

LEARNING MADE EASY



Bread Making

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More than 85 recipes
from around the globe

Tips, tricks, and secrets to bake
sourdough or yeast breads

Healthier breads baked with
rye and whole-grain flours

**Wendy Jo Peterson,
MS, RDN**

Co-author of *Instant Pot Cookbook
For Dummies*



Bread Making

by Wendy Jo Peterson

**for
dummies®**
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Bread Making For Dummies®

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Introduction

If you've recently found yourself curious about bread making, you're not alone! The age-old ritual of mixing flour, water, and yeast to create a delicious loaf of bread is growing in popularity.

And it's not surprising. Bread is part of the soul. In fact, some scientists believe bread making has been around for 30,000 years. From flatbreads to loaves, bread can easily be considered the most widely consumed food on Earth. Every culture has some type of bread as a staple in their diet.

You no longer need to pound grains between rocks to yield flour, but bread making still requires a bit more effort than going to a store and simply buying a loaf. Bread making is a labor of love, and the smell of hot bread fresh from the oven is just one of the many rewards of making your own. With this book as your guide, you'll be reaping the rewards in no time!

About This Book

Think of this book as your own personal bread-making coach! You start by getting familiar with some of the science behind bread making. Don't worry, there won't be a quiz and you don't have to memorize any technical terms or formulas, but understanding how just a few ingredients combine to make a delicious loaf of bread is important. I explain which flours and types of yeast are used to make different kinds of bread, and I show you some bread-making techniques that will come in handy. Finally, I help you stock your kitchen for your bread-

making adventure, before offering more than 85 recipes to choose from.

This book is a reference, which means you don't have to read it from beginning to end and you don't have to commit it to memory. Instead, you can dip into these pages over and over again to find the information you need. The Table of Contents and Index will point you in the right direction.

Sidebars (text in gray boxes) and anything marked with the Technical Stuff icon (more on that later) can be skipped without missing the main point of the subject at hand.

Here are a few suggestions for getting the most out of the recipes in this book:

- » Read each recipe from top to bottom before you make your grocery list to ensure you have all the ingredients you need.
- » In the ingredients list, *milk* means whole milk and *butter* means unsalted butter; *all-purpose flour* means white, unbleached, all-purpose flour; and *warm water* means water between 100 and 110 degrees (it should feel warm to the touch, but not hot).
- » A “floured surface” is generally $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of all-purpose flour on a flat surface. You can add more or less flour based on the stickiness of the dough. (If the dough is sticky, add a little more flour to the surface; if the dough is dryer, add a little less flour to the surface.)
- » If your house is cool or drafty, consider allowing the dough to rise in a cold oven with the light on. Cover the dough bowl with a tea towel, place it in a cold oven, and turn on the oven light. (Be sure to leave a

note on the oven, so no one accidentally heats the oven with the dough inside!)

- » You can use either fresh or dried herbs. For easy substitution, just keep in mind that 1 teaspoon of dried is equivalent to 1 tablespoon of fresh.
- » Pay special attention to the techniques called for, whether hand kneading or using a stand mixer with a dough hook. Technique affects the end result, so be sure to follow the recipe.
- » If possible, use a scale to measure the ingredients instead of relying on measuring cups and spoons. Bread making is a science, and the more precise you can be with your measurements, the better.
- » Any recipes that are vegetarian are marked with the tomato icon (🍅) in the Recipes in This Book and the Recipes in This Chapter lists. (Most of the recipes in this book are, not surprisingly, vegetarian!)
- » The recipes in this book include information on how long you can store the bread. If you can't use the bread in the recommended timeframe, you can always place all or part of a loaf in a resealable plastic, freezer-safe bag and store it in the freezer for later use. To defrost, remove from the freezer and let the breads return to room temperature in the freezer bag, or place on a baking sheet and bake at 350 degrees for 10 minutes. Toasting bread is also a great way to defrost without the wait.

Within this book, you may note that some web addresses break across two lines of text. If you're reading this book in print and want to visit one of these web pages, simply key in the web address exactly as it's noted in the text, pretending as though the line break doesn't exist. If you're reading this as an e-book, you've got it easy —

just click the web address to be taken directly to the web page.

Foolish Assumptions

In writing this book, I made a few assumptions about you, the reader:

- » You've tasted homemade or bakery-style bread and you know what you're aiming to achieve.
- » You have basic knowledge of cooking, baking, and measuring.
- » You're patient — bread making definitely is *not* a quick process!

Icons Used in This Book

Throughout the book, you'll icons in the margin. Here's what each icon means:



TIP

The Tip icon marks information that can save you time and money as you're planning recipes to make, shopping for ingredients, and making bread.



REMEMBER

You don't have to commit this book to memory, but sometimes a piece of information is so important that I want you to remember it. When that happens, I flag it with the Remember icon.



WARNING

Think of the Warning icon as a big orange traffic cone in the middle of the sidewalk, warning you about a hole you don't want to fall into.



**TECHNICAL
STUFF**

Bread making is a science, and sometimes I wade into the weeds with technical information. When I do, I use the Technical Stuff icon. You can safely skip anything marked with this icon without missing anything essential about the topic at hand.

Beyond the Book

In addition to what you're reading right now, this product comes with a free access-anywhere Cheat Sheet that includes tips on how to form a round roll, the benefits of sourdough bread, and a bread baker's schedule you can follow if you like. To get this Cheat Sheet, go to www.dummies.com and type **Bread Making For Dummies Cheat Sheet** in the Search box.

Where to Go from Here

If you're brand-new to making breads, take your time and explore [Part 1](#). If you've made bread before and you feel confident with the process, check out all the recipes in [Part 2](#) — from savory to sweet to stuffed, you have more than 85 recipes to explore! If you're short on time, [Part 3](#) offers ways to use up stale bread, my favorite sandwich ideas, and more.

I hope this book becomes your go-to bread-making guide, one that you flip through often when you crave freshly made bread. After all, everything is better with bread!

Part 1

Getting Started with Bread Making

IN THIS PART ...

Discover the science behind great bread.

Get acquainted with bread-making ingredients.

Understanding bread-making techniques.

Discover the old-world techniques of sourdough baking.

Plan a well-equipped kitchen and pantry.

Chapter 1

Understanding the Basics of Bread Making

IN THIS CHAPTER

- » Looking at how gluten, yeast, and salt combine to make bread
 - » Measuring your ingredients precisely
-

Bread is king, and bread making is equal parts art and science. In this chapter, you explore the science behind bread making and find out why a scale is so important for success.

If science wasn't your favorite subject in school, you may be tempted to flip ahead to the next chapter or just dive into a recipe, but especially if you're new to bread making, I urge you to give this chapter a read. It's only a few pages, and the information about how and why bread making works will not only help you understand what you're doing in the kitchen, but also give you the knowledge you'll need to figure out what went wrong if something does.

Donning Your Lab Coat: The Science of Bread

Science is *everything* in bread making. Each ingredient plays a specific role in the formation of bread. The good

news is, this kind of science is fun! Plus, unlike in school, there won't be a test on Friday.

In this section, I fill you in on the main components of bread and the roles they play in making that delicious loaf you love.

Gluten

Gluten is the protein found in flour, and it's why the type of flour you use matters when you're baking, whether you're making cake or bread. (Turn to [Chapter 2](#) for more on flour.) The forming of gluten is what gives rise, literally, to bread. Without gluten, your bread would feel like a brick.

When you add water to flour, it creates long, elastic strands from the gluten (known as the *gluten matrix*). Knead the flour strengthens those strands, which is important in giving your bread structure, so it can rise. ([Chapter 3](#) explains the intricate details of kneading and stretching dough.)

Yeast

Yeast is another key ingredient of bread. Yeast is a living thing — it feeds off the carbohydrates in flour and expels carbon dioxide (a gas), which gets caught in the gluten matrix. That nifty matrix you formed while you were kneading holds the gas inside its chambers, and the dough rises. Magic!

Salt

Salt has an important role to play in bread making, and it's not just about flavor (although nothing is quite as tasty as a well-salted bread). Salt conditions the gluten, making it stronger and strengthening the elasticity of the strands. If you use too *little* salt, not only will your bread

taste bland, but it will rise too quickly in an ill-formed matrix. If you use too *much* salt, it can kill the yeast.



REMEMBER Bread making is all about balance, but don't fret! The recipes in this book have just the right balance of flour, yeast, and salt.

Heat

When you place your bread in the oven to bake, the gluten solidifies and holds its form. And when the baking is complete, the bread won't deflate. Instead, your well-formed gluten will hold its form as the bread cools and after it's sliced.



WARNING Don't slice your bread too early! You'll probably be tempted to eat your bread straight out of the oven, but bread needs to fully cool before slicing or the texture will turn gummy and sticky.

Taking the Guesswork out of Baking Bread

Bread making is precise, and in order to have precision, you need a scale.



TIP

A food scale is one of the most important pieces of equipment when it comes to successful baking, and not just for breads. For around \$12, you can purchase a decent food scale that measures in grams.

As a culinary teacher, I do an experiment where I ask each of my students to measure out 1 cup of flour and then have them weigh it. Some students measure out 128 grams; some, 142 grams; and others, closer to 200 grams (if they've packed the flour in the cup). The correct weight of 1 cup of all-purpose flour is 125 grams. Being a few grams off can make a *huge* difference in the outcome of your bread.



REMEMBER

Although the recipes in this book include both the metric measurements (grams) and U.S. imperial volume measurements (cups and teaspoons), I recommend using a scale and following the metric measurements.

Chapter 2

Digging into the Ingredients

IN THIS CHAPTER

- » Looking at the different types of flour used in bread making
 - » Considering all the other ingredients that go into bread
-

The most critical ingredient in bread making is flour. Flour is what gives the bread its structure, texture, and flavor. However, not all flours are created equally. In this chapter, I dive into the differences among various flours, so you can make any recipe, knowing how to swap flours in and out.

Although flours take center stage in bread making, additional ingredients make flour become bread. In this chapter, I walk you through all these other important ingredients — from yeast to salt to liquids and more.

Focusing on Flour

Flours come in all different varieties, from grains to protein. In this section, I look at the flours used most often in bread making. The following list just scratches the surface of flours used in bread making, though, so don't hesitate to branch out and try different kinds of flour to see which one you like best.



REMEMBER

The type of flour you use in baking matters. Cake flour yields the best cakes, but it's not what you want to use when making bread.



TECHNICAL
STUFF

ALL YOU EVER WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT WHEAT

In the United States, wheat is grown in 42 of the 50 states. There are six wheat varieties: hard red winter, hard red spring, soft red winter, hard white, soft white, and durum. Technically, wheat is a member of the grass family (hence, the image of golden swaying wheat that may come to mind when you picture wheat).

Whole wheat is a whole grain, meaning it contains all the parts of the grain: the bran, germ, and endosperm. Whole wheat is naturally low in fat and a good source of fiber. It also has important nutrients, such as, selenium, potassium, and magnesium. In the 1990s, wheat products got a boost of nutrition with the enrichment of iron, folic acid, thiamin, riboflavin, and niacin. This came about as a means to combat birth defects and support nutrient deficiencies across the United States.

When the grass of wheat is dried and ground down, it becomes a whole-wheat flour. When the grass is stripped of everything except the endosperm, it becomes white flour. If you're looking for the most nutrient-dense flours, look for the words *stone ground* on the label — this old-world grinding technique is slower and helps retain more nutrition than the faster, more conventional techniques used today.

Bread tends to get a bad rap because it's often made with white and enriched flour instead of the whole-grain form. You can absolutely savor a great white bread, but just remember to balance your plate with whole grains. Also, branch out and try a variety of grains that boost nutrition and flavor in breads.

» **All-purpose flour:** Many cookbooks use the term *flour* to mean “all-purpose flour.” All-purpose flour contains 10 percent to 12 percent protein. Many

manufacturers label their all-purpose flour with the percentage of protein so the consumer understands what they're using. You can find all-purpose flour bleached or unbleached; for bread making, choose an unbleached flour.

- » **Bread flour:** Bread flour typically ranges from 12 percent to 14 percent protein, which is an ideal range for forming gluten and creating the matrix (see [Chapter 1](#)).
- » **Cake flour:** Cake flour plays a role in certain breads, like Croissants ([Chapter 9](#)) and German Pretzels ([Chapter 9](#)). Cake flour is lower in protein (about 7 percent to 9 percent) than all-purpose flour and it's milled finer. These simple differences make a significant impact on texture. Although you can swap out cake flour for all-purpose flour, the outcome won't result in as tender of a crumb.
- » **Whole-wheat flour:** Whole-wheat flour contains the bran, germ, and endosperm of wheat and is around 14 percent protein. Whole-wheat flour produces a denser, often less airy or spongy bread. When you know how to work the grain, you can produce a great product with whole-wheat flour.
- » **White whole-wheat flour:** A white whole-wheat flour has often been produced from a spring white wheat, so it's a whole-wheat product and can have a higher protein content (13 percent), but it has a milder flavor.
- » **Winter red wheat flour:** Red refers to the color of the kernel of wheat grown. Winter red wheat flour produces a nuttier, more robust wheat flavor. Many artisan bread makers seek out a hard red wheat flour because of the flavor and higher protein (14 percent).
- » **Einkorn:** *Einkorn* means "single grain" in German. Einkorn is the most primitive form of the wheat grain

that you can find. Because it's an ancient grain, it produces a denser bread with a nuttier flavor than you may have tasted before. You can purchase einkorn as a berry, and then mill or sprout it to add it to breads, or you can purchase the flour and add it to your bread recipes. Einkorn has a protein content of 22 percent, but it's low in gluten.



TECHNICAL
STUFF

Often, in recipes with ancient grains, you find a gluten product, whether in the form of flour or in vital wheat gluten added to the recipe to help form the matrix in bread.

- » **Emmer:** Much like einkorn, emmer is an ancient grain that is high in protein (22 percent) and low in gluten.
- » **Khorasan:** Khorasan is an ancient grain that has not been subjected to modern hybridization. At 15 percent protein, it can make a better bread than other ancient grains. It requires more liquid, though, because it absorbs more than other flours do. The grain produces a dense loaf of bread.



TECHNICAL
STUFF

Some research studies have highlighted the cholesterol-lowering effects of eating more Khorasan grains.

- » **Rye flour:** Rye is not a wheat at all, but a grass. Rye is a popular grain used throughout Europe and Russia. It has less gluten than wheat, producing a denser loaf of bread. You see rye flour used frequently in this book to provide a subtle flavor and increase the nutrition profile of the bread.

- » **Semolina flour:** Semolina is a durum wheat and hard wheat, which is most commonly seen in pastas. However, when you use semolina in bread making, you get a pale yellow hue in the bread and subtle nutty undertones.
- » **Spelt flour:** Spelt is another fabulous ancient grain, and quite possibly my favorite whole grain to use when making bread. Spelt has a higher gluten content, making it a great substitute for whole-wheat flour in recipes with a range of 13 percent to 14 percent total protein.
- » **Sprouted-grain flour:** Sprouting wheat grains prior to milling or adding to dough improves digestibility. You can purchase sprouted whole-wheat flours, which typically has 13 percent to 14 percent protein content, and use it to make a great bread. You can also sprout your own grains (see the nearby sidebar), and add the sprouted grains to your bread mix.
- » **Rice flour:** You may consider rice flour an odd item on this list, but rice flour is actually an excellent flour to use with sourdough baking — not within the loaf, but in the *banneton* (a woven or braided basket that helps a loaf hold its shape and creates a desired design on the surface of the dough during its final proofing). Rice flour won't stick to the bread as it proofs, allowing the bread to easily release from the mold.



TIP

SPROUTING YOUR OWN GRAINS

Sprouting grains is easy! Just follow these steps:

1. **In a quart-size glass canning jar, place 1 cup of grains (like emmer, einkorn, or Khorasan).**

2. **Pour 12 ounces of filtered water over the grains.**
3. **Place a tea towel over the jar and place a rubber band over the tea towel to secure the towel as a lid for the jar.**
4. **Place the jar in a dark, cool cupboard and wait 24 hours; then drain and rinse the grains under cold, running water for 3 minutes.**
5. **Place the damp grains back in the jar; cover with the tea towel and use the rubber band to secure the tea towel.**
6. **Over the next two days, rinse the grains twice daily and return to the cupboard each time.**
7. **When you begin to see the grains sprout, transfer the grains to the refrigerator and use in salads, on sandwiches, or in baked goods.**

Looking At Everything Else

Flour is, not surprisingly, a major part of bread making. But you can't make bread with flour alone. Here are all the other ingredients that may go into your favorite bread:

» **Yeast:** Yeast plays a major role in giving bread its rise (see [Chapter 1](#) for more on how yeast works). For bread making, yeast comes in two main varieties:

- **Commercial yeasts:** The most common commercial yeast used in the United States is active dry yeast. This yeast is activated with warm water (100 to 110 degrees) and then fed a little sugar to begin bubbling and release carbon dioxide. You can find active dry yeast in individual packages or in a glass jar. Store the yeast in a cool, dark, dry space.
- **Wild yeasts:** When you move into sourdough breads and work with a starter, you'll discover wild yeasts. Wild yeasts are naturally occurring

organisms in the fungus family that are floating around in the air, on our counters, on our skin, and in our flours. Wild yeasts are everywhere. By forming a starter, we are capturing and feeding the wild yeasts and creating a fermented yeast perfect for bread making.



WARNING Be sure not to buy nutritional yeast! Nutritional yeast is deactivated, and it won't help your baked goods rise.

- » **Salt:** Salt has an important role to play in bread making, from adding flavor to tightening the structure of gluten, and it helps slow fermentation. You can play around with different salts, like sea salt or kosher salt. If you use fancier salts, be sure they don't have artificial coloring, or else they may cause discoloration in your dough.
- » **Liquid:** Liquids are responsible for rehydrating the flours and dissolving the yeast to help form the dough. Every bread recipe will have a liquid; however, varying liquids will create a different effect on the final product, from flavor to tenderness. Here are a couple liquids you may find:
 - **Water:** Flour absorbs the water and helps to form the gluten. The steam released during baking helps the breads rise. You can use bottled, filtered, or tap water in the recipes in this book.
 - **Milk:** Milk is a nutrient-dense liquid, with fats, sugar, and protein. The protein helps strengthen the dough, the fat helps tenderize it, and the sugars found naturally in milk feed the yeast. For the purposes of the recipes in this book, I used whole milk.

- **Non-dairy milk:** If you have a dairy allergy, you can play around with replacing cow's milk with nutty alternatives, from almond milk to coconut milk. Non-dairy milks will naturally add their flavors and won't provide the same protein strength, but they make for a decent substitute.
- » **Eggs:** Eggs impart a golden color to dough, as well as provide structure, tenderness, and richness. Think about a rich brioche bun, and you'll understand the importance of eggs.
- » **Fat:** Fats can help soften the dough and create a tender crumb. Not every recipe calls for fat, and some fats impart a distinct flavor in the dough. Here are a couple popular fats used in bread making:
 - **Butter:** Everything's better with butter! Rich, cultured butter is my favorite, but because it's harder to find, I've tested all the recipes in this book with unsalted butter. Butter provides tenderness to breads and actually softens the gluten. Getting the right balance of butter is important to create soft, but not crumbly, breads.
 - **Oils:** A touch of oil on the surface of dough helps prevent the dough from drying out. Mixed in, oil tenderizes the bread.
 - **Bacon fat or lard:** These types of fats are often seen in older recipes where people creatively used up rendered fat they had on hand. Bacon fat and lard provide flavor and tenderness to bread.
- » **Fruits, nuts, or seeds:** Not every bread recipe calls for fruits, nuts, or seeds, but they can give bread more nutrition and flavor. Fruits also provide sugars that feed the yeast. Nuts and seeds add in essential

fats, crunch, and texture to the dough. Here's what each of these ingredients brings to the table:

- **Dried fruits:** Dried cherries, apricots, raisins, currants, blueberries, and dates are great additions to dough. They don't add to the structure, but these fun mix-ins do add texture. The sweetness of dried fruits also provides a *substrate* (food) for the yeasts to feed on and can create a sweeter-tasting bread.
- **Nuts:** The most commonly used nuts are walnuts, pecans, hazelnuts, and almonds. Nuts are better protected from high heat when mixed into the dough, instead of being sprinkled on the surface where they may burn at high heat. Nuts add great texture and a dose of nutrition in breads.
- **Seeds:** Flax, chia, sesame, and sunflower seeds are regularly enjoyed around the globe in breads. They add in nutrition and texture. Seeds can often handle higher heat than nuts. They may be best suited mixed into the dough and not just sprinkled on the surface. Seeds are nutrition powerhouses, packed with healthy fats and antioxidants. If you travel to Europe you'll frequently see seeds and nuts added to breads.



TIP

Store dried fruit, nuts, and seeds in an airtight container placed in a cool, dark pantry to extend their shelf life.

» **Honey, molasses, sugar, or dates:** Whether you opt for honey, molasses, sugar, or pureed dates, you'll get added sweetness, food for the yeast, and a touch of color through caramelization. If you opt to reduce or