



**French Loaves:** makes 2-3 baguettes. Recipe adapted from Harry McNaughton

### Ingredients

Slightly less than 1 and ¼ cup water

3 cups high-grade flour. 1 cup =125gms. Weigh out as 375gms

1 tsp white sugar

1.5 tsp. salt

3 teaspoons Edmonds Surebake yeast

Option for glazing loaves - 1 egg yolk mixed with 1 tbsp. water

### Method

- Place water, bread flour, sugar, salt and yeast into bread machine pan in the order recommended by manufacturer. Select Dough cycle, and press Start. I turn off after 5-10mins. Or mix well by hand.
- Place dough in a greased bowl, turning to coat all sides. Cover and let rise in a warm place for about 30 minutes, or until doubled in bulk. Dough is ready if indentation remains when touched.
- If rising overnight (*preferred option as dough gains flavour*), put dough (with cover) in fridge.
- In morning, turn out dough onto a lightly floured surface and shape roughly into a cylinder of pre-planned length before rolling out.
- Roll into an *even* 24 x12 inch rectangle and slice dough into thirds for 3 baguettes. Roll up each third of dough tightly, beginning at 12-inch side, pounding out any air bubbles as you go with rolling pin. Roll dough gently back and forth with open palms to obtain an even cylinder shape and to taper end.
- Place in baguette trays also lined with greaseproof paper. Or 3 inches apart on a greaseproof paper lined baking tray. To maintain baguette shape, while rising, they can be separated by tightly adjacent rolled tea towel or by a triangular fold of the sheet of greaseproof paper. Sprinkle flour between tea towel and baguette to enable easy removal prior to cooking.
- Make deep diagonal slashes across loaves every 2 inches or one lengthwise slash on each loaf.
- Cover and let rise in a warm place until approximately doubled in bulk. In a cool environment you can oil some glad wrap and cover baguettes with the oiled surface of glad wrap to prevent the dough crusting and drying out or use oven in cold months – turn empty oven on high for 60sec then turn off – about 30degrees is good.
- The rise height is what you get after baking so be prepared to let rise more if the rise time is slow – as in cooler weather, but *don't over proof* (see below).
- Preheat oven to 200-220°C fan.
- For glaze (though I don't use), mix egg yolk with 1 tablespoon water and brush over tops of loaves.
- For steam, put a deep (*avoids spillage*) roasting dish in bottom of oven while it is heating up. A few minutes before adding loaves to oven, pour boiling water (1cm depth) into roasting dish. Remove any cover off baguettes and supporting cloths and add loaves to an *upper/middle oven rack* and close door.
- Take out roasting dish after 10 minutes to let bread get firm crust.
- Flip baguettes over to enable even browning, removing paper from the baguette trays
- Bake for another 10 minutes until golden brown.

### Baker's tips.

1. Don't pack down the flour if using a cup as a measuring device.
2. If your overnight dough is a bit wet add more flour to bench prior to rolling out.
3. Avoid having the dough too wet as the dough is difficult to roll out and lacks a nice dense texture. I use 90-95% of the recommended water volume. You can always add bit more water to the mixture when first preparing if it is too dry.
4. Be careful not to overproof dough on 2<sup>nd</sup> rise which then bulges out of tray and collapses with loss of texture



5. Alison Holst in The New Zealand bread book (Simon and Alison Holst ISBN: 1-877382-55-8) suggests when making dough to make a sufficient amount to use for up to a week, leaving it in the refrigerator in a covered bowl but sprinkled with flour to enable you to cut off a portion easily when needed. Some authors say gently punch down risen dough. Some say knead for a few minutes, but Alison Holst also makes “no knead baguettes” and I suspect the rolling out achieves the same effect and I don't bother.
6. You want a nice brown crisp crust so experiment with your oven temperature  $\pm$  fan if not well browned.
7. Eat fresh, on the day or freeze and then reheat for five -10 minutes in a 180°C oven BUT don't overcook. Better underdone than overdone.

There are other ways to make baguettes but more time consuming.

Critique and discussion welcome.

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