

Basic Bread | Lean Dough

Swick

Makes 545 g doughs | Serves 1 | Active Time: 25 minutes | Total Time: 2 hours 30 minutes

Step 1: Preparing Your Mise en Place

- 1 cup (225 g) lukewarm water
- 1 tsp (3.5 g) instant yeast
- 2 cups + 2 tbs (310 g) unbleached bread flour*
- 1 tsp (6 g) sea salt

To prepare your mise en place, follow a Simple Bakers Formula by weighing the ingredients. Set aside.

*Use a bread flour with at least 12% protein content.

Step 2: Mixing the Dough

Pour the water into a medium-sized, deep bowl and sprinkle the yeast over top. Add three-quarters of the flour. With a wooden spoon, mix the ingredients until just combined and then add the salt.

Do not knead at this point. Keep stirring, adding the remaining flour. Depending on the humidity, you may need to add a bit more than the measured amount. Add enough flour to create a clay-like mass. As you stir, the dough should clean the sides of the bowl, but it will be lightly sticky.

Step 3: Kneading the Dough

Turn the dough out onto the countertop, removing any bits of flour and dough that are stuck to the bowl. Gently knead the dough for a minute, allow it to rest and hydrate for 5 minutes, then gently knead for another minute. Use a bench scraper to assist with handling the dough, if needed. Use only a light sprinkling of flour, if needed.

Gently shape the dough into a round.

Step 4: Fermenting the Dough

Clean out the mixing bowl, if necessary and place the kneaded dough inside. Cover the bowl with plastic wrap and let rise at room temperature or in a slightly warm location, until it doubles in size, approximately 1-2 hours depending on the ambient temperature.

Once the dough doubles in size, punch it down to expel the gas. Cover the dough again and let it rest for about 5 minutes.

Step 5: Shaping the Dough

- medium cornmeal (for dusting)
- bread flour (for dusting)

Once the dough has rested, it can be shaped. Watch Topic 5 of the Stages of Bread Making Lesson for specific instructions.

Once the dough has been shaped, place it onto a tray lined with cornmeal.

If a silicone baking mat is used, cornmeal is not necessary.

Step 6: Proofing the Dough

Place a small tray on the lowest rack and preheat your oven to 450°F (230°C).

Flour the dough using a strainer and cover loosely with plastic wrap. Let the dough proof at room temperature for approximately 30 minutes. Perform the spring back test to ensure it has proofed enough before baking.

Step 7: Slashing and Baking the Dough

- 3 tbsp cold water

Once the dough has properly proofed, slash the dough with a serrated knife or other sharp knife or lame.

Immediately transfer to the middle rack and pour the water into the small tray to create steam. Immediately close the oven door.

Bake it until the top and sides are golden to medium brown. For a baguette, about 20 minutes. Test the temperature by inserting a thermometer into the center of the loaf. The temperature should reach 180°F (82°C).

Step 8: Cooling and Storing the Bread

Once you remove the bread from the oven, transfer it to a cooling rack to cool completely.

Wait at least 30 minutes before cutting. Enjoy within 1 to 2 days; store at room temperature in a paper bag or bread box.