

Easy Peasant Bread with 7-Grain and Honey Topping

(Bread recipe is from Alexandra Cooks. Topping is from MK.)



Ingredients

- 4 cups (512 g) unbleached all-purpose or bread flour
- 2 teaspoons (10 g) kosher salt
- 2 cups (454 g) lukewarm water (made by mixing 1.5 cups cold water with 0.5 cup boiling water)
- 2 teaspoons (8 g) sugar
- 1 Tablespoon stone ground flax seed (optional)
- 2 teaspoons (8 g) SAF or other instant yeast
- room temperature butter, about 2 tablespoons (I use baking spray in the bowls instead of butter.)

See end of recipe for Topping ingredients and instructions.

Instructions

1. **Mixing the dough:** In a large mixing bowl, whisk together the flour, salt, sugar, and instant yeast. Add the water. Mix until the flour is absorbed.
2. **Let it rise.** Cover bowl with a tea towel or plastic wrap and set aside in a warm spot to rise for at least an hour. (In the winter or if you are letting the bread rise in a cool place, it might take as long as two hours to rise.) This is how to create a slightly warm spot for your bread to rise in: Turn the oven on at any temperature (350°F or so) for one minute, then turn it off. Note: Do not allow the oven to get up to 300°F, for example, and then heat at that setting for 1 minute — this will be

too hot. Just let the oven preheat for a total of 1 minute — it likely won't get above 100°F. The goal is to just create a slightly warm environment for the bread.

3. **Preheat the oven to 425°F.** Grease two 1-qt or 1.5-qt oven-safe bowls (see notes below) with about a tablespoon of butter each.
 1. Using two forks, punch down your dough, scraping it from the sides of the bowl, which it will be clinging to. As you scrape it down try to pull the dough toward the center (see video below for guidance).
 2. You want to loosen the dough entirely from the sides of the bowl, and you want to make sure you've punched it down. Then, take your two forks and divide the dough into two equal portions — eye the center of the mass of dough, and starting from the center and working out, pull the dough apart with the two forks.
 3. Then scoop up each half and place into your prepared bowls. This part can be a little messy — the dough is very wet and will slip all over the place. Using small forks or forks with short tines makes this easier.
4. **Let the dough rise again** for about 20 to 30 minutes on the countertop near the oven (or near a warm spot) or until it has risen to just below or above (depending on what size bowl you are using) the top of the bowls. (Note: Do not do the warm-oven trick for the second rise, and do not cover your bowls for the second rise. Simply set your bowls on top of your oven, so that they are in a warm spot. Twenty minutes in this spot usually is enough for my loaves.)
5. **Bake it.** Bake for 15 minutes. Reduce the heat to 375° and bake for 15 to 17 minutes longer. Remove from the oven and turn the loaves onto cooling racks. If you've greased the bowls well, the loaves should fall right out onto the cooling racks. If the loaves look a little pale and soft when you've turned them out onto your cooling racks, place the loaves into the oven (outside of their bowls) and let them bake for about 5 minutes longer. Remove from oven and let cool for 10 minutes before cutting.

7-Grain Honey Topping

- If using this topping, prepare it ahead of time and let it set while the dough is in the first rise.
- In a medium bowl (need room to mix), measure out another 1/2 cup 7-Grain Cereal.
- Warm 4 Tbs raw honey to a more liquid state; this only takes a few seconds in the microwave or set a smaller bowl inside a bowl of a boiling hot water for the same result.

- Immediately drizzle the warm honey over the cereal and mix together with a small rubber spatula or spoon. It will be sticky. Just scrape off and mix until it's well blended and all the cereal is coated.
- When you're at the step to separate the dough into two bowls, use a little extra baking or cooking spray in the bowls. Separate the dough, then mix 1/2 the cereal and honey mixture over each batch of dough and lightly mix using the forks. It will seem like it's greasy or sticky, but that's okay. Don't overmix. The idea is to coat the dough, not knead it.
- Follow the rest of the recipe as normal, and allow to fully cool before slicing.