

Simple White Loaf

Makes 1 (800g/28oz cooked) loaf (recipe can be doubled if desired to make two loaves)



EQUIPMENT

scales and or measuring cups, liquid cup measure, measuring spoons, standmixer with beater and dough hook, clean tea towel, baking tray, cooks knife, cooling rack

INGREDIENTS

550g (19oz) strong bread flour
7g (2½ teaspoons) dried yeast
2 teaspoons sugar
1 teaspoon salt flakes
300ml (10½fl oz) warm water
1 tablespoon olive oil
extra oil and a little flour

Homemade bread is a joy to make, smell and eat ... you could be surprised at how simple it is.

What went wrong

- *Not weighing ingredients properly. The ratio of dry ingredients, water and oil is very important.*
- *Not using high-protein/strong flour—you need the additional protein/gluten for structure and lift.*
- *Stale or not enough yeast. I recommend freeze-dried yeast as it is very easy to use and has a long shelf life.*
- *Too much sugar or salt—this will kill and inactivate the yeast.*
- *Water that's too hot—the water must be tepid, which is just warm or the heat will kill the yeast.*
- *Standing the dough in a cold or drafty spot. Find a warm place out of a draft. I usually pop mine by the kitchen window, or close to the oven on a cold day—the sun or warmth helps the dough to rise.*
- *Not enough kneading—allow the standmixer to knead the dough slowly. The dough must be smooth and springy. The slow speed is needed to produce gluten, which will give the bread lightness and a good texture.*



METHOD

Place the flour, yeast, sugar, salt (all the dried ingredients) into the mixing bowl of your standmixer with the beater attachment, turn to low speed (1) and mix 10 seconds or until combined.

Add the water and oil, while the mixer is turning. Mix for a further 15 seconds or until a dough begins to just form. Change to the hook/kneading attachment.

Knead on low speed (1) for 5 minutes or until the dough is smooth and soft (it will also 'spring back' when pressed with your fingertip).

Lightly oil a large bowl (you can use the bowl from the standmixer—just give it a good wipe). Place the dough into the bowl and cover with a clean tea towel. Place in a warm (but not hot), draft-free place. Allow to stand at least 1–1½ hours or until the dough doubles in size.

Return the dough to the standmixer, with the kneading/dough hook attachment and mix 10 seconds (this can also be called 'punching down').

Sprinkle some flour onto a baking tray. Form the dough into a round 'cob' shaped loaf and place on the floured tray. Set aside in the same warm place, covered with a clean tea towel, for around 30 minutes to prove again.

Preheat the oven to 220°C (420°F).

Scatter the top of the loaf with a little extra flour and quickly slash the top a couple of times. Bake the bread for 10 minutes, then reduce the temperature to 200°C (400°F) and bake a further 20 minutes or until golden and the bread sounds hollow when tapped on the base.