

tid bits If bread doesn't make it, the house still smells good

By Lynn Roberts

Since this is my last chance to woo you with the delights of food, I thought I'd rise to the occasion with one of my favorites—bread.

Not only does baking bread fill the house with great smells, there is the satisfaction of creating fresh loaves of bread from scratch.

Quick-breads use baking powder or soda for leavening and eliminate the need for several risings. They are easy to make and usually contain fruit or nuts.

Quick breads keep well and usually are best to eat and slice a day after they've been baked. Keep all homemade breads in the refrigerator, since they have no preservatives.

Yeast breads

Yeast breads, of course, use yeast as leavening. The yeast ferments, gives off carbon dioxide and causes the bread to rise.

As the carbon dioxide is given off, a gluten substance (formed from protein in the flour and liquid) stretches and gives the bread its shape.

The best way to make yeast bread, if you've never done it before, is to set aside four hours and enlist a pro to help you. It's not hard to do, but there are techniques, like kneading, that are easier to learn by watching.

Whole wheat molasses bread

2 3/4 c. whole wheat flour	1/2 c. dark molasses
2 c. white flour	1/4 c. packed brown sugar
2 pkgs. yeast	2 tbs. shortening
1 3/4 c. water	1 tbs. salt

In a large bowl dissolve yeast in 1/2 c. warm water. In a saucepan heat the rest of the water, molasses, sugar, salt and shortening until shortening just melts. Cool until lukewarm and mix with yeast.

Add to yeast the whole wheat flour and beat until well mixed. Then add remainder of flour plus whatever you need until dough is no longer sticky.

Knead on well floured surface about eight minutes and place in an oiled bowl. Cover and let rise until double (about 2 hours). Punch down and cover with towel for 10 minutes. Shape into two round flattened loaves and place

Kneading is done to help develop the gluten after the dough is mixed. After kneading, the break is put in a warm place until it doubles in size.

If there isn't a warm place in your kitchen, place a hot pan of water in the oven bottom and the bread on a rack above it.

After the bread has risen, loaves are formed, the bread is allowed to rise again, and after this bake it. Then comes the best part—you eat it.

No limit

There's really no limit to the kinds of bread you can make. White bread can be changed by kneading in herbs or braiding the dough instead of making loaves.

Whole grain flours like whole wheat and rye usually have more flavor than white, but they take longer to rise and are heavier and not as big.

If you're new to the bread baking business, just follow recipe directions and seek a dough expert's advice.

A good book for any bread lover (especially for beginners since it has illustrations that are easy to follow) is *The Sunset Cookbook of Breads*.

Just remember that if your bread doesn't turn out exactly like you wanted, don't give up. So what if it's a little hard or flat and you have to chew a little longer; the house still smells good.

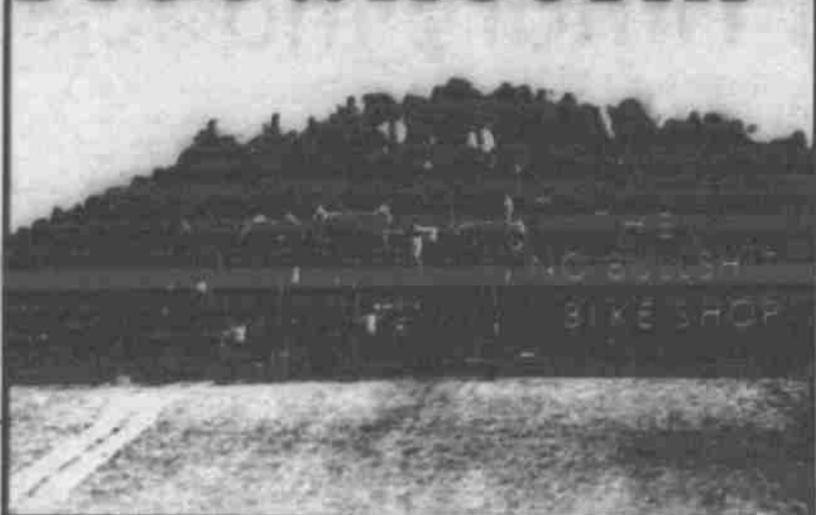
on a greased baking sheet.

Cover and let rise for 45 minutes. Bake at 375 degrees for 30 to 35 minutes. Brush with water several times during the last 15 minutes of baking, if a chewy crust is desired.

Banana nut bread

2 c. whole wheat flour	1 tsp. baking soda
1/2 c. oil	2 c. ripe mashed bananas
1/2 c. honey	1/2 c. chopped walnuts
2 eggs.	

Beat eggs, and blend with honey and oil until smooth. Mix flour, baking soda and salt. Add this to the honey batter in thirds, alternating with the bananas. Stir after each addition and fold in chopped nuts. Bake in a greased loaf pan for 50 minutes at 350 degrees. Cool for five minutes and remove from pan.

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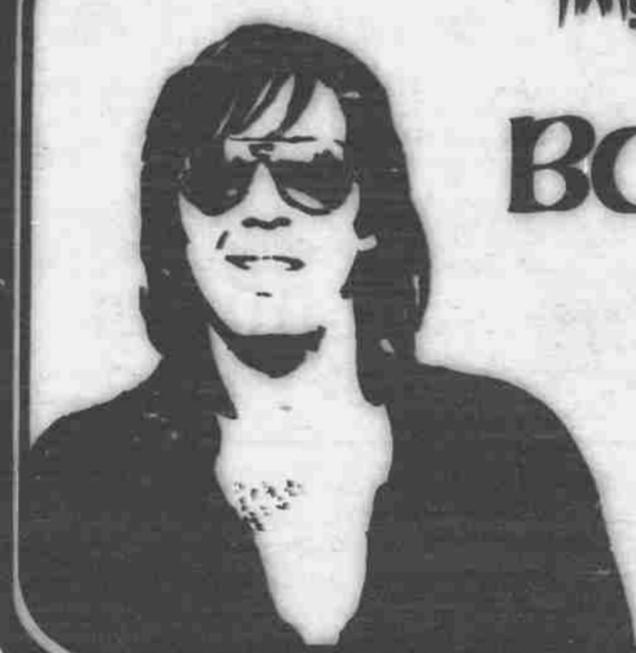
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