

Somewhat Whole Wheat Bread

I adapted this from a recipe in a Better Homes and Gardens cookbook and then finetuned it to be faster and easier and instalment-friendly. If you mix one batch, it makes one loaf or 12 buns or some serious cinnamon rolls. If you want two loaves in one day, you can double the recipe as given here to make three loaves; just let the dough rise a bit longer and freeze the third portion for pizza another day. If you want one loaf today and another tomorrow, double the batch, divide it in two, and stick the lump you're not using into the 'fridge.

Between 1 and 7 hours before mixing, set out

1 cup milk

1 egg

For more advance preparation, combine

1/2 teaspoon salt

1/4 cup sugar

and butter a loaf or muffin pan

and measure 1/4 cup butter into a pan or microwaveable dish.

When ready to assemble dough:

Melt butter (don't overheat it)

Pour 1/4 cup warm tap water into a large bowl or the bowl of an electric mixer (if you have one with a dough hook) and

Sprinkle 1 package (2-1/4 teaspoons) traditional yeast over it.

While waiting 3-5 minutes until yeast has gone foggy, or even bubbly,

Combine melted butter, egg, milk, sugar, and salt

Whisk the yeast

Add to it 1 cup whole wheat flour

Add milk mixture to flour and yeast and stir or turn on mixer

Add 3 cups all-purpose flour, 1 cup at a time, mixing as you go.

If you have a mixer with a dough hook you can let it do the dirty work. Otherwise you're better off digging your hands into the dough at the end than trying to work a spoon through it. When the batter is mixed, dump it out onto a lightly floured board or the counter and knead it just enough to round it out.

This is where I divide the dough if I've doubled the recipe, and put a loaf's worth into the loaf pan to rise. It takes about an hour just sitting on the counter in my kitchen; I prop a giant Tupperware bowl over top of the loaf pan to retain the heat and keep it from sticking to anything unpleasant like plastic wrap while it grows. For rolls I divide the dough into twelve, then rise and bake them in a buttered muffin pan.

The dough can spend a few hours rising on the counter, sit in the 'fridge for 3 days, or stay in the freezer for up to 3 months--just bear in mind that once it's been cooled in the 'fridge or freezer, it won't rise as high.

When you're ready to bake, preheat the oven to 375 degrees.

Bake muffin-pan rolls for 10 minutes or until they're light brown on top.

Bake a loaf for 10 minutes, slip a piece of aluminium foil shiny side up to keep the top from getting any darker, and bake for another 15 minutes until the sides of the loaf are pulling away from the pan.