

THE INTERESTED CHILD'S ULTRA FLEXIBLE BREAD

Boil:

1½ C. water

Scald (bring to just short of boil):

1 C. milk (or just the equivalent of 1 C. powdered milk or buttermilk added to 2½ C. water); the milk, whether powdered or wet, adds protein to the recipe

(The point here is to have 2½ cups of liquid that has been sterilized—any stray bacteria or yeasts killed by heat—as the basis for the dough.)

Pour hot liquids over and mix together:

4 T. butter or margarine (half a stick) or 4 T. low-flavor oil (canola, safflower)

1/3 C. honey, blue agave, Demerara sugar, brown sugar, maple syrup, or white sugar (can also use 1/6 c. molasses and 1/6 c. white sugar)

1 C. grain: rolled oats, multi-grain cereal, corn meal, rye flakes, oat bran, wheat bran, or other

1 T. salt

Let mixture cool to lukewarm—c. 110° F. (so you can't feel heat when touched to skin of wrist)

Add and stir in gently:

4 scant tsp. dry yeast—any baking yeast including “bread machine yeast”

Let sit until yeast begins to work (form a thick layer of bubbles); 20 minutes should do.

Add, 2 cups at a time:

5½ – 6 C. unbleached (this is our preference) white flour (could substitute 2 C. graham or whole wheat flour plus 3½ – 4 C. white flour)

Knead dough until springy; form into ball. Leave in the bowl, and cover with slightly damp cloth, then set aside to rise in a warm-ish but not hot place

Let rise until doubled, then gently punch down and re-form into a ball. Cover.

Let rise again until doubled, then gently punch down. Divide equally and shape dough into 2 loaves.

(You can also shape into 1½-inch-diameter balls that will rise and bake into the form of attached dinner rolls if they are packed touching each other in a greased or buttered baking pan; the dough could also be shaped into 2 pizzas about 9x12-inches each)

Bake at 350° F. for 30–35 minutes (25–32 minutes for rolls, possibly less for pizza after toppings have been added). Remove from oven and baking pans, if used. Brush tops with butter or margarine or egg whites while still hot.

Let cool before slicing bread (if you don't the bread will tend to smush down and lose its shape); rolls can be eaten warmer.

Enjoy.