

**BRILLIANT  
BAKING**  
step-by-step

**the PINK WHISK**  
 guide to

As seen on  
THE GREAT BRITISH  
BAKE OFF

# BREAD MAKING

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# BASIC WHITE LOAF

**MAKES ONE 900G (2LB) LOAF**

**PREP ⌚ 30 MINUTES PLUS 1½ HOURS PROVING**

**BAKE ⌚ 35 MINUTES | OVEN 190°C (FAN)/210°C/425°F/GAS MARK 7**

A straightforward white loaf is up first, and probably the best place to start if you're new to bread making. Perfect for sandwiches, popping in the toaster or dunking in a bowl of soup.

## INGREDIENTS

### Bread

400g (14oz) strong white bread flour  
2 tsp fast action yeast  
1 tsp caster (superfine) sugar  
1 tsp salt  
170ml/170g (6fl oz/6oz) water  
83 ml/85g (2¾fl oz/3oz) milk

## EQUIPMENT

900g (2lb) loaf tin



1 First measure the flour into a large mixing bowl. Add in the yeast, sugar and salt, placing each in a different part of the flour. It's best to avoid the salt touching the yeast at this stage as it can inhibit its effectiveness.



2 Now for the water and milk. The liquid for dough shouldn't be cold, but lukewarm – this springs the yeast straight into action. You can warm the liquid through in the microwave but it also works well to measure the water hot from the kettle and then add the milk cold from the fridge. Set to one side.

3 Stir together the dry ingredients: you're going to have to get your hands in at some point so it might as well be now! Once the yeast, salt and sugar are fairly evenly distributed make a well in the centre and pour in the water/ milk mixture.



4 Using your fingers start to work the dry ingredients into the wet. Keep working until it forms a shaggy dough with everything incorporated.

5 Turn the dough out onto the work surface. Don't be tempted to add any extra flour to the surface as this would be incorporated into the dough as you knead and toughen the finished bread. It may seem sticky to begin with but persevere. Using both hands knead the dough for ten minutes. Stretch the dough away from you then pull it back onto itself, repeating the action with both hands and allowing the dough to turn as you knead it.

6 After five minutes of kneading the dough will be much more elastic and will look a lot less shaggy.



7 After 10 minutes the dough will be far smoother, non-sticky and ready to prove. 10 minutes of kneading is fairly hard work, certainly for your arms, but it is essential. Set a timer and be strict with yourself not to be distracted. You can reward yourself with a cup of tea when the timer goes off!

8 Now prepare a bowl for the dough to rest in. Not so large that it's rattling around on its lonesome; a smaller bowl will keep the dough snug and draught free – a 1.5l (1½ US quart) capacity is ideal. Grease the base and sides of the bowl with a teaspoon of sunflower or vegetable oil and pop the dough in, then turn it to give it a very light coating of the oil.







**9** Cover with cling film (plastic wrap) or a clean dish towel and set somewhere at room temperature away from draughts and direct sunlight. Leave to rise for 1 hour or until doubled in size. If it's kept somewhere cool it will take longer to double: be patient, this stage is important. Using a smaller bowl makes it easier to see when the dough has doubled – in a large bowl this can be deceiving.

**10** Once doubled in size, tip the dough out onto your work surface. Again, no flour is needed. Gently knead the dough for a couple of minutes; this knocks it back and deflates it. It should be much, much softer and more elastic than before.

**11** Flatten the dough out into a rough rectangle. Take hold of the edge of the dough and fold it in to the centre. Work your way all around the dough folding in to the centre leaving you with a smaller-shaped piece of dough. Repeat the folding in to the centre again, tightening the dough until you can fold into the middle no more – this creates a spine for the loaf and will ensure an even rise.



**12** Flip the dough over so that the seam is underneath. Cup your hands with thumbs touching around the top of the dough, then slide your hands down the sides and underneath the dough in a tightening action. Repeat the tightening action, gently encouraging the dough to shape into the rough length of your tin, all the time keeping the seam underneath.



**13** Grease the loaf tin and pop in the shaped dough. Give it a light dusting of flour if you like. Cover it again loosely with cling film (plastic wrap) or clean dish towel and put it in the same draught-free spot as the first proving for its final rise. 30 minutes should be sufficient, so preheat the oven to 190°C (fan)/210°C/425°F/Gas Mark 7.



**14** The dough will have almost doubled in size. Almost is the key here: it should be domed over the top of the tin. You need to leave some room for oven spring – the last burst of rise when the loaf goes into the oven. If the dough is left too long at this stage the dough becomes over-proved – the yeast loses its power and can leave you with a very wrinkled crust. Remove the cling film (plastic wrap) or dish towel and put the loaf straight into the middle of the oven, quickly, and shut the door, to keep in as much of the heat as possible. Bake for 35 minutes.

**15** When removing from the oven, turn the loaf out of the tin (pan) as soon as possible. If left in it will sweat and the moisture will be reabsorbed by the loaf leaving you with soggy bread! When fully baked the base of the loaf when tapped should sound hollow. If there is a dull sound then it needs more time in the oven to bake through fully. If it sounds nice and hollow transfer it to a wire rack to cool.





















































