

Bread Theory

Bread is actually fairly simple to make once you figure out a few basic techniques.

Most breads have the following 8 ingredients

1. A **Leavening Agent** to make it rise (e.g. yeast, baking powder, baking soda). The agent creates CO_x gas that fills the bread with air.
2. **Salt** to add flavour and make the crust nice and crisp
3. **Flour**, which has gluten strands in it that hold the CO₂ gas in little pockets. You can use all kinds of flour: whole wheat, white, rye, corn flour, etc.

+ You can add all kinds of other fun stuff like whole grains, seeds, raisins, milk powder (for more nutrients), soy powder (for more protein), oatmeal, etc.
4. A **Liquid**, usually water, but try adding in a bit of milk, juice, beer, or even the leftover water from cooked potatoes (yum!)
5. A **Sweetener**, to make the bread tasty, to help the crust turn brown, but most importantly to feed the yeast. You can use honey, molasses, maple syrup, or dissolved brown sugar.
6. An **Oil** to help make the dough smooth and add flavour. You can substitute any type of oil to change the flavour. Try corn, olive, hempseed, or any other type.

Bread Practice

A Recipe for Whole Wheat Bread

Adapted from the Living More With Less Cookbook

*Step 1. In a large bowl, mix the following **Dry Ingredients** well:*

- ➔ 2 Tablespoons Dry Active Yeast
- ➔ 1 Tablespoon Table Salt
- ➔ 3 Cups of Organic Whole Wheat Flour
- ➔ 1 Cup of Red River Cereal

*Step 2: In a large measuring cup or bowl, combine the following **Wet Ingredients** and heat briefly in the microwave or on the stove. Make sure it is not too hot or too cold or it will kill the yeast*

- ➔ 3 Cups of Water
- ➔ 1/3rd of a Cup of Honey or Molasses
- ➔ 2 Tablespoons of Sunflower or Canola Oil.

7. **You!** Get your hands in there and help this bread transform! Many breads require you to “knead” them to both mix the ingredients, but also to activate the gluten in the flour. As you knead it, you will feel the bread undergo a “transformation” from a gooey mess to a firmer ball.

8. **Time.** All breads require time to rise. This is where the yeast does its magic and the bread fills with gas. It is also where the flavours and the crust develop.

Experiment by mixing up the different ingredients.

Provided that you balance the wet and dry ingredients and don't overheat the yeast, you can't go to wrong. Bread is fairly forgiving, and you can always eat your mistakes!



Step 3: Pour the Wet Ingredients into the bowl with the Dry Ingredients and mix well by hand or with beaters until all the lumps are gone.

Step 4: Add in White Flour 1 cup at a time until the mixture gets less sticky and more solid

Step 5: Place the mass of dough on a clean flat surface, and knead it with your hands. Add more flour as you go to make it less sticky. Keep kneading for about 10 minutes or until the dough starts to feel like firm but soft like a baby's bum.

Step 6: Place the kneaded dough ball back into the large bowl (don't oil the bowl!). Cover with another bowl or towel and let it rest for about 45 minutes to an hour in a warm, non-drafty place. After 45 minutes, punch it down again and let it rise once more.

Step 7: Cut the dough into 3 equally sized pieces. Knead it gently to get any air bubbles out.

Shape into 3 oblong (oval) loaves. Grease 3 bread pans with oil. Put each loaf in a pan. Let them rise again for about 20 minutes. Pre-heat the oven to 190 C (375 F).

Step 8: Place the bread pans in the oven and bake for 35 minutes.

Step 9: Take the pans out. Let them rest for 5 minutes. Then turn the bread loaves out on to cooling racks.

Step 10: Give Thanks to God for the gift of Bread! Eat! Share! Enjoy!