

# Dutch-Oven or French Bread Loaf (No-Knead)

Writer in the Kitchen ~ MK McClintock

Makes 1 large baguette or 2 thin baguettes or 6 sandwich rolls



## Ingredients

1. 3 cups bread flour
2. 2 tsp active dry yeast
3. 1 ½ tsp sea salt
4. 1 ½ cups warm water 102 - 108 degrees F
5. 2 Tbs stone ground flax seed (optional)

## Instructions:

1. Combine the flour, yeast, and salt in a large bowl and stir to combine.
2. Add the water and mix until the dough forms a ball. It will be soft!
3. Cover the bowl with a damp tea towel.
4. Let dough sit covered at room temperature for 10-24 hours.
  - a. NOTE: If I start the loaf in the evening, I let it sit overnight. If I start it early enough in the morning, I bake it early evening.
5. After 10-24 hours you're ready for one of the next steps.

## **IF MAKING A LOAF/BAGUETTE (or 2 BAGUETTES)**

1. Roll the dough into a rectangle (about 15 inches). Starting from the long side, roll the dough into a cylinder.
  - a. NOTE: The dough will be very soft!
  - b. If you want 2 thin baguettes, follow the same process, just split the dough evenly into two rounds before rolling and shaping.
2. Turn both ends in and pinch the seams closed. Round the edges and place onto a baking sheet with parchment or a Non-Stick Perforated French Bread Pan lightly with baking spray.
  - a. NOTE: The perforated French bread pan will give you a nicer, crisper crust. If you plan on making this bread often, it's well worth buying one. I place the bread pan on top of a baking sheet, and it gives me my preferred level of crispness (not hard, but not too soft).
3. Cover lightly with a tea towel. Let rise while oven is heating.
  - a. NOTE: You can let the dough rise 30-60 minutes, but I've never found that necessary. Allow for extra rise time if you want larger loaves.
4. Preheat oven to 500 °F and place an oven-safe bowl of boiling water on the rack. This will create steam to give the crust a nice crispness.
5. Once the oven is heated, remove the bowl of water.
6. Score the top of the loaf diagonally 3-5 times (evenly), about 1/4" deep using a bread lame, sharp knife, or razor blade.
7. Slide the bread pan or baking sheet into the oven.
8. Turn the oven down to 450 °F and bake 23-25 minutes. The longer you bake it, the darker and crisper the crust.
9. Internal temperature of the bread should read 195-210°F (any hotter and you've likely overbaked the bread).
10. Once finished, remove from oven and cool on a cooling rack. After about 5 minutes, I brush the top lightly with olive oil. This is an optional, but tasty, step. If you want the crust to retain its extra crispiness, do not brush with olive oil or butter.

## **IF USING A DUTCH OVEN:**

11. Place a 2 3/4 quart dutch oven (or a 2.4L baking dish) with a lid in the oven while it is preheating. (Note: Readers have used a 5 qt. dutch oven with success).
12. While oven is preheating, transfer the dough from the bowl onto a floured surface.

13. Form the dough into a ball, adding a few TBS more flour if needed. The dough should still be slightly loose. Then cover it with a floured towel while the oven is preheating. (**Important note:** The dough ball will be loose and "floppy." That is how it should be as this is a very moist bread which is what makes it so irresistible. You will not have a firm ball, it will look a little flat).
14. Carefully remove the hot baking dish from the oven. Remove the lid and spray the dish with cooking spray or line it with parchment paper.
15. Gently put the dough ball into the baking dish so it's evenly distributed.
16. Cover and bake for 30 minutes.
17. Remove the lid and bake for an additional 15 minutes, or until the loaf is golden brown.
18. Remove the loaf from the baking dish and let it cool on a rack before slicing. To keep it warm, cover with a tea towel.

### **IF MAKING ROLLS:**

- Follow the instructions through #5.
- Divide the dough into equal parts. I make six rolls because I like them big enough to use for sandwiches and burgers.
- Place on a baking sheet or use a mini cake pan (I use a mini round cake pan with 6 wells, 15 3/4" x 11")
- Preheat the oven to 500°F and let the rolls rise while the oven is heating.
- Once heated, turn the oven down to 450 °F, score the tops of each roll crosswise, and bake 20-22 minutes.
- Remove from the oven and pan, and allow to cool on wire rack. Optional: Light brush the tops with olive oil.

### **PRODUCTS I USE:**

- My favorite flour brand is Bob's Red Mill. King Arthur Flour is a great alternative, but really, and good-quality bread flour will work. DO NOT use all-purpose flour.
- I use SAF Instant Yeast for excellent results every time.
- The Flax is optional, but really had a nice rustic look to the loaf and a little added nutrition. I also use Bob's Red Mill brand for the Flax.
- The pan I use for the rolls is USA Pan Mini Round Cake and Cinnamon Roll Pan, 6 Well, Nonstick & Quick Release Coating, Made in the USA from Aluminized Steel, 15-3/4 by 11.

