

Boat-Friendly Breads

Matthew and Gail Jenkins, s/v *Alisios*

We consider “boat-friendly” breads to be those that use readily available ingredients, require minimal kneading / hand-folding and little clean-up. They should taste good and take little effort to make. The following recipes were refined and tested during our winter of 2007 – 2008 seven-month cruise from the Chesapeake Bay to the southern Bahamas and back, then added to upon our return.

Alisios' Minimal Knead White Bread

This is our basic yeast-risen bread recipe and most of the other recipes here are enhancements to these ingredients and steps. It makes a medium-weight, tasty white bread that is great on its own, but can also be modified by adding ½ a cup of chopped sun-dried tomatoes, chopped olives, coconut, or the like. Make it plain a few times to get the hang of it. Then, if you feel like it, experiment!

1 ¾ cups warm water	1 ½ tsp. salt
2 tsp. sugar	1 – 2 Tbsp. vegetable or olive oil
1 packet (2 ¼ tsp.) dry yeast	3 ½ – 4 cups all-purpose flour

Mix sugar, yeast, and water in a bowl and let sit for 10 minutes. Add salt and oil. Stir until the salt is completely dissolved. Add flour slowly and mix well with a strong (e.g. wood) spoon, until you get a lump of firm, slightly sticky dough, then hand-fold / knead the dough in the bowl sprinkling in additional flour until the texture is consistent. Rinse the bowl clean, dry it, and spray the interior with a very light coating of Pam. Place the dough back in the bowl, cover with a towel and let rise in a warm, not hot, environment (75° – 85° F best) until the dough approximately doubles in size (about 1 ¼ – 1 ½ hours. It seems to rise faster in a house than onboard a boat). Oil (Pam) a bread pan. Fold the dough again in the bowl, shape it a bit and put it into the pan, shaping further until it fills the bottom relatively evenly. Let rise another 35 – 45 minutes until it's made a small dome above the rim of the pan. Bake at 350 degrees until golden brown (approximately 50 minutes). It will rise further in the oven. Remove from pan and let stand on rack at least 30 minutes before cutting. Don't bag any bread until it has cooled completely.

Alisios' Minimal Knead Honey Molasses Wheat Bread

1 ¾ cups warm water	1 ½ tsp. salt
1 Tbsp. honey	1 Tbsp. vegetable oil (or 2 Tbsp. melted butter)
1 Tbsp. molasses	2 cups whole wheat flour
1 ½ tsp. sugar	1 ½ – 2 cups all-purpose flour
1 packet (2 ¼ tsp.) dry yeast	½ cup shelled sunflower seeds

Mix honey, molasses, sugar, yeast, and water in a bowl. Let the mixture sit for 10 minutes. Add salt and oil, stir until the salt is completely dissolved. Add flour slowly (wheat first) and mix well with a strong (e.g. wood) spoon, until you get a lump of firm, slightly sticky dough. Sprinkle in the sunflower seeds as you are mixing the dough. Hand-fold / knead the dough in the bowl sprinkling in additional flour until the texture is consistent. Cover with a towel and let rise in a warm, not hot, environment (75° – 85° F best) until the dough approximately doubles in size (between 1 ¼ and 2 hours). Oil (Pam) a bread pan. Fold the dough again, dump into the pan and let rise another 45 minutes. Bake at 350 degrees until brown (approx. 50 minutes). Remove from bread pan and let stand on rack at least 30 minutes before cutting. Don't bag until it has cooled completely. Makes a medium-heavy, tasty wheat bread that is really good as buttered toast.

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Alisios' Rye Bread

1 ½ cup warm water	1 Tbsp. vegetable oil (or 2 Tbsp. melted butter)
2 Tbsp. [dark] brown sugar	1 ¼ cups rye flour
1 packet (2 ¼ tsp.) dry yeast	2 – 3 cups all-purpose flour
1 tsp. salt	1 Tbsp. caraway seeds
2 Tbsp. milk (or 1 Tbsp. powdered)	

Mix sugar, yeast, and water in a bowl. Let the mixture sit for 10 minutes. Add milk, salt and oil, stir until the salt is completely dissolved. Add the rye flour and mix in with a strong (e.g. wood) spoon. Add the caraway seeds and all-purpose flour. Mix well, then hand-fold / knead the dough in the bowl sprinkling in additional flour until the texture is consistent. Cover with a towel and let rise in a warm, not hot, environment (75° – 85° F best) until the dough approximately doubles in size (about an hour and 15 minutes to an hour and a half). Oil (Pam) a bread pan. Fold the dough again, dump into the pan and let rise another 35 – 45 minutes. Bake at 350 degrees until golden brown (approximately 50 minutes). Remove from pan and let stand on rack at least 30 minutes before cutting.

Honey Buttermilk (White) Bread

¾ cup buttermilk	1 ½ tsp. salt
½ cup warm water	1 Tbsp. melted butter
3 Tbsp. honey	1 Tbsp. vegetable oil
1 packet (2 ¼ tsp.) dry yeast	3 ½ – 4 cups all-purpose flour

Mix water, honey, and yeast in a bowl. Let the mixture sit for 10 minutes. Add buttermilk (we use powdered, which is reconstituted by mixing it with water), salt and butter / oil, stir until the salt is completely dissolved. Add flour slowly and mix well with a strong (e.g. wood) spoon, until you get a lump of firm, slightly sticky dough. Hand-fold / knead the dough in the bowl, sprinkling in additional flour until the texture is smooth and consistent. Cover with a towel and let rise in a warm, not hot, environment (75° – 85° F best) until the dough approximately doubles in size (between 1 ½ and 2 hours – this dough takes a bit longer to rise than some others). Oil (Pam) a bread pan. Fold the dough again, dump into the pan and let rise another 45 minutes to an hour. Bake at 350 degrees until brown (approx. 45 minutes). Remove from bread pan and let stand on rack at least 30 minutes before cutting.

Beer Bread

3 – 3 ½ cups self-rising flour *
3 Tbsp. sugar
1 (12 oz) can / bottle warm Budweiser-type beer
(Don't use a heavy beer. The bread won't taste good.)

Mix 3 cups of the flour and the sugar in a large mixing bowl. Add the beer slowly, stirring it in with a strong (e.g. wood) spoon until you get a lump of firm, slightly sticky dough. You will probably need to add a bit of additional flour after the beer to get the dough to the proper consistency. Put the dough into a greased bread pan (OK to use PAM). Bake at 375 degrees until golden brown (approximately 50 minutes).

* If you don't have self rising flour you can make it by adding ½ tsp. salt and 1 ½ tsp. baking powder to each cup of regular all-purpose flour.

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Wheat Honey Oat Bread

2 - 2 ½ cups whole wheat flour	1 ¼ tsp. salt
1 cup all-purpose flour	¼ cup (4 Tbsp.) powdered milk
½ cup regular rolled oats	1 packet (2 ¼ tsp.) dry yeast
3 Tbsp. honey	1 cup boiling warm water
1 Tbsp. molasses	½ cup warm water
2 Tbsp. vegetable oil	

Place the oats and boiling water into a mixing bowl and let stand 10 minutes. Add the warm water, honey, molasses, and yeast. Let stand another 5 – 10 minutes. Add the powdered milk, salt, and oil and stir. Add flour slowly and mix well with a strong spoon until you get a lump of firm, slightly sticky dough. Hand-fold / knead the dough in the bowl until the texture is consistent. Cover with a towel and let rise in a warm, not hot, environment (75° – 85° F best) until the dough approximately doubles in size (about an hour and a half to two hours). Oil (Pam) a bread pan. Mix the dough again, dump into the pan and let rise another 45 minutes, tenting the bread pan so the towel will not stick to the dough on the second rising. Bake at 350 degrees until brown (approximately 45 – 55 minutes). Remove from bread pan and let stand at least 30 minutes before cutting. Don't bag until it has cooled completely.

Basic Corn Bread

1 cup stone-ground cornmeal	2 eggs
1 cups all-purpose flour	¼ cup corn oil, vegetable oil, or melted butter
½ tsp. salt	2 – 3 Tbsp. honey
2 tsp. baking powder	1 cup milk

Preheat oven to 425° F. Stir the dry ingredients together. In another bowl, whisk together the wet ingredients. Quickly mix the wet and dry ingredients together, pour the batter into an 8 inch square baking pan, and bake in the middle of the oven until golden brown on top and beginning to pull away from the edges (about 25 minutes). Serve hot right from the pan.

Basic Baking Powder Biscuits¹

2 cups all-purpose flour	6 Tbsp. butter, shortening, or vegetable oil
2 tsp. baking powder	1 cup milk
½ tsp. salt	

Combine the dry ingredients in a bowl and cut in the butter with your fingers or two knives until the mixture looks like coarse meal. Pour in the milk and stir it with a fork until the dry ingredients are evenly moistened. Lightly flour the counter, turn out the dough and pat it into a circle about ¼ inch thick. Cut into rounds. Reassemble the scraps and cut them out as well. Bake the biscuits at 450° on a lightly greased (PAMed) cookie sheet until golden brown (approximately 15 – 20 minutes).

For Buttermilk Biscuits, use buttermilk instead of milk and add ½ tsp. baking soda.

For Drop Biscuits, increase the milk or buttermilk to 1 1/3 cups and drop by spoonfuls onto the sheet.

¹ From *Vegetarian Cooking for Everyone* by Deborah Madison

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Welsh Cakes (Pice ar y Maen)

2 cups all-purpose flour	½ cup (1 stick) softened butter
1/3 cup granulated white or castor sugar	1/3 cup currants or raisins
2 ¼ tsp. baking powder	1 egg, lightly beaten
¼ tsp salt	¼ tsp. vanilla extract
¼ tsp ground cinnamon	2 – 4 Tbsp. milk
¼ tsp. ground mace or nutmeg	

In a large bowl, stir together the flour, sugar, baking powder, salt, ground cinnamon, and mace (or nutmeg). Don't over-do the spices. Cut the butter into small pieces and blend into the flour mixture with two knives. The mixture should look like coarse crumbs. Stir in the currants. Add the beaten egg and enough milk to form a light dough. Knead the dough gently on a lightly floured surface and roll to a thickness of 1/4 inch. Cut into rounds using a 3 inch cookie cutter. Lightly butter a griddle and heat to medium-hot. It's important that the griddle not be too hot. You want the cakes to cook slowly and not burn. (On an electric range, don't start on high – aim for about a steady 5 – 6.) Cook the Welsh cakes for about 4 – 5 minutes per side, or until they are golden brown, but still soft in the middle. Immediately after baking, sprinkle with granulated white or castor sugar. Serve warm or at room temperature. Makes 15 – 20 cakes.

Alisios' Pizza Crust

I created this recipe to emulate the packets of pizza crust mixes one can buy in U.S. grocery stores. The proportions are sized for use with a 9" * 13" cookie sheet (the oven of a small boat).

1 ¼ cups all-purpose flour	1 Tbsp. powdered egg (about ½ a mixed egg)
½ tsp. salt	1 Tbsp. olive oil
2 tsp. baking powder	½ cup warm water
1 Tbsp. powdered milk	

Mix the dry ingredients. Add the water and olive oil. Mix, then hand-fold until the dough is firm but sticky. Let stand for 10 minutes. Grease (Pam) a 9" * 13" cookie sheet and stretch dough from edge to edge. Add a light coating (approximately 6 – 7 oz.) of sauce and any desired toppings. Bake pizza at 450 degrees for 15 minutes.

So-So Pizza Sauce

1 (6 ounce) can tomato paste	1 Tbsp. olive oil
6 oz. water	Dash of salt
½ tsp. sugar	Dash of black pepper
1 tsp. oregano (or Italian seasoning)	Dash of red pepper (optional)
1 or 2 cloves minced garlic	

Combine all ingredients. Makes 1 ½ cups, enough for two of the pizza crusts above.

(Sauce is better when cooked, but we didn't want to go through the hassle and didn't find a simple recipe that was as good as the store-bought sauces which we found sold in both jars and cans throughout the Bahamas. This recipe is passable, easy, and doesn't require bulky ingredients. However, it's only so-so.)

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Baking Loafs of Bread in a Pressure-Cooker

If you don't have an oven, bread can also be baked in a pressure cooker. In addition to a 4 or 6 quart pressure cooker, you will need both a heat diffuser (flame tamer) and a little corn meal – Follow any of the bread recipes above. But, instead of using a bread pan, grease (Pam) a 4 or 6 quart pressure cooker and coat the pot with a dusting of corn meal. Place the dough in the pressure cooker for the final rising (if applicable), then bake it over a low flame, with a heat diffuser between the pot and the flame and **WITHOUT THE GASKET OR STEAM VALVE**, until done (between 45 minutes and 1 hour). The pressure cooker is being used as a Dutch oven. The heat diffuser and corn meal insulate the bread from the direct heat of the flame, keeping it from burning on the bottom. The bread will not brown on the top but will cook through. You will have to play with timing as it will vary a bit depending on the stove and pressure-cooker used.