

GIGI'S EASY BUTTERMILK ARTISAN BREAD

1 loaf | 15 Min Prep | 5-5 1/2 Hours Elapsed

Start at 1pm to have warm bread at a 6:00pm dinner.

INGREDIENTS

3 cups all-purpose flour

¼ teaspoon yeast (active or instant)

1 teaspoon fine pink Himalayan salt or fine sea salt

1 ¾ - 2 cups warm buttermilk

DIRECTIONS

1. Whisk dry ingredients together in a large bowl.

Note: If you are using active yeast, the baked bread will be slightly smaller than the instant yeast version because this recipe does not require you to dissolve the yeast in warm water to activate it; therefore, it does not rise quite as much but it isn't much of a difference, maybe ½ inch – 1 inch or so in height

2. Put buttermilk in a saucepan and slowly warm it up on LOW-MED, stirring frequently. When it is warm to the touch, it should be ready.

Note: When buttermilk gets too hot the curds and whey separate. If you want to use a thermometer to test the temperature, roughly 90-95 degrees is warm enough to activate the yeast in the dough.

OPTIONS & VARIATIONS

Try fun variations such as

- Onion powder and dried or fresh chopped chives (1t each)
- Garlic powder and dried parsley (1t each)
- Honey (3 T)
- Cinnamon (1t) (can combine with the honey)

Tips:

*This bread toasts well and can be sliced for sandwiches

*You can substitute warm water for buttermilk. You will not need more than 1 ¾ cups of water. The buttermilk is more absorbent and therefore requires more liquid to reach the tacky/sticky state

*When using warm water, you can run your tap water as hot as it gets, that is usually sufficient

3. Slowly add the warm buttermilk to the dry mix while stirring with a spatula or wooden spoon. Don't add more than 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ c unless needed.
4. As you stir and add buttermilk, the dough should become sticky and tacky.
5. Once the dough is tacky, push it towards the center of the bowl away from the edges.
6. Cover with plastic or a lid and set a timer to let the dough rest for 3 hours or until doubled, sometimes it needs 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ hours. You can set the bowl on the counter or in front of a sunny window. The yeast needs a warm environment to feed. You can also cover your bowls with towels to help keep the heat inside.
7. After dough has doubled, you will see that it has moved to the edges of the bowl and will have small bubbles forming and popping in the dough. The dough is now ready for forming.
8. Dust a clean surface with flour and have a small amount on the side to help you handle the dough.
9. Use your spatula or a dough scraper to get the dough out of the bowl and onto the flour surface.
10. Sprinkle a small amount of flour on top of the dough.
11. Fold only a few times, you can use your hand or the spatula and form it into a ball while twisting the ends up towards the top as if you are picking up a ball by the top. This is different from other recipes, you will not need to score the top, do not flip the dough ball over, leave the twisted or stretched pieces at the top.
12. Get a sheet of parchment paper and carefully set the dough ball, stretch side up on the center of the sheet.
13. Place the sheet into a clean bowl and cover with a towel, let the dough rest after that workout for 30-35 minutes- go to the next step immediately after covering your bowls.
14. Turn on your oven to preheat to 450 degrees.
 - a. Put your Dutch oven with the cover on into the oven to heat up.
15. When the dough is finished resting, carefully open the oven and remove the lid from your hot Dutch oven, insert the parchment paper and dough ball. Replace the cover and slide back into the oven. The bread needs to bake with the COVER on.
16. Set timer and let the bread bake for 30 minutes.
17. When the timer goes off, open Dutch oven and check your bread, if it is not golden enough to your liking, put the bread back in the oven UNCOVERED for 5 minutes. Check it again and repeat another 5 minutes if needed.
18. Let your bread cool and ENJOY!!

Hint: If you need to store warm bread, use a paper bag or a bread box. Do not use a plastic bag while the bread is warm. The outer crunchy crusty goodness will get soft from the condensation inside a plastic bag.

Hint: Make sure the handle on your Dutch oven is rated for 450 degrees or hotter. If it is not rated that high, it could melt or become brittle which can be dangerous when using it to move a heavy and hot cover. You can find replacement knobs that are rated up to 500 degrees on Amazon for around \$6.00.