

Homemade White Sandwich Bread

This recipe for Homemade White Sandwich Bread is virtually foolproof. (Although, the first time I published it, I forgot a step which pretty much made it virtually impossible!) But fear not, all the steps are here now and the only way things can go awry is if the yeast you use is dead or non-reactive, in which case you have to get some new yeast and start from the beginning, a very good place to start!

Ingredients:

2 and ½ cups warm water

1 Tbsp active dry yeast

1 Tbsp sugar

2 tsp salt (I use kosher salt because it's lower in sodium but regular table salt works too!)

6 to 6 and ½ cups bread flour (all purpose flour works perfectly fine)

¼ cup butter, softened

Stir 1 Tbsp active dry yeast into ½ cup warm (ie. tepid, or, in my terms, 'warmish-hot'), water. Water should be around 105/110 degrees Fahrenheit. Let stand for 5 minutes to proof, or activate.

In a large bowl, add 3 cups flour. Stir in 2 tsp salt. After yeast has been proofing about 5 minutes, and it should look frothy or bubbly, stir in 1 Tbsp sugar with the yeast and water and pour into bowl containing flour and salt. Stir to combine. Add 2 more cups of warmish-hot water, stir. Add 3 cups of flour, 1 cup at a time, until dough becomes 'shaggy'. Add an additional ½ cup flour if needed.

Turn dough out onto floured work surface and form into a loose ball. Let sit for 5 minutes or so to rest before proceeding. (I use this time to wash out my bowl and lightly grease it with olive oil, which I'll need to place my dough back into to rise after the next step).

After dough has rested for approximately 5 minutes, using heel of your hand, knead dough out onto a rough rectangle shape. Spread softened butter, about a tablespoon or so at a time, over dough and fold dough over onto itself, covering up all of the butter. Knead again slightly to incorporate butter, flatten into another rough rectangle and repeat until all of the butter has been incorporated into the dough. Form into a loose ball.

Lightly grease a large bowl with a little olive oil, if you haven't done it already, and add dough to bowl. I usually turn the ball of dough over once so that both the top and bottom are lightly kissed with olive oil. Cover bowl with plastic wrap and wrap with a towel. Place bowl somewhere warm, ie. stove top, top of the refrigerator, and let rise for approximately 1 hour.

After dough has risen for about an hour, pour out onto a lightly floured work surface. Separate dough into thirds. Working with one third at a time, flatten dough into a rectangular shape, roughly 8 inches by 11 inches. Fold 1/3 dough lengthwise onto itself into the center and pinch where dough meets. Fold other 1/3 of dough in onto top of the first fold and pinch where dough meets. Fold ends up and pinch together where dough meets, all around. Turn 'loaf' over and form until roughly the length of your bread pan and place in greased bread pan. Repeat with remaining dough.

Cover filled bread pans loosely with plastic wrap and a towel and place in warm area to rise for another 45 minutes to 1 hour. When dough has risen sufficiently out of the bread pans, place in oven preheated to 375 degrees Fahrenheit and bake for 30-35 minutes, until golden brown. Immediately turn bread out onto cooling rack. For a softer crust, brush tops of each loaf of bread with melted butter. Let cool completely before slicing – enjoy!