or knead several times. Repeat this process for a total of one hour of resting (with kneading every 10 minutes).
3. Divide the dough into two equal parts, sprinkling the dough with a little flour if necessary. Shape each portion of dough into a long loaf and place on a baking sheet that has been lightly sprinkled with cornmeal. Make sure to leave enough room for both loaves or use two cookie sheets. Shape and place the other piece of dough.
4. If desired, cut three slashes in each loaf. Let the loaves rise, covered with a kitchen towel, for about ½ hour or until almost doubled in size. Preheat the oven to 375F.
5. In a small bowl blend together the egg white and milk, brush the mixture onto the loaves, then sprinkle the loaves evenly with the chopped rosemary. Bake for 28-32 minutes or until the loaves are golden brown on the outside. If desired, place a pan of hot water in the bottom of the oven to help make the crust crunchier. Cool the loaves slightly on a wire rack, serve warm.

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