

Lesson Four - Yeast Breads

Homemade bread baking in the oven brings back memories of my grandma's kitchen. The aroma was wonderful, surpassed only by the delicious taste of bread fresh from the oven! It is not difficult to make yeast bread and, with today's quick rising yeast, you can turn out loaves in half the time it took grandma.

In this lesson, the girls will learn to:

- Work with yeast
- Knead bread dough
- Shape bread dough
- Test yeast bread for doneness



The girls take turns kneading bread dough.

Review:

- Measuring dry & liquid ingredients (Lessons 1-3)
- What is leavening? (Lesson 3)

Give each girl a copy of:

- Learning to Bake Yeast Breads
- Fast Rising White Bread recipe
- Kneading Bread Dough Skill Page

Read the student page together, "Learning to Bake Yeast Breads".

Demonstrate the leavening action of yeast. In a glass measuring cup, stir together 2 T. flour, 1 packet of yeast and 1 t. sugar. Add $\frac{1}{2}$ C. of very warm water, (120-130 degrees). Cover with plastic wrap. In 5-10 minutes, the mixture should be foaming and expanding.

In Lesson Three, we learned that baking soda and baking powder create carbon dioxide bubbles when mixed with liquid. **Yeast also produces carbon dioxide bubbles.** It grows when fed sugar and starch, providing the leavening for our bread.

Don't be afraid of yeast! It needs warm liquid and food to grow. Since RapidRise yeast is added first to the other dry ingredients, it tolerates warmer water; 120-130 degrees is ideal. Most home hot water heaters are set in this range, so hot tap water will probably be just right. A kitchen thermometer is a valuable tool to check water temperature.

For our Fast Rising White Bread recipe, **be sure to purchase RapidRise yeast.** Other companies may call it "quick rise". It takes only half the rising time of regular yeast, which is simply called "Active Dry Yeast".



Purchase yeast in a jar, or a strip containing 3 packets.

1 packet of dry yeast =
2 $\frac{1}{4}$ t.

Photos provided by
Fleischmann's Yeast

Besides yeast, the most important ingredient in bread is **flour**. We're starting with a simple recipe for white bread. I recommend using King Arthur All-Purpose flour for making bread by hand. Not all flour is the same. Take a look in the grocery store and you'll find many different types and brands of flour. What's the difference?



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King Arthur Flour Co.

Gluten is a protein found in flour that produces the structure in bread. This network of gluten is developed as you knead the dough. It traps the carbon dioxide produced by the yeast. The yeast grows; the dough expands and rises.

King Arthur All-Purpose flour has a higher protein content than other brands. Also, it is not chemically bleached or bromated as most other flours are. I find it yields consistently excellent results! King Arthur also produces bread flour, but that is best used with bread machines (the protein content is very high and requires a great deal of kneading).

Other brands of All-Purpose flour have a lower protein content than King Arthur flour. If you're using any other brands, purchase **bread flour**.

This **basic white bread recipe** is a good starting point. It has only four ingredients plus water. There are many other delicious recipes that add butter, eggs, milk, and other ingredients, but they are not necessary to turn out a tasty loaf of white bread.

Our recipe for **Fast Rising White Bread yields two loaves**. Plan to make one batch for a demonstration. Then you may want to have the girls work together to make just one more batch. Several girls can measure ingredients and everyone can take turns kneading the dough. Set a timer and ask each girl to knead for one minute. This is the way I introduced yeast breads to my group.

Of course, you can work in pairs or groups of 3 or 4, but be sure your oven can accommodate all the loaves to be baked, and that you have space for everyone kneading the dough at the same time. An adult should be available to help each group.

Once you have a little experience, I encourage you to try other recipes. Go to the Fleischmann's website, www.breadworld.com or the King Arthur flour website, www.kingarthurfLOUR.com for lots of great recipes and tips.

While the bread is rising, why not **make homemade butter** to spread on the warm bread? It's easy, and oh, so yummy! Pour a carton of heavy whipping cream into a jar and screw the lid on tightly. Shake vigorously. Pass the jar around so everyone takes a turn shaking the cream. It will take a few minutes, but soon the cream will thicken. Keep shaking! A large lump of butter will form. Drain the buttermilk; enjoy the butter on your bread. One pint of whipping cream should be enough for 6 – 8 people.

What you'll need for this lesson:

Ingredients (for 2 batches):

5 lb. bag King Arthur All-Purpose Flour – in a canister for easier access
Rapid Rise or Quick Rise Yeast – 1 strip (or a jar of yeast)
6 Tablespoons of Sugar
2 – 4 teaspoons of Salt
Water
Cooking Oil Spray

Note: A 5 pound bag of flour contains approximately 19 Cups of flour, enough for 3 batches of the Fast Rising White Bread recipe.

Supplies:

Plastic Wrap
Loaf Pans 9" x 5" or 8" x 4" (metal or disposable foil)
Large Mixing bowl
One Cup Measure for flour
Measuring Cup for liquids
Measuring Spoons
Large Sturdy Spoon for mixing dough
Rolling Pin
Clean Scissors
Cooling Rack
Kitchen Thermometer

To serve the bread:

Cutting Board
Bread Knife
Butter, margarine
Spreading knives
Small plates
Napkins

To make butter:

1 pint heavy whipping cream (enough for 6-8 people)
Jar with tight-fitting lid

Optional: For crisper crust:
1 egg or egg white
Small bowl
Fork
Pastry Brush
Sesame or Poppy Seeds

For softer crust, brush with milk.

Kneading Bread Dough

If you've ever played with modeling dough or clay, you probably rolled it, pushed it and shaped it. Kneading bread dough is very similar! It's fun to do, and it's an essential step in bread making.

Let's get started. Work on a clean, dry table or countertop. It should be low enough so that you can extend your arms comfortably as you knead the dough.

Rub some flour on your hands and sprinkle a little on the table. Put the dough on top. It will be sticky at first, but will become easier to work with as you knead.

Pat the dough into a ball. Turn it over several times. Add a little flour to the table if the dough sticks.



Remember these three steps: Fold-Push-Turn.

1. Fold

Flatten the dough a little, then fold it toward you.



2. Push

Put the heels of both hands in the middle of the dough and push it away from you, pressing down as you push.

3. Turn the dough a quarter turn and repeat.

You'll soon **develop a rhythm** as you fold, push and turn. Say to yourself: "Fold, Push, Turn. Fold, Push, Turn." Be energetic! Kneading strengthens the gluten that forms the structure of bread. Gentle love pats won't do!

When the dough gets sticky, **add a little flour** (about 1 T. at a time) and work it into the dough.

It will take 6-10 minutes of kneading, depending on how fast you work. When the dough is smooth and elastic and springs back when you poke it, you're done kneading.



Time to **rest!** Spray plastic wrap with cooking oil spray. Cover the dough with it so the oiled side touches the dough. Let it rest for the time indicated in your recipe.

Name:

Learning to Bake Yeast Breads

Most of the bread we eat every day is leavened with yeast. Leaven makes dough rise. It's great fun to watch yeast at work! Just a little yeast makes an entire batch of bread dough rise, and gives bread a wonderful flavor.

Yeast is actually a tiny, living plant. It's been used in bread making for centuries and is mentioned in the Bible.

Several **types of yeast** are available. **Fresh yeast** comes in little refrigerated blocks and is often called compressed, or cake yeast.

Dry yeast is more common. Although it is dry, it has only been deactivated, not killed. When you add water and flour, you activate the yeast and it starts to grow.

There are **several types of dry yeast**. **Active Dry Yeast** requires long rising times and works best if it's dissolved in warm water first, and then added to the other ingredients.

RapidRise yeast only needs half as much time for rising. You can add it directly to the other dry ingredients without dissolving it first in water. This is the type we will use.

Both types of dry yeast are available in the baking section of the supermarket. Both can be purchased in strips of three packets each, or in a jar. Read the label carefully so you get the type needed for your recipe.

What activates the yeast to make it grow? Warm liquid will activate the yeast, and sugar or flour feeds it. Some cooks worry that they will kill the yeast, but that is not likely if you remember this: if the liquid is warm and feels comfortable to you, it will probably be fine for the yeast.

When using RapidRise yeast, the ideal water temperature is 120-130 degrees. That will feel quite warm to you. RapidRise Yeast is the easiest to use because it's added directly to the dry ingredients. You do not need to dissolve it in water first.

The other main ingredient in bread is flour. There are many different types of wheat flour, so it is important to read the label carefully when purchasing it.

Wheat flour contains a protein called gluten (gloo ten). As you knead the dough, you develop strands of gluten that give structure to the bread.

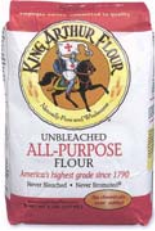


Fresh Yeast



RapidRise Yeast

Photos provided by
Fleischmann's Yeast.



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King Arthur All-Purpose flour is the best choice for making bread by hand because it has a high protein content and is not treated with chemicals. If you use any other brand, you will need to buy **bread flour**.

There are only a few **other ingredients** in our bread recipe. **Sugar** helps the yeast to grow. **Salt** gives flavor and prevents the yeast from rising too fast.

Yeast dough can be made into rolls, coffeecake, cinnamon bread or rolls, pretzels, pizza dough and more! Look in a cookbook for more recipes to try another time. With your parents' permission, you can also find recipes and tips at the following website: www.breadworld.com.

Name:

Fast Rising White Bread

Ingredients:

5 – 6 Cups King Arthur All-Purpose flour
1 pkg. Rapid Rise Yeast (2 ¼ t.)
3 Tablespoons sugar
1 – 2 teaspoons salt
2 Cups very warm water (120 – 130 degrees)
Cooking oil or oil spray



Method:

Yield: 2 loaves

1. Put 5 C. of **flour** into a large bowl.
2. Add the **yeast, sugar** and **salt** to the flour. Stir well.
3. Add the **water**. Stir with a large spoon until the ingredients are well blended. The dough will be very stiff.
4. On a clean, dry table or countertop, sprinkle ½ C. **flour**. Rub some flour all over your hands. Brush the excess flour to one side.
5. Place the dough on the floured surface. Pat it into a ball. It will be sticky at first.
6. Knead the dough 8-10 minutes. Add just enough flour to keep the dough from sticking as you knead, about 1 T. of flour at a time.
7. When you've finished kneading, the dough should be smooth and elastic. Cover with plastic wrap, sprayed with cooking oil. Let the dough rest 10 minutes away from drafts.
8. Grease 2 loaf pans.
9. Flour your hands. Punch down the dough with your fist. Cut the dough in half with a clean scissors.
10. Shape each half into a smooth ball. Roll each into a rectangle with a rolling pin, or stretch and pat the dough with your hands.
11. Starting from a short end, roll the dough tightly into a log shape.
12. Pinch the seam and the ends closed.





13. Place seam-side down into the greased pans.
14. Cover each pan with plastic wrap sprayed with cooking oil. Let the dough rise in a warm place until it doubles in bulk, about 45 minutes.
15. **Preheat the oven to 400 degrees** at least 20 minutes before baking.
16. **Optional:** For a crisp, brown crust, brush the top of each loaf with an egg mixture (see below). Sprinkle with sesame or poppy seeds, if desired.
17. Bake loaves 30-35 minutes or until done. Bake rolls or small shaped bread about 20 minutes. If the bread gets too brown during baking, turn the oven down to 375 degrees.
18. Ask an adult to remove the bread from the pans and test for doneness. Turn bread out of pan. Tap the side or bottom. If it sounds hollow, the bread is done. A thermometer inserted into the bread should read 190-205 degrees.
19. Cool on wire racks.

Optional:

With a fork, beat 1 egg white (or whole egg) with 2 T. water. Brush on top of bread dough just before baking.

Or,

For a softer, tender crust, brush unbaked loaves with milk.



Photos provided by Fleishchmann's Yeast.

www.breadworld.com

Extending The Lesson... Fun with Bread Dough

Bread sculpture is great fun! Once the girls have learned to bake the basic white bread, you can use the same recipe to shape the dough into animals, letters and numbers, flowers, you name it! Be creative; see how many different edible masterpieces you and the girls can create.

Follow the Fast Rising White Bread recipe through step 7. After the dough has rested 10 minutes, cut it in half, or quarters, with scissors. The amount of bread dough you give each girl will depend on how large you want the finished sculpture, and how much oven space you have to bake everyone's bread.

Since our recipe is enough for two loaves of bread, you can cut the dough into fourths and each girl will have plenty to make a medium-sized bear or other creation. For a larger group, the dough can be cut into eight pieces for everyone to make a small sculpture.

With a large group, it helps to give each girl a piece of foil to set her finished sculpture on. First, have the girls write their initials on the back of the foil with a marker. Then spray the other side of the foil with cooking oil spray. Place the sculptures on the foil, then on a cookie sheet to bake. They will be easier to identify when they come out of the oven.

Take a look at some of our creations:



The girls shape the dough into teddy bears on a lightly greased cookie sheet.

Tip: To make claws on the bear, or textured shell for a turtle, make little snips in the dough with clean scissors.



Whole cloves are stuck into the dough for eyes & buttons. Be sure to remove them before eating. After a 20 minute rise, the bears are ready to bake.



We're so proud of the finished bears!

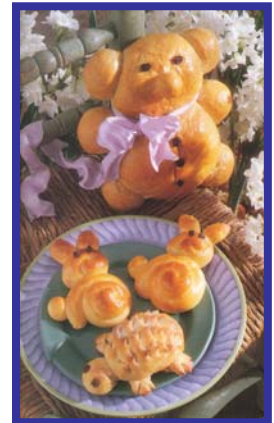


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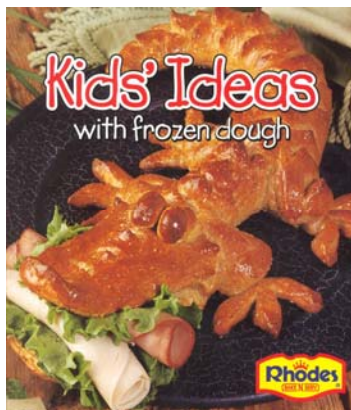
The bear and kitty were brushed with a beaten egg wash to give the brown, shiny crust. Uncooked spaghetti was added, after baking, for whiskers.

Punch a hole in the baked bread with a skewer or toothpick and then insert uncooked spaghetti for whiskers.

Chocolate chips or raisins can be stuck on with a little honey, after the bread has cooled, to create eyes or other features.

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