

4-Hour No-Knead bread.

by [daniel_reetz](#) on April 23, 2009

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Intro: 4-Hour No-Knead bread.

There are many good bread Instructables already, but when making bread, you can never have too many fail-safe techniques, and this recipe works almost every time.

This is a four-hour process; you need that much time to let the dough rise. I like to throw it together while snacking on lunch, and then when I get home after school it is ready to throw in the oven.

My recipe differs from most no-knead recipes in that you do not drop it into a heated pan. I changed the recipe because I had too many burns from handling a bread pan at 400+ degrees, and one of my Pyrex dishes shattered on me when I accidentally set the edge of it on a wet washcloth.

I hope you enjoy this tutorial and the resulting mouthwatering delicious bread.



Image Notes

1. LOAF!!

step 1: Materials.

Flour:

To make good bread, you need good flour. Flour which is marked "bread flour" typically has 11-12% protein (gluten) which is higher than normal flour. This allows the loaf to have good structure and texture. You can cut cheaper white flour with bread flour if you don't have enough of either.

If you are in Germany, type 550 flour works well. Thanks t.rohner and stryke!

Yeast:

I use yeast from a Polish market. While you can buy Fleischmann's yeast from the supermarket, it is really expensive, especially in packets. If you have access to an Eastern European or Balkan market, often they sell 1lb bags of yeast for just a few dollars, a huge savings over the grocery store stuff. You need a small spoonful, the amount is not critical.

Salt:

I use sea salt, but you can use any kind of salt. Salt adds flavor and slows the growth of yeast slightly. I like to put about half a spoonful in.

Container:

You need a bake-proof container with a lid (the lid saves you from having to use foil every time and results in a more consistent crust). I got my Pyrex baking dish (visible in Step 7) at a local thrift store for just a few dollars. It is really the perfect dish for this kind of thing

Ingredients:

3 cups flour.

Some salt. (see picture 2)

Some yeast. (see picture 2)



Image Notes

1. the magic of Photoshop

step 2: Putting Things Together and Mixing Them.

Pour your ingredients in a bowl. Mix the dry ingredients a bit before adding 1.5 cups warm(ish) water.

Be sure to add the water slowly - pour it in a small but steady stream. Some flours take more or less. You just want your dough to be "shaggy" -- pictured in the next step.



step 3: Making Your Dough "Shaggy".

Your dough should be this consistency or a little more damp. It's easy to add too much water -- it's better to add less, because when you let it sit for 4 hours, the water will diffuse through the loaf.

If you added too much, add more flour to get it back to "shaggy", my favorite texture.



step 4: I Love Yeast

Cover the dough, put it in a warm place, and let the yeast rise. It's pretty amazing to watch them go.

These images cover a span of about 4 hours. You can do more, but you'll get poor results with less. Click on the second image for an animation of the dough rising.



Image Notes

1. you can see the damp cutting board drying!

step 5:

This part is critical. I have an old burnt pan that I use for just this purpose.

Put a tablespoon or so of oil on the surface.

Let the oil spread around.

Remove the dough from your mixing bowl. Mash it once as shown. Do not mash or knead it any more than once or, if you must, two times.

Roll up the flat thing you just made.

Done with this step!



step 6: Into the Dish!

Place the dough in a Pyrex baking dish, "ugly side up". Doing this allows the dough to easily expand and makes for an interesting surface.

I like to salt my bread at this point. The surface is oily and catches the salt nicely. Be generous with the salt; you won't regret it.

Other things I like to put on top:

A dash of sugar and black pepper OR

A streak of honey (if I plan to eat it with butter/jam) OR

Basil and sun dried tomato pieces OR

A splash of garlic vinegar OR

Minced onion.



step 7: Pre-Oven Prep

Now cover the loaf in the baking pan. You have to let it "rest" in order to have it bake properly. By now, you're probably starving, but don't rush this step.

To make the wait easier, preheat your oven to around 450 degrees F.



Image Notes
1. after resting

step 8: INTO THE DARKNESS

Put your dough in the oven.

Pour some water on your hands for your dead yeasties.



Image Notes

1. the darkness

step 9: Baking

Bake your bread for 30 minutes with the cover on.

Then, if you want an extra crispy, nutty, amazing crust, remove the lid and bake 5 more minutes.



Image Notes

1. i meant to point at this...

step 10: ENJOY.

By now, your whole house smells of baking and you're starving. Take the loaf from the oven, remove it from the pan, and let it cool for a minute. Cut it with a bread knife or tear it open with your hands like a hungry caveman.

One of the simplest and most delicious things to eat with the finished product is a small bowl with oil, salt, and Italian spices like basil. I like to keep such a bowl in my fridge, ready for each new loaf. Dipping fresh bread in such a mixture is just outstanding eating.

I won't even go into the money you'll save baking for yourself, because if you could buy this kind of bread at the store, you wouldn't care what it cost.



Image Notes

1. LOAF!!

Related Instructables



How to Make Garlic Bread by JellyWoo



The Unkneaded Bread by Siljestam



Ginger Bread Houses (slideshow) by ewilhelm



Easy Bread Anywhere: "Baking" bread in a pressure-cooker by Rectifier



My ultimate bread - learn the secrets of "slow baking" by t.rohner









How To Make Edible Bread Bowls (video) by Mangetout

Comments

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-
-  **magetrainee** says: Oct 24, 2010. 12:22 PM [REPLY](#)
I've been cooking this bread on a pizza stone just for the fun of it, but my crust has consistently turned out a bit whit and thin, any ideas as to what might help?
maybe if i brushed egg on it before cookin...
-
-  **magetrainee** says: Oct 24, 2010. 2:11 PM [REPLY](#)
just finished the bread
made one loaf with olive oil on the outside and the other with egg brushed onto it and the egg produced a FANTASTIC crust for all those interested
I also baked it on a baking stone at 450 with a dish of water underneath
-
-  **allbeef** says: Oct 3, 2010. 4:01 PM [REPLY](#)
just made mine today, at first when i pulled it out of the oven i was dissappointed because the crust looked rubbery and lame and pale. but then when it cooled, i ripped off a chunk and it was amazing! really good recipie!
-
-  **kerri2357** says: Sep 5, 2010. 7:48 PM [REPLY](#)
Thanks for posting this. I made it today and it's delicious. I put the "pretty" side up and should have slashed it but it came out with a very nice crust and a beautiful spongy texture with a ton of tiny holes, just lovely.
-
-  **daniel_reetz** says: Sep 6, 2010. 6:29 PM [REPLY](#)
Great! Thanks for reporting back. It really is great bread.
-
-  **cadia** says: Jul 4, 2010. 7:22 AM [REPLY](#)
I've made the 18 hour bread many times now and looking forward to trying this shorter version today! But what is this all about??(!): " Pour some water on your hands for your dead yeasties. "
-



beehard44 says:
the yeast dies when exposed to huge amounts of heat

Jul 30, 2010. 12:03 AM [REPLY](#)



hay_jumper says:
Your photos are great, and the text is entertaining and educational. I'm going to ditch the Bittman version of this bread I've been making. Nice job all around.

Jun 7, 2010. 7:49 PM [REPLY](#)



daniel_reetz says:
Thank you very much! Please post pics of your bread! I'm going to be making more soon, a friend of mine replaced my broken Pyrex dish. w00t!

Jun 7, 2010. 8:07 PM [REPLY](#)



cadia says:
I'm wondering how the recipe would be cooked in a cast iron pot and what size it should be (I have one about 8 inches round) . I've made many no-knead breads now with many variations, can't tolerate store -bought now !!

Jun 7, 2010. 5:18 PM [REPLY](#)



daniel_reetz says:
I think there might have been a comment below (don't have time to search at the moment) saying how to do it. I think the trick was to pre-heat the cast iron pot... but maybe I read that somewhere else. If you figure it out, please post back here!

Jun 7, 2010. 8:07 PM [REPLY](#)



the4est says:
I tried this for the first time yesterday, and it worked wonderfully! the whole loaf got eaten very quickly. i guessed the quantities of the ingredients and it worked, but you might consider posting the amount of yeast and salt recommended.

Apr 18, 2010. 1:10 PM [REPLY](#)



annienygma says:
This is my favorite no-knead bread recipe... My favorite pan to use is a cast iron skillet for this bread (go figure).. I share this recipe with everyone!

Jan 29, 2010. 8:15 PM [REPLY](#)



daniel_reetz says:
That's fantastic. I'm really interested in other kinds of baking dishes. How do you cover your skillet?

Jan 29, 2010. 9:24 PM [REPLY](#)



macrumpton says:
I use an enameled giant turkey roaster pan that I got for \$9 at Target. It works great for these no-knead recipes. It is also big enough to make huge loaves.
When I use the hot pan technique I put the dough on a piece of baking parchment and lower it into the pan using the edges of the parchment. It is easier to avoid burns that way.

Mar 20, 2010. 9:10 PM [REPLY](#)



annienygma says:
Sometimes I tent aluminum foil over it, but mostly I just bake it uncovered.. I prefer the crust if it is uncovered actually.

Jan 29, 2010. 10:53 PM [REPLY](#)



annienygma says:
Sometimes I tent aluminum foil over it, but mostly I just bake it uncovered.. I prefer the crust if it is uncovered actually.

Jan 29, 2010. 10:53 PM [REPLY](#)



macrumpton says:
Most of the hot pot no-knead recipes recommend that you bake it with the lid on for just over half the baking time to allow the steam to rise the bread to it's max, and then you remove the lid for the rest of the time to get the nice crispy crust.

Mar 20, 2010. 9:12 PM [REPLY](#)



GibbonsRock says:
Hi! I am (attempting) to make this right now, and from 3 cups flour and 1.5 cups water, I've got pancake batter! Maybe it's cuz' I'm using regular all porpoise flour? does it take a while to get "shaggy"? I'll add some more flour... thanks for the fun instructible!

Apr 25, 2009. 11:33 AM [REPLY](#)



isaac! says:
this has absolutely nothing to do with anything, but when i read "all-porpoise flour", i lmao'd out the door.

Jan 12, 2010. 4:29 PM [REPLY](#)



gyongyi says:
Local humidity plays a huge role in how much water is needed for the 3 cups of flour. Used to live in the desert (very low humidity) and 1.5 cup water was not enough water to 3 cups of flour, now with local high humidity here in KY I use less than 1.5 cup of water to 3 cups of flour. Just need to get the feel for the right consistency of the dough and then you can replicate that in any conditions. The pictures attached to the instructions are a great help for that. Good luck and enjoy your bread.
Daniel I want to thank you for the great step by step instructions, I used to do the 18+2 hours no knead bread which is great, but sometimes we had no time to wait that long. Your method gives me excellent results, hubby and I both love the bread with lots of salt and seeds on it (sunflower, sesame, poppy etc).

Oct 24, 2009. 6:59 PM [REPLY](#)



daniel_reetz says:

Apr 25, 2009. 1:12 PM [REPLY](#)

Yikes! At least with my flour, I definitely don't have pancake batter. I think you have the right idea to add more water. For anyone else trying this, just add water until it is "shaggy" and then stop -- I suppose different flours may give different results. I may change the instructable to reflect this.



daniel_reetz says:

Apr 26, 2009. 5:55 AM [REPLY](#)

When I said more water, of course I meant: more flour.



daniel_reetz says:

Apr 26, 2009. 5:58 AM [REPLY](#)

And I updated step 2. Thanks for the feedback,GR.



GibbonsRock says:

Apr 26, 2009. 8:49 AM [REPLY](#)

Hi Dan!

Thanks for the update! I was literally typing one handed yesterday, my other hand dripping with pancake dough. My dough got a lot better with considerably more flour (I'd say over a cup extra!) but it never did quite make it to the shaggy stage. Anyhoo, I let it rise out on the deck for several hours, refrigerated overnight (duh'oh! had plans!)

I just baked it and it came out very good- with your bread being the "great" mark. ;)

Now my wife and I are about to enjoy a mediterranean lunch of Brie, homemade pesto, a glass of wine and a loaf of "4 hour no knead bread."

Here's a pic for ya and your readers.

Thanks again!



daniel_reetz says:

Apr 26, 2009. 10:53 AM [REPLY](#)

That looks excellent, much better than my first try. Super cool to see the outcome! Thanks for your experience and info!



At Liberty says:

Dec 18, 2009. 6:23 PM [REPLY](#)

Was they pyrex that exploded on you new, or vintage? I've been hearing of this occurring more & more, and I'm spooked to use mine.



arzthaus says:

May 25, 2009. 4:45 PM [REPLY](#)

just tried this. i don't think i mixed the water well enough, it was kinda flaky and dusty. Still good though. Is there a way to make it less dense? Perhaps let it rise a bit longer? Just wondering. Great instructable btw



cofosho says:

Oct 22, 2009. 11:05 AM [REPLY](#)

For a longer rise-time and richer flavor, I strongly recommend NY baker Jim Lahey's "No Knead Bread" recipe, found here in the NYT and reprinted/revised by Mark Bittman in How to Cook Everything.



daniel_reetz says:

Jun 7, 2009. 5:54 PM [REPLY](#)

looks like acrollet found a solution above. I'm testing it now.



frankenfoof says:

Jun 8, 2009. 2:41 PM [REPLY](#)

For a great explanation on the mechanics of breadmaking, see the section on French bread in Julia Child's Mastering the Art of French Cooking Vol. 2 . You can probably find it in your local library. Personally, I genuflect before her picture every day! ;-)



e-lizard says:

Sep 27, 2009. 4:04 PM [REPLY](#)

Thanks very much for an easy to follow yummy recipe, I modified mine just a bit, added 1 cup grated sharp cheddar, 1/2 cup parmesan cheese, 1/4 tsp garlic powder, 1/4 tsp dried parsley to the flour before adding the water, didn't need quite as much water with all that cheese to get the "shaggy" results.... Increased the "rest time" just before baking by approx 40 minutes (because I was baking something else in the oven) and am pleased with the results.... a great soup dipper.....



daniel_reetz says:

Congrats! Did you just add those ingredients on top of the existing ones? That sounds delicious -- and it's just getting cold here in Fargo. I'm thinking about making up a batch today...

Sep 27, 2009. 4:06 PM [REPLY](#)



e-lizard says:

Yeap, I did everything else just the way you posted it - well kind of, I didn't have bread flour so I added 4 tsp of wheat gluten to my all purpose flour, experience told me I'd need it.. It turned out really great. I made some creamy veggie soup (from pulp left over when juicing - waste not want not) and the bread was perfect for dunking. Thanks again for the recipe. The temp today here in Indiana is only going to be mid 50's (f) so a perfect soup and bread day..... :)

Sep 28, 2009. 6:19 AM [REPLY](#)



vaclov says:

Oops! I must correct myself. Amount of yeast should read 1/4 tsp

Sep 18, 2009. 2:37 PM [REPLY](#)



vaclov says:

I have not seen it shown but one tsp of yeast should added to the flour mix.

Sep 18, 2009. 2:28 PM [REPLY](#)



AaronJBobb says:

Turned out amazing! I wanted to post a picture, but my loaf magically disappeared (carb loving sister).

Sep 12, 2009. 7:43 PM [REPLY](#)



daniel_reetz says:

Great! I'm looking for a new baking dish, as mine broke. What kind of baking dish did you use?

Sep 12, 2009. 8:08 PM [REPLY](#)



AaronJBobb says:

I used a pyrex casserole dish.

Sep 12, 2009. 10:05 PM [REPLY](#)



mandras says:

Cool recipe! Fast process with impressive result. I will try with bread flour next time.

Aug 17, 2009. 9:40 AM [REPLY](#)



daniel_reetz says:

Awesome. That looks great. What kind of baking dish did you use?

Sep 12, 2009. 8:07 PM [REPLY](#)



b.biter says:

Mine turned out good!!!! My kids loved it, and I am making a second batch tonight!!!

May 12, 2009. 6:42 PM [REPLY](#)





Artekus says:

I was wondering that too :) Is it cast iron?

Jul 31, 2009. 12:03 PM [REPLY](#)



daniel_reetz says:

Beautiful. What kind of pot is that?

May 17, 2009. 8:26 AM [REPLY](#)



acrollet says:

Just tried this for the first time - turned out delicious, crust was perfect! The crumb is perhaps a small bit denser than I would prefer, do you have any suggestions for making it rise a little more? I may have gotten a little too much water in the dough, perhaps that was the culprit... Used bread flour and one packet of quick-rise yeast. Thanks very much for the excellent tutorial!

May 23, 2009. 3:53 PM [REPLY](#)



jradi says:

One of the best loaves I've ever made, and I've made a LOT of bread! The crust was amazing. I let the loaf rise for almost 12 hours (because I forgot about it) and it still came out wonderful.

Jun 6, 2009. 8:36 PM [REPLY](#)



daniel_reetz says:

w00t! Great news! And interesting, it seems from your comments and others that you can leave this stuff overnight and still get great results. Awesome.

Jun 6, 2009. 9:07 PM [REPLY](#)



acrollet says:

Forgot to mention - I used a crockpot insert w/ pyrex lid, and it worked great. Used an oven thermometer to make sure I was baking at 450. (had to turn the dial a little over 475)

May 23, 2009. 3:56 PM [REPLY](#)



daniel_reetz says:

Thanks! Actually, just today I tried calibrating my oven -- the knob is off by ten degrees. I don't have a good suggestion for getting the crumb to be less dense... have you had any luck since?

Jun 6, 2009. 9:06 PM [REPLY](#)



acrollet says:

I have had some success actually - just last night I re-tried the recipe with these ingredients: 3 cups bread flour 1 tsp. yeast 1.5 tsp salt 1.5 cups water with 1 tsp apple cider vinegar mixed in I stirred a bit longer at the beginning to develop the gluten some more, but otherwise followed your recipe to the letter. I was very happy with the result, the crumb has the airier, springier texture that I really like. Added bonus: it's still fresh and good right now, 24 hrs after I took it out of the oven. Here's a pic:

Jun 7, 2009. 4:20 PM [REPLY](#)



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