

Tips For Baking Tasty Artisan Bread

(NAPSA)—Creating a loaf of aromatic artisan bread is indeed a work of art, but it only requires the mastery of some simple tools and techniques.

The tools include a baking stone, a kitchen thermometer, spray bottle, a wire rack and parchment paper.

As for technique, it's important to remember that most artisan dough is very soft and wet—much wetter than traditional yeast dough. As a result, these are not kneaded in the traditional method. Instead, the “kneading” takes place with the stirring and turning of the dough, and the long resting times (during which the dough “micro-kneads” itself). Gently over time, the shaping process pulls the gluten strands in alignment around the loaf, giving it shape and a firm crust.

Semolina Bread

Makes 1 bâtard (oval loaf)

Prep time: 50 minutes

Polish time: 8+ hours

Rest and rise time: 4½ to 5 hours

Bake time: 20 to 30 minutes

Polish:

1 cup bread flour

½ teaspoon Fleischmann's®

RapidRise Yeast

¾ cup lukewarm

(90° to 100°F) water

Dough:

½ teaspoon Fleischmann's®

RapidRise Yeast

¾ cup lukewarm

(90° to 100°F) water

Polish

2 tablespoons olive oil

1½ teaspoons salt

2 cups semolina flour

¾ cup bread flour

¼ cup sesame seeds,

optional, for topping



Artisan bread is shaped rather than kneaded as normal.

To make the Polish: Stir together flour and yeast in a medium bowl. Stir in water until blended. This dough will be like thick cake batter. Cover with plastic wrap and let sit overnight or up to 24 hours. The dough will become frothy and have lots of little bubbles.

To make the Dough: Dissolve yeast in lukewarm water in a large bowl. Stir in Polish, olive oil and salt until thoroughly blended. Add semolina flour and ½ cup of the bread flour. Stir until combined. Dough will be soft and slightly sticky like biscuit dough. Add remaining ¼ cup bread flour, if necessary. Cover and let rest for 20 minutes.

Turning Dough: Turn the dough onto a lightly floured surface and knead for 2 minutes. Place in a large bowl. Cover and let rest 1 hour. With a slightly wet hand, gently

give the dough several turns by sliding the hand down the edge of the bowl, lifting and stretching the dough up and over the center. Give the bowl a quarter turn and repeat 7 times until you have gone around the bowl twice. Cover and let rest 1 hour. Repeat turning and resting 2 more times for a total of 3 hours rising time.

Shaping: Turn the dough out onto a lightly floured surface. With floured hands, gently press to deflate dough. Working with dough on a lightly floured surface with floured hands, pull an edge of the dough from the outside to the center, gently stretching the side of the dough to the center. Give the dough a sixth of a clockwise turn and repeat going around the dough 2 or 3 times, shaping it into a rough ball. Cover and let rest for 20 minutes. For final shaping,

working with the seam side up, slightly flatten the dough. Repeat the edge-pulling shaping as above, going around the ball 1 time. Now fold the far edge toward the center about 1 inch, pressing into the dough under the edge. Repeat folding and pressing several times until almost to near edge. Fold up near edge and pinch to seal. Turn the loaf over and gently roll with hands to an oval about 8 inches long (never use a rolling pin).

For best baking results, place a baking stone, pizza stone or unglazed ceramic tile on bottom shelf of oven. Preheat oven to 475°F for 20 minutes to allow stone to get to temperature. Place loaf seam side down on parchment paper. If desired, brush flour off top, lightly brush with water and sprinkle with sesame seeds. Score loaf with 2 to 4 slashes using a sharp knife or blade. Slide the dough with parchment onto bread peel or rimless baking sheet. Carefully slide onto heated baking stone, immediately spritzing the oven with water around the dough 7 to 10 times. Bake for 20 to 30 minutes, spritzing every 5 minutes 3 more times. Bake to an internal temperature of 200°F. Remove from oven and parchment; cool on wire rack.

For more artisan bread techniques and recipes, visit the Artisan Bread Box on www.Facebook.com/FleischmannsYeast or www.breadworld.com.