

## Irish Soda Bread



St. Patrick's Day is celebrated on March 17 and you don't have to be Irish to enjoy this holiday. My mind immediately turns to corned beef and Irish soda bread. The Irish soda bread we eat today has little resemblance to the soda bread of the 1800s that actually used soda ash as a leavening agent. The quick bread that we identify with today as "Irish Soda Bread" differs in that it uses soft wheat and bicarbonate soda as a leavening agent. What developed was today's sweet quick bread loaded with raisins and caraway seeds. A neighbor's nanny, who had just emigrated from Ireland, reluctantly shared her mother's recipe with my mother and we have made it on St. Patty's day every year since. It's the perfect accompaniment to corned beef and cabbage, balancing the saltiness of the corned beef with the sweetness of the bread. All that's needed to complete this meal is a good stout.

Servings: 1 8" round of bread

1.5 C All Purpose Flour  
½ tsp Baking Soda  
1 tsp Baking Powder  
¼ tsp Table Salt  
½ C Sugar  
1 ½ TBS Caraway Seeds  
1 C Raisins  
¾ C Buttermilk (room temperature)  
½ TBS Melted Butter  
1 Large Eggs

Preheat your oven to 350°F. Grease and flour an 8" cake pan.

Sift the flour into a large bowl then add the remaining dry ingredients (baking soda through caraway seeds) until thoroughly mixed. Add the raisins to the dry mixture. In a separate bowl, mix the room temperature buttermilk and the melted butter together, and then beat in the eggs. Add 1/3 of the dry ingredients at a time to the buttermilk mixture and mix until incorporated. Do not over mix.

Pour the mixture into the cake pan and bake in the oven for 25-30 minutes or until the top is a *dark* golden brown. Insert a toothpick in the center to test for doneness. The toothpick should come out dry. The bread must have a dark brown crust or it will not be cooked through. Cool in the pan on a wire rack for 15 minutes. Remove from the pan and complete cooling it on a wire rack. Serve at room temperature.



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