

Kitchen Korner

Bread 101: The Basics...By Hand And Machine

(NAPS)—One of the most pleasing smells that may waft from a kitchen is that of fresh-baked bread. Golden-brown loaves from the oven can make a terrific complement to a hearty meal, or serve as a key ingredient in a succulent sandwich.

Any way you slice it—whether you bake your bread the old-fashioned way or with the help of a bread machine—heeding a few expert tips can help make your loaves even more delightful.

By Hand

- Don't omit the salt. Salt adds flavor to bread and tempers the growth of the yeast. Salt also chemically "toughens" the gluten a bit, allowing the loaf to hold its structure better.

- Flavor develops during the rising time, so don't be afraid to give your dough time. A slow, overnight rise in the refrigerator creates a wonderful dough with super flavor.

- Use the right flour. Flour too low in protein will give you a small, squat loaf of bread. The protein in a rich flour, such as King Arthur, provides more gluten in the dough. The gluten is what traps the carbon dioxide produced by the yeast and gives your dough a beautiful rise.

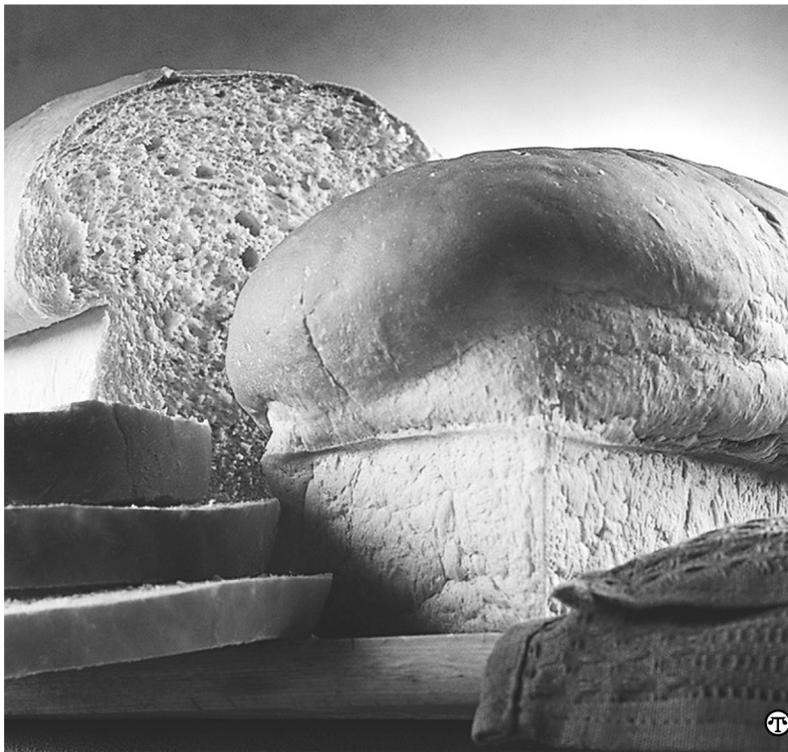
- Don't add all the flour at once. Flour is like a sponge; it can absorb humidity in the air or dry out in dry weather. It is difficult to recover from dry dough once you have added too much flour. The resulting bread is tough and dry.

- Make sure to knead the dough sufficiently to develop the gluten. There is no need to beat on the dough. A gentle, rhythmic workout is all that is needed. Generally, eight to ten minutes of hand kneading will allow for good protein development.

With a Bread Machine

- Traditional recipes calling for six cups of flour may easily be adapted to the bread machine. Simply cut the ingredient measurements in half; the exception is yeast. Reduce that by only one quarter.

- Always watch the dough as it kneads through the machine. You may need to add flour or liquid to achieve a soft, smooth ball of dough.



Patience and the right flour are two key ingredients in baking up fragrant, delicious loaves of bread.

The following recipe is for the bread made weekly by Walter Sands, father of Frank E. Sands, chairman of the board of King Arthur Flour. Because of his arthritic hands, Walter used a bread bucket with a crank, which kneaded hundreds of loaves of this fragrant bread. For more information, additional great recipes or to order the flour, call 1-800-827-6836 or visit www.KingArthurFlour.com.

Walter Sands' Basic White Bread

2 cups warm water
2 tablespoons sugar or honey
1 scant tablespoon or packet active dry yeast
½ cup dry milk (optional)
2 tablespoons butter, softened, or vegetable oil
6 cups King Arthur Unbleached All-Purpose Flour
2 teaspoons salt

Pour the warm water into a mixing bowl. Add and let dissolve the sugar or honey and

then the yeast. When the yeast is bubbling, add the dry milk, butter, 3 cups of flour and the salt. Mix together and then stir in a further 2½ cups of flour. Sprinkle the remaining ½ cup on the surface you intend for kneading.

Knead the dough for 3 to 4 minutes, until it begins to behave as if it belonged together. Let it rest while you clean and grease the bowl. Continue kneading a further 3 to 4 minutes, until the dough feels smooth and springy.

Let the dough rise until doubled (1 to 2 hours). Knock it down, knead out any stray bubbles, cut it in half and form two loaves. Place them in two lightly greased 4½x8½-inch bread pans. Let rise until almost doubled (45 minutes to 1 hour).

Preheat the oven for 15 minutes to 350°F. Bake the loaves 35 to 40 minutes, or until nicely browned. Remove bread from oven and cool completely on a wire rack.

Yield: 2 loaves