

MOM'S HONEY WHOLE WHEAT BREAD

makes 2 loaves

The Cooks Next Door

2 pkgs. active dry yeast (or 4 tsp. bulk active dry yeast)

1/2 c. warm water (105-115)

1//3 c. honey

1T. salt

1/4 c. oil, butter, or shortening

3 c. unbleached all-purpose or bread flour

3-4 c. whole wheat flour

Dissolve yeast in 1/2 c. warm water in large mixing bowl. Stir in honey, salt, oil, rest of water and the white flour. Beat until smooth. Stir in enough whole wheat flour to make dough easy to handle.

Turn dough onto lightly floured surface; knead about 10 minutes, until smooth and elastic. Place in a large greased bowl; turn greased side of dough up. Cover with a lightweight cloth (tea towel); let rise in a warm place until double' about and hour. (Dough is ready if an indentation remains when touched.)

Punch down dough; divide in half. Flatten each half with hands into a rectangle (9x12). Roll dough tightly starting at the 9 inch side. Pinch edge firmly to seal; fold ends under.

Place loaves seam sides down in 2 greased loaf pans, 9x5x3 or 8 1/2x4 1/2x2 1/2 inches. Cover again and let rise until double, about 1 hour.

Heat oven to 375. Place loaves are deep golden brown and sound hollow when tapped, 35 to 40 minutes. Remove from pans; cool on wire rack.

Mom's notes: Bread dough is pretty forgiving. You can easily adjust the amount of honey or oil according to diet needs and end up with a good product. I have made this completely by hand.

After adding the white flour to the liquids, beat with a sturdy wooden spoon for about 2 minutes, until the batter slips off the spoon in a sheet, sort of. Then add the whole wheat flour a cup at a time and beat in until the dough is easy to handle for kneading. When you knead, you will work in more of the whole wheat flour as you keep the dough from sticking to the kneading surface. Making the bread without equipment to mix or knead will build your muscles and get your heart rate up--good aerobics. :)

A note about whole wheat flour: Use the freshest whole wheat flour you can. The oils in whole wheat begin to deteriorate (get rancid) when the grain is ground. Whole wheat should be stored in the refrigerator (or freezer for a longer period of time). If you have a grain mill, you can grind a mixture of several grains (millet, barley, rice, quinoa, kamut, groats, etc.) having the majority of the grain being wheat (for the gluten). This will produce a multigrain bread. Also if you prefer to use all whole wheat or multigrain to improve the nutritional quality of the bread, add about 1/3 c. gluten for some of the flour. Gluten is a necessary protein for the texture of the bread. The initial beating of the dough and the kneading both help to activate the gluten.

This bread freezes well and the batch can easily be doubled. It's an even better workout!