

SAVOR INDIANA RECIPES



Crusty 18-Hour Bread

INGREDIENTS

3 cups all-purpose flour, plus more as your dough requires in order to form a ball

1/4 teaspoon granulated yeast

2 teaspoons salt

2 cups water - temperature does not matter
Cornmeal or wheat bran as needed



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From "Marvelous Madison"

DIRECTIONS

In a large bowl combine 3 cups flour, yeast, salt and about 1 ½ cups of water. Stir until well blended, then add that last ½ cup of water. Your dough should look shaggy and sticky. Cover the bowl loosely with plastic wrap. In a warm room, about 70 degrees, let dough rest at least 12 hours, but it will be better if you can let the dough rest for 18 hours. You'll know your dough is ready when its surface is dotted with bubbles. Sprinkle ¼ cup flour over the dough, then fold the dough over on itself until the flour is incorporated. When the dough resembles ball, cover it again and allow it to set in a warm place for another 15 minutes. After the 15 minutes rest, continue to add flour, ¼ cup at a time, until the dough resembles a ball. The nice thing about this recipe is that you don't have to knead it.

In the next step, we use a large clean kitchen towel, not a terry cloth or any kind of towel that has slubs in it. Spread out the towel on your bread board and lightly dust it with cornmeal or wheat bran. The cornmeal will keep the bread from sticking to the pot. Gently place the dough in the middle of the towel. Then, bring two corners together into the center and lay them on top of the bread. Bring the other two corners together and tie them in a single knot. This step is important because you are molding the dough into the shape that you want to have for the final baking pan.

Leave the bread on the bread board to rise and double in bulk for about 2 hours. You'll know your dough is ready when it will not spring back easily when poked with a finger. About 1 ½ hours after the final rising, heat your oven to 450 degrees. Put a heavy covered pot, it can be cast iron, enamel, or ceramic into the oven, as it heats. It is important to heat the lid as well. When the dough has doubled in bulk, carefully remove the pot, with the lid from the oven and take the lid off of the pot - put it on a heat resistant surface. Very carefully, remember the pot is hot, lift the bread in the kitchen towel over the pot. Carefully, slide the dough into the pot. It may look like a mess - that's okay. Shake the pan a couple of times if the dough seems unevenly distributed. It will even out as it bakes.

Cover with the lid and bake for 30 minutes. Then remove the lid and bake for another 15 to 30 minutes, until the loaf is beautifully browned. Cool on a wire rack.

Yield: One 1 ½ pound loaf