

Freshly-Baked Bread

I OFTEN get letters about home-made bread. Some give good advice and hints, some ask questions; but all agree in liking freshly-baked bread or rolls, especially on cold days. Much more exciting than scones or pikelets—and such an appetising aroma! Bread is not hard to make, and one soon acquires the knack. It can be made with dried yeast quite satisfactorily, so keep a jar in the house in case you want to give the family a treat one wet week-end when you haven't a cake of compressed yeast handy. Two level tablespoons of dried yeast weigh an ounce. Also, people often ask for recipes for making their own yeast; and an occasional baking-powder loaf is a great favourite and no trouble at all.

Remember to have flour really dry and even slightly warmed; and the liquid for mixing must be only blood heat—hot liquid kills yeast, and cold liquid won't work it at all. Temperatures for baking are always guides and not hard and fast rules, because stoves and other conditions vary in different homes. Practice makes perfect. Never add the salt to the yeast-liquor, but always sift it with the flour. Fill the tins only half-full and don't set it to rise in too hot a

place, or it will rise too fast and be holey. A hot-water cupboard is a good place. A 2 lb. loaf takes approximately 45 minutes at regular 7 or 450 degrees electric, reducing heat a little after about 15 minutes.

Housewives' Hints

(1) One rounded tablespoon of dried yeast is just right for 8 breakfast cups sifted flour. It must be sifted flour, for I found that it was nearly a whole cup more when it wasn't sifted; and, of course, the flour must be warmed. Flours do differ—some absorb more moisture so you see you must use a bit of individual experience.

(2) Our cakes of compressed yeast weigh 1¼ oz.; the American cakes weigh three-fifths of ours.

Irene's Bread (Papanui)

"Two pounds flour, 1½ teaspoons sugar, 4 level teaspoons salt, 1 pint tepid water, 1 oz. yeast (compressed cake form). Sift flour and salt into warm basin. Mix together and make a well in the centre. Put yeast in another warm basin, break it in pieces, mix sugar in until it becomes a creamy liquid. Add tepid water to liquid yeast mixture, then

stir into flour. Beat till smooth. Place cloth over basin and stand in warm place to rise, about 2 hours. Turn out and knead 2 to 3 minutes. Form into two loaves on tray or put in open tins. Cover with cloth again, and return to warmth for further ½ hour. Bake in hot oven for 40 minutes approximately. I find my cylinder cupboard ideal for rising."

White Bread (about 4 lb.)

Three pounds flour, 3 level teaspoons salt, 4 level teaspoons sugar, 1½ pints to 1¾ pints water at blood heat, according to strength of flour, 1 cake compressed yeast. Sift flour and salt together in large warm bowl. Dissolve sugar in ¼ pint water in a small bowl. Add yeast to this and stir until dissolved. Add yeast to the full quantity of water and pour all into a well in the centre of the flour. Mix quickly to a flexible dough, beating with a wooden stirrer, until the dough leaves the sides of the bowl. Turn on to a floured board and knead and fold quickly for about 3 minutes, kneading and folding the dough as often as possible in the time. Roll into a smooth ball on the board. Cover with a bowl. Leave on the board in a warm place for 20 to 25 minutes. Push the dough lightly from the board, turn it once and knock or press it down and fold it over four or five times. Cut into two or four as desired. Shape each piece into a good loaf and place in slightly greased tins. Put to rise on a rack over a bowl of hot water (not too hot for the hand). Cover lightly and leave till

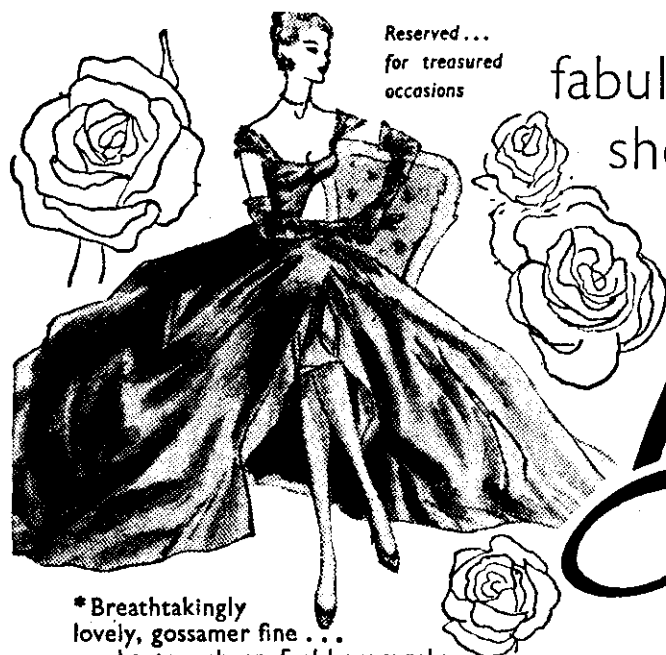
double in bulk. Bake in a hot oven. Forty minutes if in four tins, one hour if in two. When done the bread is well browned and has a dry hollow sound when tapped with the fingers.

Scottish Border Bread (no kneading)

Three pounds of wholemeal flour, 2 pints of luke-warm water, 4 teaspoons salt, 2 teaspoons of sugar, 1 oz. of yeast. Mix the flour and salt in a large bowl and put it to warm in a warm spot, turning it over occasionally until the chill is off. Crumble the yeast in a basin, add the sugar and mix with a spoon until liquid. Add the luke-warm water, stir thoroughly and leave for about 10 minutes to froth up. Make a well in the centre of the flour and pour in the frothing yeast. Mix thoroughly with one hand until the flour is evenly wetted, then divide the dough into three and put in three two-pound loaf tins well greased. Cover with a cloth and put to rise in a warm place for about half an hour, or until the dough has doubled its original bulk. Bake for an hour in a hot oven approximately 425 degrees.

Wharepunga Bread

This was sent by a mother of 5 children who makes it up every day. The ferment: 3 dessertspoons dried yeast, 3 dessertspoons sugar, 3 dessertspoons flour or wholemeal, 1 pint warm water. Mix this and let stand until required. Can be used within ½ hour. Now put into a bowl 8 cups flour or wholemeal and 4 teaspoons salt. Add the ferment to the flour and use more warm water for mixing until mixture leaves sides of bowl clean.



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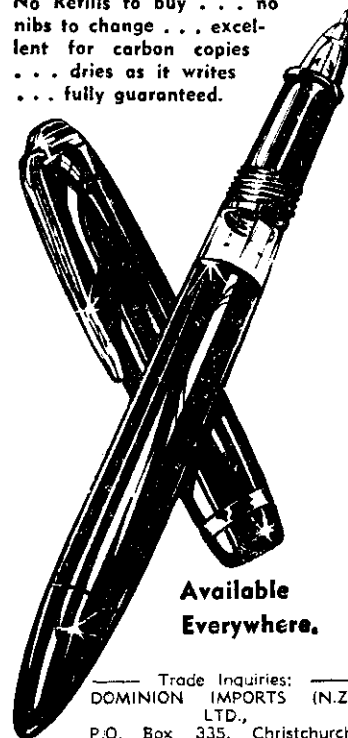
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