

Family Bread

- 4 cups warm tap water (not hot)
- 2/3 cup non-fat dry milk powder (instant powdered milk)
- 1/3 cup sugar or 1/4 cup honey
- 2 packets or 4 teaspoons dry yeast
- 1 tablespoon salt
- 1/3 cup melted margarine or oil
- 12 cups (approximately) white or whole wheat flour or a combination

The first thing you need is a big bowl or clean dish pan to mix this up in. I use a huge metal bowl that is made of stainless steel. But I used to use the same plastic dish tub I washed the dishes in. I would wash it with a little bit of bleach, rinse it really well, and then dry it completely. In some ways it worked better because it fit on my lap more conveniently due to the rectangular shape.



But the shiny stainless steel one does look more like I know what I'm doing. So much for appearances.

So anyway mix the water, dry milk powder and sugar in the dishpan or bowl. Add the yeast, sort of sprinkled on top. Allow the mixture to sit until the yeast dissolves some, this will only take a couple of minutes. Add the salt, margarine or oil, and flour. Mix with a wooden spoon until it gets too stiff and then dig in with your hands. When the dough is in a nice cohesive ball, turn it out onto a floured kitchen table or counter. Or if you are using a dish pan, you can just leave it in there.

Now start kneading the dough with all of the love you have for your family. Press the dough and send big love vibes into it. Stretch the dough and impress all of your compassion and generosity into it. Remember why you love your kids,

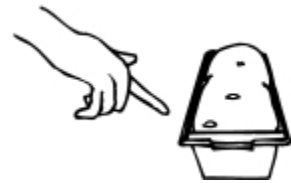


and your spouse and your mom or you dad, and just put it all into the dough. Knead it like this for a full ten minutes. Add more flour if you need to as you go along.



Coat the dough with oil, about 2 tablespoons of it, and put it into the bowl or dishpan. Cover it with a towel or plastic wrap and let it set in a warm place to rise for about an hour or so. It should double in bulk. It may take up to two hours on cool days, or in the air conditioning, so be patient.

Punch down the dough by literally pressing your fist into the center of it. Divide the dough into 4 equal lumps. Coax them into loaf shapes and place them into large (9 by 5-inch) well oiled loaf pans. If you don't have enough



loaf pans, use casserole pans or cake pans, or whatever. Cover the dough with a cloth or more plastic wrap and let it rise again. It should take less time for the second rising. When the dough is risen up enough, bake the loaves at 350° for 40 minutes.

You can tell the dough is done if you turn it out of the pan and thump the bottom with your finger. It should make a dull hollow sound. If it doesn't sound hollow, put it back into the pan and cook it some more. Makes four loaves.

Old-Fashioned Low-Yeast Bread:

This variation is similar to sourdough bread and it has 2 benefits. The first is economical. You only need a single packet of yeast to make 4 loaves of bread. The second is that the work can be done the day before and finished when you have more time the next day. The process is simple.

Reduce the yeast to 1 packet, or approximately 2-1/4 teaspoons of active dry yeast. Mix and knead the dough as

directed. When you tuck it away to rise, put it in a spot that is safe from nocturnal critters (like in the oven or the drier) and let it sit for 12 to 18 hours. The yeast has to have a long time to work because there isn't much of it in there. As it sits in the dough, it will reproduce itself and gradually raise the entire batch of dough. Do not refrigerate it during this time; let it sit at room temperature.

The next day check your dough to see how it's doing. If it has doubled in bulk, then you can punch it down and shape it into loaves. If it hasn't doubled yet then let it sit a while longer.

Don't worry about the dough. Don't worry about it going bad, or getting contaminated or anything like that. Remember, our foremothers always made their dough this way and they produced healthy, hearty offspring that could withstand all sorts of trouble. Eating this kind of bread didn't make anyone sick back then when their sanitary methods were questionable at best and it won't hurt you or your crew either.

After the dough has doubled, you can proceed with the recipe as written. The second rise may take 2 or 3 hours, or it may take less than that. Bake the bread like you normally do. When it's done you'll notice that the texture may seem a tiny bit chewier than usual, but for the most part it will be perfectly normal bread.